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**Office of Inspector General**  
**United States Department of State**

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ISP-I-24-04

Office of Inspections

December 2023

# **Inspection of Embassy Vienna, Austria**

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

ISP-I-24-04

## What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Vienna.

## What OIG Recommends

OIG made 15 recommendations to Embassy Vienna.

In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with all 15 recommendations. OIG considers all 15 recommendations resolved. The embassy's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The embassy's formal response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

December 2023

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

## Inspection of Embassy Vienna, Austria

### What OIG Found

- The Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission led Embassy Vienna in a professional and strategic manner. The Ambassador consistently supported diversity values and programs.
- The Political-Economic Section collaborated with other offices and agencies to advance the Integrated Country Strategy and Department of State priorities. However, the embassy did not hold required interagency Deal Team meetings to coordinate commercial advocacy.
- Consular Section leadership instituted operational changes to adjust to the higher workload following the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and staffing shortages.
- Overall, the Joint Management Office provided equitable services to its customers despite internal control shortcomings related to personal property, residential leasing, motor pool, the contracting officer's representative program, time and attendance, and residential fire safety.
- The organizational structure of Embassy Vienna's information management program did not meet Department standards.
- Spotlight on Success: Embassy Vienna's engagement with the government of Austria led to restarting a resettlement program for Iranian minorities.
- Spotlight on Success: The Public Diplomacy Section coordinated with the embassy's Commercial Service office to revitalize the embassy's social media outreach.
- Spotlight on Success: The Joint Management Office collaborated with the Department to create an outreach program to share information on services and opportunities for employment with Tri-Mission Vienna's current and incoming eligible family members.
- Spotlight on Success: Facility management staff instituted a tracking system to monitor compliance with monthly fire extinguisher checks using quick response, or QR, codes and electronic questionnaires.

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## CONTEXT

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About the size of South Carolina and with a population of approximately 8.9 million, Austria is a wealthy, mid-sized European country, bordered by Germany and the Czech Republic to the north, Switzerland and Lichtenstein to the west, Italy and Slovenia to the south, and Hungary and Slovakia to the east. It is a parliamentary democracy with constitutional power shared between a popularly elected president and a bicameral parliament, known as the Federal Assembly. Although constitutionally non-aligned,<sup>1</sup> Austria is a member of the European Union (EU) and actively participates in EU peacekeeping and crisis management operations under the Common Security and Defense Policy.<sup>2</sup> Austria is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but is part of NATO's Partnership for Peace framework and participates in NATO-led crisis management and peacekeeping operations. Austria supports European forces in Bosnia and has a significant presence in the NATO operation in Kosovo. Vienna hosts the International Atomic Energy Agency and several other United Nations bodies, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In 2022, the Austrian economy had a gross domestic product of \$473 billion, a per capita gross domestic product of \$52,000, and a 4.6 percent unemployment rate, making it an attractive trade and investment partner for the United States. The United States ranks as Austria's seventh largest source of imports and third largest export destination. Austria is one of the fastest growing sources of foreign direct investment in the United States and the United States is the third-largest investor country in Austria after Germany and Russia. In 2021, the United States invested \$4.6 billion in Austria, an increase of 1 percent over 2020. During the same period, Austria invested \$16.2 billion in the United States.

Embassy Vienna's top four strategic objectives, as outlined in the current Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) approved in April 2022, are to:

- Strengthen Austria's support for economic growth, stability, and prosperity in the United States and regionally.
- Expand engagement with the Austrian public to increase understanding of the United States and strengthen support for the transatlantic relationship and common goals.
- Work with Austria as a NATO partner country to make it a reliable, regional leader in counterterrorism and military capability to enhance security and stability in Europe and beyond.
- Enhance bilateral intelligence sharing, law enforcement, and consular ties to ensure the safety of U.S. citizens while facilitating legitimate trade and travel to the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> Austria's Constitution prohibits military alliances and foreign military bases in country.

<sup>2</sup> The EU's Common Security and Defense Policy enables it to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets. European Union, "The Common Security and Defence Policy," [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy_en).

The U.S. diplomatic mission to Austria consists of Embassy Vienna, which, through its Tri-Mission Joint Management Office, provides administrative support, including information management services, to the two other U.S. missions in Vienna—the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (USOSCE) and the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna (UNVIE). The embassy’s Regional Security Office also supports all three missions. The Department refers to the three missions as the Vienna Tri-Mission.

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Vienna had 169 authorized U.S. direct-hire positions, 174 locally employed (LE) staff, and 25 eligible family member positions. Additionally, there were 24 authorized U.S. direct-hire and 15 LE staff positions for the six other government agencies represented at the embassy: the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice, and the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

OIG evaluated the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Vienna consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.<sup>3</sup> Concurrent with this inspection of Embassy Vienna, OIG also inspected USOSCE and UNVIE.<sup>4</sup> A related classified inspection report on the Vienna Tri-Mission includes discussion of the security program for the three missions, issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities, and certain aspects of the information management program.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTION**

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OIG assessed Embassy Vienna’s leadership based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG’s review of documents and observations meetings and activities during the on-site portion of the inspection.

### **Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct**

The Ambassador, a first-time non-career ambassador, arrived on January 7, 2022. She is a lawyer by profession, with extensive private sector experience in law and business as well as in the non-profit sector. Prior to her appointment as Ambassador, she was with an international law firm and served on the Board of the Greater Boston (Massachusetts) Chamber of Commerce. She also co-founded and serves as President Emerita of the Board of Directors of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, a non-profit organization in Boston.

The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived at the embassy on July 12, 2021. Prior to Embassy Vienna, he was the Managing Director for Visa

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> OIG, *Inspection of the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (ISP-I-24-05, report not yet released) and *Inspection of the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna, Austria* (ISP-I-24-10, report not yet released).

Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Previous assignments include Country Coordinator for Visas in Mexico City and as DCM and Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See. He also served at the U.S. embassies in Prague, Warsaw, and Bogota, and as Deputy Director of the Executive Secretariat Staff, Senior Watch Officer in the Department of State (Department) Operations Center, and in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs in Washington.

OIG found that the Ambassador and the DCM modeled integrity and ethical behavior in accordance with the Department’s leadership and management tenets in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b.<sup>5</sup> The Ambassador and DCM were viewed as affable and engaged, and a strong and complementary team who were genuinely committed to excellence and the welfare of the tri-mission and the embassy community. Embassy staff told OIG they appreciated some of the “personal touches” the Ambassador had introduced to the Front Office, including hosting monthly birthday celebrations, and holding periodic brown bag lunches to get better acquainted with mission personnel and discuss issues of current interest. The DCM was viewed as an attentive supervisor who sought to resolve problems when they arose. He was praised for his level-headed leadership as Charge d’Affaires during a dramatic spike in anomalous health incidents<sup>6</sup> in 2021 and 2022, which created concern in the embassy community and attracted considerable international media attention.

Department personnel and staff from other agencies commended the Ambassador and DCM for their inclusive and collaborative style in Country Team and other interagency discussions, on their clear communications, and generally felt that differing viewpoints were appreciated and respected. Embassy staff described the Front Office as “meticulous” about processing incoming gifts and keeping an up-to-date gift registry, and as being scrupulous to consult the Joint Management Office (JMO) and the Department’s Office of the Legal Adviser prior to accepting gifts.<sup>7</sup> The Ambassador also recused herself on occasions where there could have been a perceived conflict of interest, such as the visit of Austrian members of Parliament to an institution in the United States with which she had been affiliated.

