



**INTERNATIONAL  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANISATION**  
SINCE 2011, RECONFIRMED STATUS  
AS OF 1. JANUARY 2022

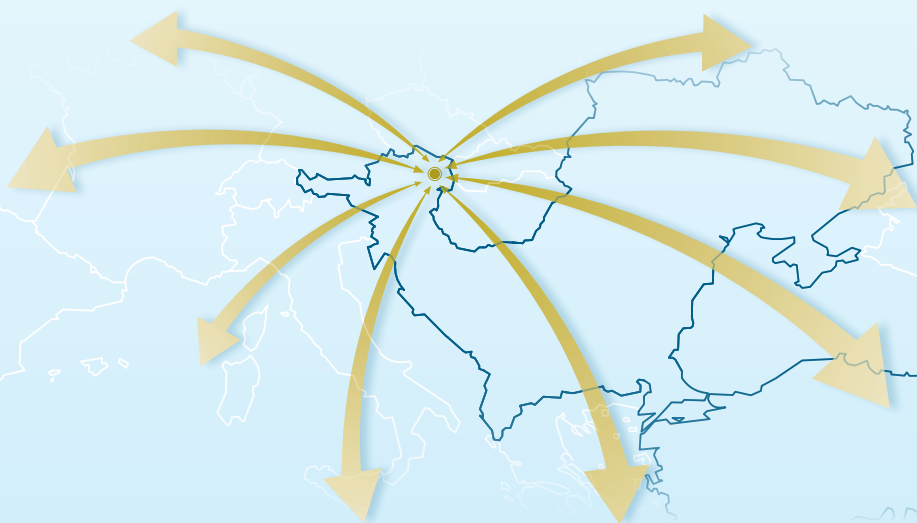


**CONSULTATIVE STATUS  
WITH THE ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS (ECOSOC)**

Go South East

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

# VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



## REVIEW 2021

**Vienna Economic Forum has the honor to cooperate  
for a better understanding in the region with**



Anatolian Businessmen Association, Istanbul



Bled Strategic Forum, Bled, Slovenia



Bled School of Management, Slovenia



Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Sofia



Central European Initiative (CEI) Trieste



Confederation of the Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (CEIBG), Sofia



Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK), Istanbul



Delphi Economic Forum NPO Athens



EastEuroCo Executive Search Group Ltd. Budapest



Federation of Austrian Industries, Vienna



Foreign Investors Services d.o.o., Belgrade



Handelskammer Schweiz-Österreich-Liechtenstein, Vienna



Hayek Institut, Vienna



International Business and Diplomatic Exchange (IBDE), London



Institut für den Donaauraum und Mitteleuropa (IDM), Vienna



International Foundation for Sustainable Peace and Development 2009



Marmara Group, Strategic and Social Research Foundation, Istanbul



New Bulgarian University Sofia



Ost-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft Berlin



Organization for International Economic Relations, Vienna



Österreichischer Gewerbeverein Vienna



OstWestWirtschaftsForum Bayern eV



Regional Cooperation Council Sarajevo



TSOMOKOS Group INTERNATIONAL d.o.o., Greece and Serbia



Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TURKONFED), Istanbul



Vienna School of International Studies Austria

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NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
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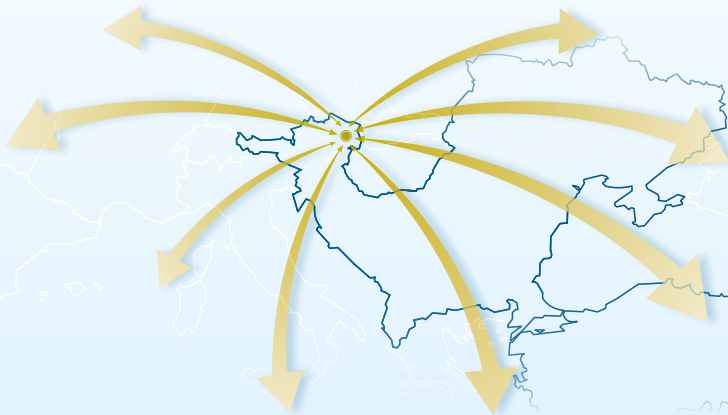


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# VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



REVIEW 2021



The Flag of Vienna Economic Forum has been proudly waving in the heart of the Vienna Embassy District next to numerous national flags!

