

# Helfried CARL

*Diplomat · Democracy Advocate · Policy Innovator*

European Capital of Democracy NPO | The Innovation in Politics Institute | Ungargasse 59-61, 1030 Vienna, Austria

## Professional Summary

Former Austrian Ambassador and senior diplomat with 30 years of experience spanning the UN, OSCE, the Western Balkans peace process, and high-level parliamentary service. Co-founder and Partner at [The Innovation in Politics Institute](#) and founder and CEO of the [European Capital of Democracy NPO](#) – pioneering new models for democratic participation and political innovation across Europe. Combines deep expertise in multilateral diplomacy, conflict resolution, and EU affairs with a strong public voice on European democracy, foreign policy, and transatlantic relations.

## Career Path

Institution	Role	Dates
European Capital of Democracy NPO	Founder and CEO – leading an initiative that awards and supports cities demonstrating innovative democratic practices across Europe	2021 - present (CEO from 2026)
The Innovation in Politics Institute GmbH, Vienna	Co-Founder and Partner (CEO 2024-2026) – built and scaled a pan-European institute promoting excellence in political leadership and participatory democracy	Feb 2019 - present
Austrian Embassy, Bratislava	Austrian Ambassador to Slovakia – led bilateral relations, directed cultural diplomacy initiatives including the TRAM gallery shuttle and the Technisches Museum Wien exhibition	Sept 2014 - Jan 2019
Austrian Parliament, Vienna	Chief of Cabinet of the President of the National Council – managed the parliamentary agenda and high-level institutional relations at the apex of the Austrian legislature	Feb 2007 - Aug 2014
Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Vienna	Deputy Head, Department for Middle East Affairs – steered Austria's policy engagement with the Middle East	July 2006 - Feb 2007
Austrian Mission to the UN, New York	Political Counsellor; Austrian Representative at the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly	June 2002 - June 2006
Office of the High Representative, Sarajevo	Deputy Chief of Cabinet of the High Representative for Peace Implementation – supported post-conflict governance and institution-building in Bosnia-Herzegovina	Sept 1999 - May 2002
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Vienna	Attaché, Permanent Mission to the OSCE – contributed to multilateral security dialogue	Nov 1998 - Aug 1999
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Vienna	Organisation of the EU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Pörschach during the first Austrian EU Presidency	July - Oct 1998
UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London	First-ever Austrian Liaison Officer to the FCO; co-organised the Summit of EU Heads of State and Candidate Countries at Lancaster House	Sept 1997 - June 1998
Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Vienna	Attaché, Western Balkans Department – early-career posting covering a region undergoing historic transformation	Sept 1996 - Sept 1997

## Education

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- MA in International Economics and International Relations – School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Bologna & Washington D.C. (1995–1996)
- Mag. phil. Political Science (with distinction) – University of Salzburg (1988–1995)
- 8th Strategic Leadership Training Course – Austrian Military, on behalf of the Austrian Government (2011)
- **Languages:** German & English (fluent) · French (upper-intermediate) · Italian & Slovak (intermediate) · Spanish & Russian (beginner)

## Awards & Honorary Functions

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- Medal of the President of the Slovak Republic
- Gold Medal of the Foreign Minister of the Slovak Republic
- Member of the Board, Austrian Society for European Politics ([ÖGFE](#))
- Curator and Member of the Board, [Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue](#)
- Spokesperson, [Initiative demokratische Außenpolitik](#)

## Selected Cultural Projects

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- [T.R.A.M.](#): Gallery and Cultural Centre – shuttle train connecting Bratislava and Vienna (2018)
- Special Exhibition "[Stadtverbindungen](#)", Technisches Museum Wien (2018)
- [Virtual exhibition](#) marking 25 years of bilateral Austria-Slovakia relations
- ORF III documentary film: "[Die Porzellangassenbuben: Ari Rath und Eric Pleskow im Gespräch](#)" – idea by Helfried Carl, directed by Lukas Sturm, Vienna (2012)

## Selected Publications & Media

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### Academic & Book Contributions

- "Der Gaza-Konflikt und die Frage der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung Palästinas. Die österreichische Debatte und ihr internationales Umfeld", in: Khol et al. (eds.): Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik 2025, Böhlau Verlag, Wien, 2026.
- "Die Europäische Demokratie-Hauptstadt: Eine Übung in politischer Bildung", in: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik (ed.): 30 Ideen für Europa. Czernin Verlag, Wien 2021. (reprinted in English in [Living Democracy](#), Bundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt Stiftung, 11/2021)
- "Thinking Inside the Box: Eight Often Unpopular Things the International Community Should Do in Post-Conflict Peace-Building", in: Swoboda, Solioz (eds.): Conflict and Renewal: Europe Transformed. Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden, 2007.
- "Vom Weg zur Post – Multiethnizität als Teil der Lösung, nicht des Problems", in: Kofler, Le Rider, Strutz (eds.): Kulturelle Nachbarschaft. Wieser Verlag, 2002.
- "Der Wandel der OSZE vom Dialogforum des Kalten Kriegs zum Arsenal für regionale Konfliktbearbeitung", in: Werkstattblätter Nr. 3, Wien, 1999.
- Foreword in: Gärtner et al.: Democracy, Peace and Security. Lexington Books, 2015.
- "Vielklang – Barbara Prammer 60" (co-editor), Edition Ausblick, Wien, 2014.

### Opinion & Media (selection)

- "[Europa darf sich von Trumps Info-Bombardement nicht beirren lassen](#)", Kurier, 28.2.2026
- "[Gefährliche Feindseligkeit gegenüber der EU](#)", Die Presse, 16.1.2026
- "[Friedensplan für die Ukraine – Europa auf der Speisekarte](#)", Falter.com, 28.11.2025
- "[Städte als Orte der Zuversicht](#)", Festive Speech at 1st Salzburg City Festival, 27.6.2025
- "[Elemente einer progressiven Außenpolitik](#)", International, VI/2024
- "[Die Kurz-Sichtigkeit von Österreichs Nahost-Politik](#)" (with Wolfgang Petritsch), Die Presse, 20.12.2023
- "[Die Klaviatur des Parlamentarismus](#)", Der Standard, 10.1.2023
- Keynote: "[Zeitenwende – Europa Quo Vadis?](#)", Europe Day 2022
- Television talks at the [Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue](#), broadcast by [W24](#)
- Regular column contributions: [Slovak daily SME](#) (Ambassadors' Column); Slovak Spectator ([2015](#), [2017](#))