

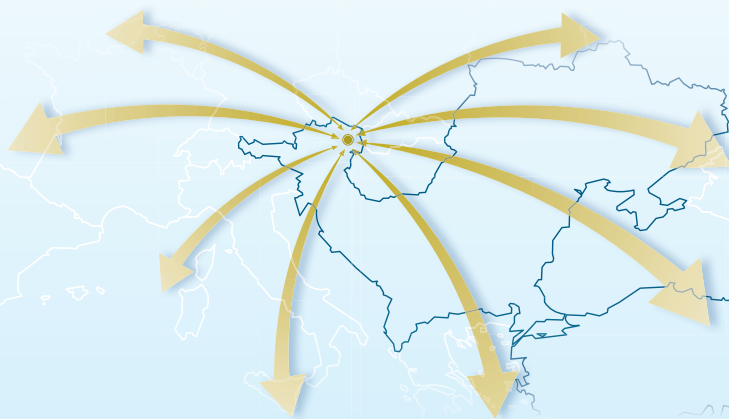
INTERNATIONAL
NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATION



CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS (ECOSOC)

REGISTERED IN THE
TRANSPARENCY REGISTER
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION

VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



REVIEW 2018



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Bundesministerium für europäische
und internationale Angelegenheiten

DVR: 0000060

Wien, am 7. Jänner 2011

GZ: BMeiA-N9.8.19.12/0036-1.2/2010

An das

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)
z.Hd. Fr. Dr. Elena Kircheva
Stubenring 16/3
1010 Wien

BESCH E I D

Der Bundesminister für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten als Behörde gemäß § 1 des Bundesgesetzes über die Einräumung von Privilegien an nichtstaatliche internationale Organisationen, BGBl. Nr. 174/1992, entscheidet wie folgt:

S p r u c h

Dem Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) wird die Rechtsstellung einer Organisation im Sinne des Bundesgesetzes über die Einräumung von Privilegien an nichtstaatliche internationale Organisationen (NGO-Gesetz), BGBl. Nr. 174/1992, eingeräumt.

...

Für den Bundesminister:

(Ges. MMag. Gregor Schusterschitz)
Leiter der Abteilung 1.2 – Allgemeines Völkerrecht

United Nations  Nations Unies

Non-Governmental Organizations Branch
Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

DC1-1480, 1 U.N. Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 • Tel. (212) 963-8652 • Fax (212) 963-9248
Website: www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo • Contact: www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo/contact

27 July 2012

Dear NGO Representative,

I am pleased to inform you that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its Substantive Session of July 2012 adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to grant **Special** consultative status to your organization **Vienna Economic Forum**. On behalf of all staff of the Non-Governmental Organizations Branch, please accept our heartfelt congratulations.

Consultative status for an organization enables it to actively engage with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, as well as with the United Nations Secretariat, programmes, funds and agencies in a number of ways. In order to better understand this relationship, we take this opportunity to provide some critical information about the **privileges** that consultative status with ECOSOC confers on your organization, as well as the **obligations** that your organization will be required to meet under this relationship. **We therefore urge you to take the time to carefully review the information we have provided below.**

Privileges and benefits of consultative status

1) ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

- Arrangements for consultations with NGOs are regulated by ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, adopted by the Council on 25 July 1996. Please review the entire resolution at: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/199631.pdf> for detailed information . It provides information on ways to participate in the work of the Council, including opportunities to organizations such as yours to consult with Member States and the United Nations system at large, based on the nature and scope of work that your organization undertakes. Consultative relationship with NGOs also enables the Council or one of its bodies to seek expert information or advice from organizations with special competence in a subject matter.
- Consultative status allows you to be informed about the provisional agenda of the Economic and Social Council;

.../..

Vienna Economic Forum

DEAR MEMBERS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS
OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM,
HONOURED PRIME MINISTERS –
PATRONS OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM,
DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AMBASSADORS,
MEMBERS OF THE AMBASSADORS COMMITTEE
OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM,

it is a special feeling to be able to address you all for the **15th Anniversary Year of Vienna Economic Forum** with our Annual Review brochure 2018!

The founding of the Vienna Economic Forum in April 2004 was a timely response to the aspirations of the countries of the whole Southeast Europe region to return to their European identity! Thinking back, one above all remembers the enthusiasm, the joy and the willingness, with combined forces, to transform our region into a European region!

If you compare the region and the economic conditions 15 years ago and today, you can identify a generally positive development: in the infrastructure, in the energy sector, in banking and transport, in production, in the performance field, in all segments of the everyday living! In all these years, the economic development contributed to the change in many of the VEF countries.

One thing has remained unchanged – the goal of Vienna Economic Forum: All the states of the region remain in the focus of the economic interest of the members of Vienna Economic Forum and this interest is characterized by the long-term motivation to participate in the economic revitalization and development of the entire region.

We are proud, to bring onboard as VEF members renowned Austrian, European and international companies with a serious interest in the economic development of the countries of the region. And in this regard, we will continue with our efforts! VEF will continue to set concrete and pragmatic goals. We can assure you all!



We are pleased to report that VEF succeeded in 2018, with the high-ranking attendance and pragmatically oriented **Vienna Economic Forum Sofia Talks 2018** in May and the **15th Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2018** in November, both held under the Motto “Economy meets Politics”, to build a bridge between the Bulgarian and the Austrian EU Presidencies, as an official part of the two governmental programs.

The positive economic development is a result of cooperation between economy and politics and we want to continue to use the synergies of this cooperation on an even better scale and more actively. An example of such synergy is the initiative to establish a **Digital ICT School** (Information, Communication, Technology) for the young people of our region, with which the Vienna Economic Forum continues to focus on the good economic development of the member states.

For the good cooperation, for the trust and the constant support, for your participation in reaching new horizons – a big THANK YOU to all of you!

DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner
President

Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva
Secretary General

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photo DI Viehauser © www.charakter.photos

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photo Dr. Gollowitzer © B. Nidetzky

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The Board of Vienna Economic Forum is honoured to have the **elected Prime Ministers of the Vienna Economic Forum Member Countries**, as well as **Dr. Heinz FISCHER**, former President of the Republic of Austria (2004–2016), as **Members of the Vienna Economic Forum Patrons Committee** and to call them **Patrons of Vienna Economic Forum!**

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Vienna Economic Talks

Vienna Economic Talks behandelt spezifische Themen, Regionen und Wirtschaftssektoren, die nicht nur für die Mitgliedsländer des Vienna Economic Forum von großem Interesse sind, sondern auch für andere Interessierte in der Region.

Vienna Economic Talks deals with specific topics, regions and economic sectors, which are of great interest not only for the member countries of the Vienna Economic Forum, but also for other interested parties in the region.

FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING



Yours,
Vienna Economic Forum Team



Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*CEO
AI Telekom Austria Group*

photo Mr. Arnoldner © Renee Del Missier

“AI Telekom Austria Group is the leading provider of digital services and communications solutions in the CEE region with more than 24 million customers and almost 19,000 employees in seven countries. Our broadband networks and data centers form the backbone of the modern information society and at the same time represent the necessary platform for digital change. In line with our vision of ‘Empowering digital life’, however, our self-conception has long since gone beyond the provision of infrastructure, connectivity and bandwidth. We see ourselves as a strong partner for business location and society and as a European pioneer and driver of digitalization with the know-how to create and implement digital business models and solutions – in all our CEE markets. In this way we support the economy, secure jobs and actively contribute to prosperity and quality of life in these countries.”

„Die AI Telekom Austria Group ist führender Provider für digitale Services und Kommunikationslösungen im CEE Raum mit mehr als 24 Millionen Kunden und knapp 19.000 Mitarbeitern in sieben Ländern. Unsere Breitbandnetze und Rechenzentren bilden das Rückgrat der modernen Informationsgesellschaft und stellen zugleich die notwendige Plattform für den digitalen Wandel dar. Entsprechend unserer Vision ‚Empowering digital life‘ geht unser Selbstverständnis aber längst über das Bereitstellen von Infrastruktur, Konnektivität und Bandbreite hinaus. Wir verstehen uns als starker Partner für Wirtschaftsstandort und Gesellschaft und als europäischer Pionier und Treiber der Digitalisierung mit dem Know-how, digitale Geschäftsmodelle und Lösungen zu kreieren und umzusetzen – und das in allen unseren CEE Märkten. Damit unterstützen wir die Wirtschaft, sichern Arbeitsplätze und tragen aktiv zum Wohlstand und zur Lebensqualität in diesen Ländern bei.“

Mein #BusinessChange

Ich kann von überall auf Prozesse und Daten zugreifen.



Wolfgang Rathner
Geschäftsführer,
FILL GESELLSCHAFT M.B.H.

ALLES



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Mag. Heinz MESSINGER

*Member of the Board, Financial Referent
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Managing Director
AME International GmbH*

“Traditionally, Austria has strong relation to the region of the partner countries Vienna Economic Forum. AME International GmbH and myself have been actively working on strengthening the healthcare systems for VEF member countries almost 25 years, creating a sustainable benefit for patients in the region. Recent project examples include the creation of a nationwide health information exchange e-health platform for Albania, connecting around 80 public hospitals and polyclinics. We were also pioneers in improving cancer treatment in Albania and have established the first Radiotherapy Unit at Mother Theresa Hospital. In view of the increase of cancer incidence we are putting a strong focus on medical technology for cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment including telemedicine and radiotherapy. We are looking forward to repeating our success.”

„Österreich hat traditionell einen starken Bezug zu den Partnerländern des Vienna Economic Forum. Die AME International GmbH und ich arbeiten fast 25 Jahre aktiv an der Stärkung der Gesundheitssysteme für die VEF-Mitgliedsländer und schaffen einen nachhaltigen Nutzen für die Patienten in dieser Region. Jüngste Projektbeispiele umfassen die Schaffung einer landesweiten E-Health-Plattform für den Austausch von Gesundheitsinformationen für Albanien, die etwa 80 öffentliche Krankenhäuser und Polikliniken verbindet. Wir waren auch Vorreiter bei der Verbesserung der Krebsbehandlung in Albanien und haben im Mutter-Theresa-Krankenhaus die erste Strahlentherapie-Abteilung eingerichtet. Angesichts des Anstiegs der Krebsinzidenz legen wir einen starken Fokus auf die Medizintechnik für Krebsvorsorge, -diagnose und -behandlung, einschließlich Telemedizin und Strahlentherapie. Wir freuen uns darauf, den Erfolg zu wiederholen.“

„We improve healthcare delivery by using Cutting Edge Technology“

AME International GmbH (AME) is a global healthcare technology solutions provider based in Vienna, Austria. Founded in 1995, AME International GmbH was established by a seasoned team of experts with extensive know-how in developing, implementing, operating and financing international healthcare projects. To date more than 75 health and

e-Health projects in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East have been implemented by AME and in this way strengthened the medical situation in over 180 hospitals worldwide, with in total more than 48.000 beds improving the health situation for 1.6 million inpatients and over 19 million outpatients and as such covering a catchment area of 165 million people.

- ▶ eHealth
- ▶ Medical Package Solutions
- ▶ Turn Key Solutions
- ▶ Consulting & Hospital Engineering





Mr. Emmanuel FOREST

Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum

CEO
BOUYGUES Europe SA
Belgium

“Bouygues Group is proud to have been working in the Vienna Economic Forum region for years, in particular in Croatia, where we operate the Bina-Istra motorway concession and where we have built Zagreb new airport terminal. Colas is also present, and keen to participate in further infrastructure development projects. We strongly believe in the future of south-eastern Europe, and we look forward reinforcing our links with these countries, within the framework of tighter links between Balkan states and the EU, with their next possible accession to full EU membership as stated recently by the European Commission.”

„Bouygues Group ist stolz, seit Jahren in der Region des Vienna Economic Forums tätig zu sein, insbesondere in Kroatien, wo wir die Autobahnkonzession Bina-Istra betreiben und den neuen Flughafen Zagreb gebaut haben. Colas ist ebenfalls präsent und möchte an weiteren Infrastrukturentwicklungsprojekten teilnehmen. Wir sind fest von der Zukunft Südosteuropas überzeugt und freuen uns darauf, unsere Beziehungen zu diesen Ländern im Rahmen engerer Beziehungen zwischen den Balkanstaaten und der EU mit ihrem nächst möglichen Beitritt zur vollen EU-Mitgliedschaft zu verstärken, wie kürzlich von der Europäische Kommission betont wurde.“

BOUYGUES

Istrian Y motorway – 209 km of motorway – Concession Croatia

Under the terms of a 32-year concession contract, construction of 209 km of motorway in Istria, Croatia.

This project is part of the project for development of tourism and enhanced European integration for the Republic of Croatia.