With this highly symbolic act, Vienna Economic Forum confirms its high status and the international reputation it has gained as THE European economic platform based in Vienna!

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# BUNDESGESETZBLATT

## FÜR DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH

Jahrgang 2021

Ausgegeben am 27. Dezember 2021

Teil II

593. Verordnung: Zuerkennung der Rechtsstellung einer Internationalen Nichtregierungsorganisation oder einer Quasi-Internationalen Organisation an Nichtregierungsorganisationen (INROV)

### 593. Verordnung des Bundesministers für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten betreffend die Zuerkennung der Rechtsstellung einer Internationalen Nichtregierungsorganisation oder einer Quasi-Internationalen Organisation an Nichtregierungsorganisationen (INROV)

Auf Grund der §§ 15 und 16 des Amtssitzgesetzes (ASG), BGBl. I Nr. 54/2021, wird im Einvernehmen mit dem Bundesminister für Arbeit und dem Bundesminister für Inneres verordnet:

#### Internationale Nichtregierungsorganisationen

§ 1. Folgenden Nichtregierungsorganisationen wird die Rechtsstellung einer Internationalen Nichtregierungsorganisation (§ 15 ASG) zuerkannt:

1. Atomic Reporters, Gumpoldskirchen;
2. Confédération Sportive Internationale Travailleiste et Amateur – International Workers and Amateurs in Sport Confederation (CSIT), Wien;
3. Democrat Youth Community of Europe (DEMYC), Wien;
4. Ground Truth Solutions – Organisation zur Stärkung der Verantwortlichkeit in der humanitären Hilfe (Ground Truth), Wien;
5. Impact Finance Organization – Verein zur Förderung des Impact Investings (IMFINO), Wien;
6. International Federation for Information Processing – Internationale Vereinigung für Informationsverarbeitung (IFIP), Luxemburg;
7. Internationale Biathlon Union (IBU), Salzburg;
8. Internationales Presseinstitut – International Press Institute (IPI), Wien;
9. Internationaler Rat zur Erhaltung des Wildes und der Jagd (CIC), Wien;
10. One Earth Future Austria – Verein zur Prävention und Klärung bewaffneter Konflikte (OEF Austria), Wien;
11. Vienna Economic Forum (VEF), Wien;
12. Weltverband von Fremdenführervereinen (WFTGA), Wien;
13. World Institute for Nuclear Security – Weltweites Institut für Nukleare Sicherheit (WINS), Wien.

#### Quasi-Internationale Organisationen

§ 2. Folgenden Nichtregierungsorganisationen wird die Rechtsstellung einer Quasi-Internationalen Organisation (§ 16 ASG) zuerkannt:

1. Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens – Ban Ki-moon Zentrum für globale Bürger, Wien;
2. FES Regionalbüro für Zusammenarbeit und Frieden in Europa, Wien;
3. Frauen ohne Grenzen – Women without Borders / SAVE – Sisters Against Violent Extremism, gemeinnütziger Verein, Wien;
4. International Union of Forest Research Organizations – Internationaler Verband Forstlicher Forschungsanstalten (IUFRO), Wien;
5. Multilateraler Dialog KAS, Wien;
6. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership – Partnerschaft für erneuerbare Energie und Energieeffizienz (REEEP), Wien;

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

#### BESCHEID

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:

#### Spruch

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](http://www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo) • Contact: [www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo/contact](http://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!

Looking back at the Year 2021, yet another special year imposing many challenges to the global community and to our everyday living, Vienna Economic Forum is proud to have grown and has once again succeeded in achieving its objective in facilitating and promoting regional economic cooperation in and between the Member countries from the VEF Region.

At the beginning of the new 19th year since its founding, albeit the strains imposed by the current global situation, Vienna Economic Forum stands strong and determined to not only achieve the full Agenda for 2022 but to also recognize and accomplish new ways in which we can assist the economic endeavours of our 13 member countries!