## **Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives**

OIG’s review of Embassy Vienna’s accomplishment of U.S. foreign policy goals found the Ambassador and the DCM led the Country Team in a professional and strategically sound manner in accordance with guidance in 2 FAM 113.1c, which charges chiefs of mission with representing the interests of the United States and maintaining close relations with the government and people of the host country. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was in the process of updating the ICS to better align its operations with new priorities and objectives

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<sup>5</sup> The Department’s leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214b are (1) model integrity, (2) plan strategically, (3) be decisive and take responsibility, (4) communicate, (5) learn and innovate constantly, (6) be self-aware, (7) collaborate, (8) value and develop people, (9) manage conflict, and (10) foster resilience.

<sup>6</sup> In 2016, U.S. government personnel in Cuba began reporting a variety of symptoms, some of which were associated with an unusual auditory or sensory event. These incidents are referred to as anomalous health incidents across the interagency community. Department of State, “Health Incident Response Task Force,” <https://www.state.gov/health-incident-response-task-force/>.

<sup>7</sup> See 2 FAM 962.7 and 2 FAM 963.

resulting from Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine and other developments in the region; however, the new ICS had not been finalized.

OIG observations, interviews, and questionnaires revealed that much of the embassy's foreign policy efforts had shifted to Russia-Ukraine related issues and, while these were not reflected in the ICS, the embassy responded quickly and well to Washington directives and requests to present U.S. positions on the rapidly evolving war in Ukraine and its effects. The embassy also engaged with the government of Austria on the U.S.-Austria Strategic Dialogue, which helped in sharing perspectives and aligning policy on regional developments such as Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Balkans peace and security. Washington colleagues credited the Ambassador, the DCM, and the Political-Economic Section with having good access and close contact with their Austrian government counterparts, which resulted in generally positive responsiveness to U.S. government initiatives and requests.

Washington readers welcomed and praised embassy reporting on Ukraine-related matters and on other significant developments on the Austrian political scene, such as the upsurge of far-right parties. To foster greater interagency and embassy coordination and information sharing on issues involving Russia and China, the embassy established Russia and China working groups chaired by the DCM that included representatives from UNVIE and USOSCE. During the inspection, the embassy also initiated an interagency working group on climate led by the Political-Economic Counselor.

Notable policy advocacy successes spearheaded by the Ambassador, the DCM, and their Country Team included the reestablishment of the Lautenberg program to resettle Iranian religious minorities in the United States, an Apprenticeship and Workforce Development agreement that provides employment opportunities for U.S. workers, and a youth exchange agreement creating travel and work opportunities in the United States to help dispel anti-American disinformation.

## **Adherence to Internal Controls**

The embassy completed the Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance process in August 2022, in accordance with Department guidance in 2 FAM 022.7, 2 FAM 024d, and 22 STATE 85378,<sup>8</sup> which instructs posts to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management controls and to submit the annual statement of assurance. No material weaknesses or deficiencies were identified. The embassy also updated the designated officers list during the inspection.

OIG found that the DCM conducted regular reviews of nonimmigrant visa adjudications in accordance with Department guidance in 9 FAM 403.12-3(A)a and 9 FAM 403.12-4a. However, during a 3-month period prior to the inspection, he did not complete the reviews within the

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<sup>8</sup> Cable 22 STATE 85378, "Instructions for Reporting Templates in your FY 2022 Statement of Assurance," August 22, 2022.

time required by 9 FAM 403.12-1d, which the Department updated in November 2022. The DCM began complying with the updated FAM requirement during the inspection.

### ***Deputy Chief of Mission Did Not Attend ICASS Council Meetings***

OIG found the DCM did not attend tri-mission International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS)<sup>9</sup> Council meetings as required in 6 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-5 H-222.2a. As the Ambassador's representative, the DCM is required to attend all ICASS Council meetings to ensure oversight and accountability for administrative management. The DCM was unaware of this requirement. Failure to participate in ICASS meetings prevents the DCM from ensuring that Embassy Vienna provides the appropriate level of administrative service through the JMO platform.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Vienna should require the Deputy Chief of Mission to attend International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council meetings, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

## **Security and Emergency Planning**

OIG found that overall, Embassy Vienna's Front Office fully supported the Vienna Tri-Mission security program consistent with Department standards in 12 FAH-1 H-762a, requiring the Ambassador to take part in emergency planning and emphasize that emergency preparedness is a priority. OIG interviews, document reviews, and on-site observation showed that the Ambassador and the DCM fully supported the Regional Security Office and the embassy security program. Specifically, OIG observed the Ambassador and the DCM leading by example by taking part in a mission-wide fire and security drill. They urged embassy personnel to fully participate in the drill through a post-drill briefing and prize-giving ceremony that rewarded embassy floor wardens and encouraged others to sign up as volunteers.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

OIG found that the embassy's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) principles complied with Department standards in 2 FAM 1511.1a, the leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214b(6), and the Secretary's guidance on diversity and inclusion in cable 21 STATE 60514.<sup>10</sup> EEO and DEIA notices were regularly distributed to embassy staff and prominently displayed in public areas at the embassy.

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<sup>9</sup> The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, or ICASS, is the principal means by which U.S. Government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at most diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions.

<sup>10</sup> Cable 21 STATE 60514, "Policy Statements on Diversity and Inclusion and Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment," June 11, 2021.

In interviews and questionnaires, personnel consistently remarked on embassy leadership's visible commitment and support for DEIA values and programs. Country Team members noted the Ambassador's strong emphasis on women's issues, including specific requests to meet with female leaders and youth groups when she traveled. Staff also commented that the embassy held a DEIA event almost every month since the Ambassador's arrival. The Front Office actively supported the embassy's DEIA Council, which held meetings and activities on a regular basis. In addition, the Ambassador advocated for improving accessibility for people with disabilities at U.S. government facilities.

## **Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals**

At the time of the inspection, the Vienna Tri-Mission did not have a formal First- and Second-Tour (FAST) program. OIG surveys and interviews found that across the tri-mission, programs for mentoring and the professional development of FAST personnel were intermittent and lacking in a systemic, formalized structure, as required in 3 FAM 2713b.<sup>11</sup>

Based on interviews and surveys, OIG found that although embassy and tri-mission leadership provided some individual guidance and mentoring to mission personnel and offered opportunities for FAST officers to learn about policy issues in each mission, the Vienna Tri-Mission's FAST program had been dormant since the COVID pandemic. Although there was a nascent effort underway by a few FAST officers to re-establish a program of activities, FAST personnel and other tri-mission staff described the current program as insufficient and "box-checking" exercises. The lack of an active, structured FAST program limits employees' ability to sharpen critical skill sets, and for Foreign Service officer and specialist career candidates to demonstrate the ability to serve successfully across the normal career span.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should implement a structured First- and Second-Tour professional development program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

## **POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

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OIG assessed Embassy Vienna's policy and program implementation through a review of the advocacy and analysis work of the Political-Economic and Public Diplomacy Sections, and the U.S. citizen and visa services provided by the Consular Section. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, OIG made recommendations to address issues in the Political-Economic and Consular Sections, as discussed below.

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<sup>11</sup> At the time of the inspection, USOSCE did not have any FAST employees.