Mag. Hermann ANDERL

*Vice-President
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Managing Director
Canon CEE GmbH*

“Canon, world-leader in imaging solutions, has published highlights from its Office Insights 2018 report, which reveals that Central and Eastern Europe has a growing intent to deploy Managed Print Service and cloud services for private as well as public sector – despite restrictive budgets and inherent concerns around security, especially under the new GDPR security requirements. The report found that even though there are signs of appreciation of the benefits of digital technology among Central and Eastern European businesses, the adoption process has only just begun. The growth opportunities are not restricted to office environment but are visible also for other areas of business such as graphic arts, pro photo and video.”

„Canon, weltweit führender Imaging-Solutions Anbieter, hat die Schwerpunkte aus seinem Office Insights 2018 Bericht veröffentlicht. Daraus geht hervor, dass in Mittel- und Osteuropa vermehrt die Absicht besteht Managed Print Service und Cloud Services für den privaten und öffentlichen Sektor einzusetzen und dies trotz restriktiver Budgets und inhärenter Sicherheitsbedenken insbesondere unter den neuen Sicherheitsanforderungen der DSGVO. Der Bericht belegt, dass der Adoptionsprozess gerade erst begonnen hat, obwohl die Vorteile der Digitaltechnologie bereits jetzt von mittel- und osteuropäischen Unternehmen geschätzt werden. Die Wachstumschancen beschränken sich nicht nur auf das Büroumfeld, sondern ergeben sich auch für andere Geschäftsbereiche wie Grafik, Pro-Foto und Video.“



THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Canon Office Insights Report 2018

The workplace is rapidly changing. Flexible start times, working from home, mobile workers and hot desking and employees who interact daily across international boundaries, all contribute to a diverse and sometimes difficult to manage landscape. With big data on the rise, security and data management issues are evolving. At the same time, businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of utilising information quickly and securely, no matter where their employees are based or what industry they work in.



The research covers IT decision-makers, influencers in the purchase process and significant end users. Insights have been collected from technology decision-makers and end users located in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, the Middle East and Africa. These findings are particularly valuable because it's the voice of businesses directly. They're telling us what's happening today and what they expect tomorrow.

Martin Wootton
Breaking Blue

Canon

See the bigger picture

2,550 SURVEYS CONDUCTED

9+ BUSINESS UNITS

4 BUSINESS FUNCTIONS



Small
Businesses
Surveyed

39%



of respondents are
decision-makers



Medium
Businesses
Surveyed

24%



of respondents
are end users



Large
Businesses
Surveyed

37%



of respondents
are influencers

For more information on how businesses are operating in the digital environment, contact your Canon representative or download the 2018 Office Insights Report from www.canon-europe.com/officeinsights2018



Mr. Ahmet Mesut ERSOY

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Chairman of the Management Board and CEO
DenizBank AG*

“Since its foundation in 1996, DenizBank AG functions as a bridge builder in the international financial services sector, supporting companies with its solid experience and know-how. The Austrian financial institute focuses particularly on undertakings that are economically strongly linked to the European Union. Vienna Economic Forum provides the ideal platform for new and creative cooperation concepts on a regional as well as on an international level.

Known for its pro-active and comprehensive customer services, DenizBank AG offers its partners a wide range of products in Corporate & Commercial Banking. Beside its support for importers and exporters in the field of trade financing, DenizBank AG also provides classical banking products and project financing for its customers. Thanks to the close collaboration with its parent company DenizBank A.Ş., which was awarded multiple times for its advanced developments in information technology by US-American Bank Administrative Institute (BAI) and was named the most innovative financial institute by Financial Management Association (EFMA), DenizBank AG is able to offer cutting-edge technological solutions throughout all customer segments.”

„Seit ihrer Gründung 1996 fungiert die DenizBank AG als Brückenbauer im internationalen Finanzdienstleistungssektor und unterstützt Wirtschaftstreibende mit ihrer Erfahrung und ihrem Know-How. Besonderen Fokus legt das österreichische Finanzinstitut dabei auf Unternehmen, die wirtschaftlich eng mit der Europäischen Union verbunden sind. Das Vienna Economic Forum bietet die ideale Plattform für neue und kreative Kooperationskonzepte – sowohl auf regionaler als auch auf internationaler Ebene.

Bekannt für proaktive und umfangreiche Kundenbetreuung bietet die DenizBank AG ihren Partnern im Bereich Corporate & Commercial Banking ein breitgefächertes Produktportfolio an. Neben der Betreuung von Importeuren und Exporteuren im Rahmen von Handelsfinanzierungen werden Kunden auch durch klassische Bankdienstleistungen und Projektfinanzierungen unterstützt. Die enge Zusammenarbeit mit der Muttergesellschaft DenizBank A.Ş., die mehrfach auf internationaler Ebene für ihre hochmodernen Entwicklungen im IT-Sektor von dem US-amerikanischen Bank Administrative Institute (BAI) und der European Financial Management Association (EFMA) als innovativster Finanzdienstleister ausgezeichnet wurde, ermöglicht es der DenizBank AG, in allen Kundensegmenten technisch hochentwickelte Produkte und Services zu bieten.“



Vergleichen lohnt sich!

Für mein Unternehmen strebe ich jeden Tag nach dem Besten.
Genau das erwarte ich auch von meiner Bank.

Daher investiere ich in die Anlagekonten **Deniz-Flex und Deniz-Fix der DenizBank.**

www.denizbank.at

Nähere Informationen erhalten Sie im Contact Center unter 0800 88 66 00.
Wir beraten Sie gerne in unseren Filialen oder auch in Ihrem Unternehmen.



Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Spokesman of the Executive Board
EVN AG*

photo © EVN Gebhart_de_Korckorck

“Since our market entry in South Eastern Europe slightly more than ten years ago, we have made a sustainable contribution to the long-term improvement of the local supply infrastructure – and also to economic development in Bulgaria and Macedonia – with our investments in the energy supply. Within the context of our environmental services business, we offer our planning and operating expertise to deliver specially designed solutions for the construction of drinking water supply and wastewater treatment plants in the member countries of the Vienna Economic Forum.”

„Seit unserem Markteintritt in Südosteuropa vor etwas mehr als zehn Jahren haben wir mit unseren Investitionen in die Energieversorgung einen nachhaltigen Beitrag zur langfristigen Verbesserung der örtlichen Versorgungsinfrastruktur und damit zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in Bulgarien und Mazedonien geleistet. Im Rahmen unseres Umweltgeschäfts bieten wir zudem mit unserer Planungs- und Betriebsführungsexpertise maßgeschneiderte Lösungen für die Errichtung von Trinkwasserversorgungs- und Abwasserbehandlungsanlagen in den Partnerländern des Vienna Economic Forum.“



EVN

AKW Zwentendorf als Event- Location

Das Atomkraftwerk –
ein einzigartiger
Veranstaltungsort,
der alles bietet ...

T 02236 200-0, info@evn.at, akw@zwentendorf.com



Dr. Willibald PLESSER

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Partner
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP*

“Central and Eastern Europe is a diverse market where investors frequently need lawyers with international perspective and experience. Freshfields operates at the forefront in the CEE region. We have advised clients on the largest transactions in CEE. This means we know the region very well and understand the regulatory, commercial and cultural environments. What sets us apart is our integrated approach combining the expertise of corporate, finance, tax and employment lawyers. Finally, our StrongerTogether in the region network enables us to select for each transaction the best lawyers in CEE.”

„Mittel- und Osteuropa ist ein vielfältiger Markt, auf dem Investoren häufig Anwälte mit internationaler Perspektive und Erfahrung brauchen. Freshfields ist einer der führenden Berater in der CEE-Region. Wir haben Mandaten bei den größten Transaktionen in CEE beraten. Das heißt, wir kennen die Region sehr gut und verstehen das regulatorische, kommerzielle und kulturelle Umfeld. Was uns von anderen unterscheidet, ist unser integrierter Ansatz, der die Expertise von Wirtschafts-, Finanz-, Steuer- und Arbeitsrechtlern kombiniert. Unser StrongerTogether Programm mit führenden lokalen Kanzleien ermöglicht es uns, die besten Anwälte für die jeweiligen Transaktionen in CEE auszuwählen.“

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DI Wolfgang VIEHAUSER, M.Sc.

*Member of the Board
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*Spokesman of the Board
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“The HYPO NOE Landesbank is Austria’s oldest and one of the country’s largest state-owned regional banks. Founded in 1888, we have a long tradition in the banking and financial services sector. HYPO NOE is wholly owned by the State of Lower Austria, enabling it to build on foundations of stable and dependable ownership. The proven strategy is based on regionality, closeness to customers and sustainability.

HYPO NOE is principally active in its core market of Lower Austria and Vienna, as well as in selected countries in the neighbouring CEE region. The HYPO NOE Landesbank’s aspiration and mission is to act as a secure and reliable partner to its public sector and real estate clients, large corporates, retail and corporate customers.”

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Als HYPO NOE Landesbank sind wir vor allem in unserem Kernmarkt Niederösterreich und Wien sowie in ausgewählten Ländern im benachbarten CEE-Raum tätig. Ziel und Mission der HYPO NOE Landesbank ist es, als sicherer und zuverlässiger Partner für die Öffentliche Hand, für unsere Immobilien-, Privat- und Unternehmenskunden aufzutreten.“



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HYPO NOE



Mr. Arda ERMUT

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*President
Investment Support and Promotion Agency
Turkey*

“As the President of the official investment promotion agency of Turkey and as the board member of the Vienna Economic Forum, I strongly attach vital importance to the VEF region. We collaborate with business associations and government institutions to realize B2B meetings with potential investors, organize their visits to Turkey, and help them with their entire investment process. In addition, we often attend investment related meetings and seminars all around the region.

Turkey is a dynamic and growing G20 economy that uniquely links the East with the West. We are supporting the growth of international investors through a business-friendly environment and we provide access to large domestic and international markets. In this regard, investors can always count on our support while planning to invest in Turkey.”

„Als Präsident der offiziellen Investitionsförderungsagentur der Türkei und als Vorstandsmitglied des Vienna Economic Forum, lege ich große Bedeutung auf die VEF Region. Wir arbeiten mit Wirtschaftsverbänden und Regierungsinstitutionen zusammen, um B2B-Treffen mit potenziellen Investoren zu organisieren, sie bei deren Besuchen in der Türkei zu begleiten und ihnen bei ihrem gesamten Investitionsprozess zu helfen. Darüber hinaus nehmen wir häufig an investitionsbezogenen Veranstaltungen und Seminaren in der Region teil.

Die Türkei ist eine dynamische und wachsende G20-Wirtschaft, die den Osten in einzigartiger Weise mit dem Westen verbindet. Wir unterstützen das Wachstum internationaler Investoren durch ein unternehmerfreundliches Umfeld und bieten Zugang zu großen nationalen und internationalen Märkten. In dieser Hinsicht können Anleger immer auf unsere Unterstützung zählen, wenn sie planen, in der Türkei zu investieren.“

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of GDP at
current prices
2017

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of population
with half under the age of 31

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Amb. Victor JACKOVICH

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*President
Jackovich International
USA*

“I am honoured to continue serving as a Member of the Board of the Vienna Economic Forum and to participate actively in the Forum’s activities in Austria and throughout the Southeast European region. My many years of active engagement in diplomacy and commercial activity, primarily in regions of direct interest to the Vienna Economic Forum have confirmed my belief in the strength and capabilities of the peoples of Southeast Europe and surrounding countries. The overall objective should be the full integration of all of Europe, including Southeast Europe, into Euro-Atlantic associations, including the European Union (EU). Today, we are all faced with new and unique challenges. But these challenges should not deter progress in forging strong regional, Euro-Atlantic and global relations. To the contrary, all the more reason why the work of the Vienna Economic Forum and like-minded organizations take on added tremendous significance. The keys to progress toward this objective of integration remain the same as they have always been: good governance, democracy, transparent markets, open societies and regional and global cooperation. Having celebrated its 15th anniversary, the Vienna Economic Forum can count on me for continued support in all of these key activities through the coming period.”

„Für mich ist es eine große Ehre, weiterhin Mitglied des Vorstands des Vienna Economic Forum zu sein und tatkräftig an den Aktivitäten des Forums in Österreich und im gesamten südost-europäischen Raum mitzuwirken. Mein langjähriges Engagement in der Diplomatie und den kommerziellen Aktivitäten, vor allem in den Regionen, die für das Vienna Economic Forum von direktem Interesse sind, hat meinen Glauben an die Stärke und die Fähigkeiten der Völker Südosteuropas und der umliegenden Länder bekräftigt. Das übergeordnete bzw. gesamte Ziel sollte die vollständige Integration ganz Europas, einschließlich Südosteuropas, in euro-atlantische Verbänden einschließlich der Europäischen Union (EU) sein. Heute stehen wir vor neuen und einzigartigen Herausforderungen. Diese Herausforderungen sollten jedoch den Fortschritt bei der Gestaltung starker regionaler, euroatlantischer und globaler Beziehungen nicht verhindern. Umso mehr, weil die Arbeit des Vienna Economic Forum und gleichgesinnten Institutionen eine enorme Bedeutung erlangt. Der Schlüssel zum Erreichen dieses Integrationsziels bleibt immer noch derselbe: gute Regierungsführung, Demokratie, transparente Märkte, offene Gesellschaften und regionale und globale Zusammenarbeit. Das Vienna Economic Forum, das inzwischen sein 15-jähriges Bestehen gefeiert hat, kann sich darauf verlassen, dass ich es bei all diesen wichtigen Aktivitäten auch in der kommenden Zeit unterstützen werde.“

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Dr. Gabriel LANSKY

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Partner
LANSKY, GANZGER + partner*

“LGP and VEF share the same vision of deepening the ties between the CEE/SEE countries and building bridges between businesses and political institutions. The conferences organised by VEF have become an important place to exchange ideas on regional and international topics, as well as to connect on a personal level with high-ranking decision makers.

