

“Sky Shield” put to the test

Are billions of taxpayers’ money being wasted?

by Andreas S.,* Austria

(CH-S) On 10 April 2024, the Federal Council decided to join the “European Sky Shield Initiative” (ESSI) project, with the approval of the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Committees. The project, which is being implemented jointly with 22 NATO states, including Germany, but also neutral Austria, was intended, according to the then Head of the Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), Viola Amherd, to provide effective protection against missile and drone attacks.

Now the reality test for the Sky Shield is taking place in the Middle East. The results are devastating. In Austria, concerns are being raised about the practical viability of the “European Sky Shield Initiative”. A series of articles on the Austrian internet portal TKP addresses the emerging questions. Below we reproduce one of these articles.

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Sky Shield is falling apart right before our eyes. You just have to look. The missiles on which Austria is staking its billions are being destroyed day after day in the Middle East – the systems behind them are failing, in front of rolling cameras, against the very threats they are supposed to protect us from. France and Italy asked the right questions from the outset – and stayed out of it. Austria? No questions asked. Billions.

This article summarises what this source-based investigative series has been documenting for weeks – as an interim review for those who have been following it from the start. And for those joining now, as a window into what hardly anyone has asked about so far. The starting point of the series – Austria’s accession to the *European Sky Shield Initiative* (ESSI) without a parliamentary resolution, without a legal opinion, without a cost-benefit analysis – can be found in the first article dated 24 February 2026.¹

What this series has documented from the outset can be summarised in a few lines:

- 7 billion euros. Without missiles included in the price.

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“The total cost for Austria is now estimated at up to 7 billion euros – although this figure covers only the infrastructure. The missiles themselves – the system’s actual warheads – are not included in this. An Arrow-3 interceptor missile costs between 3 and 4 million US dollars each. A single complete Patriot battery, including missiles, costs around 1.1 billion US dollars.”¹

- A minister. On her own. Without a parliamentary resolution.
- No expert opinion. No cost-benefit analysis. No questions asked
- The Brenner Pass: unprotected – a prime target.²
- 8 NATO countries: stayed out of it – they must have their reasons.³
- Turkey: is part of it – with Russian weapons.
- Austria: is part of it. No questions asked.

How many missiles would Austria need, what a single interceptor missile costs, who decides whether and when they are delivered – nothing on this is publicly available. The only thing to be found is the Ministry of Defence’s response regarding ammunition planning on *bundesheer.at*: “This is currently being planned and developed.”⁴ That was the full response.

What is happening right now – and what it means

The field test has been underway since 28 February 2026. The US and Israel are waging war against Iran – using precisely those systems intended to form the core of *Sky Shield*: *Patriot* and *Arrow-3*. Article number three of this series documented⁵ what this means in practice. Since then, the situation has been escalating daily.

According to the *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Israel’s *Arrow-3* stocks were depleted by more than half in the first four days of the war.⁶ Recovery time at current production rates: 32 months. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated it on camera: Iran is producing over 100 ballistic missiles per month.⁷ The opposing side is producing six to seven interceptor missiles. Per month.

Since 28 February, TKP has been documenting daily – and is doing so again now – ongoing Ira-

nian missile attacks on Israeli military targets. We are currently at wave 71, which, as reported here, were more intense last night [22 March] than ever before⁸ – salvos that reportedly caused extensive damage. The multi-layered defence architecture, which America and Israel have spent decades building, has been under daily pressure since the start of the war – without respite.

Chancellor *Christian Stocker* stated that anyone observing the conflicts in the Middle East would recognise how important *Sky Shield* is.⁹ One has to agree with him. If one looks closely.

At what level does this system actually function? Technically, it fails against hypersonic missiles. Financially, it has not been properly costed. Strategically, it not only makes Austria a target – but also dependent on suppliers far away who, as is becoming apparent, will not be able to deliver. Democratically, it was never decided upon.

The Queue

Austria is currently subject to an EU deficit procedure.¹⁰ On this note: When exactly would Austria actually have expected a missile delivery – and from whom?

According to *Lockheed Martin* and the Pentagon framework agreement of January 2026, the production rate for PAC-3 MSE interceptor missiles stands at around 550 units per year.¹¹ The ramp-up plan to 2,000 units annually is a seven-year project – not even contractually funded yet.

Procurement is handled via *US Foreign Military Sales* – government-to-government. Washington decides on priorities and delivery dates. Behind its own armed forces. Behind NATO's eastern flank. Behind Israel – which is currently requesting replenishment itself because stocks are critically low, as US government sources confirmed to *Semafor* on 14 March 2026.¹²

Austria is right at the back of the queue. How rose-tinted must one's glasses be to believe we will still be served in this century?

We must be combat-ready by 2029 – so said German Federal Minister of Defence Pistorius in the Bundestag.¹³ With which missiles, then?

Another question regarding strategy

Sky Shield is being marketed as a European project – the core systems come from *Raytheon*,

Lockheed Martin, *Israel Aerospace Industries* and *Boeing*. No European manufacturer. No European control. How many billions of EU taxpayers' money are flowing? Where to – and why?

Whoever makes themselves strategically dependent on two supplier countries that are themselves at war, need supplies themselves and decide on supply priorities themselves – what was the strategic thinking behind that? And who benefits from this arrangement – apart from the suppliers?

Defence Minister *Kludia Tanner* signed the *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) alone in Brussels on 28 May 2024 – without a parliamentary resolution, without a constitutional opinion. *Parliamentary Question 348/M*¹⁴ confirms: a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis does not exist.

Has Parliament asked about this in the meantime?

It is clear who stands to benefit from this deal. It is also clear who is expected to foot the bill.

Source: <https://tkp.at/2026/03/22/sky-shield-fragen-verboten-milliarden-erlaubt/>, 22 March 2026

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ <https://tkp.at/2026/02/24/sky-shield-das-naechste-milliarden-debakel-und-kaum-jemand-schaut-hin/>

² <https://tkp.at/2026/03/16/sky-shield-bella-italia-und-der-brenner-eine-rakete-reicht/>

³ <https://tkp.at/2026/03/20/sky-shield-8-nato-laender-sagen-nein-oesterreich-ist-drin/>

⁴ <https://www.bundesheer.at/aktuelles/detail/15-antworten-zu-sky-shield>

⁵ <https://tkp.at/2026/03/09/iron-dome-sky-shield-die-realitaet-im-nahen-osten/>

⁶ <https://www.fpri.org/>

⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/>

⁸ <https://tkp.at/2026/03/22/23-tag-im-angriffskrieg-israels-und-der-usa-gegen-den-iran-ticker-20-00-uhr/>

⁹ <https://www.weekend.at/politik/stocker-iran-krieg-sicherheit-osterreich>

¹⁰ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/press/press-releases/2025/07/08/stability-and-growth-pact-council-opens-new-excessive-deficit-procedure-for-austria-and-revises-the-corrective-path-for-romania/>

¹¹ <https://www.lockheedmartin.com>

¹² <https://www.semafor.com/>

¹³ <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2024/kw23-de-regierungsbefragung-1002264>

¹⁴ <https://www.parlament.gv.at/>