## Political-Economic Section

OIG reviewed Embassy Vienna's Political-Economic Section<sup>12</sup> through an assessment of leadership and management, policy engagement and coordination, reporting, Leahy vetting,<sup>13</sup> commercial promotion, and end-use monitoring functions. During the inspection, OIG confirmed that the embassy's Leahy vetting standard operating procedures were up-to-date and approved by the Department as required by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's 2017 Leahy Vetting Guide.

OIG determined that the embassy's reporting and diplomatic engagement supported ICS and Department goals. Specifically, OIG reviewed 87 embassy reporting cables sent from February 2022 to May 2023, and found reporting was generally completed in a timely manner and appropriately sourced. Additionally, Department and interagency officials uniformly praised the quality and quantity of the section's political and economic reporting. Stakeholders cited cables on Austrian leaders' private views on the war in Ukraine following Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion that were unavailable in open-source reporting as invaluable. Reporting on domestic political dynamics—especially the rise of the far-right Freedom Party and Austrian investments in Russia—also were singled out as very helpful.

OIG also found the Political-Economic Section collaborated with other offices and agencies in the embassy to advance ICS and Department priorities, including advocating, coordinating, and reporting on country-wide activities in the areas of defense, Austria's support for Russian sanctions, COVID-19, and climate cooperation. As noted in the Executive Direction section above, the embassy held meetings of working groups with broad office and interagency participation on Russia, China, and climate that were led or co-led by the DCM and the Political-Economic Section. Department and other agency officials credited this collaboration and coordination on advocacy as playing an important role in key U.S. successes. These included securing an agreement between the U.S. Department of Labor and Austria on establishing an apprenticeship program for American workers in Austrian tech companies located in the United States, starting reciprocal youth work-study programs in both countries, launching a

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<sup>12</sup> The combined Political- Economic Section consisted of four Foreign Service officers, one office management specialist, and 4 LE staff members. During the inspection, the section was fully staffed except for one vacant position, the office management specialist. The one Expanded Professional Associates Program position's funding was not renewed following the curtailment of the incumbent immediately before the inspection.

<sup>13</sup> The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the United States from furnishing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the Department has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Leahy vetting is the process of determining if the Department has credible information that units or individuals proposed to benefit from certain assistance have committed a gross violation of human rights. See 22 U.S.C. § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). The Department also helps implement a similar law applicable to "amounts made available to the Department of Defense" for assistance to foreign security forces. See 10 U.S.C. § 362.

partnership agreement between the Vermont National Guard and Austrian Ministry of Defense,<sup>14</sup> and securing Austria's commitment to sign on to the Global Methane Pledge.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the above successes, OIG determined, and Department officials and embassy staff acknowledged, that the heavy workload and the Department's taskings related to Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine required the Political-Economic Section to prioritize reporting and advocacy commensurate with its staffing levels. Staff told OIG this required them to put other priorities such as commercial advocacy, discussed below, reporting on developments outside Vienna, and malign People's Republic of China activities in Austria on the backburner.

Finally, as described below, the embassy's Political-Economic Section led a successful embassy-wide effort to secure Austria's agreement to restart, after a 6-year hiatus, the Lautenberg program to resettle Iranian religious minorities in the United States via transit through Austria.

### **Spotlight on Success: Embassy's Engagement With Austria Led to Restarting Resettlement Program for Iranian Minorities**

The Ambassador and the Political-Economic Section led an embassy-wide effort to restart a program to bring persecuted religious minorities into the United States via Austria. The embassy engaged with the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and the Austrian government to restart the Lautenberg Program after a 6-year hiatus.<sup>16</sup> From 2004 to 2017, the United States and Austria facilitated family unification in the United States for more than 32,000 individuals from five religious minorities in Iran through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. The government of Austria issued visas in Tehran for Iranians to travel to Austria where U.S. officials vetted them for onward resettlement in the United States. Austria suspended the program in 2017 after the United States altered its security vetting process and denied entry to 150 Iranians located in Austria. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration credited the arrival of the Ambassador and new Political-Economic Section staff in 2022 with reenergizing discussions with Austria. A year-long process of embassy engagement with Austria culminated in a discussion between Secretary of State Blinken and Austrian Foreign Minister Schallenberg that led to Austria's commitment to work with the United States to resolve resettlement concerns. The U.S. strengthened the vetting process for Iranian applicants and the Political-Economic Section drafted a note verbale, an informal diplomatic note, that further guaranteed eligibility and enforcement of financial obligations. The United States and Austria signed the new

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<sup>14</sup> The program links Vermont's National Guard with Austria's military, security forces, and disaster response organizations in cooperative, mutually beneficial initiatives and activities.

<sup>15</sup> The Global Methane Pledge was launched in 2021 at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow to collectively reduce methane emissions by at least 30 percent below 2020 levels by 2030.

<sup>16</sup> Since 1989, the Lautenberg Program has provided family reunification to persecuted religious minorities with relatives or close ties in the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Congress has reauthorized the Lautenberg Amendment in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act every year since 1990, most recently on December 29, 2022. First established for applicants from the former Soviet Union, Congress later added Iran's religious minorities, including Armenian and Assyrian Christians, Baha'is, Zoroastrians, Sabeian Mandaean, and Jewish Iranians.

memorandum of understanding in Vienna in March 2023. As many as 400,000 Iranians are potentially eligible for resettlement in the United States through the Lautenberg Program.

***Embassy Failed to Hold Interagency Deal Team Meetings to Coordinate Commercial Advocacy, a Principal Goal***

Despite establishing an interagency commercial advocacy committee, known as a Deal Team, in 2020, OIG found that the embassy had failed to hold any meetings of the Deal Team after an initial year of activity until May 2023. As a result, the embassy lacked an effective coordinating forum in which to share information and plan advocacy for increasing U.S. commercial sales to Austria and promoting Austrian investment in the United States, one of the principal goals in the embassy's ICS. U.S. law<sup>17</sup> states that promotion of U.S. goods and services is a principal duty of chiefs of mission, and a series of Department cables—most recently one in May 2023—reminded missions that every overseas post should have a Deal Team with appropriate section and interagency participation.<sup>18</sup>

The embassy's Commercial Service office<sup>19,20</sup> has the lead on commercial advocacy, assisted by the Political-Economic Section, but OIG determined that the two sections' interaction was largely limited to coordinating official visits and clearing cables. The Political-Economic Section told OIG that, due to increased taskings from Washington, especially related to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, it was unable to adequately support the Commercial Service office on commercial promotion.

Embassy staff told OIG that having an active interagency Deal Team in which to share and develop ideas for U.S. export opportunities would be useful. For example, Office of Defense Cooperation staff told OIG that because Austria was increasing its defense spending in response to Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, they expected U.S. defense-related commercial sales to Austria to increase. In addition, Foreign Agricultural Service staff in Berlin<sup>21</sup> told the Political-Economic Section that there were potential U.S. agricultural export opportunities in Austria's renewable energy sector. Without increased interagency coordination and collaboration as would occur with an active interagency Deal Team, the embassy risks missing opportunities for increasing U.S. trade and investment with Austria.

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<sup>17</sup> See 22 U.S.C. § 3927(c).

<sup>18</sup> Cable 23 STATE 48122, "Embassy Deal Team Initiative - Updated Guidance," May 2, 2023. This was a joint Department of State and Department of Commerce cable.