As an international law firm with a strong focus on the region, we are proud of being part in VEF's success story.”

„LANSKY, GANZGER + partner Rechtsanwälte und das Vienna Economic Forum eint eine Vision. Wir verstehen uns als Brückenbauer zwischen den Ländern Mittelost- und Südosteuropas, ihrer Wirtschaft und ihrer politischen Institutionen. Die Konferenzen des Vienna Economic Forum sind zu einer wichtigen Plattform für den Ideenaustausch geworden, was Regionales aber auch überregionale Themen betrifft. Hier diskutieren hochrangige Entscheidungsträger.

Als international orientierte Wirtschaftsanwälte mit starkem Fokus auf die Märkte Mittelost- und Südosteuropas sind wir stolz, Teil dieser Erfolgsgeschichte zu sein.“

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Mag. Harald NEUMANN

*Vice-President
of Vienna Economic Forum*

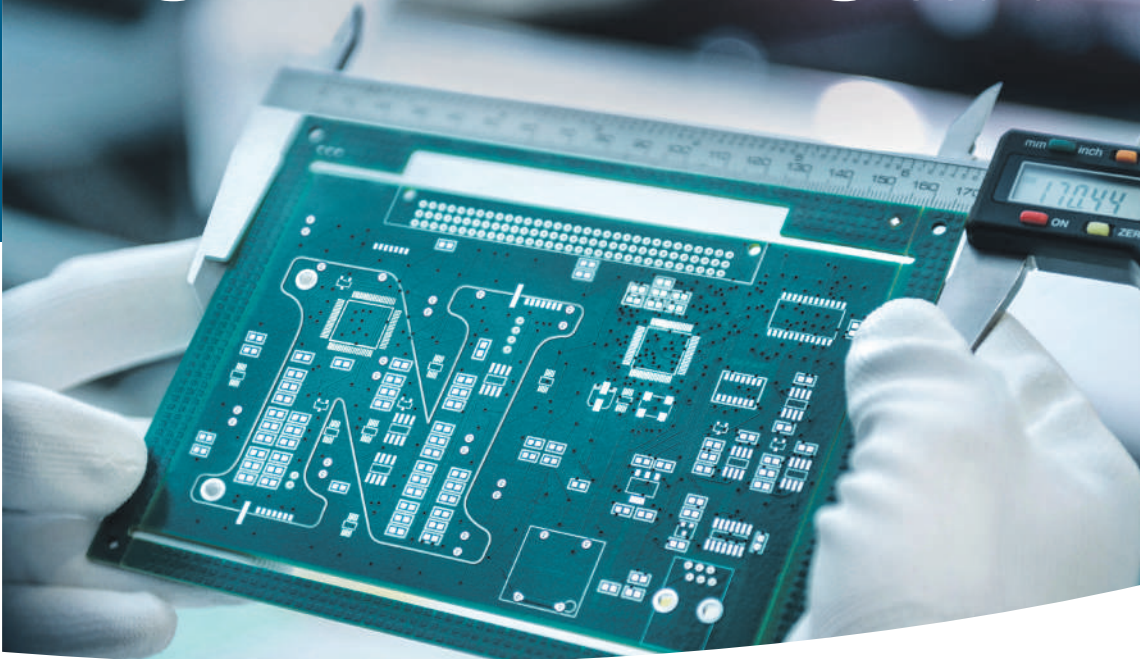
*CEO
Novomatic AG*

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“The Vienna Economic Forum builds a strong network and supports economic interests exactly in those regions, where NOVOMATIC has a strong presence. Due to our early commitment, we have been able to establish an excellent position in these markets. The NOVOMATIC Group generates around one quarter of its annual revenues in the member countries of the Vienna Economic Forum. For NOVOMATIC, technological advancement, economic growth and positive change to regulatory frameworks are key drivers of the business as they open new markets and business opportunities. A strong network such as the Vienna Economic Forum contributes to the further expansion of our leading position.”

„Das Vienna Economic Forum bildet ein starkes Netzwerk und fördert Investitionsmöglichkeiten in Regionen, in denen auch NOVOMATIC stark präsent ist. Aufgrund unseres Markteintritts vor rund 30 Jahren (1989) und der hervorragenden Positionierung in diesen Ländern, unterstützen wir die Arbeit des Vienna Economic Forums. Die NOVOMATIC-Gruppe erwirtschaftet rund ein Viertel ihres Umsatzes in den Mitgliedsstaaten des Vienna Economic Forum. Wesentliche Treiber unseres Erfolges dabei sind der technologische Wandel, wirtschaftliches Wachstum und positive Veränderungen regulatorischer Rahmenbedingungen, die laufend neue Märkte und Geschäftsmodelle eröffnen. Das starke Netzwerk des Vienna Economic Forum trägt dazu bei, unsere führende Position weiter auszubauen.“

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DI Peter UMUNDUM

Vice-President
of Vienna Economic Forum

Member of the Board
Österreichische Post AG

photo © tinefoto.com, M. Steinthaler

“Austrian Post’s international strategy fits very well with the VEF’s focus as Austrian Post has had successful investments in CEE and Turkey for many years. We support added value and economic development in this region with our strong local subsidiaries. Over the years, the VEF has established itself as a suitable platform to realise and support joint projects. The presence of Austrian Post in many of VEF’s partner countries enables productive exchange and utilizes synergies.”

„Die internationale Strategie der Österreichischen Post passt sehr gut zum Fokus des VEF, denn erfolgreiche Investments tätigt die Post schon sehr lange in CEE und der Türkei. In dieser Region unterstützen wir mit unseren starken Töchtern vor Ort die Wertschöpfung und dadurch die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung. Das VEF hat sich in der Vergangenheit als eine geeignete Plattform bewährt, um gemeinsame Projekte erfolgreich umzusetzen und zu unterstützen. Durch die Präsenz der Österreichische Post in vielen Partnerländern des VEF kann ein fruchtbarer Austausch entstehen und so Synergien genutzt werden.“

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Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*President
Serbian Association of Economists
Serbia*

“Serbian Economists Association (SES) strongly cooperates with the related organizations and institutions in the country, EU member states and Western Balkan countries (such as Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Croatian Economists Association, Bled School of Management, Montenegrin Chamber of Commerce, Vienna Economic Forum etc). Through organization of joint conferences and meetings and different projects support, SES aims to contribute to the improvement in the economic system, regulation and economic policy, promotion and enhancement of regional economic connectivity, regional investment incentives, and competitiveness increase.

In the last period, Serbia’s accession to the EU is being put in the context of the Western Balkans cooperation. Regional cooperation is an essential element of stabilization and association – the process guiding Serbia and the Western Balkan countries towards EU membership and a key factor for establishing political stability, security and economic prosperity.”

„Serbian Association of Economists (SAE) pflegt eine enge Zusammenarbeit mit den einschlägigen Organisationen und Institutionen des Landes, der EU-Mitgliedstaaten und der westlichen Balkanländern (wie der Wirtschaftskammer Serbiens, der kroatischen Vereinigung der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler, der Handelskammer von Bled, der Handelskammer Montenegros, Vienna Economic Forum etc.). Durch Organisation gemeinsamer Konferenzen und Treffen sowie durch Unterstützung verschiedener Projekte, trägt SAE zur Verbesserung des Wirtschaftssystems, der Regulierung und Wirtschaftspolitik, zur Förderung und Verbesserung der regionalen Wirtschaftskonnektivität, zu regionalen Investitionsanreizen und zur Steigerung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit bei.

Zur Zeit wird der Beitritt Serbiens zur EU in den Kontext der westlichen Balkan-Kooperation gestellt. Die regionale Zusammenarbeit ist ein wesentliches Element der Stabilisierung und der Assoziierung - ein Prozess, der Serbien und die Länder des westlichen Balkans auf dem Weg zur EU-Mitgliedschaft führt und ein Schlüsselfaktor für politische Stabilität, Sicherheit und wirtschaftlichen Wohlstand ist.“



Founded in 1947, the Serbian Association of Economists is a professional organization which gathers professional economists and aspires to promote the economics profession for the benefit of the society at large. Main activities of the Association are: organization of scientific conferences and seminars, education and training programs, publishing activity and collaboration with academic institutions, regulatory bodies and government agencies. These activities are oriented toward the development and popularization of economic science and profession, enhancement of the quality of corporate and public governance, improvement of the economic system, regulatory framework and economic policy, strengthening of the competitiveness of Serbian economy, and promotion of ethical behavior in economic decision-making.



The Kopaonik Business Forum, organized by the Serbian Association of Economists, is held in the first week of March at the Congress Center of the "Grand" hotel at Kopaonik. Over the last ten years, the Forum has been organized under the auspices of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia.

The Kopaonik Business Forum gathers renowned experts and eminent individuals from the local and regional economic and political circles. The goal of the Forum is to build a platform for exchange of thought and a constructive debate with strong argumentation, thereby perceiving key reform challenges from different perspectives: political and economic, micro and macroeconomic, from the perspective of real and financial sectors, domestic and foreign investors, private and public enterprises, theory and practice. Just as the World Economic Forum in Davos is a sort of a reality check on a global level, the Forum is a place where the results of our country's economic policy between two Forums are summarized. Over the last couple of years, the Forum has acquired a strong regional dimension.



Foundation of the Serbian Association of Economists for Supporting Students of Economics was established in 2016 with the aim of developing and promoting economics as a science and profession, affirming talented students of economics, improving the quality of education offered to students at faculties of economics and enhancing the quality of scientific research in the field of economics. The Foundation achieves the abovementioned targets by granting scholarships to talented students of faculties of economics, presenting awards to successful students of economics, by organising fundraising charity activities, independently or in cooperation with other similar organisations, through cooperation with state and privately owned business entities, cooperation with universities, schools, associations and other similar organisations whose primary interest is to promote economics.



Ing. Wolfgang HESOUN

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*General Director
SIEMENS AG Österreich*

“Siemens is a successful leading company in Austria and the 18 CEE countries, for which we bear responsibility out of our office in Vienna. If we handle orders with our approximately 20,700 employees and 16 plants in the CEE region, the local economy benefits because we regularly bring in partners, suppliers, logistics companies, as well as research expertise and know-how from outside our company. Technical excellence, high reliability and regional diversity are some of our strengths that drive electrification, automation and digitization to the benefit of our customers and their competitiveness. With creative inventiveness, we implement sustainable projects and create added value for society.”

„Siemens ist ein erfolgreicher Leitbetrieb in Österreich und den 18 CEE-Ländern, für die wir aus Wien heraus Verantwortung tragen. Wickeln wir mit unseren rund 20.700 Mitarbeitern und 16 Werken der CEE-Region Aufträge ab, profitiert die lokale Wirtschaft, weil wir regelmäßig Partner, Zulieferer, Logistikbetriebe, und auch Forschungsexpertise und Know-how von außerhalb unseres Unternehmens dazu holen. Technische Exzellenz, hohe Verlässlichkeit sowie die regionale Vielfalt sind einige unserer Stärken, mit der wir Elektrifizierung, Automatisierung und Digitalisierung zum Vorteil unserer Kunden und deren Wettbewerbsfähigkeit vorantreiben. Mit kreativem Erfindergeist setzen wir nachhaltige Projekte um und schaffen einen Mehrwert für die Gesellschaft.“

The background of the advertisement features a blurred office setting with two people, a man and a woman, looking at a laptop. Overlaid on this are several lines of binary code (0s and 1s) in white and orange, creating a digital atmosphere. The Siemens logo and tagline are positioned in the upper left, and a large teal text box is in the lower middle.

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Dr. Ognian DONEV

*Vice-President
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Chairman of the Board of Directors and
Executive Director Sopharma PLC
Bulgaria*

“Vienna Economic Forum to me is an enhancer of opportunities to exchange Ideas! The Vienna Economic Talks 2018 in Sofia was the ground for creating new partnerships and for uniting the leaders of the Balkan Countries around the West European spirit.