In 2021 the Vienna Economic Talks placed a special Focus on the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. VEF is proud to have digitally brought together the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, Prime Ministers from the Western Balkans region, VEF Board members, as well as other high representatives from the European and regional economic, energy and legal sectors on the Topic of the ongoing multi-billion Euro economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans. The live online broadcast reached over 600 viewers from over 20 countries worldwide. Vienna Economic Forum would like to thank AI Telekom Austria Group for their hospitality and strong technical support.

The special edition of the 18. Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021, originally conceived as a combined onsite and online Conference, which under the Motto “Economy meets Politics in a Digital World” during the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council on the topic: “Energy Transition. Infrastructure and Financial Challenges for the Countries of the VEF Region” should have taken place on 22 November 2021 in the House of Industry in Vienna had to be canceled at the last moment in its planned form due to force majeure and the measures introduced across Austria.

However, VEF took up the challenge and with a great support of Austrian Post, created a digital composition of all the materials prepared for the 18. VEF. With this, VEF not only brought forward the many already prepared presentations, contributions, speeches but gave due credit to the high-level participants from various backgrounds – from economic decision-makers, political representatives, government leaders and legislators to financial global institutions and experts in their respective fields.

Vienna Economic Forum continues to grow and develop further by exploring new horizons for cooperation, acquiring new members, constantly building the VEF-Family network. Just at the beginning of this year, we have started with the establishment of new praxis of visiting our Patrons and member countries by organising a high-level visit of a VEF delegation to the VEF-Member Country Moldova! This success has given us an impetus in yet another form in which we could assist and support our members.

Dear Members, Partners and Friends of Vienna Economic Forum,

On behalf of the entire Vienna Economic Forum Board, thank you for your constant support and faith entrusted in VEF!

Rest assured, Vienna Economic Forum shall firmly continue to follow its objectives set since its founding in 2004. You have our Word!

Let us encourage and aid each other on our mutual path towards new accomplishments and future successes!

Yours,



DI Peter Umundum  
President



Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva  
Secretary General

## BOARD OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



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*President*



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*Founder of Vienna Economic Forum*

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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!**

[www.vienna-economic-forum.com/index.php/en/about-en/committee-en](http://www.vienna-economic-forum.com/index.php/en/about-en/committee-en)



**Vice Chancellor Dr. Erhard BUSEK**

*Founding Father and Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum*

With everything that he has done for Vienna Economic Forum,  
Dr. Busek remains our role model and we will greatly miss him.

It is with deep gratitude that we make our promise  
to call for and continue to work on regional economic cooperation  
with and between the member countries of the Vienna Economic Forum  
with deep commitment and dedication!



**In Memoriam**  
**Vice Chancellor Dr. Erhard BUSEK**

**(1941–2022)**

*Founding Father and Honorary President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

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**Ambassador Dr. Valentin INZKO, Austrian diplomat, long time UN High Representative and EU Special Representative (HR/EUSR) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Long-Standing Supporter of Vienna Economic Forum**

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WWV Partner Steuerberatungs GmbH, Tax Consultant**



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**Mag. Peter KYSELA, Managing Partner, DATANET Solutions GmbH  
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**KR Prof. Mag. Gertrud TAUCHHAMMER, Honorary Consul from  
Cameroon and Honorary Consul General from Tunisia, Publisher of  
Magazine Society, Media Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**

# 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



**Dr. Snezana KEARNS**

*Senior Project Manager, Executive Assistant to the Secretary General*



**Mag. Georgi TENEV**

*Project Manager International Cooperation*



**Irena PAL, BBA**

*Project and Office Manager*



**Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**

CEO  
AI Telekom Austria Group

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © Renee Del Missier

“As AI Telekom Austria Group we are at the epicenter of digitization and we are a reliable partner for business, people and society, even in particularly challenging times. Our strategic leitmotiv "Empowering digital life" took on an even more decisive significance as a result of these developments. We are a leading provider of digital services and communications solutions in the CEE region with around 25 million customers and more than 17,000 employees in seven core markets. Our Group offers telecommunications, broadband internet, integrated ICT and business solutions, payment, multimedia and entertainment services as well as wholesale and payment solutions.

The digital transformation opens up enormous potential for more economic efficiency, social equality of opportunity and resource conservation in the interest of people and the environment. Cooperation and a common approach are the key to unlocking the enormous potential of digitization. Ultimately, it is always a question of how one can ensure even better living conditions for people and future generations within one's sphere of influence.”