<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Commercial Service is part of the International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

<sup>20</sup> The Commercial Service office is staffed by the Department of Commerce's U.S. Commercial Service and consisted of one Commercial Officer and four LE staff members at the time of the inspection. Two LE positions were vacant during the onsite portion of the inspection.

<sup>21</sup> The Foreign Agriculture Service office in Embassy Vienna has one LE staff member who was supervised by the Foreign Agriculture Service Attaché in Berlin.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Vienna should staff and convene Deal Team meetings with appropriate interagency participation and agendas to coordinate commercial promotion and advocacy in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

## Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's strategic planning and reporting, section leadership, resource and knowledge management, grants administration, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs programs, and media engagement. The section's staff was very experienced; more than half of the 11 LE staff members had been in the section for 20 to 40 years. Anticipating LE staff retirements, the section started cross training more junior members of the team. Overall, OIG determined public diplomacy operations and programs generally complied with Department standards and guidance and supported the embassy's ICS goals.

OIG reviewed 20 grants (total value \$1,047,822) out of 97 grants (total value \$1,442,538) issued from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022, and found they generally complied with the Department's Federal Assistance Directive.<sup>22</sup> OIG determined the grants had clear objectives that directly supported the embassy's ICS goals.<sup>23</sup> However, the Department's Office of the Procurement Executive told OIG the section did not close out 63 grant files as required.<sup>24</sup> Because the grants officer and grants officer representatives closed out these grant files during the inspection, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue. In addition, 2 of the 20 files reviewed were missing a grants officer representative report.<sup>25</sup> Section staff told OIG they only learned about the report requirement during a March 2023 grants refresher training. Because the section added the missing grants officer representative reports to the two files, OIG did not make a recommendation.

### Spotlight on Success: Public Diplomacy Section and Commercial Service Office's Coordinated Efforts Revitalized Embassy's Social Media Outreach

Embassy Vienna's Public Diplomacy Section began working with the embassy's Commercial Service office in June 2021, with the goal of revitalizing the embassy's LinkedIn account. Although the Commercial Service office originally considered establishing its own LinkedIn account, the Public Diplomacy Section LE staff supervisor responsible for social media suggested that the Commercial Service office instead use the existing embassy account. The Public Diplomacy Section gave the Commercial Service office full access to the account so it could post business related content in real time. By joining efforts and maintaining one LinkedIn account, the section and office avoided fragmenting their audiences, conserved resources, and allowed the Commercial Service office to create content on commercial issues as the subject matter expert. This collaboration directly supported mission goals and aligned

<sup>22</sup> The Department's Federal Assistance Directive establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices and posts administering federal financial assistance. It is updated annually by the Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive.

<sup>23</sup> None of the 20 grants reviewed were directly related to the situation in Ukraine.

<sup>24</sup> See Federal Assistance Directive (October 2022), Chapter 5.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., page 149.

with the section's internal objective of diversifying social media outreach across the embassy's multiple platforms. Public Diplomacy staff from Embassy Geneva and Embassy Luxembourg already have consulted the Public Diplomacy Section to learn more about how the embassy maximized its resources and improved social media management.

## **Consular Operations**

OIG reviewed Embassy Vienna's consular operations, including section leadership, U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, outreach, and fraud prevention programs. The Consular Section faced operational challenges including the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; an increase in Ukrainian and Russian visa applicants following Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, who traveled to Vienna for their visa interviews; and staffing shortages, when one or both of the section's two visa adjudicator positions were vacant from October 2022 to April 2023. As a result, nonimmigrant visa applicants who required an interview faced a wait of more than 120 days.<sup>26</sup> In response, the section increased the use of the interview waiver program<sup>27</sup> and reinstated the Global Support Strategy<sup>28</sup> passport courier program. In addition, the section limited all non-resident visa applicants, most of whom were Russian speakers, to Friday mornings. This allowed the section to create a rotating schedule of tri-mission volunteers with Russian language skills to assist with interpretation, eliminating the reliance on applicants' private interpreters and the concern that the interpreters were leading applicants' answers. The Consular Section chief and Deputy Consular chief, with staff input and in anticipation of increased visa demand during the summer, focused on implementing changes to decrease the wait time while maintaining the flexibility to respond to emergency cases involving U.S. citizens. These changes included implementing new scheduling structures, streamlining standard operations, and training staff to manage the increasing demand for services.

During the inspection, Embassy Vienna corrected several issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

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<sup>26</sup> Most Austrians are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program, which provides for visa-free travel by nationals of designated countries coming to the United States for tourism or business for a period not to exceed 90 days, provided the traveler meets specific requirements. Non-Austrian applicants, largely from Ukraine, Russia, and Iran, comprise most nonimmigrant visa interview cases.

<sup>27</sup> According to 9 FAM 403.5-4(A)(1), consular officers are authorized to waive in-person interviews on a case-by-case basis for certain first-time and/or renewing applicants. These interview waiver authorities reduce visa appointment wait times at many embassies and consulates by freeing up in-person interview appointments for other applicants who require an interview.

<sup>28</sup> Global Support Strategy is a Bureau of Consular Affairs worldwide program to provide support services that are not inherently governmental functions for nonimmigrant and immigrant visa operations. These may include information services, appointment systems, offsite fee collection, document delivery, onsite greeters, and offsite biometric data collection. This program requires overseas posts to provide management oversight of the services they receive.

- Ensured the Consular Section’s cashier began routinely depositing consular fees with the embassy’s main cashier at the close of each day (7 FAH-1 H-726.2-5a(3) and 4 FAM 396.1d).
- Ensured staff computer systems user roles were up to date (7 FAH-1 H-661.1a and b and 7 FAM-1 H-662).
- Completed the country fraud summary (7 FAH-1 H-943.6-1b), a written fraud strategy (7 FAH-1 H-941a(1) and 7 FAH-1 H-943.7b, c, f), and a standard operating procedure on fraud prevention with the Regional Security Office (7 FAH-1 H-943.7b, c, and f).<sup>29</sup>
- Moved two workstations to allow adjudicating officers to have overlapping lines of sight<sup>30</sup> (7 FAH-1 H-281e).
- Updated the Duty Officer Handbook (7 FAH-1 H-291.2).

OIG determined Embassy Vienna’s consular operations generally complied with guidance contained in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies, with the exception noted below.

***Embassy Lacked Wheelchair Accessible Consular Interview Window***

OIG found the Consular Section lacked an interview window that was easily accessible to consular customers and applicants who used wheelchairs. Department standards in 7 FAH-1 H-282(1)(m) and 7 FAH-1 H-281a call for consular sections to provide a teller window low enough for wheelchairs. Consular management was aware of this issue but had yet to request funding to make the necessary improvements. The lack of an interview window at a height suitable for customers and applicants using wheelchairs prevents equal access to the embassy and makes it difficult for consular officers to interview applicants in wheelchairs.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and Consular Affairs, should provide a wheelchair accessible interview window for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with OBO and CA).

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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OIG reviewed the Joint Management Office’s operations in general management, general services, human resources, facility management, financial management, as well as the Health Unit, Community Liaison Office, ethics, and internal controls.

During the inspection, the JMO corrected multiple internal control issues that OIG identified. Specifically, the JMO:

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<sup>29</sup> This section of the FAH was updated in May 2023, during fieldwork for this inspection. These requirements are still incorporated within 7 FAH-1 H-940, though numbering may differ slightly.