This initiative stirred the process of sharing solutions and expertise, of collaboration on common challenges to the next level. I am grateful for the involvement of professionals and leaders on many levels and for the willingness to continue working together for a better tomorrow. Sharing is becoming more important and helps save resources by finding fast and flexible solutions for improving the wellbeing throughout Europe. In that sense Vienna Economic Forum is an invaluable network!”

*„Für mich ist das Vienna Economic Forum ein Verstärker zum Ideenaustausch!
Die Vienna Economic Talks 2018 in Sofia haben zu neuen Partnerschaften und zur Vereinigung
der Führungskräfte der Balkanstaaten im Sinne des Westeuropäischen Geistes beigetragen.*

*Diese Initiative hob den Prozess der gesamten Lösungen, Expertisen und der Zusammen-
arbeit auf ein neues Niveau. Ich bin dankbar für das Involvieren von Spezialisten und
Führungskräften in unterschiedlichsten Bereichen und für den Willen, weiterhin zusammen
für eine bessere Zukunft zu arbeiten. Das Miteinanderteilen wird immer wichtiger und hilft
schnellere und flexiblere Lösungen mit weniger Ressourcen zu erzielen, die zu einem höheren
Standard im gesamten Europa beitragen. In diesem Sinne ist Vienna Economic Forum ein
unschätzbar wichtiges Netzwerk!“*

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**DI Dr. Günther
RABENSTEINER**

*President
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Member of the Board
Verbund AG*

“In 2018 the Vienna Economic Forum organised numerous activities in Austria and in the Balkan region to further strengthen regional cooperation of our countries. 2018 gave us even more possibilities to act as a platform for the European integration, as Bulgaria and Austria took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Let us bring in our joint expertise to establish and ensure the regional and economic cooperation in the broad European context based also on cross border projects.”

„Im Jahr 2018 organisierte Vienna Economic Forum zahlreiche Aktivitäten in Österreich und auf dem Balkan, um die regionale Zusammenarbeit unserer Länder weiter zu stärken. 2018 ergab für uns noch mehr Möglichkeiten, als Plattform für die europäische Integration zu fungieren, da Bulgarien und Österreich, die Präsidentschaft des Rates der Europäischen Union innehatten. Lassen Sie uns weiterhin unsere gemeinsame Expertise einbringen, um die regionale und wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit im breiten europäischen Kontext auch auf der Grundlage von grenzüberschreitenden Projekten zu etablieren und sicherzustellen.“

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Prof. Dr. Günther OFNER

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*Member of the
Executive Board
Flughafen Wien AG*

“The Vienna Economic Forum promotes economic cooperation among the regions along the Adria as far as the Black Sea and provides important impetus for joint projects to further develop this area. Vienna Airport is a significant gateway with more than two million passengers in this region each year. It links more than 27 million passengers annually to 71 countries in 205 destinations. The close collaboration and intensive exchange between the Vienna Economic Forum on the one hand with all its supporters and participants and Vienna Airport on the other hand creates a win-win situation for all partners.”

„Das Vienna Economic Forum fördert die wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit der Regionen entlang der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer und setzt wichtige Impulse für gemeinsame Projekte zur Weiterentwicklung dieses Gebiets. Der Flughafen Wien ist mit jährlich mehr als zwei Millionen Passagieren in diese Region ein bedeutendes Gateway und verbindet die insgesamt über 27 Millionen Passagiere im Jahr mit 71 Ländern in 205 Destinationen. Die enge Kooperation und der intensive Austausch zwischen dem Vienna Economic Forum mit all seinen Unterstützern und Beteiligten sowie dem Flughafen Wien schafft eine Win-win-Situation für alle Partner.“



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Dr. Ludwig NIESEN

Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum

Chief Operating &
Technology Officer
Wiener Börse AG

“The Vienna Stock Exchange has 20 years of experience with state-of-the-art, fully digital stock exchange infrastructure. As a service provider, it also shares its know-how with stock exchange operators and trading participants in the Central and Eastern European region. We cooperate with over ten markets in the field of real-time data distribution, index calculation and the operation of trading systems. The Vienna Economic Forum gives us the opportunity to strengthen our network within the region even further and to build new bridges,” says Ludwig Niesen, Chief Operating & Technology Officer, Wiener Börse AG.”

„Die Wiener Börse hat 20 Jahre Erfahrung mit topmoderner, volldigitaler Börsen-Infrastruktur. Als Service-Provider teilt sie ihr Know-How auch mit Börsenbetreibern und Handelsteilnehmern in der Region Zentral- und Osteuropa. Die Wiener Börse kooperiert mit über zehn Märkten im Bereich der Echtzeit-Datenverteilung, Indexberechnung sowie dem Betrieb von Handelssystemen. Das Vienna Economic Forum öffnet uns die Möglichkeiten uns in der Region noch stärker zu vernetzen und neue Brücken zu schlagen,“ sagt Ludwig Niesen, Chief Operating & Technology Officer, Wiener Börse AG.“



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Dr. Kurt Gollowitzer

*Member of the Board
of Vienna Economic Forum*

*CEO
Wien Holding GmbH*

photo Dr. Gollowitzer © B. Niderzky

“With our projects and companies, we strengthen Vienna's position as a top business location. That's one of our main tasks as a company of the City of Vienna. To secure this position and strengthen it even further in the future, we rely on competent partners such as the Vienna Economic Forum. With its knowledge and expertise, it supports us in making new contacts in the region from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea. This way, we are able to use potential synergy effects for Vienna.”

„Eine unserer Aufgaben als Unternehmen der Stadt Wien ist es, mit unseren Projekten und Unternehmen Wiens Position als Wirtschaftsstandort zu festigen und auch in Zukunft noch weiter zu stärken. Das Vienna Economic Forum ist ein kompetenter Partner, der uns mit seinem Wissen und seiner Expertise dabei unterstützt, neue Kontakte in der Region von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer zu knüpfen. So können wir mögliche Synergieeffekte optimal für Wien nutzen.“



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VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM ECONOMY MEETS POLITICS 2018



ORDINARY BOARD MEETING OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 29 January 2018

The annual Ordinary Board Meeting of Vienna Economic Forum took place on 29 January 2018 in the Säulenhalle of the Wiener Börse AG.

Host and Vienna Economic Forum Board Member **Dr. Ludwig NIESSEN**, Chief Operating & Technology Officer at Wiener Börse AG, welcomed the attendees and explained the significance of Vienna Economic Forum and the VEF region for Wiener Börse AG:

“As operator of stock exchange infrastructure within Central and Eastern Europe, the Vienna Stock Exchange is highly appreciated worldwide for its unique know-how. The Vienna Stock Exchange cooperates with over ten markets in the area of real-time data dissemination, index calculation and operation of trading infrastructure. Our success in the establishment of this network is rooted in our ability to build bridges. We are looking forward to exchanging ideas and know-how within the Vienna Economic Forum,” says Ludwig Nießen.

The Members of the Board were informed about the activities of Vienna Economic Forum in 2017 and the planned events in 2018 by Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum.

Chaired by the VEF President DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, Member of the Board at Verbund AG, the following additions and changes to the Board and various Committees of Vienna Economic Forum were announced:

New Vienna Economic Forum Board Members:

- **Mr. Alejandro PLATER**, Chief Executive Officer & Chief Operating Officer, AI Telekom Austria Group
- **Dr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ**, President of Serbian Association of Economists

Changes in the Vienna Economic Forum Board:

- New Vice President **DI Peter UMUNDUM**, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG and longtime Board Member of VEF

New Members of the Patrons Committee:

- **H.E. Ramush HARADINAJ**, Prime Minister of Kosovo
- **H.E. Zoran ZAEV**, Prime Minister of Macedonia
- **H.E. Pavel FILIP**, Prime Minister of Moldova
- **H.E. Duško MARKOVIĆ**, Prime Minister of Montenegro



New Members of the Ambassadors Committee:

- **H.E. Victor OSIPOV**, Ambassador of Moldova
- **H.E. Mehmet Ferden ÇARIKÇI**, Ambassador of Turkey
- **H.E. Ksenija ŠKRILEC**, Ambassador of Slovenia

New Members of the Honorary Committee:

- **Dr. Karl STOSS**, General Manager of Casinos Austria (2007–2017), President of the Österreichisches Olympisches Comité, founding member and active supporter of Vienna Economic Forum
- **DI Dr. Erwin PRÖLL**, Former Governor of Lower Austria (1992–2017) and longtime active supporter of Vienna Economic Forum
- **Dr. Milan PARIVODIĆ**, President of Parivodic Advokati, until January 2018 Board Member of Vienna Economic Forum and longtime active supporter of Vienna Economic Forum

All changes will come into effect after confirmation by the meeting of the General Assembly of Vienna Economic Forum, which will take place on 28 March 2018 in the Säulenhalle of the Wiener Börse AG.

Following this year's board meeting, Wiener Börse AG, together with the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, invited to a Cocktail Reception, which was attended by members of the Ambassadors Committee **H.E. Roland BIMO**, Ambassador of Albania; **H.E. Ivan SIRAKOV**, Ambassador of Bulgaria; **H.E. Victor OSIPOV**, Ambassador of Moldova and **H.E. Mehmet Ferden ÇARIKÇI**, Ambassador of Turkey next to various members of the VEF Honorary Committee, diplomats of VEF member countries and the VEF Arbitrators.

The team of Vienna Economic Forum would like to thank all Board Members, Members and Partners for their excellent support of the numerous activities of VEF in Austria and abroad in the year 2017 and for their constant trust!

The success story of this development motivates us further to conquer new horizons!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 28 March 2018

On 28 March 2018, the annual General Assembly of Vienna Economic Forum took place.

Host and Vienna Economic Forum Board Member **Dr. Ludwig NIESSEN**, Member of the Management Board, COO/CTO of Wiener Börse AG, welcomed the attendees for the second time this year in the Säulenhalle of Wiener Börse AG.

The present Members of the Board and Ordinary Members were welcomed by the Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, who informed about the activities of Vienna Economic Forum in 2017 and the planned events in 2018.

Chaired by the President, DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, Member of the Board of Verbund AG, the following new members have been confirmed by the General Assembly:

New Vienna Economic Forum Board Members:

- **Mr. Alejandro PLATER**, Chief Executive Officer & Chief Operating Officer, AI Telekom Austria Group
- **Dr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ**, President of Serbian Association of Economists

Changes in the Vienna Economic Forum Board:

- New Vice President **DI Peter UMUNDUM**, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG and longtime Board Member of VEF

New Members of the Patrons Committee:

- **H.E. Ramush HARADINAJ**, Prime Minister of Kosovo
- **H.E. Zoran ZAEV**, Prime Minister of Macedonia
- **H.E. Pavel FILIP**, Prime Minister of Moldova
- **H.E. Duško MARKOVIĆ**, Prime Minister of Montenegro

New Members of the Ambassadors Committee:

- **H.E. Victor OSIPOV**, Ambassador of Moldova
- **H.E. Mehmet Ferden ÇARIKÇI**, Ambassador of Turkey
- **H.E. Ksenija ŠKRILEC**, Ambassador of Slovenia
- **H.E. Mr. Željko PEROVIĆ**, Ambassador of Montenegro



New Members of the Honorary Committee:

- **Dr. Karl STOSS**, General Manager of Casinos Austria (2007–2017), President of the Österreichisches Olympisches Comité, founding member and active supporter of Vienna Economic Forum
- **DI Dr. Erwin PRÖLL**, Former Governor of Lower Austria (1992–2017) and longtime active supporter of Vienna Economic Forum
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Following this year's general meeting, Wiener Börse AG, together with the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, invited to a Cocktail Reception. Present were the Members of the Ambassadors Committee **H.E. Mr. Roland BIMO**, Ambassador of Albania; **H.E. Mr. Tomislav LEKO**, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Representatives of the embassies of **Romania and Montenegro**; the newest Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **Mr. Alejandro PLATER** as well as arbitrators and honorary members of the Vienna Economic Forum.

The team of Vienna Economic Forum would like to thank all Members and Partners for their excellent support of the numerous activities of VEF in Austria and abroad in the year 2017 and for their constant trust!

The success story of this development motivates us further to conquer new horizons!



Family Photo of Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018



Podium of Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018



**VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM
SOFIA TALKS 2018
POLITICS MEETS ECONOMY**

**Under the Auspices
of the Bulgarian Presidency
of the Council of the European Union**

**Official Side Event of the
EU-Western Balkans Summit**

18 May 2018
National Palace of Culture – Congress Centre Sofia (NDK)
Hall 6, Bulgaria Square 1, 1263 Sofia, Bulgaria

Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018 took place on **18 May 2018** at the **National Palace of Culture (NDK)** in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Vienna Economic Forum is proud to have been able to organize **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** as part of the **official programme of the Bulgarian EU-Presidency** and as the **official Side-Event of the EU Western Balkans Summit** and to have welcomed 300 registered participants from 31 countries.

Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018 enabled the **Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans**, together with the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, **H.E. Mr. Boyko BORISSOV**, to discuss concrete economic projects with high-ranking representatives of **Austrian, European and international companies** – members of Vienna Economic Forum, and to facilitate and accelerate their implementation.

During the opening, which was moderated by **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, **H.E. Ms. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, Minister of the Bulgarian EU Presidency 2018; **H.E. Ms. Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA**, Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as **H.E. Ms. Mariya GABRIEL**, EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, presented interesting insights into the priorities of the Bulgarian Government and the European Commission with regard to the regional economic development of the Western Balkans.

VEF Member of the Board and President of Jackovich International LLC, USA, **Ambassador Victor JACKOVICH** moderated the Round Table Discussion: *Regional Cooperation as a Part of the European Integration. The Western Balkans: Reality and Expectation – Who Takes Responsibility?* Initiated by **H.E. Mr. Boyko BORISSOV**, Prime Minister of Bulgaria and **Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**, the discussion was enriched by relevant contributions with regional focus by the Members of the Patrons Committee and Patrons of Vienna Economic Forum: **H.E. Mr. Edi RAMA**, Prime Minister of Albania; **H.E. Mr. Ramush HARADINAJ**, Prime Minister of Kosovo; **H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV**, Prime Minister of Macedonia and **H.E. Mr. Duško MARKOVIĆ**, Prime Minister of Montenegro; and **H.E. Ms. Ana BRNABIĆ**, Prime Minister of Serbia. True to the motto: *“Politics meets Economy”*, the Prime Ministers engaged in an in-depth discussion with the Members of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, who presented investments and future strategies of their companies in the Western Balkans.

The represented VEF Members of the Board were **DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER**, Member of the Board of Verbund AG and President of Vienna Economic Forum; **DI Peter UMUNDUM**, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG and Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum; **Dr. Ognian DONEV**, Chairman of the Board of Directors & Executive Director of Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria, and Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum; **Mr. Alejandro PLATER**, CEO and COO of A1 Telekom Austria Group; **Mr. Emmanuel FOREST**, CEO of Bouygues Europe SA, Belgium, and **Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, Managing Director of AME International. **Mr. Rocco Luigi BUBBICO, PhD**, represented the European Investment Bank (EIB) by speaking about EIBs engagement in the Balkans.

Organized by the Board of Vienna Economic Forum and Österreichische Post AG, an **Informal Evening Meeting** followed by a **Cocktail Reception** took place at Hotel Marinela on the eve of **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018**, on 17 May 2018, with **H.E. Mr. Emil Karanikolov**, Minister of Economy of Bulgaria, being Speaker of Honour. In addition, **Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ**, President of the Serbian Association of Economist and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum; **Mr. Symeon TSOMOKOS**, Founder and Chairman of Delphi Economic Forum, Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum; **Ms. Danela ARSOVSKA**, President of the Macedonian Chambers of Commerce; and **Mr. Gordan MILINIĆ**, Director of the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented their organizations and their roles in the Western Balkans.

It is the aim of Vienna Economic Forum to contribute to the regional economic development of the entire region of South-Eastern Europe. With this in mind, Vienna Economic Forum wants to build a bridge between the Bulgarian EU-Presidency in 2018 and the subsequent Austrian EU-Presidency in the second half of the year under the motto “*Politics meets Economy*” – which is dedicated to implementing this concern. Therefore, we plan our **15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2018** on **19 November 2018** in Vienna under the same motto and have already advertised this in all countries of the region.

Vienna Economic Forum is very proud that **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** was organized together with the **Bulgarian Ministry for the Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018** and the Ministry of Economy of Bulgaria, as well as with the great support of **Sopharma PLC**, Bulgaria.

Vienna Economic Forum thanks all cooperation partners for their support, especially **AI Telekom Austria Group**, **Österreichische Post AG**, **Penkov, Markov & Partners**, **AIK Banka**, **Atlas Bank**, **Vienna Insurance Group**, **Investment Management Exhibition**, **Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (KRIB)**, **Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)**, **Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA)**, **Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA)**, **Delphi Economic Forum**, **SeeNews** and **MonitorTV**.

Special thanks to:



Regional Media Partner:



Main Media Partner:



PROGRAM

THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2018

LOCATION

Hotel Marinela, Blvd “James Bouchier” 100, 1407 g. k. Lozenets, Sofia

6:00–8:00 p.m. **INFORMAL EVENING MEETING (by personal invitation)**

WESTERN BALKANS – REGION WITH FUTURE

The evening will be moderated by

DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER, *Member of the Board of Verbund AG*
President of Vienna Economic Forum

Informal Talks with high representatives from the Economy and the Politics from the region

Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ, *President of Serbian Economists Association*
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Mr. Symeon TSOMOKOS
Founder and Chairman of Delphi Economic Forum
Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum

Ms. Danela ARSOVSKA
President of Macedonian Chambers of Commerce

Mr. Gordan MILINIĆ
Director of Foreign Investment Promotion Agency
of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Speaker of Honour

H.E. Mr. Emil KARANIKOLOV, *Minister of Economy of Bulgaria*

Followed by

WELCOME COCKTAIL

hosted by the Board of Vienna Economic Forum
and Österreichische Post AG
(by personal invitation)

FRIDAY, 18 MAY 2018

LOCATION

The National Palace of Culture – Congress Centre Sofia (NDK), Hall 6

8:45–9:45 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

9:45–9:55 a.m. **FAMILY PHOTO (by invitation)**

10:00–10:30 a.m. **OPENING of VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – SOFIA TALKS 2018**

Moderation

Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA, *Secretary General*
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Opening Statement

H.E. Ms. Lilyana PAVLOVA, *Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency*
of the Council of the European Union 2018

Greetings**H.E. Ms. Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA***Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria***Impulse Statement****H.E. Ms. Mariya GABRIEL***Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, European Commission*10:30 a.m.–
12:30 p.m.**ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION – Politics Meets Economy****REGIONAL COOPERATION AS A PART OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. THE WESTERN BALKANS: REALITY AND EXPECTATION – WHO TAKES THE RESPONSIBILITY?**

Powered by A1 Telekom Austria Group

Moderation of the Discussion**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH***President of Jackovich International LLC, USA
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Introduction to the Discussion****H.E. Mr. Boyko BORISSOV**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***Participants from the Side of the Politics
Regional Leaders from the Western Balkans****H.E. Mr. Edi RAMA**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Denis ZVIZDIĆ**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Ramush HARADINAJ**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Duško MARKOVIĆ**, *Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Ms. Ana BRNABIĆ****Participants from the Side of the Economy****DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER***Member of the Board of Verbund AG, Austria
President of Vienna Economic Forum***DI Peter UMUNDUM***Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG
Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum***Mr. Alejandro PLATER***CEO/CTO, A1 Telekom Austria Group
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Dr. Ognian DONEV***Chairman of the Board of Directors & Executive Director,***Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria***Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum*

Mr. Emmanuel FOREST

CEO, BOUYGUES Europe SA, Belgium

Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Mag. Heinz MESSINGER

Managing Director, AME International GmbH Austria,

Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Mr. Rocco Luigi BUBBICO, PhD

European Investment Bank (EIB), Luxembourg

CONCLUDING REMARKS

by the Moderator

CLOSING REMARKS

by the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum

12:30–2:00 p.m. **Prolonged informal discussion for all participants**

in the framework of a

GET-TOGETHER LUNCH BUFFET

hosted by the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

and Sopharma PLC

2:00 p.m.

END OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – SOFIA TALKS 2018

Vienna Economic Forum is proud to cooperate with:



Ein Unternehmen der SCSG Wien

Organizational Support:



PHOTO GALLERY



*Welcome to H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Zoran Zaev by Ambassador
Dr. Elena Kircheva,
Secretary General of VEF*



*Welcome to H.E. Prime Minister Ms. Ana Brnabić by Dr. Ognian Donev, Chairman of the Board of
Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria, Vice President of VEF and
DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, President of VEF*



*Former Prime Minister of Bulgaria,
H.E. Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha*



*Welcome to
H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Boyko Borissov*



Welcome to
H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Duško Marković





*H.E. Ms. Lilyana Pavlova,
Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union 2018
welcomes the participants*

EU-Western Balkans Summit

Leaders' Agenda

Sofia 2018





Opening of Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018





Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum moderates the Opening of the Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018





H.E. Dr. Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2018 presents the priorities of the Bulgarian Government with regards to the regional economic development of the Western Balkans





High ranking Audience



H.E. Ms. Ekaterina Zaharieva, Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria greets the distinguished participants and guests



Balkans Summit Leaders' Agenda Sofia 2018



H.E. Ms. Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society in her Impulse Statement provides interesting insights into the Priorities of the Bulgarian EU Presidency and the European Commission



*H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Boyko Borisov, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum,
Advocate for the Western Balkans*





Amb. Victor Jackovich, President of Jackovich International LLC, USA Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum moderates the Round Table Discussion: "Regional Cooperation as a part of the European Integration. The Western Balkans: Reality and Expectation – Who takes the Responsibility?"



*H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Edi Rama, Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*





Eminent audience



*H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Ramush Haradinaj,
Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*





H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Zoran Zaev, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum







*H.E. Prime Minister
Ms. Ana Brnabić*



*H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Duško Marković,
Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*





DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, President of Vienna Economic Forum offers expert views on behalf of the members of Vienna Economic Forum on the economic development towards the Western Balkan countries





*DI Peter Umundum,
Member of the Board,
Österreichische Post AG,
Vice President of Vienna
Economic Forum*







Mr. Alejandro Plater, COO, AI Telekom Austria Group, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum





*Dr. Emmanuel Forest, CEO,
Bouygues Europe SA,
Belgium, Member of the
Board of Vienna Economic
Forum*



*Mag. Heinz Messinger,
Managing Director,
AME International GmbH,
Member of the Board of
Vienna Economic Forum*





Mr. Rocco Luigi Bubbico, PhD, European Investment Bank (EIB) Luxembourg

AWARDING THE PARTICIPANTS





BILATERAL TALKS





*Signing of
Bilateral Cooperation Agreement
in the area of Energy*



WHERE ECONOMY MEETS POLITICS ...



... THE EXCELLENT PLATTFORM FOR COMMUNICATION



RECEPTION AT HOTEL MARINELA ...



... NETWORKING IN A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE





















17TH TRADITIONAL GARDEN PARTY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

“Culinary and Musical Journey through the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum.”

On 15 June 2018, Vienna Economic Forum together with the Ambassadors of the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum invited to the **17th Traditional Garden Party – “Culinary and Musical Journey through the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum”** at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna.

The guests were treated to country-specific, traditional culinary delicacies by the Vienna Economic Forum Member Countries, and artistic performances from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine were the highlight of the evening, with regional folk dances inspiring many of the guests to join.

In addition to the Ambassadors of the Member Countries, **Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, had the pleasure of welcoming Vienna Economic Forum President **Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER**, Member of the Board of Verbund AG, Vienna Economic Forum Vice-President **Mag. Hermann ANDERL**, Managing Director of Canon CEE GmbH and the Vienna Economic Forum Members of the Board **Ms. Polina CHRISTOVA**, Executive Director of HYPO NOE Group Bank AG, **Mr. Ahmet Mesut ERSOY**, CEO of DenizBank AG and **Dr. Ludwig NIESEN**, COO/CTO of Wiener Börse AG. In addition, the Vienna Economic Forum Arbitrators **KR Ing. Otto MUSILEK** and **Mag. Marika LEVENA** were present as well as Vienna Economic Forum Honorary Member **Dr. Johann SOLLGRUBER**, the Vienna Economic Forum Members of the Culture Committee **Prof. Stefan KAMILAROV** and **Prof. Eugeniy CHEVKENOV**, the Vienna Economic Forum Members **DI Birol KILIC** and **Dr. Vladimir PENKOV** and senior representatives of the Austrian ministries and institutions.

With a greeting address **H.E. Ms. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU, praised the very successful implementation of **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** on 18 May 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria, in which the 6 Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans participated.

The numerous Members, Partners and Friends of Vienna Economic Forum enjoyed the good atmosphere, the culinary delights and the musical pleasure. This year, the unique atmosphere was once again proof of the similarities that connect the people of the region from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea.

INTERNATIONAL
NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATION



CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS (ECOSOC)

Go South East

REGISTERED IN THE
TRANSPARENCY REGISTER
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION

INVITATION

Together with

H.E. Roland BIMO, H.E. Tomislav LEKO, H.E. Dr. Ivan SIRAKOV,
H.E. Dr. Vesna ČVJETKOVIĆ, H.E. Mag. Sami UKELLI,
H.E. Loretta ZAKAREVIČIENĖ, H.E. Dr. Vasilka POPOSKA-TRENEVSKA,
H.E. Victor OSIPOV, H.E. Željko PEROVIĆ, H.E. Bogdan MAZURU,
H.E. Mag. Ksenija ŠKRILEC, H.E. Mehmet Ferden ÇARIKÇI and
H.E. Dr. Oleksandr SCHERBA

and

on behalf of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA

has the honour
to invite you to the

17th Traditional Garden Party **“Culinary and musical journey through the partner countries of Vienna Economic Forum”**

on Friday, 15 June 2018, from 6 to 10 pm
at the hall and garden of Diplomatic Academy Vienna,
FFavoritenstraße 15a, 1040 Vienna

PHOTO GALLERY



Family Photo

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD,
AMBASSADORS AND HONORARY COMMITTEE,
AS WELL AS ARBITRATORS OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM





GOOD ATMOSPHERE ...