*„Als AI Telekom Austria Group stehen wir im Epizentrum der Digitalisierung und sind ein verlässlicher Partner für Wirtschaft, Mensch und Gesellschaft auch in speziell herausfordernden Zeiten. Unser strategisches Leitmotiv „Empowering digital life“ erhielt durch diese Entwicklungen einen noch entscheidenderen Stellenwert. Wir sind ein führender Provider für digitale Services und Kommunikationslösungen im CEE-Raum mit rund 25 Millionen Kunden und mehr als 17.000 MitarbeiterInnen in sieben Kernmärkten. Unser Konzern bietet Telekommunikation, Breitband-Internet, integrierte ICT- und Business-Lösungen, Payment-, Multimedia- und Entertainment-Services sowie Wholesale und Payment-Lösungen an.*

*Die digitale Transformation eröffnet enormes Potenzial für ein Mehr an Wirtschaftlichkeit, sozialer Chancengleichheit und Ressourcenschonung im Interesse von Mensch und Umwelt. Zusammenarbeit und ein gemeinsamer Ansatz sind der Schlüssel, um das enorme Potenzial der Digitalisierung zu erschließen. Denn letztlich geht es stets um die Frage, wie man in seinem Einflussbereich für noch lebenswertere Bedingungen für die Menschen und nachfolgende Generationen sorgen kann.“*



Hello, Future!

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for Austria.

A1 is starting Austria's largest fiber network expansion – directly to your home.

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More stability. More possibilities.

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### Dr. Wolfgang POSPISCHIL

Managing Director  
AFRY Management Consulting  
Austria GmbH

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

“AFRY Management Consulting is the leading expert for the energy, forestry and bioindustries worldwide. Our team provides strategic and operational advice across the value chain.

Industries are changing at an unprecedented pace as our world becomes increasingly interconnected. Global changes bring both challenges and opportunities for all: the shift towards fossil-free and smart systems, the transition from synthetic to biomaterials, operational excellence and digitalisation, the decentralisation of markets, as well as new strategies and products. We aim to assist our clients in this transformation phase in the best possible way. As part of the AFRY Group, our management consultants are supported by 17,000 experts from infrastructure, industry and energy.

Our Austrian branch has been focusing on decarbonisation, digitalisation, location attractiveness and the industrial region of the future, with the latter receiving a lot of attention lately. We particularly focus on "Future Industrial Regions" and have launched a unique initiative in Austria to support existing companies, attract new companies and increase resilience. What makes this project so special is the inclusion of children and young people as well as the overall accompanying technical expertise out of Northern Europe.”

*„AFRY Management Consulting ist die führende Beratung für die Energie-, Forst- und Bio-industrie weltweit. Unser Team bietet strategische und operative Beratung über die gesamte Wertschöpfungskette hinweg.*

*Die Industrien verändern sich rasant, während sich die Welt immer mehr vernetzt. Globale Veränderungen bedeuten Herausforderungen, aber auch Chancen für alle: der Wandel zu fossilienfreien intelligenten Systemen, der Übergang von Kunst- zu Biomaterial, Operational Excellence und Digitalisierung, die Dezentralisierung der Märkte sowie neue Strategien und Produkte. Wir wollen unsere Kunden bestmöglich in dieser aktuellen Phase der Transformation begleiten. Als Teil der AFRY Gruppe werden unsere Managementberater von 17.000 Fachkräften aus Infrastruktur, Industrie und Energie unterstützt.*

*In Österreich legen wir den Fokus auf Dekarbonisierung, Digitalisierung, Standortattraktivität und die Industrieregion der Zukunft, wobei letzteres derzeit große Beachtung erfährt. Wir konzentrieren uns besonders auf die „Future Industrial Regions“ und haben dazu eine einzigartige Initiative in Österreich gestartet, um bestehende Unternehmen zu unterstützen, neue Unternehmen anzusiedeln und die Resilienz zu erhöhen. Was dieses Projekt besonders auszeichnet, ist das Miteinbeziehen von Kindern und Jugendlichen sowie die begleitende fachliche Expertise aus den nordeuropäischen Ländern.“*



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# Making Future



**Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**

*Managing Director  
AME International GmbH*

*Vice-President and Financial Referent  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“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 for more than 25 years, creating a sustainable benefit for patients in the region.