<sup>30</sup> Guidance in 7 FAH-1 H-281e states that workstations and offices for adjudicating officers should be located throughout a consular section to provide the greatest possible range of overlapping lines of sight.

- Updated its requirements for country clearance; health and other relevant travel information; and local holidays (2 FAM 116.6-1b).
- Documented the annual review of the JMO's blanket purchase agreements<sup>31</sup> in the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)<sup>32</sup> (Department of State Acquisition Regulation 613.303-6).
- Removed a privately owned vehicle improperly placed into emergency storage at the tri-mission warehouse (14 FAM 625.2).
- Sought approval from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) to use shipping containers as temporary storage at the warehouse (18 STATE 98976 and 21 STATE 103606).<sup>33</sup>
- Undertook an annual review of the circumstances of employment of each relative of an employee to ensure compliance with nepotism rules (3 FAM 8314).
- Requested an exception from the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services' Office of Financial Policy for the use of its Suspense Deposit Abroad<sup>34</sup> account for the mission's personal gas card program (4 FAM 326.2a and 4 FAM 326.2-8).
- Began conducting monthly testing of emergency lighting and inspections of the mission's emergency exit doors (15 FAM 844a and 15 FAM 846.4).
- Inspected increased-risk work areas of the mission's mail rooms and pouch handling areas (15 FAM 962a and 14 FAH-4 H-123a).
- Enrolled the safety assistant, who is responsible for conducting workplace and residential safety inspections, in the Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer assistant training (15 FAM 962d and 15 FAM 965f).

At the request of the tri-mission DCMs, OIG also reviewed the JMO's operations and mechanisms to ensure there was proper tri-mission oversight of, and input into, the JMO services they received. OIG found that although it was more than 10 years old, the memorandum of understanding among the three missions—that defined JMO services provided to the multilateral missions, standards for those services, and provisions for evaluation, input, and revision of the agreement as needed—remained valid.

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<sup>31</sup> A blanket purchase agreement is a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing "charge accounts" with qualified sources of supply.

<sup>32</sup> The Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) is an integrated web-based system that encompasses all Department supply chain functions in one system. ILMS is designed to upgrade Department supply chain management by improving operations in areas such as purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail.

<sup>33</sup> Cable 18 STATE 98976, "Shipping Containers and Portable Structure Use and Occupancy Requirements," September 27, 2018; and cable 21 STATE 103606, "FY 2022 Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Financial and Operational Guidance," October 8, 2021. See OIG's *Audit of Physical Security Standards for Department of State Temporary Structures at Selected Overseas Posts* (AUD-SI-23-30, September 2023) for additional information regarding Department-wide challenges managing temporary structures, including the unauthorized use of shipping containers.

<sup>34</sup> Suspense Deposits Abroad transactions are official collections for payments on behalf of and as directed by the depositors. The U.S. government is responsible to each such depositor for ensuring that amounts received are appropriately disbursed or returned.

OIG found the JMO, which provides services to the embassy, UNVIE, and USOSCE,<sup>35</sup> generally implemented processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, except as described below. Overall, OIG found that the JMO made efforts to provide equitable services to its customers across the tri-mission within the constraints of limited LE staff in some JMO offices, customers and facilities spread across five functional buildings in the city, and a competitive local labor market.

## **General Management**

### ***Furniture and Appliance Pool Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

OIG found that the tri-mission's furniture and appliance pool program, overseen by the JMO, did not comply with Department standards. For example, the tri-mission lacked a current furniture and appliance pool policy approved by all participating agencies, as required in 6 FAH-5 H-511. The policy provided to OIG was an unsigned memorandum of understanding effective October 1, 2012, that listed two unapproved items—vacuum cleaners and fans—in the basic furnishings package<sup>36</sup> as well as outdated buy-in and annual assessment amounts. JMO staff told OIG that the unapproved items were no longer being issued and that the tri-mission's housing handbook contained a correct listing of basic furnishings provided to residences under the program. However, the existence of two documents containing contradictory information could cause confusion for participating agencies.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Vienna should bring the tri-mission furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

## **General Services**

### ***Residential Leases Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

OIG found that residential leases across the tri-mission did not comply with Department standards. OIG reviewed 12 residential leases signed from 2014 to 2021 and found that none conformed to the Department's standard model lease,<sup>37</sup> as required by 15 FAM 341. JMO staff told OIG they assumed the model lease did not change and had only begun requesting case-by-case waivers to the model lease in the 2 years prior to the inspection. The JMO also requested a tri-mission-wide waiver to certain clauses in the model lease in fall 2022. During the inspection, OBO approved certain post-requested changes to the model lease, and the JMO began to bring the tri-mission's 173 leases into compliance with the newly approved language. Because of the actions taken by the JMO, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

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<sup>35</sup> JMO also provides limited management services to Embassy Bratislava, Slovakia.

<sup>36</sup> See 6 FAH-5 H-513.2-2c, "Standard and Supplemental FAP Items."

<sup>37</sup> The Department's standard model lease is in 15 FAM 351.

### ***Motor Pool Operations Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

The JMO did not manage tri-mission motor pool operations in compliance with Department standards. Specifically, tri-mission operators of official vehicles did not perform and record daily maintenance inspections on the required checklist, in accordance with 14 FAM 435.2b. Additionally, tri-mission operators did not record daily vehicle usage data for all U.S. government vehicles as required by 14 FAM 437.2. OIG's analysis of vehicle daily use records for 10 of 57 government-owned vehicles from March to September 2022 showed there was vehicle usage that was not accounted for and no documentation of maintenance inspections. These issues occurred primarily with self-drive vehicles and those vehicles operated by a single office or section in the tri-mission. JMO staff told OIG that non-motor pool staff did not believe it was their responsibility to complete these forms. Failure to perform daily maintenance checks risks placing an unsafe vehicle into operation, endangering the operator and any passengers in the vehicle. Incomplete vehicle information prevents the embassy from having accurate cost and usage data essential for an effective fleet management system.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission motor pool operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

### ***Contracting Officer's Representative Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

OIG found the tri-mission's contracting officer's representative (COR) program, overseen by the JMO, did not comply with Department standards. At the time of the inspection, the tri-mission had eight CORs who oversaw 22 contracts valued at more than \$3 million. Specifically, OIG found the CORs did not maintain files electronically for all awards made after October 1, 2020, as required in Procurement Information Bulletin No. 2020-04.<sup>38</sup> In addition, CORs did not certify to the contracting officer that they properly maintained their COR files, as required in 14 FAH-2 H-517c. Despite these issues, OIG discussions with tri-mission staff and reviews of documentation showed the CORs maintained well-documented paper files. Staff told OIG they were unaware of the requirement to maintain COR files electronically for all awards made after October 1, 2020, or to certify to the contracting officer that they properly maintained their COR files. A non-compliant COR program increases the risk of contract mismanagement.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Vienna should bring its tri-mission contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

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<sup>38</sup> Office of the Procurement Executive Procurement Information Bulletin (PIB) No. 2020-04, "Electronic Contract Filing (eFiling)," June 4, 2020.