... VARIOUS DELICACIES ...







... AND CULTURAL PROGRAM ...







... OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM MEMBER COUNTRIES





15TH JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



**We are writing the story of the growing together of the
Vienna Economic Forum region – a European region!**



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Austrian
Presidency
of the
Council of the
European Union



Family Photo of the 15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum

15TH JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2018

The Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans – again at the Vienna Economic Forum for a round of cooperation

The Management Board and the Members of the Vienna Economic Forum had the honor and the pleasure to once again welcome high-ranking round of Prime Ministers from the Western Balkans at the **15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2018** which under the motto “*Economy Meets Politics*” took place at the House of Engineers, on 19 November 2018 in Vienna.

The **15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum** was held under the Patronage of **H.E. Mr. Sebastian KURZ**, Federal Chancellor of Austria und as official event of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In the panel discussion on “**Regional Cooperation as a Part of the European Integration. Digitisation – Bridging Gaps and Chance to Leapfrog**”, together with **H.E. Ms. Mariya GABRIEL**, EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, the Prime Ministers of Albania, **H.E. Edi RAMA**, of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **H.E. Denis ZVIZDIC**, of Kosovo, **H.E. Ramush HARADINAJ**, of Montenegro, **H.E. Duško MARKOVIĆ** and Macedonia's Vice Prime Minister, responsible for the economy, **H.E. Kocho ANGJUSHEV**, took part.

In her Opening speech, the **Vienna Economic Forum Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, went back to the founding of Vienna Economic Forum in 2004 and emphasized, that when comparing the economic situation of the 14 Member countries of Vienna Economic Forum with the 15 years ago, it shows a generally positive economic development. Over all these years, the committed economy has helped to change a lot in the Vienna Economic Forum countries. One thing only has remained unchanged: all of the states from the region continue to be in the focus of the economic interest of the Members of Vienna Economic Forum and this interest is shaped by the long-term motivation to participate in the economic revitalization and development of the entire region. The unchanged goal of the Vienna Economic Forum is to continue focusing on it and, as Vienna Economic Forum members, to bring renowned Austrian, European and international companies with a serious interest in the economic development of the countries of the region on board.

The positive economic development is a result of a **cooperation between business and politics** and in this regard, the Secretary General has extended a big thank you to the representatives of the regional policy in the Balkans, the Prime Ministers who, as Vienna Economic Forum patron members of the Patronage Committee, support this cooperation.

In his greeting, the host **Dr. Kari KAPSCH**, President of the **Austrian Association for Electrical Engineering**, spoke about the development of the electrical engineering and energy industries and the many years of good experience of the association.

The **Vienna Economic Forum President DI Günther RABENSTEINER** emphasized the development of the Vienna Economic Forum on THE European Economic Platform, based in Vienna, as a platform for confidence building, for exchange of ideas and concrete cooperation in the economic sector, together with state institutions and political circles! A platform where visionaries from the worlds of business and politics meet and one that offers support and practical assistance to Vienna Economic Forum members and the many representatives from business and politics in the various member states.

In her impulse statement, the **Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs, H.E. Dr. Margarete SCHRAMBÖCK**, stressed the importance and the advanced achievements of the Balkan countries cooperation in the area of digitisation and the important role of this cooperation.

In his External View Statement, **Dr. Ivan KRASTEVI**, appointed for 2018–2019 as the Henry A. Kissinger Chair in Foreign Policy and International Relations at the John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress, USA, introduced the high ranking audience with his visions of the development of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe.

Under the moderation by **Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, Managing Director of AME International GmbH, Member of the Board of Management of Vienna Economic Forum, the high-ranking representatives of the Austrian business community and members of the Vienna Economic Forum Executive Board **DI. Peter UMUNDUM**, Member of the Board of Austrian Post and Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, **Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ**, Spokesman of the Executive Board, EVN AG and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **Mag. Hermann ANDERL**, Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH and Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, **Dr. Gabriel LANSKY, Partner, LANSKY, GANZGER + partner**, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum and **Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER, CEO**, A1 Telekom Austria and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum discussed important aspects of regional cooperation in the digital industry.

Since Vienna Economic Forum always sets concrete and pragmatic goals, the Secretary General reported on the positive results from the Vienna Economic Forum- Sofia Talks 2018 and, at the end of the 1st Session invited for a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a **Digital ICT School** for the young people of the Vienna Economic Forum region.

At the **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018**, which was held on 18. May 2018 in Sofia, **together with the 6 countries of the Western Balkans** under the same motto “Business meets politics”, the representative of A1 Telekom Austria Group informed the Prime Ministers of the Western Balkan countries about the serious need in the telecom industry to train a new generation of young people capable of “absorbing” the necessary knowledge in the rapid development of world digitization.

The Vienna Economic Forum took this vision which further became a VEF inspiration with the willingness and active commitment of the Rectors and Professors of **3 regional universities** – New Bulgarian University (NBU) Sofia, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems and TITU MAIORESCU University of Bucharest who came to a joint Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed in the presence of **EU Commissioner Mariya GABRIEL**,

the CEO of AI Telekom Austria Group **Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**, Member of the Board of the Vienna Economic Forum and other VEF Board members. With this initiative, Vienna Economic Forum continues to focus on the good economic development of the member states.

In the **Afternoon Working Session “A Strong Europe Through a Strong Economic Connection: Building Bridges”**, Ministers **H.E Mr. Damian GJIKNURI**, Minister of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania, **H.E. Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council, **H.E. Mr. Kreshnik BEKTESHI**, Minister of Economy of Macedonia, **H.E. Prof. Dr. Antony ANTON**, Minister of Energy of Romania and **H.E. Mr Zdravko POCIVALSHEK**, Minister for Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia, discussed how strong economic cooperation can contribute to a strong Europe. The moderator **Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, president of Jackovich International LLC, USA and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum invited **Dr. Daniel THORNILEY**, President of DT-Global Business Consulting to deliver his External View Statement and to share his visionary thoughts with the audience.

In his **Impulse Statement**, **Mag. Harald NEUMANN**, CEO, Novomatic AG, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum and Honorary Consul of Romania with a Consular District of Lower Austria, spoke about building bridges in the transregional economy and the great opportunities of the Romanian economy. As further representatives of the regional and international economy with most interesting contributions, the members of the VEF Board **Dr. Emmanuel FOREST**, CEO, BOUYGUES Europe, SA, Belgium and **Dr. Ludwig NIESSEN**, Member of the Management Board, COO/CTO, Wiener Börse AG, took an active part as Speakers.

The following **Q and A session** led to lively discussions and exchange of views with the high representatives of regional and European politics as well as the high-ranking representatives of the Austrian, regional, European and international economy.

At the traditional Annual Award Ceremony of the **15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2018** the following were unanimously nominated and honored with the **Vienna Economic Forum Award 2018: As Country Partner of the year 2018** the member country **Bulgaria**, for the great contribution to regional economic cooperation during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The award was accepted by **H.E. Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. As **cooperation partner of the year 2018 Novomatic AG** for the great contribution to the economic development on international and regional level in the member countries of Vienna Economic Forum. The award was accepted by CEO **Mag. Harald NEUMANN**. As **Vienna Economic Forum Special Appreciation Award 2018 – Penkov, Markov & Partners** for the great contribution to regional common understanding and excellent cooperation. The award was presented by **Vladimir Penkov**, Senior Partner and Chairman, Penkov & Markov & Partners International Law Firm Received; and as **Vienna Economic Forum Media Partner 2018 – Monitor TV** for the long-standing great media representation of the Vienna Economic Forum and excellent cooperation and media support. The award was accepted by **Mag. Thomas EBNER**, Senior News Editor, MonitorTV Journalist & Media Trainer, main media partner of the Vienna Economic Forum.

Vienna Economic Forum would like to thank all members, partners and friends for the excellent and long-lasting cooperation, which motivates and inspires us for further activity!

Special thanks go to all the cooperation partners:

AI Telekom Austria Group, AME International GmbH, Bouygues Europe SA, CANON CEE GmbH, DenizBank AG, EVN AG, Flughafen Wien AG, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, HYPO NOE Landesbank, Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (ISPAT), Jackovich International LLC, LANSKY, GANZGER + partner, Novomatic AG, Österreichische Post AG, Serbian Association of Economists, Siemens AG Österreich, Sopharma PLC, The Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Investment Office, Verbund AG, Wiener Börse AG, Wien Holding GmbH.



Main Media Partner:



PROGRAM

SUNDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2018

LOCATION

Hotel Imperial, Kärntner Ring 16, 1015 Vienna

6:00–8:00 p.m. **WELCOME COCKTAIL (by personal invitation)**
 hosted by the Board of
 Vienna Economic Forum
 and Verbund AG

MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2018

LOCATION

**House of Engineers, Ceremonial Hall
 Eschenbachgasse 9, 1010 Vienna**

8:45–9:45 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

9:50 a.m. **FAMILY PHOTO (by invitation)**

10:00–10:45 a.m. **OPENING of 15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum –
 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2018**

Moderation

Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA, *Secretary General,
 Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Welcome Words

Dr. Kari KAPSCH, *President of Österreichischer Verband
 für Elektrotechnik*

DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER, *Member of the Board of Verbund AG
 President of Vienna Economic Forum*

Impulse Statement

H.E. Mag. Gernot BLÜMEL, *Federal Minister
 for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, Austria*

External View

Dr. Ivan KRASSTEV, *Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia,
 Permanent fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences IWM in Vienna*

10:45 a.m.–
 12:45 p.m. **PODIUM DISCUSSION – Economy meets Politics**

**REGIONAL COOPERATION AS A PART OF
 THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. DIGITALISATION –
 BRIDGING GAPS AND CHANCE TO LEAPFROG**

Powered by A1 Telekom Austria Group

Moderation of the Discussion

Mr. Heinz MESSINGER, *Managing Director, AME International GmbH
 Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Main Statement

H.E. Ms. Mariya GABRIEL, *European Commissioner
 for Digital Economy and Society*

Participants from the Side of the Politics**H.E. Mr. Edi RAMA, Prime Minister of Albania***Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Dr. Denis ZVIZDIĆ, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina***Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Ramush HARADINAJ, Prime Minister of Kosovo***Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV, Prime Minister of Macedonia***Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***H.E. Mr. Duško MARKOVIĆ, Prime Minister of Montenegro***Patron of Vienna Economic Forum***Participants from the Side of the Economy****DI Peter UMUNDUM, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG,***Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum***Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ, CEO, Spokesman of the Executive Board,***EVN AG, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Mag. Hermann ANDERL, Managing Director, CANON CEE GmbH,***Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum***Dr. Gabriel LANSKY, Partner, LANSKY, GANZGER + partner,***Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER, CEO, AI Telekom Austria Group,***Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Q AND A SESSION**

with the Audience (led by the Moderator)

Signing of a MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDINGfor establishing a **Digital ICT School**

1:00–2:00 p.m. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS for all participants

in the framework of a

GET-TOGETHER LUNCH

hosted by the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

and Österreichische Post AG

2:00–4:00 p.m. AFTERNOON WORKING SESSION**A STRONG EUROPE THROUGH A STRONG ECONOMIC CONNECTION:
BUILDING BRIDGES****Moderation of the Discussion****Amb. Victor JACKOVICH, President, Jackovich International, LLC, USA***Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Impulse Statement****Mag. Harald NEUMANN, CEO, Novomatic AG,***Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum, Honorary Consul of Romania**with consular district Lower Austria***External View****Dr. Daniel THORNILEY, President DT-Global Business Consulting**

Participants from the Side of the Politics

H.E. Mr. Damian GJIKNURI, *Minister of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania*

H.E. Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA, *Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU*

H.E. Mr. Kreshnik BEKTESHI, *Minister of Economy of Macedonia*

H.E. Prof. Dr. Anton ANTON, *Minister of Energy of Romania*

H.E. Mr. Zdravko POČIVALŠEK, *Minister of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia*

Participants from the Side of the Economy

Dr. Ognian DONEV, *Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLG, Bulgaria, Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum*

Mr. Emmanuel FOREST, *CEO, BOUYGUES Europe SA, Belgium Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Dr. Ludwig NIESSEN, *Member of the Board, COO/CTO Wiener Börse AG Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Dr. Stephan PACHINGER, *Partner, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Dr. Kurt GOLLOWITZER, *CEO, Wien Holding GmbH Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

Q AND A SESSION

with the Audience (led by the Moderator)

4:30–5:00 p.m. **ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY of Vienna Economic Forum**

5:00 p.m. **INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS for all participants**
in the framework of a
FAREWELL COCKTAIL
hosted by the Board of Vienna Economic Forum
and Novomatic AG

6:00 p.m. **END OF 15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2018**

WELCOMING THE PATRONS OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM ...