The social impact of our projects has resulted in strengthening clinical care in over 200 hospitals worldwide covering more than 56.000 beds, improving the health situation for over 1.8 million inpatients and over 21 million outpatients and as such extending the benefit of improved access to care for a catchment area of 165 million people.”

*„Österreich hat traditionell einen starken Bezug zur Region der Partnerländer des Vienna Economic Forum. AME International GmbH und ich arbeiten seit mehr als 25 Jahren aktiv an der Stärkung der Gesundheitssysteme für die VEF-Mitgliedsländer und schaffen damit einen nachhaltigen Nutzen für die Patienten in der Region.*

*Die sozialen Auswirkungen unserer Projekte haben dazu geführt, dass die klinische Versorgung in über 200 Krankenhäusern mit mehr als 56.000 Betten gestärkt wurde, die Gesundheitssituation für über 1,8 Millionen stationäre und über 21 Millionen ambulante Patienten verbessert wurde und somit ein Einzugsgebiet von 165 Millionen Menschen von einem verbesserten Zugang zur Versorgung profitiert.“*





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AME International GmbH (AME) is a global provider of healthcare technology solutions based in Vienna, Austria. Founded in 1995, AME has extensive expertise in the development, implementation, operation and financing with international healthcare projects. To date, AME has successfully implemented around 90 healthcare projects and digital healthcare solutions in Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

As a comprehensive solution provider AME strives to optimize processes and maximise efficiency gains for the benefit of patients, health care providers and medical staff. AME takes pride in creating individual sustainable solutions, using the leading brands technology partners. Training and Change Management are key focus areas, in order to attain sustainable project success. By taking a comprehensive and integrated view, we ensure the optimum solutions for our clients' individual needs.

As a provider and integrator for healthcare projects, our technical expertise and project management capabilities, supported by a strong financial background and access to project financing, ensure sustainable, cost-effective solutions for clients and stakeholders in the healthcare sector.

The range of services includes:

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- 💧 Medical Technology Package Solutions and Turn-key Solutions
- 💧 Digital Solutions in Healthcare



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**Mr. Wilbert VERHEIJEN**

*Managing Director  
Canon CEE GmbH*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The past two years have thrown many challenges our way. Many of us had to change the way we work, forcing us to adapt to technologies and business processes faster. By 2022 businesses have built agility into their working practices, accelerating digital transformation. Employers realize the benefits of remote working, as greater flexibility and freedom have become a requisite for employees. After realizing that there will be no returning to the traditional way of working, businesses must adapt their model, processes, and workflows to make hybrid working successful and equally productive. They need to ensure productive, collaborative, and secure work from any device.

With its advanced technologies/solutions and expertise, Canon supports effective hybrid working within a connected, automated, and secure working environment.

We have the experience and expertise to guide you on swift digital transformation journeys whilst continuing to make an existing document and content environment more efficient, less costly, and more compliant.”

*„Die letzten zwei Jahre haben uns vor viele Herausforderungen gestellt. Viele von uns mussten ihre Arbeitsweise ändern und wurden dazu gezwungen, sich schneller an Technologien und Geschäftsprozesse anzupassen. Mit 2022 ist agile Arbeitsweise Praxis geworden, und beschleunigt die digitale Transformation weiter. Arbeitgeber erkennen die Vorteile des mobilen Arbeitens, da größere Flexibilität und Freiheit zu Voraussetzungen für zufriedene Arbeitnehmer geworden sind. Nachdem Unternehmen erkannt haben, dass es keine Rückkehr zur traditionellen Arbeitsweise geben wird, müssen sie ihr Geschäftsmodell, Prozesse und Arbeitsabläufe anpassen, um hybrides Arbeiten erfolgreich und gleichermaßen produktiv zu machen. Unternehmen müssen produktives, kollaboratives und sicheres Arbeiten von jedem Gerät gewährleisten.“*

*Mit seinen fortschrittlichen Technologien/Lösungen und seiner Expertise, unterstützt Canon effektives hybrides Arbeiten in einer vernetzten, automatisierten und sicheren Arbeitsumgebung.*