## Financial Management and Human Resources

### *Time and Attendance Procedures Did Not Meet Department Standards*

OIG found that tri-mission time and attendance procedures did not meet Department standards. Specifically, OIG found:

- Offices within the tri-mission used locally created forms to authorize premium compensation for LE staff rather than standard form DS-3060 Authorization of Overtime and Premium Compensation. According to 4 FAH-3 H-518b, the use of standard forms is mandatory unless exempted by law or by the Bureau of Administration's Office of Directives Management.
- Premium pay was not requested and approved in advance (4 FAH-3 H-523.2). OIG found 67 instances in three pay periods<sup>39</sup> across tri-mission sections where overtime or compensatory time was not requested or approved in advance.
- Annual leave was not requested and approved in advance (4 FAH-3 H-525.4-1b). OIG found 26 instances in three pay periods across tri-mission sections where leave was not requested and approved in advance.

JMO staff told OIG the local forms were created to make it easier to keep track of different time and attendance codes and that tri-mission supervisory staff were unsupportive of efforts to approve premium pay and leave in advance. The JMO acknowledged the need to address these issues and planned to release a management notice on the subject but were unable to do so during the inspection. Failure to comply with Department standards for time and attendance increases the risk for waste, fraud, and mismanagement of government resources.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

### **Spotlight on Success: Collaborative and Innovative Eligible Family Member Employment Virtual Series Fostered Community Connection and Information Sharing**

The Joint Management Office, in partnership with the Department's Global Employment Advisor for Central Europe, collaborated to create an innovative and inclusive outreach program for Tri-Mission Vienna's current and incoming eligible family members during the COVID-19 pandemic. From March 2020 to June 2021, the team delivered 12 webinars focused on eligible family member employment information, including a roundtable with currently employed eligible family members, how to apply for jobs at the tri-mission, and interview preparation. More than 200 eligible family members assigned to or moving to Vienna attended these webinars. The team also created a library of the webinar recordings

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<sup>39</sup> OIG reviewed pay period 3 covering January 30, 2022, to February 12, 2022; pay period 9 covering April 24, 2022, to May 7, 2022; and pay period 24 covering November 20, 2022, to December 3, 2022.

for on-demand viewing. Inspired by this program, several community liaison offices in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs organized and delivered their own webinar series in 2021. Using a set of core presentations supplemented by other topics geared to audience interest—for example, next steps when moving back to Washington, D.C., and information on the Department’s Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas positions—this program continues to be an effective annual outreach tool to connect the eligible family member community to services and opportunities for employment.

## Facility Management

### *Tri Mission’s Non-High-Rise Residential Properties May Not Meet Minimal Fire Safety Standards*

JMO staff told OIG that 165 of the tri-mission’s 237 non-high-rise residential properties<sup>40</sup> may not meet “a minimal equivalency to fire safety standards.”<sup>41, 42</sup> An OBO fire safety inspection in September 2022 reviewed three of the tri-mission’s residences and found all three failed to meet Department requirements. According to 15 FAM 813.7f, non-high-rise properties are inspected to the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association’s Life Safety Code. Department guidance in 22 STATE 25472 outlines the safety infrastructure requirements that non-high-rise residential buildings are required to meet to fully comply with the fire code. In addition, the cable states that if the embassy is unable to identify properties that meet minimal fire safety standards, the management officer may make an informed decision to lease a non-compliant property. However, embassy management must coordinate the decision with OBO’s Fire Protection Analysis Division in writing. OBO would then assist the embassy in evaluating and managing the risks for the property and would provide property specific mitigation measures. At the time of the inspection, OIG found that JMO staff had yet to coordinate with OBO their decisions to lease the non-conforming properties. Although the JMO drafted a memorandum on the subject in September 2022, staff never sent the request forward. JMO staff were unsure why the request was not sent to OBO. Taking appropriate residential fire mitigation measures is critical for the life safety of occupants and failure to do so puts embassy staff and their families at risk.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should comply with Department standards for its non-high-rise residential properties. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with OBO)

<sup>40</sup> Non-high-rise buildings are defined as buildings with an occupied floor located less than seventy-five feet (22.86 meters) above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access.

<sup>41</sup> Cable 22 STATE 25472, “Supplemental Fire and Life Safety Guidance for Leasing Non-High-Rise Functional and Residential Property,” March 16, 2022.

<sup>42</sup> At the time of the inspection, JMO staff had not surveyed all residences, so could not confirm whether the residences met minimal fire safety standards.

### ***Embassy Did Not Use Approved Accountability System for Facilities Expendable Supplies***

OIG found that JMO's facility management staff used a third-party inventory software application<sup>43</sup> for storing and maintaining its facilities expendable property and supplies,<sup>44</sup> contrary to Department guidance. According to 14 FAH-1 H-415.3a(2), ILMS is the only approved accountability system for tracking operating materials and supplies. Management staff told OIG adding supplies to the third-party inventory software was a way to initially inventory these items before eventually moving them to ILMS. However, the facility management staff did not move the items to ILMS and instead continued to use the third-party inventory software. Failure to properly account for all expendable property increases the risk of fraud, waste, and mismanagement of resources.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Vienna should account for all expendable property in the Integrated Logistics Management System, in accordance with Department standards.  
(Action: Embassy Vienna)

### **Spotlight on Success: Electronic Questionnaires Facilitated Tracking of Required Monthly Inspection for Fire Extinguishers**

To verify that staff and residents complete the required monthly inspections of the tri-mission's fire extinguishers, the Joint Management Office's facility management safety team instituted an electronic tracking system to monitor compliance. Staff affixed quick response, also known as QR, codes to fire extinguishers in non-classified office spaces. Users could scan the QR code with their phone and fill out an electronic questionnaire to complete the required checks. Results were compiled and verified by the JMO safety team using reports generated by Microsoft Forms. At the time of the inspection, after successfully deploying the electronic tracking system for non-residential fire extinguishers, the JMO had begun installing QR codes on all its residential fire extinguishers. This new program gave the JMO the ability to verify compliance with the monthly inspection requirement, a task which many embassies find difficult, especially for residential fire extinguishers, due to the lack of a centralized tracking mechanism or system.

## **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

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OIG reviewed Embassy Vienna's computer network operations, information systems and administration of mobile computing devices, mail and pouch services, cyber security practices, records management, telephone, and emergency communications systems. OIG determined Embassy Vienna's information management programs and services generally met the embassy's day-to-day computing and communications needs in accordance with Department standards, with the exceptions described below.

<sup>43</sup> The mission used Sortly, a commercially available inventory tracking software for its facility expendable supplies.

<sup>44</sup> Expendable supplies are items that are consumed during use, such as office supplies.

### ***Organizational Structure for Embassy's Information Resource Management Office Did Not Meet Standards***

The organizational structure for Embassy Vienna's Information Resource Management (IRM) Office did not meet Department standards. Guidance in 5 FAM 120 lists the information management roles and responsibilities abroad and separates them by key functions. For example, the information systems officer position is responsible for unclassified operations, the information programs officer position is responsible for classified operations, and the information management officer is responsible for all operations. However, Vienna IRM Office staff told OIG the embassy eliminated the information programs officer position during a 2019 reorganization and assigned both unclassified and classified operations to the information systems officer. Additionally, they designated that position as the deputy information management officer—a position not found in 5 FAM 120—with roles and responsibilities similar to those of the information management officer. Furthermore, the reorganization designated the two senior information management specialist positions as information programs supervisors—another position not found in 5 FAM 120—with supporting roles for classified, unclassified, and information system security operations. Guidance in 1 FAM 014.5a states that nonessential supervisory layers increase problems associated with establishing clear delegation of responsibility and authority, transmission of information, workflow, and morale.