... AND DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS

















Opening of the 15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum: Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Edi Rama, H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Denis Zvizdić, H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Ramush Haradinaj, H.E. EU Commissioner Ms. Mariya Gabriel, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Kocho Angjushev, H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Duško Marković



Welcome Words by DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, President of Vienna Economic Forum









The podium



H.E. Dr. Margarete Schramböck, Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs of Austria



Distinguished participants and audience



*Dr. Kari Kapsch,
President of the
Austrian Electrotechnical
Association*



Opening Session





External View by Dr. Ivan Krastev, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia, Permanent fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences IWM in Vienna





Moderation by Ambassador Dr. Elena Kircheva, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum





Moderation of the Discussion by Mr. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director of AME International GmbH and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum



*Main Statement by
H.E. Ms. Mariya Gabriel,
European Commissioner for
Digital Economy and Society*



15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum High Ranking Podium-discussion Participants



Statement by H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Edi Rama, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum



Prominent participants and audience



*Statement by
H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Ramush Haradinaj,
Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*





*Statement by
H.E. Deputy Prime Minister
Mr. Kocho Angjushev*



*Statement by
H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Duško Marković,
Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*







*Statement by
H.E. Prime Minister
Mr. Denis Zvizdić,
Patron of
Vienna Economic Forum*







*Statement by Mag. Stefan Szyszkowitz, CEO, Spokesman of the Executive Board, EVN AG,
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Statement by DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG,
Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Statement by Mag. Hermann Anderl, Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH,
Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*





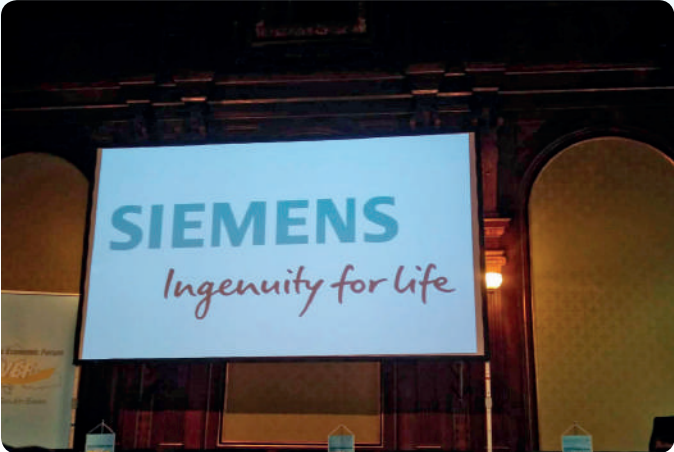
*Statement by Dr. Gabriel Lansky, Partner, Lansky, Ganzer + partner,
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*





*Statement by Mag. Thomas Arnoldner, CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group,
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*









Official signing of the MoU in the presence of the Patrons of Vienna Economic Forum and H.E. European Commissioner Gabriel







Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), between the New Bulgarian University (NBU) Sofia, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems and TITU MAIORESCU University of Bucharest, for establishing a Digital ICT School for the young people of the VEF region



Mag. Thomas Arnoldner, CEO A1 Telekom Austria Group, Member of the VEF Board; Mag. Harald Neumann, CEO, Novomatic AG, Vice President of VEF; DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, President of Vienna Economic Forum, H.E. Dr. Margarete Schramböck, Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs of the Republic of Austria, DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG, Vice President of VEF and Dr. Kari Kapsch, President of the Austrian Electrotechnical Association



PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSIONS















*DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, President of Vienna Economic Forum,
H.E. Dr. Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU,
Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum,
Ms. Müjgan and Dr. Akkan Suver, President of the Marmara Group Foundation*



Statement by Amb. Victor Jackovich, President of Jackovich International, LLC, USA and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum





Statement by Mag. Harald Neumann, CEO, Novomatic AG, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, Honorary Consul of Romania with consular district Lower Austria





External view by Dr. Daniel Thorniley, President, DT-Global Business Consulting



Statement by
H.E. Albanian Minister of
Infrastructure and Energy
Mr. Damian Gjicknuri





Statement by H.E. Dr. Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU





Statement by H.E. Macedonian Minister of Economy Mr. Kreshnik Bekteshi





Statement by H.E. Romanian Minister of Energy, Dr. Anton Anton

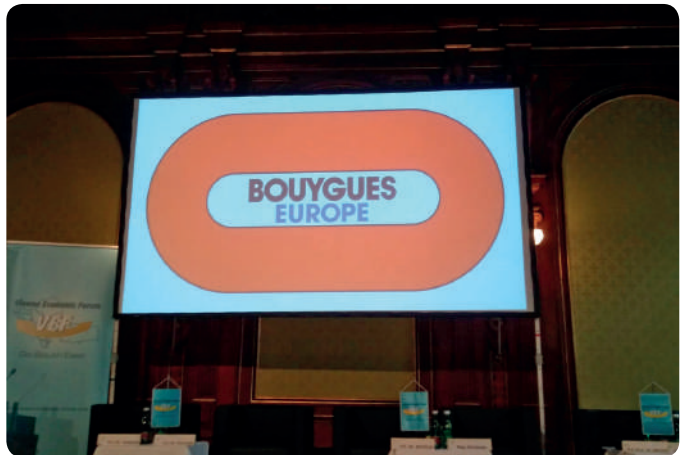




Statement by H.E. Slovenian Minister of Economic Development and Technology, Mr. Zdravko Počivalšek



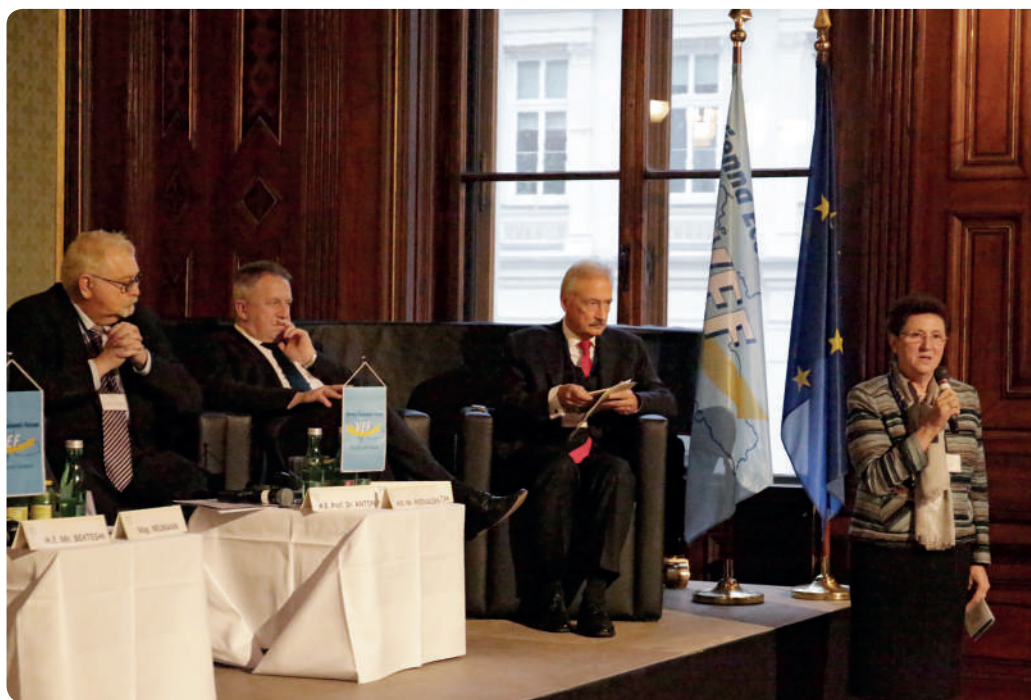
*Statement by Dr. Emmanuel Forest, CEO, Bouygues Europe SA, Belgium
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*





Statement by Dr. Ludwig Nießen, Member of the Board, COO/CTO Wiener Börse AG, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum





VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AWARD COUNTRY PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2018



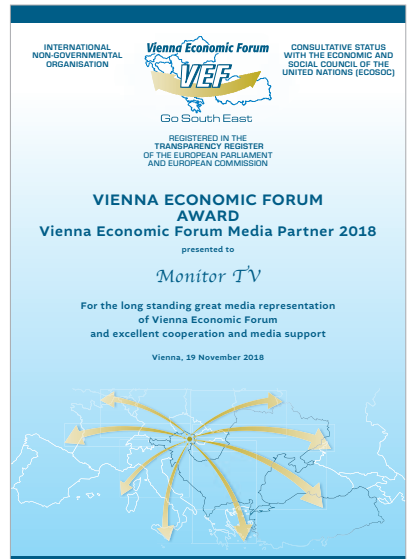
VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AWARD COOPERATION PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2018



VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM SPECIAL APPRECIATION AWARD 2018



VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AWARD MEDIA PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2018





Recipients of the Vienna Economic Forum Award for 2018:

Country Partner of the year 2018 the member country Bulgaria – accepted by H.E. Dr. Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Cooperation partner of the year 2018 Novomatic AG – accepted by CEO Mag. Harald Neumann.

Vienna Economic Forum Special Appreciation Award 2018 – Penkov, Markov & Partners accepted by Vladimir Penkov, Senior Partner and Chairman, Penkov & Markov & Partners International Law Firm.

Vienna Economic Forum Media Partner 2018 – Monitor TV accepted by Mag. Thomas Ebner, Senior News Editor, MonitorTV Journalist & Media Trainer, main media partner of the Vienna Economic Forum.



*"Golden Mask of Teres" award
for H.E. Minister Gjinkuri*



*"Golden Mask of Teres" award
for H.E. Minister Anton*



RECEPTION AT HOTEL IMPERIAL ...



... EXCELLENT ATMOSPHERE ON THE EVE OF THE
15TH JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



















Vienna Economic Forum is proud to announce that the 16th Vienna Economic Forum will take place at Novomatic Forum in Vienna on 18. November 2019

VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM DAILY BUSINESS



Work Meeting with DI Dr. Franz Fischler President of the European Forum Alpbach

In a constructive meeting on 20 February 2018 in Vienna, **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum and **DI Dr. Franz FISCHLER**, **President of the European Forum Alpbach and European Union's Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries (1995–2004)** addressed the potential of a future cooperation between the European Forum Alpbach and Vienna Economic Forum.

The **European Forum Alpbach** takes place since 1945 every year in August in the Tyrolean mountain village Alpbach. International speakers and participants from science, business and politics, as well as experts and students discuss current topics in order to find interdisciplinary solutions.

H.E. Mr. Željko Perović, Ambassador of Montenegro First official visit at Vienna Economic Forum



On the occasion of a first official visit on 20 February 2018, **H.E. Željko PEROVIĆ**, **Ambassador of Montenegro**, and Secretary General **Amb. Dr Elena KIRTICHEVA** discussed a further intensive cooperation.

On behalf of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, the Secretary General welcomed **H.E. Željko PEROVIĆ**, **Ambassador of Montenegro** among his colleagues in the **Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum** and awarded His Excellency with the **Vienna Economic Forum Badge of Honour**.



Delphi Economic Forum is a new Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum

As part of the third **Delphi Economic Forum** in Delphi, Greece, held on 1 to 4 March 2018, the **Secretary-General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, and the Founder and Chairman of the Delphi Economic Forum, **Mr. Symeon G. TSOMOKOS**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** to reaffirm the cooperation in favor of the regional economic development of the Vienna Economic Forum-region.

Vienna Economic Forum is looking forward to the upcoming cooperation with Delphi Economic Forum at the forthcoming **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** on 17./18. May 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates Dr. Akkan Suver, President of Marmara Group Foundation



On 26 March 2018, **Dr. Akkan SUVER**, President of Marmara Group Foundation and longtime Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum was granted the rank of an Officer of the Order of the Crown of Romania by Her Majesty Margareta, Custodian of the Crown of Romania. For this occasion, an investiture ceremony was held at the Royal Palace in Bucharest.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates **Dr. SUVER**, who was awarded with the **Royal Medal** for his dialogue and peace studies at the Marmara Group Foundation in Istanbul.



Panel discussion on the future of Europe in the context of the current Bulgarian and subsequent Austrian EU Presidencies

On 26 March 2018, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador **Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**; Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum, Chair of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) and former Vice-Chancellor of Austria **Dr. Erhard BUSEK** as well as the Head of the Task Force for the Austrian EU-Presidency, **Mag. Regina KOTHMAYR**, discussed the question: “Which Europe do we want?”