*Wir verfügen über die Erfahrung und das Fachwissen, um Sie bei der raschen digitalen Transformation zu begleiten und gleichzeitig eine bestehende Dokumenten- und Content-Umgebung effizienter, kostengünstiger und gesetzeskonformer zu gestalten.“*



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## Canon

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See the bigger picture



**Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ**

*Spokesman of the Executive Board  
EVN AG*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

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“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.“*



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PORT **V** OLIO



**Dr. Stephan PACHINGER**

*Partner  
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer  
Rechtsanwälte PartG mbB*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © Martina Dräger

“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 where we have advised clients on their largest transactions. 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 network in the region 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 und wir haben Mandaten bei ihren größten Transaktionen beraten. Das heißt, wir kennen die Region sehr gut und verstehen das regulatorische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Umfeld. Was uns auszeichnet, ist unser integrierter Ansatz, der die Expertise von Wirtschafts-, Finanz-, Steuer- und Arbeitsrechtlern kombiniert. Unser StrongerTogether Netzwerk mit führenden lokalen Kanzleien ermöglicht es uns, die besten Anwälte für die jeweiligen Transaktionen in CEE auszuwählen.“*



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### Amb. Victor JACKOVICH

*President  
Jackovich International  
USA*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 südosteuropäischen 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

Partner  
LANSKY, GANZGER, GOETH,  
FRANKL + Partner (LGP)

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

“LANSKY, GANZGER, GOETH, FRANKL + partner (“LGP”) is a widely recognized international law firm operating at the intersection of law, business, and politics. We are renowned as a gateway between the markets of the European Union and South-Eastern Europe, and go beyond purely legal advice to offer deal counseling, transaction facilitation, investment matchmaking, and business development services.

With offices in Vienna, Bratislava, and Skopje we were able to achieve impressive growth in the Western Balkans and Eastern European markets which offer exciting opportunities in the dynamic infrastructure, energy, extractive industries, construction, and M&A sectors of the region.

LGP is a proud partner of the Vienna Economic Forum, a leading platform for the exchange of ideas on regional economic and political issues and developments. The VEF conferences offer high-level experts and decision-makers a space for debate and networking, making them a fixture in the calendar of all stakeholders interested in the region.”

*„LANSKY, GANZGER, GOETH, FRANKL + partner (“LGP”) ist eine weithin anerkannte internationale Anwaltskanzlei, die an der Schnittstelle von Recht, Wirtschaft und Politik tätig ist. Wir sind als Vermittler zwischen den Märkten der Europäischen Union und Südosteuropas bekannt und bieten über die reine Rechtsberatung hinaus auch Transaktionsberatung, Investitionsvermittlung und Business Development Services an.*

*Mit Büros in Wien, Bratislava und Skopje konnten wir ein beeindruckendes Wachstum auf dem Westbalkan und den osteuropäischen Märkten erzielen, die spannende Möglichkeiten in den dynamischen Bereichen Infrastruktur, Energie, Rohstoffindustrie, Bauwesen und M&A in der Region bieten.*

*LGP ist stolzer Partner des Vienna Economic Forum, einer führenden Plattform für den Gedankenaustausch über regionale wirtschaftliche und politische Themen und Entwicklungen. Die VEF-Konferenzen bieten hochrangigen Experten und Entscheidungsträgern einen Raum für Debatten und Networking und sind ein fester Bestandteil im Kalender aller an der Region interessierten Akteure.“*

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**Dr. Nina DRAKIĆ**

*President  
Chamber of Economy  
of Montenegro*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © AHG FotoBoris Sekularac

“Representing the interests of the business community, the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro continuously conducts activities aimed at improving the business environment, monitors and analyses the business conditions, issues an opinion on the draft law and initiates the amendments to regulations in order to remove business barriers. Given that the internationalization process has become a necessity and a prerequisite for growth and survival of the companies, in the following period the special attention will be paid to the promotion of the economy, internationalization of the business, implementation of international projects, as well as continuous education and training of employees in the economy, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. I believe that cooperation with the Vienna Economic Forum will strengthen our international activities and contribute to the promotion of opportunities, economic and natural resources and development projects of Montenegro, in order to improve the business ties and regional cooperation.”