Additionally, although the deputy information management officer or an information programs supervisor rated all U.S. direct-hire information management specialist staff, OIG found that the four specialists worked in teams led by LE staff, contrary to 5 FAM 120, which requires that information management specialists report directly to an information management officer, information systems officer, or information programs officer. Finally, the office tasked LE staff members with some programs that 5 FAM 120 assigns to the information programs officer and that can be performed only by a U.S. citizen employee with the proper clearance.<sup>45</sup>

OIG found the organizational structure, although designed to support the needs of the tri-mission, created silos where small teams were responsible for a narrow set of responsibilities, a practice advised against in 5 FAM 121c. As a result, completing routine tasks required the collaboration of multiple small teams, resulting in delays due to communication issues between teams or when staff were unavailable. In addition, the organizational structure resulted in inefficient operations due to increased staffing needs, program management and security issues,<sup>46</sup> and lower morale among information management specialist staff. By not following the established structure and positions for information management operations abroad, Embassy Vienna risks program gaps, security flaws, inefficient operations, and low morale.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Vienna should structure the Information Resource Management Office in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

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<sup>45</sup> These tasks are discussed in more detail in the inspection's companion classified report.

<sup>46</sup> These security issues are discussed in more detail in the inspection's companion classified report.

***Records Retirement Practices Did Not Comply With Department Standards***

The embassy's records retirement practices did not comply with Department records management standards. According to the Records and Archives Management Division in the Bureau of Administration's Office of Information Programs and Services, Embassy Vienna last retired its Public Diplomacy Section program records in 2017, and its Political-Economic Section program records in 2016. Additionally, although the embassy had regularly retired chief of mission records since 1996 as required, the embassy's records for DCMs were last retired in 2014. Department standards in 5 FAM 451b and c require overseas posts to maintain an active, continuing records retirement program that ensures records are retired in accordance with records disposition schedules. OIG determined this internal control issue occurred because embassy staff were unfamiliar with records retirement requirements. The lack of an effective records retirement program increases the risk of loss of important data and historical records that could affect the Department's and the mission's ability to conduct policy analysis, decision making, and archival research.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Vienna should retire records in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

***Server Room Emergency Power-Off Switches Were Not Operational***

Embassy Vienna did not have operational server room emergency power-off switches, as required in 12 FAH-10 H-272.8-1(1). OIG found the unclassified server room switch was not operational and the classified server room switch was missing. IRM Office staff stated the unclassified server room switch was disconnected during a past electrical project and the classified server room never had a switch installed. The lack of operational emergency power-off switches to rapidly disconnect power during emergency situations puts embassy employees' safety at risk.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Vienna should install server room emergency power-off switches in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

***Embassy Vienna's Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board Did Not Fulfill Its Responsibilities***

Embassy Vienna's local IT configuration control board did not perform its responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. Standards in 5 FAM 115.6-2 and 5 FAM 862.1 require local IT configuration control boards to ensure the hardware installed on a network does not adversely affect existing local IT infrastructure under the embassy's control. OIG found the embassy's local IT configuration control board did not approve hardware prior to its installation on the unclassified non-enterprise network. In addition, OIG found unapproved laptops, desktop computers, and network switches that were connected to non-enterprise networks. IRM Office staff said they were unaware of how those devices were procured or if a formal approval process was conducted. Without accurate review, testing, and inventory of IT assets, Embassy Vienna is at risk of inadequate IT security controls to protect its information and networks.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Vienna should require the local information technology configuration control board to perform its responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

***Mobile Device Management Lacked Effective Controls***

The IRM Office's mobile device management lacked effective controls to manage and monitor mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts. Guidance in 5 FAM 527a and b states that overseas posts should review monthly telephone service statements for accuracy of charges and must review telephone inventories annually. However, OIG found the embassy lacked effective processes and procedures to track costs associated with each mobile device, cellular service plans, and enterprise service accounts. Instead, the embassy decentralized mobile device management among different teams, each with different methods of tracking inventories and services. For example, some IRM Office teams used the Department's systems for inventory and remote enterprise services,<sup>47</sup> while others used spreadsheets or local service bills. Due to the embassy's decentralized approach to mobile device management, OIG found numerous issues including unused cellular service plans, multiple devices issued to the same staff member, and a greater number of enterprise service accounts than devices issued. At the time of the inspection, IRM Office staff started to consolidate the various lists, and they were considering the use of a shared SharePoint list to improve mobile device management. Using separate tracking systems limits the effectiveness of inventory control, enables potential duplicative devices, and can lead to an excessive number of mobile devices and services.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Vienna should implement controls to effectively manage and monitor mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

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<sup>47</sup> The Department uses ILMS for inventory tracking and the Bureau of Information Resource Management's Mobile and Remote Access Division's Go Manager system for remote enterprise service tracking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Vienna. The embassy's complete responses can be found in Appendix B. The Department also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Vienna should require the Deputy Chief of Mission to attend International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council meetings, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023,<sup>1</sup> response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Deputy Chief of Mission attended International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council meetings, in accordance with Department guidance.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should implement a structured First- and Second-Tour professional development program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna has implemented a structured First- and Second-Tour professional development program in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Vienna should staff and convene Deal Team meetings with appropriate interagency participation and agendas to coordinate commercial promotion and advocacy in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna has staffed and convened

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<sup>1</sup> OIG received Embassy Vienna's undated response via email on November 14, 2023.

Deal Team meetings with appropriate interagency participation and agendas to coordinate commercial promotion and advocacy in accordance with Department guidance.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and Consular Affairs, should provide a wheelchair accessible interview window for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with OBO and CA)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna provided a wheelchair accessible interview window for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Vienna should bring the tri-mission furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna's tri-mission furniture and appliance pool program complied with Department standards.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission motor pool operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna's tri-mission motor pool operations complied with Department standards.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Vienna should bring its tri-mission contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna's tri-mission contracting officer's representative program complied with Department standards.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with UNVIE and USOSCE)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna's tri-mission time and attendance procedures complied with Department standards.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should comply with Department standards for its non-high-rise residential properties. (Action: Embassy Vienna, in coordination with OBO)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna complied with Department standards for its non-high-rise residential properties.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Vienna should account for all expendable property in the Integrated Logistics Management System, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna accounted for all expendable property in the Integrated Logistics Management System, in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Vienna should structure the Information Resource Management Office in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna's Information Resource Management Office has been structured in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 12:** Embassy Vienna should retire records in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna records have been retired in accordance with Department records management standards.

**Recommendation 13:** Embassy Vienna should install server room emergency power-off switches in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of June 2024.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna installed server room emergency power-off switches in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 14:** Embassy Vienna should require the local information technology configuration control board to perform its responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna required the local information technology configuration control board to perform its responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

**Recommendation 15:** Embassy Vienna should implement controls to effectively manage and monitor mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts. (Action: Embassy Vienna)

**Management Response:** In its November 14, 2023, response, Embassy Vienna concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Vienna implemented controls to

effectively manage and monitor mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
<b>Chiefs of Mission:</b>		
Ambassador	Victoria Reggie Kennedy	01/22
Deputy Chief of Mission	Mario Mesquita	07/21
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
Consular	Jordana Cox	07/21
Political - Economic	Baron Lobstein	08/22
Management	Timothy Hanway	08/21
Public Affairs	Teta Moehs	07/20
Regional Security	Brendan Murray	07/22
<b>Other Agency Representatives:</b>		
Drug Enforcement Administration	Kevin Daniels	09/18
Legal Attaché	Ryan Noonan	07/21
Office of Defense Cooperation	COL Erik Bauer	08/21
Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché	Brig. Gen. James Simpson	10/22
U.S. Commercial Service	Henley Jones	07/22
U.S. Department of Homeland Security	Vacant	

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Vienna.

