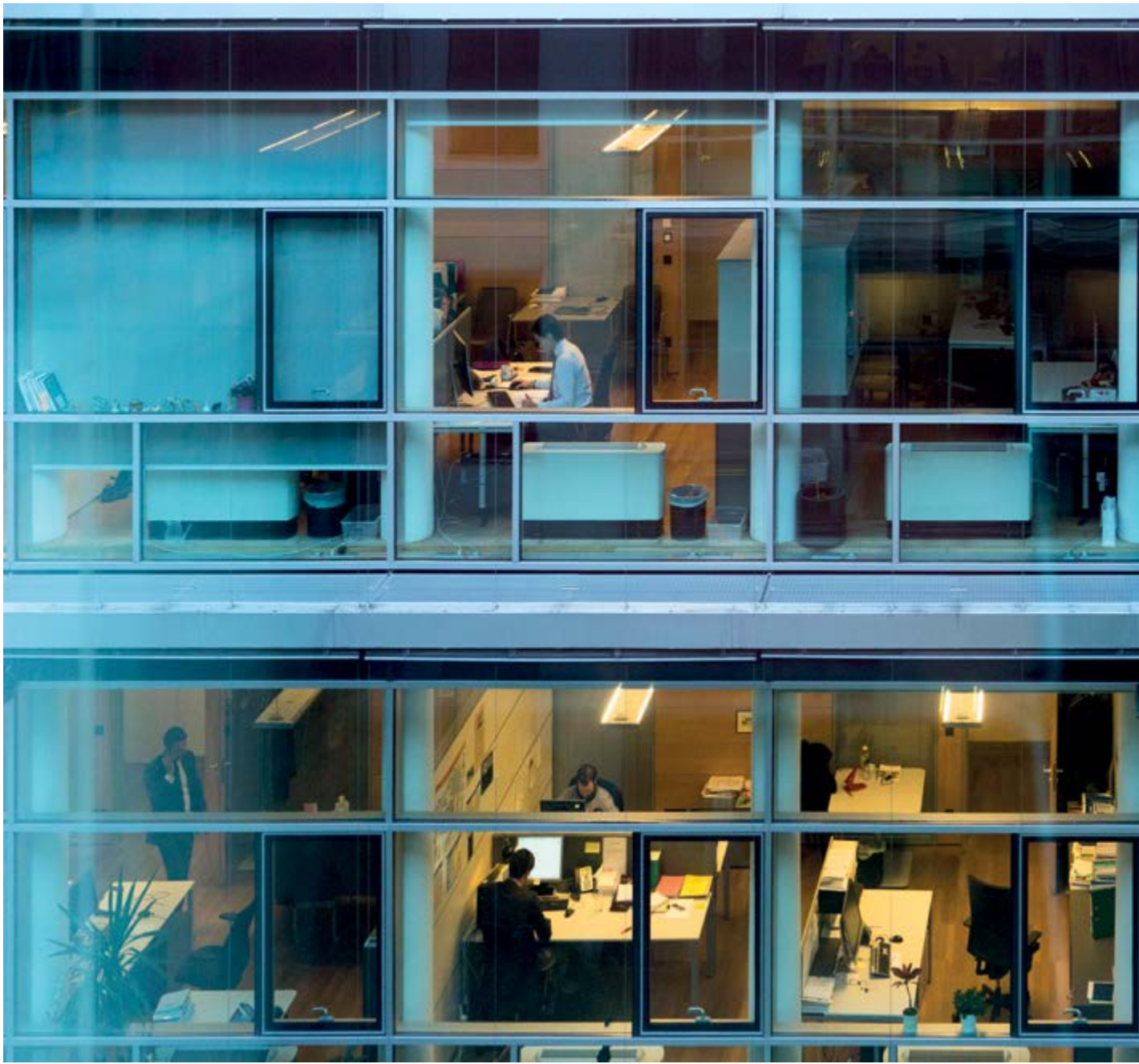




**OSCE SECRETARIAT
WALLNERSTRASSE
VIENNA**



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe





THE OSCE SECRETARIAT

Established by the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in 1990, the Secretariat of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was originally located in Prague, where it remained until 1994. When the Heads of State or Government decided at the 1994 Budapest Summit to transform the CSCE into the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to reflect its actual work, participating States also agreed to move the Secretariat to Vienna.



◀ Heinz Fischer, President of the Republic of Austria (2004—2016), King Juan Carlos I of Spain and Ursula Plassnik, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Austria (2004—2008) at the inauguration of the OSCE Secretariat on 17 December 2007.

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Every part of the building was reconsidered and refurbished, with the former horse stables currently housing the Recruitment Offices (Ablinger, Verdal & Partner, 2007).



The Austrian capital was already home to the Organization's main political decision-making body, the Permanent Council, and to the Forum for Security Co-operation, created for negotiations and consultations on military security, which both still meet weekly in the Hofburg Congress Centre.

For more than ten years, the Secretariat operated from offices

The massive renovation of the two-century-old building, paid for by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, the OSCE and the City of Vienna, cost 26.1 million euro. It began in late 2004, under the watchful eye of the Federal Office of Historical Monuments, and by mid-2006, planning for the move began in earnest.

“We all dream of – and we are all working for – a better world,” said architect *Herbert Ablinger*, at a reception for OSCE staff. “I hope we have succeeded in designing a good dreaming-thinking-talking-working place for all of you.”

at the Kärntnerringhof, on Vienna's Ringstrasse. At the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council, the OSCE participating States decided that the time had come “to give the OSCE a face” and to transfer the Secretariat from its location in a shopping mall to more dignified premises. The Austrian Government and the City of Vienna generously offered the elegant but unpretentious Palais Pálffy at Wallnerstrasse 6, right in the heart of Vienna's historic centre and only a stone's throw from the Hofburg.

The current home of the OSCE Secretariat on Wallnerstrasse was inaugurated by Austrian President Heinz Fischer and King Juan Carlos I of Spain on 21 November 2007, during Spain's OSCE Chairmanship. At 9.00 a.m. on 17 December 2007, 332 staff members of the Secretariat and of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media reported for work at a fully functioning five-story headquarters that gracefully blends the traditional with the contemporary. The Secretariat finally had a face.



PALAIS PÁLFFY

Although clearly respectful of history, the refurbishment of the Palais Pálffy-Erdödy for the purpose of housing the OSCE Secretariat, done by the Austrian architecture firm Ablinger, Verdal & Partner, meant a step into the future for the building. This new chapter did not mean that the building's history – as a family house, a bank, an archive – need be lost however, and as with most buildings in central Vienna, there is more to its history than meets the eye.

The current edifice dates back to 1811, when Count Johann Pálffy commissioned French architect Charles de Moreau to build him a family palace. With its sober exterior, the Palais Pálffy is considered to be one of the few – and most prominent – examples of French classicism in Vienna. The 14-axis façade is only sparingly adorned with mythological reliefs on the window lunettes, and

is a far cry from, for instance, the much more ornate Palais Esterhazy across from it. In keeping with the mythological references recurrent both on the exterior and inside, the building can almost be likened to a phoenix: not only is it a rare appearance, but it also rose from the ashes more than once. First constructed on the site of a row of 15th century houses that burnt down, the building was also damaged by two shells in World War II. It has since been restored to its former glory and is now a landmark for all those interested in classical architecture.

In stark contrast with its sober exterior, the original interior was designed by Rafael von Rigel, a well-known interior designer of the time who also decorated the rooms of Empress Maria Ludovika (wife of Emperor Franz I) in the Hofburg Palace. Although little of the original

▲ The Anglo-Austrian Bank added a canopy to the façade to give it a more bank-appropriate appearance.

◀◀ Charles de Moreau's sober façade in French classicist style is a rarity in Vienna (Ablinger, Verdal & Partner, 2007).

◀ Gabrielle Andrassy (née Pálffy, 1833–1914) transformed the palais into a hotspot for Vienna's court society.



The former ballroom – now the Office for External Co-operation – still features its original 18th century handmade silk tapestry from Lyon (BDA, 2007).