*„Als Vertreterin von Interessen der Geschäftsgemeinschaft, die Wirtschaftskammer von Montenegro führt kontinuierlich Aktivitäten zur Verbesserung des Geschäftsumfelds durch, überwacht und analysiert die Geschäftsbedingungen, gibt Stellungnahmen zu Gesetzesentwürfen ab und initiiert Änderungen von Vorschriften, um Geschäftsbeschränkungen zu beseitigen. Da der Prozess der Internationalisierung zu einer Notwendigkeit und Voraussetzung für das Wachstum und Überleben von Unternehmen geworden ist, werden wir in der kommenden Zeit der Wirtschaftsförderung, der Internationalisierung und der Durchführung internationaler Projekte besondere Aufmerksamkeit widmen, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf der kontinuierlichen Verbesserung des Wissens der Mitarbeiter insbesondere in Kleinst-, Klein- und Mittelunternehmen liegen wird. Ich glaube, dass die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Vienna Economic Forum unsere internationalen Aktivitäten stärken wird und zur Förderung von wirtschaftlichen und natürlichen Ressourcen und Entwicklungsprojekten Montenegros beitragen wird, mit dem Ziel, die Geschäftsbeziehungen und die regionale Zusammenarbeit zu erweitern.“*





CHAMBER OF  
ECONOMY OF  
MONTENEGRO



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*your partner*





**Mr. Nikolay TSENKOV**

*Manager  
Municipal Guarantee Fund for  
SME Sofia*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The Municipal Guarantee Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises is a unique financial instrument launched and developed by Sofia Municipality in support of business and innovation in one of the fastest growing capitals in Europe. Its mission is to increase the competitiveness and access to finance of SMEs in Sofia and to put the principle of ‘Think Small First’ in the focus of municipal economic policy.

The fund aims to provide loan guarantees to SMEs that have a cost-effective projects but cannot provide sufficient bank collaterals. So far, the Fund has supported more than 700 SME projects by issuing loan guarantees of more than 65m euros.

The ambitious goal that we are putting forward is Sofia to become the Balkan Capital of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Of course, this includes regional economic cooperation. The experience and successful model of our guarantee institution could be integrated in the CEE region for the implementation of joint transnational projects.”

*„Der kommunale Garantiefonds für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen ist ein einzigartiges Finanzinstrument, das von der Stadt Sofia zur Unterstützung von Unternehmen und Innovationen in einer der am schnellsten wachsenden Hauptstädte Europas entwickelt und aufgesetzt wurde. Seine Aufgabe ist es, die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und den Zugang zu Finanzierungen von KMUs in Sofia zu steigern und das Prinzip ‚Think Small First‘ in den Fokus der kommunalen Wirtschaftspolitik zu rücken.*

*Der Fonds zielt darauf ab, Kreditgarantien für KMUs bereitzustellen, die ein ökonomisch sinnvolles Projekt haben, aber keine ausreichende Besicherung stellen können. Bisher hat der Fonds mehr als 700 KMU-Projekte durch die Vergabe von Kreditbürgschaften in Höhe von über 65 Mio. Euro unterstützt.*

*Unser ehrgeiziges Ziel ist es, aus Sofia die Hauptstadt des Unternehmertums und der Innovation auf dem Balkan zu machen. Dazu gehört selbstverständlich auch die regionale Wirtschaftskooperation. Die Erfahrung und das Erfolgsmodell unserer Garantieeinrichtung können in der CEE-Region für die Umsetzung gemeinsamer transnationaler Projekte integriert werden.“*



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**DI Ryszard PRESCH**

*Executive Board Member  
Novomatic AG*

*Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © NOVOMATIC, Katharina Schill

“The Vienna Economic Forum forms a strong network and promotes investment opportunities in regions where NOVOMATIC has a strong presence. These days, the NOVOMATIC AG Group generates about a quarter of its revenues in those countries where the Vienna Economic Forum is also represented. Key factors for our Group’s success are economic growth, technological change and positive developments in the regulatory framework, which continuously open up new markets and business models. The cooperation with the Vienna Economic Forum contributes to further expanding our leading market position in the future.“