The panel discussion on “Austria’s EU Presidency and the Challenges for the Future of a United Europe” was moderated by **Mag. Sebastian SCHÄFFER** (IDM) and organized by IDM in cooperation with the European Commission - Representation in Austria and the Information Office of the European Parliament Austria and took place in the House of the European Union in Vienna.

Following Bulgaria’s first EU-Presidency, Austria will take over the six month Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the third time on 1 July 2018, after 1998 and 2006. The panel discussion on 26 March 2018, was the first ever to address the third Austrian EU-Presidency. The Secretary General and former Bulgarian Ambassador to Austria (Vienna), **Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, informed the audience about the activities of the Bulgarian EU-Presidency and the importance of building bridges between the **Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies**, which will be supported by Vienna Economic Forum through the organisation of various conferences.

Under the auspices of the Bulgarian EU-Presidency **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** will take place under the motto “*Politics meets Economy*” on **18 May 2018**, in which all six Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans have announced their participation; and, under the same motto “*Politics meets Economy*”, the **15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2018** will take place on 19 November 2018 at Novomatic Forum in Vienna.

The discussion highlighted the **active and important role of the Bulgarian government during the Bulgarian EU-Presidency**. The audience was very interested in the discussion and participated with many relevant questions.

Vienna Economic Forum Delegation at the 21st Eurasian Economic Summit in Istanbul

Following the invitation of **Dr. Akkan SUVER**, President of Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation, **Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**, a Vienna Economic Forum Delegation participated at the **21st Eurasian Economic Summit** in Istanbul on 11 and 12 April 2018.

DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER, President of Vienna Economic Forum and Member of the Board of Verbund AG, **Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Secretary General and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, President of Jackovich International LLC. USA, and **Dr. Erhard BUSEK**, Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum and former Vice-Chancellor of Austria (1991–1995) took active part and discussed together with other national and international high-level speakers the motto: **“Dilemma of our Century – Technology vs. Politics”** by sharing ideas as well as concerns and offering problem solutions.

Among the distinguished participants were **H.E. Mr. Binali YILDIRIM**, Prime Minister of Turkey; **H.E. Mr. Marinka CAVARA**, President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; **H.E. Mr. Mladen IVANIC**, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina; **H.E. Mr. Gjorge IVANOV**, President of Macedonia.

In her speech at the opening of the Summit, **Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** praised the important and constructive longtime cooperation between Marmara Group Foundation and Vienna Economic Forum, and President **DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER** and **Amb. Victor JACKOVICH** contributed with their statements to the main session by stressing the importance of Turkey in relation to the regional economic development and, by keeping in mind the motto, the influence and developments of the energy and economy sector.





Vienna Economic Forum Working Visit to the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (ISPAT) in Istanbul

In the frame of the **21st Eurasian Economic Summit** on 11 and 12 April 2018 in Istanbul, the Vienna Economic Forum delegation comprised of **Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER**, President of Vienna Economic Forum and Member of the Board of Verbund AG; **Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Secretary General and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum as well as **Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, President of Jackovich International LLC, USA were invited by **Mr. Arda**

ERMUT, President of the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (ISPAT), President of the World Association of Investment Promotion Companies (WAIPA) and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum to a meeting on the premises of ISPAT in Istanbul. ISPAT is a long-standing **Cooperation Partner** of Vienna Economic Forum and the meeting discussed the deepening of the joint work of both organizations.



Token of Gratitude to H.E. Dr. Lilyana Pavlova

As part of the **Europa Forum Wachau**, which took place on 15 and 16 June 2018, Ambassador **Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, General Secretary of Vienna Economic Forum, awarded the **Golden Burial Mask from Shipka** to **H.E. Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018. Shipka's gold mask was discovered by Bulgarian archaeologists in 2004 in the 2,400-year-old tomb of a Thracian king near Shipka, 200 km east of Sofia and, according to ancient Greek authors, was worn during royal ceremonies.

As part of **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018**, which took place on 18 May 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria, VEF Member **Dr. Vladimir PENKOV** gave the mask as a gift to the six Prime Minister of the countries of the Western Balkans and to the Members of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum that participated at that conference.

H.E. Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA received the mask as a thank-you for the effective cooperation between her ministry and Vienna Economic Forum in the preparation and implementation of **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Talks 2018** and the great success of this conference, but also as a sign of future cooperation with the Minister and the Bulgarian government.



Appointment of VEF Vice-President Mag. Harald Neumann as Honorary Consul of Romania with consular district Lower Austria

On 1 August 2018, the official appointment of **Mag. Harald NEUMANN**, CEO of Novomatic AG and Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum, as Honorary Consul of Romania with consular district Lower Austria, took place.

The Ambassador of Romania, **H.E. Mr. Bogdan MAZURU** and **Mag. NEUMANN** invited to the Novomatic Forum in Vienna, where **Mag. NEUMANN** was appointed by **H.E. Mr. Dan NECULAESCU**, State Secretary of Romania, and in the presence of **H.E. Ms. Johanna MIKL-LEITNER**, Governor of Lower Austria.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates **Mag. NEUMANN** on his appointment and looks forward to the future cooperation, especially in view of the forthcoming Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2019.



Working visit by Radosvet Radev, Executive President of the Bulgarian Industrial Association

During a constructive meeting on September 13, 2018 in Vienna, **Dr. Radosvet RADEV**, the new **Executive President of the Bulgarian Industrial Association** and the **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, General Secretary of the Vienna Economic Forum discussed the further intensive cooperation.

In recognition of the good cooperation of recent years, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva received the **Silver Coin of the Bulgarian Industrial Association** by **Dr. RADEV** and presented, in return and in the name of the board of the Vienna Economic Forum, the **Gold Mask of Schipka** to him.



Vienna Economic Forum and International Foundation for Sustainable Peace and Development – new strategic partnership

In a constructive discussion on September 14, 2018 in Vienna, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** and **Prof. Dr. Eldar HASANOV**, Vice President and Secretary General of the International Foundation for Peace and Development, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to reaffirm cooperation in favor of the regional economic development of the Vienna Economic Forum region.

In the presence of the Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, **Mag. Hermann ANDERI**, Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH, it was stated that the purpose of this cooperation is to build the good relations between the two organizations and to develop further relationships and networks with the aim to promote the economic activity of both parties throughout the region.



Working visit to the IMC Fachhochschule Krems on 20. September 2018

In an intensive and constructive conversation, Secretary General **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** and **Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, Member of the Management Board and Financial Referent of Vienna Economic Forum, **Prof. (FH) Dr. Ing. Karl ENNSFELLNER**, Managing Director of IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems and **Mag. (FH) Florian RUHDORFER**, Head of Business & Career, discussed the idea of the members of Vienna Economic Forum, to found “**European digital school**” in cooperation with the New Bulgarian University (NBU) in Sofia and other universities of the Vienna Economic Forum region.

Working meeting with H.E. Ms. Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society



The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** and **Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, Board member and Financial referent of Vienna Economic Forum, met on 25. September 2018 with **H.E. Ms. Mariya GABRIEL**, EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society in the House of the European Union in Vienna.

Within the framework of this meeting, the idea of Vienna Economic Forum to **establish a “European School for Digitisation”**, through which three universities, New Bulgarian University (NBU), IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, and Titu Maiorescu University, Romania, would prepare young people from the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum for the digital future of the region, Europe and the world, was intensively discussed.



Working meeting of the Presidium of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum Board

DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER, President of Vienna Economic Forum and Member of the Board of Verbund AG, **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, Member of the Board and General Secretary of Vienna Economic Forum, **DI Peter UMUNDUM**, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum and Member of the Board of Österreichische Post AG, **Mag. Hermann ANDERL**, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum and Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH, **Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, Member of the Executive Board and Financial Referent of Vienna Economic Forum and Managing Director, AME International GmbH and **Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ**, long-standing Member of Vienna Economic Forum and Spokesman of the Executive Board of EVN, met on 25 September 2018 for their traditional lunch.

In a constructive and pleasant working atmosphere, they discussed the upcoming 15th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum and the planned activities of Vienna Economic Forum for the coming year.

The Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, Mag. Hermann Anderl, reported on the newly signed **Memorandum of Understanding** between Vienna Economic Forum, represented by the Secretary General and himself, and the International Foundation for Sustainable Peace and Development, represented by the Vice President and Secretary General, Prof. Dr. Eldar Hasanov, as well as the role of Canon AG in the region.

Mr. Mag. Heinz Messingen talked about the development of the idea of VEF Members to establish a **“European School for Digitisation”**. The objective of Vienna Economic Forum is to support the work of the three universities New Bulgarian University (NBU) Sofia, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, and Titu Maiorescu University, Romania and through that to prepare the young people from the Member States of Vienna Economic Forum, for the digital future of the region, Europe and the world.

Vienna Economic Forum is very pleased with the growing role and ever closer cooperation between the countries of the whole Vienna Economic Forum region.



Sopharma – 85 years of success

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates one of its most important partners – the group Sopharma, which involves 97 companies and which employs more than 8.000 people in 7 countries today. Sopharma celebrated this anniversary with a festive concert in the hall Armez in Sofia.

11.000 people applauded the show staged for this occasion with famous Bulgarian actors, extraordinary musicians, popular singers and attractive dancers – under the motto *85 years of Sopharma. And keeps growing.*

Dr. Ognian DONEV, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC and Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum welcomed the guests from Bulgaria and abroad.



The President of the Marmara Group Foundation, Dr. Akkan Suver, long time Strategic partner of Vienna Economic Forum was awarded by the Republic of Austria with the “Decoration of Honour in Gold”

Dr. Akkan SUVER, President of the Marmara Group Foundation and long time **Strategic Partner** of Vienna Economic Forum was awarded with the “**Decoration of Honour in Gold**” by the Republic of Austria during a ceremony held at the Austrian Embassy in Ankara.

H.E. Dr. Ulrike TILLY, Ambassador of Austria to Turkey, presented the Medal and emphasized that **Dr. Akkan SUVER** was honoured because of his works that he put forth in the realms of peace and dialogue as a part of the civil society.

On behalf of Vienna Economic Forum the Honore President **Dr. Erhard BUSEK** congratulated **Dr. Akkan SUVER** on his success and said that the Marmara Group Foundation is one of the widely-acclaimed Strategic Partners of Vienna Economic Forum and widely-known civil society organization in Austria.

In his thank-you speech, **Dr. Akkan SUVER** highlighted the importance the Republic of Austria places on the thought and philosophy of civil society and maintained that he received the medal on behalf of the Turkish civil society.

Several foreign mission chefs, accredited to Turkey, and parliamentarians also attended the festive Ceremony.



High Representative of the Agency for Foreign Investment and Export Promotion of Macedonia to a working visit in Vienna Economic Forum

Secretary General Ambassador **Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** was pleased to welcome the two high ranking representatives of the Agency for Foreign Investment and Export Promotion of Macedonia, CEO Advisor **Mr. Hristijan JOSIFOVSKI** and State Advisor **Mr. Ivan ILIEV**, for a working visit in the premises of the Vienna Economic Forum on Thursday, 13. December 2018.

The focus of the meeting was in the deepening the cooperation between Vienna Economic Forum and Invest Macedonia as a prerequisite for the realization of the Vienna Economic Forum efforts to further develop a common and targeted investment strategy in the Balkans.



Working meeting with Mr. Ahmet Mesut Ersoy, Chairman of the Management Board and CEO of DenizBank AG, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum

Secretary General, Ambassador **Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** and **Mr. Ahmet Mesut ERSOY**, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, Chairman of the Management Board and CEO of DenizBank AG, discussed the good success of the long standing cooperation with great satisfaction, during an intensive working meeting in the Vienna Economic Forum on January 17, 2019.

A future cooperation and a new stage in the deepening of the collaboration between Deniz Bank AG and Vienna Economic Forum has been planned.



Working meeting with Prof. Antoni Slavinski, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the New Bulgarian University, Mr. Ivo Ivanovski, Head of International Regulatory and European Affairs, A1 Telekom Austria Group and Dr. Stefan Schneeberger, Executive Assistant to the CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group

The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, **Ambassador Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA** and **Prof. Antoni SLAVINSKI**, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the New Bulgarian University, on January 22, 2019, met **Mr. Ivo IVANOVSKI**, Head of International Regulatory and European Affairs, A1 Telekom Austria Group and **Dr. Stefan SCHNEEBERGER**, Executive Assistant to the CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group.



The main topic of the discussion at the A1 Telekom Austria Group headquarters in Vienna was the further development and the pragmatic realization of the Vienna Economic Forum idea for the foundation of a **“Digital ICT School”**.

The willingness of the three universities: New Bulgarian University (NBU) Sofia, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, and Titu Maiorescu University, Romania, to realize this idea, was affirmed during the “15. Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum” on November 19, 2018 in Vienna, by signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**.



Vienna Economic Forum is looking forward to yet another successful year 2019!