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted from March 13 to August 14, 2023, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

### Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

### Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. OIG conducted portions of the inspection remotely and relied on audio- and video-conferencing tools in addition to in-person interviews with Department and other personnel. OIG also reviewed pertinent records; circulated surveys and compiled the results; and reviewed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the review. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

This report was conducted consistent with the [Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Ukraine Response](#) and subsequent [report](#) to Congress on joint oversight released in March 2023 by the Inspectors General of the Departments of State, Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

## APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

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UNCLASSIFIED

TO: OIG – Arne Baker, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: Joint Management Office, U.S. Embassy Vienna

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Vienna, Austria

Embassy Vienna, Austria has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

**OIG Recommendation 1:** Embassy Vienna should require the Deputy Chief of Mission to attend International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council meetings, in accordance with Department guidance.

***Management Response:*** Vienna Tri-Mission concurs with the recommendation. The Deputy Chiefs of Mission from all three missions attended the ICASS Council Meeting held on November 16, 2023, and future meetings will be scheduled to ensure their attendance.

**OIG Recommendation 2:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should implement a structured First- and Second-Tour professional development program in accordance with Department standards.

***Management Response:*** Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation by OIG to implement a structured First- and Second-Tour professional development program and started implementation of the program with a draft mission statement, program outline, and launch held on September 5, 2023.

**OIG Recommendation 3:** Embassy Vienna should staff and convene Deal Team meetings with appropriate interagency participation and agendas to coordinate commercial promotion and advocacy in accordance with Department guidance.

***Management Response:*** Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by holding an initial meeting of the revived embassy Deal Team on May 23, chaired by the DCM. In accordance with guidance cable 23 STATE 48122, and in view of the embassy's resource constraints as noted in the draft OIG report, the embassy proposes to hold Deal Team meetings on a quarterly basis, or as circumstances require, rather

*than more frequently. In the embassy's view, the relative infrequency of significant opportunities for commercial advocacy does not justify more frequent meetings.*

**OIG Recommendation 4:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and Consular Affairs, should provide a wheelchair accessible interview window for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. OBO sent a survey team to post August 2023 for all ABA deficiencies. The consular deficiencies were documented and are currently with OBO awaiting final design and funding.*

**OIG Recommendation 5:** Embassy Vienna should bring the tri-mission furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. An updated Furniture and Appliance Pool Management Policy is being drafted and will be implemented by the end of December 2023.*

**OIG Recommendation 6:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission motor pool operations into compliance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. Embassy Vienna will implement use of Microsoft forms through QR Codes to replace paper trip tickets as outlined in 23 STATE 31698. Use of the new system will go into effect in the first quarter of Calendar year 2024. Vienna GSO will direct the implementation and training for the Tri-Mission.*

**OIG Recommendation 7:** Embassy Vienna should bring its tri-mission contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with this recommendation. Vienna GSO is now initiating the use of the Contract Module in Ariba which will allow CORs to convert over from a strictly paper COR files to the electronic files contained in the ILMS Ariba Contract Module system. GSO is working to secure training on the ILMS Ariba Contract Module in the first Quarter of Calendar Year 2024, with full future implementation on all new contracts utilizing the contracting module beginning in the Second Quarter of Calendar Year 2024.*

**OIG Recommendation 8:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna and the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should bring tri-mission time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards.

***Management Response:*** Vienna Tri-Mission concurs with the recommendation. The Joint Management Office has updated and reissued it's Mission Policy for Time and Attendance which

*addresses overtime and premium compensation, directing all staff to request overtime and premium compensation in advance and obtain approval on form DS-3060 prior to working overtime. The Joint Management Office also counseled heads of sections that incur the most overtime on the importance of advance approval. The Joint Management Office also issued a staff notice reminding staff and supervisors that annual leave must be approved in advance.*

**OIG Recommendation 9:** Embassy Vienna, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should comply with Department standards for its non-high-rise residential properties.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. Post has sent the required memo to OBO FIRE and will implement FIRE's recommendations for mitigation on post's non-high-rise units that are not compliant.*

**OIG Recommendation 10:** Embassy Vienna should account for all expendable property in the Integrated Logistics Management System, in accordance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. FAC is finishing the establishment of expendable supplies. Currently 95% of the inventory has been entered into ILMS and the final 5% will be entered within the next couple of weeks.*

**OIG Recommendation 11:** Embassy Vienna should structure the Information Resource Management Office in accordance with Department standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. The Information Management Section (IRM) has begun the restructuring process within the current FAM/FAH regulations and within current staffing patterns. The Information Program Officer (IPO) position was eliminated and is no longer a part of Embassy Vienna's staffing pattern. Implementation of reorganization to current FAM/FAH standards should be in place by the end of calendar year 2023, with consideration given to current IRM DC reorganization plans and changes.*

**OIG Recommendation 12:** Embassy Vienna should retire records in accordance with Department records management standards.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. The IRM section will coordinate with the Department's Records Management Program to bring the Embassy into compliance. Embassy Vienna has, also, volunteered participate in a pilot program put in place by the Records Management Program office. IRM will issue updated Records Management Policy and push to bring sections into compliance by the end of the first quarter of 2024.*

**OIG Recommendation 13:** Embassy Vienna should install server room emergency power-off switches in accordance with Department standards.

*Management Response: (U) Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. IRM section has already coordinated with Facilities to develop plans for both Unclassified and Classified*

*server room locations to repair and install power cut-off capabilities. Facilities will do the repair of the non-functioning emergency power-off switch for the unclassified server room. A PCC renovation project, which includes the installation of the power cut-off switch for the classified server room is planned to start in early 2024, with an estimated completion in June of 2024.*

**OIG Recommendation 14:** Embassy Vienna should require the local information technology configuration control board to perform its responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

*Management Response: (U) Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. The IRM Information Management Officer will work with the Information Systems Security Officer to revive the charter, policies and procedures, and review non-Enterprise equipment through the local configuration control board (CCB). The local CCB should be working and in compliance with requirements within six months of the initial report.*

**OIG Recommendation 15:** Embassy Vienna should implement controls to effectively manage and monitor mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts.

*Management Response: Embassy Vienna concurs with the recommendation. The IRM section has already begun a project to better manage mobile device inventories, cellular service plans, and remote enterprise service accounts. Timeline to completion is six months from the release of the report.*

## ABBREVIATIONS

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COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EU	European Union
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First and Second Tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
IRM	Information Resource Management
JMO	Joint Management Office
LE	Locally Employed
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
USOSCE	U.S. Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

## OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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Peter Brennan, Team Leader  
Richard Sypher, Team Manager  
Steve Begin  
Wylita Bell  
Eric Carlson  
Gina Carter  
Isabella Detwiler  
John Fennerty  
Hanane Grini  
Kristi Hogan  
Pamela Kazi  
Paul Sanders

### **Other Contributors**

Ellen Engels  
Caroline Mangelsdorf  
Rebecca Sawyer



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[\*\*WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov\*\*](mailto:WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov)