

Castries, November 06, 2012 The Republic of Austria and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) established relations at the diplomatic level on Tuesday.

At the accreditation ceremony held at the OECS Commission, the Director General of the OECS, Her Excellency Dr. Len Ishmael, accepted Letters of Introduction from the Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to the OECS, His Excellency Thomas Schuller-Gotzburg. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Austria and the OECS will serve to elevate friendship and cooperation to a new level.

At the ceremony, the Director General warmly welcomed the Austrian Ambassador to the Headquarters of the OECS, and conveyed her appreciation of Austria's desire to deepen relations with the countries of the Eastern Caribbean at the sub-regional level:

□ ***“Today, Austria becomes the latest in a group of countries, the tenth to be precise, which has sought to intensify friendship and cooperation with the Eastern Caribbean to the point of establishing relations at the diplomatic level with our Organisation. These countries have recognized the OECS as a special entity, and our Organisation in turn views them in a rather special light. The OECS recognizes the enormous potential of this relationship, and feels honoured that Austria would find it necessary to engage with the sub-region on that level.”*** □

The Director General further communicated that the Austria-OECS relationship has yielded fruitful results, owed especially to Austria's commitment toward capacity building in the region. She alluded to Austria's ongoing provision of opportunities for Caribbean nationals to pursue studies in areas such as Tourism, Hotel Management and Diplomacy, and further added that the Austrian Foreign Ministry would be conducting a workshop on Current Matters of International Law on November 07, 2012, for Foreign Service and legal officers from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of OECS Member States.

The Austrian Ambassador extended his best wishes to the Director General on behalf of the

government of the Republic of Austria, and expressed his delight in having the opportunity to further enhance the cordial relations that have existed between Austria and the OECS.

In his remarks, Ambassador Schuller-Gotsburg commended the vision of OECS leaders on their decision to move towards greater integration. He stressed that times of crisis, such as the present economic slowdown, should call for more solidarity, not less. He also indicated that Austria would continue to work closely with the OECS to promote cooperation in training, and would also be interested in pursuing initiatives in such areas as Climate Change, in order to assist Member States in designing responses to the phenomenon.

The Republic of Austria is the tenth country to establish relations at the diplomatic level with the OECS, following Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Cuba, and the United States of America.