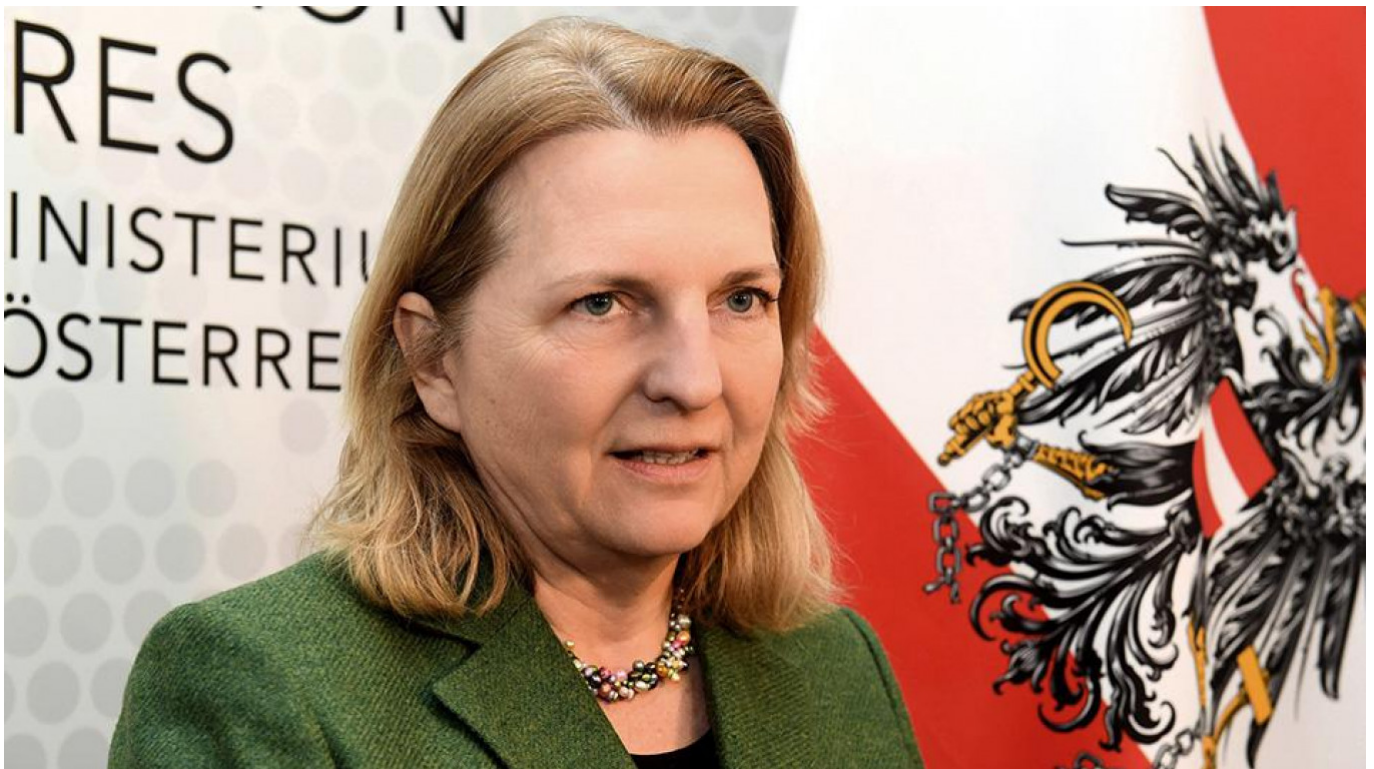# Austria Reports U.K. Pressure to Expel Russian Diplomats

March 29, 2018

Karin Kneissl **Bundesministerium für Europa / Flickr (CC BY 2.0)**

The Austrian government has confirmed that it was issued a demarche by the British government to join a coordinated Western effort to expel Russian diplomats after the poisoning of an ex-spy in southern England.

The European Union, the United States and several NATO member states expelled more than 100 Russian diplomats in response to Russia's suspected poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia on March 4. Austria was among five EU member states not to join the coordinated action, together with Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Slovenia.

Related article: [U.S. and EU Countries Expel Russian Diplomats in Coordinated Response to Ex-Spy's Poisoning](#)

Austria's Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl said that Britain's ambassador issued the country

demarches last Wednesday and Saturday "to encourage us to take specific measures," Austria's Kurier daily [reported](#) on Wednesday.

On Monday, Austria announced that it would not be expelling Russian diplomats over the poisoning.

"When the going gets tough, you have to keep the channels open," Kneissl was cited as saying by Kurier, adding that Austria "very sparingly" resorts to diplomatic expulsions.

Meanwhile, the Austrian Foreign Minister said that fears of Russian countermeasures did not play an important role in the decision to not expel Russian diplomats.

Russia denies playing a role in the March 4 poisoning of ex–Russian military intelligence colonel Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

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