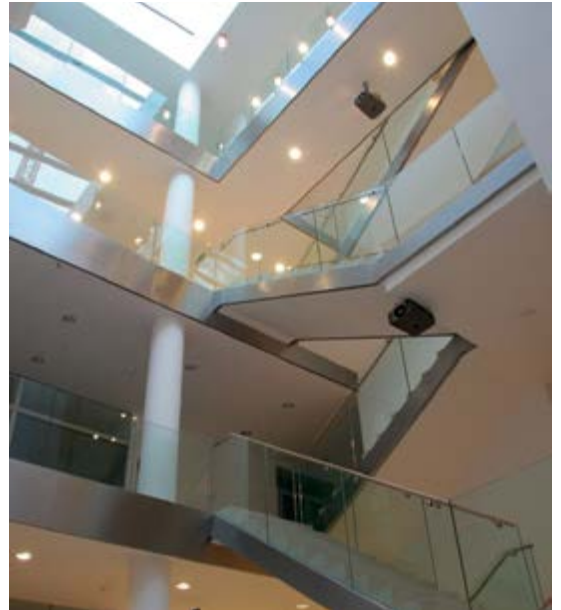


empire-style interior has withstood the test of time, the rooms currently housing the Office of the Secretary General are mostly intact. Here, the geometric wooden floors, which incorporate seven types of woods, the silk tapestry lining the walls, handmade in Lyon in the 1780s, and the original marble fireplaces give a good sense of the lavish interiors the Pálffy family enjoyed. Similarly, the marble stairwell was completely restored, and the mythological statues lining it are the originals placed there by Rigel. Other items from the Palais can now be enjoyed in different museums, as much of the family's art collection (which included works by Gainsborough and Lenbach) was donated after World War I at the bequest of its last male representative, Count Jan Pálffy (1829—1908).

After World War I and the corresponding abolition of nobility

in Austria, the building came into private hands and was purchased by the Anglo-Austrian Bank. To give it a more appropriate appearance, a canopy was added to the façade (since removed in accordance with Austrian monument policy) and the ground floor courtyard was transformed into a vault. The latter was later extended into a five-story tall storage space for documentation when the administrative archive of the Austrian Government took over the building in 1936. This construction was lost during World War II, as was a large part of the archive.

Housing the OSCE Secretariat is not the first instance of the Palais being connected to the diplomatic world. Throughout the nearly 200 years that the Pálffy family maintained it, many members of Viennese court society frequented the house, including, for instance, the



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▲▲ Rafael von Rigel incorporated many standards of empire design into the Palais' interiors, such as the ornate stucco ceilings and Corinthian columns in the current Offices of the Secretary General (Ablinger, Verdal & Partner, 2007).

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◀ The old/new contrast that is so emblematic of the building's current structure is enhanced by the interior design of Austrian office specialists Bene (Bene, 2007).

famous Austrian diplomat Klemens von Metternich, members of the imperial family, as well as Mozart and Beethoven. In the 19th century, the prestige of the Palais Pálffy reached its apex, when the sister of Count Jan Pálffy, Countess Gabriele Andrassy, transformed it into one of the most prominent venues for soirees and balls attended by the crème de la crème of Viennese society, including many diplomats and statesmen. Most notably, Otto von Bismarck spent the summer of 1892 at the Palais on the occasion of his son's wedding, coincidentally his last ever visit to Vienna. In the 20th century, the Palais was the first building to come back into the Austrian government's possession after World War II, making it a symbol of diplomacy in its own right.

Apart from the great history that a palais like Wallnerstrasse 6 is bound to have, the space also houses many

lesser stories. Indeed, long-lost family secrets also echo through the halls, such as the death of Count Jan Pálffy in the Palais in 1908. Allegedly, the Count, who primarily resided in his Bojnice Castle, in what is today Slovakia, died in the bathroom that adjoined the former Festsaal on the first floor. In earlier times, the building was also the scene of a peculiar love story involving the wife of the Palais' first resident, Johann Pálffy. As told to Viennese chronicler Lulu von Thurheim, Euphemia 'Fifi' Pálffy found her husband a boring man, but stayed loyal to him nonetheless. This was until a British nobleman appeared who stole her heart and soul, which she confessed to her husband. After her husband sent away the British nobleman, the inconsolable Fifi cried for hours. Her husband told her that she was free to cry as many tears as she wanted, as long as she would stop at midnight. Which she did.

FACTS

Wallnerstrasse 6/6a is classified as a protected historical monument. Its total net floor space is 9,180 square meters.

The Republic of Austria is the legally registered owner of the building, which it has made available to the OSCE free of charge, for use as long as its permanent headquarters remain in Vienna. The OSCE bears all operating costs, including utilities, maintenance and security.

Originally designed to host around 300 staff members, the building currently houses over 400 people, working in seven Secretariat departments and one OSCE Institution, the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

There are 166 offices spread over 5 levels and 8 meeting rooms.

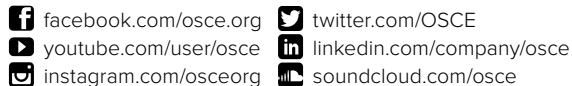
A Section of the Department of Human Resources is located in what used to be the Palais Pálffy horse stables.

The Secretariat is powered by 100% renewable energy sources, which is part of a larger effort to promote sustainable and renewable energy usage across the OSCE region.



The main courtyard as seen from the ground floor. This space was previously occupied by a safe and, subsequently, a five-floor tall documentation storage facility, which was lost during World War II (Ablinger, Verdal & Partner, 2007).

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