*„Das Vienna Economic Forum bildet ein starkes Netzwerk und fördert Investitionsmöglichkeiten in Regionen, in denen auch NOVOMATIC sehr präsent ist. Mittlerweile erwirtschaftet der NOVOMATIC AG-Konzern rund ein Viertel des Umsatzes in jenen Ländern, in welchen auch das Vienna Economic Forum vertreten ist. Maßgebliche Faktoren für unseren Unternehmenserfolg sind dabei das wirtschaftliche Wachstum, der technologische Wandel und positive Veränderungen regulatorischer Rahmenbedingungen, die laufend neue Märkte und Business-Modelle eröffnen. Die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Vienna Economic Forum trägt dazu bei, unsere führende Marktposition auch in Zukunft weiter auszubauen.“*



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### DI Peter UMUNDUM

*Member of the Executive Board  
Austrian Post*

*President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The Vienna Economic Forum is a valuable international platform for Austrian Post. It does an outstanding job linking the business community with each other as well as the economic and political spheres. We highly value its hybrid offering featuring both personal and digital meetings. The importance of this international network increases in times when it is more difficult to physically cross borders. This transnational dialogue supports the strategy of Austrian Post, which has been operating in CEE and Turkey for many years via its subsidiaries.

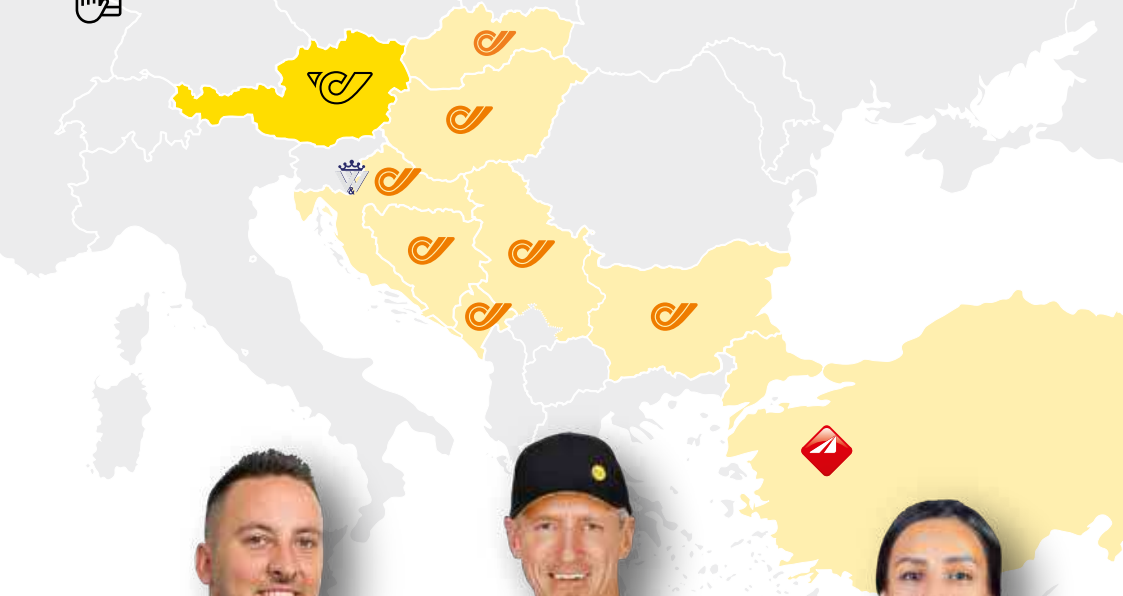
With a revenue of about EUR 2.2 billion in 2020 and close to 23,000 employees, Austrian Post is the leading logistics and postal services provider in the country and is also strongly positioned internationally through its subsidiaries. In addition to Austria, we have subsidiaries in Germany, Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Turkey. Austrian Post transported a total of 452 million parcels in all these countries in 2021. Moreover, the company has delivered all mail items in a CO<sub>2</sub> neutral manner since 2011 and plans to implement 100% emission-free delivery services by the year 2030.”

*„Das Vienna Economic Forum ist für die Österreichische Post AG eine wertvolle internationale Plattform, der es hervorragend gelingt, die Wirtschaft untereinander und die Wirtschaft mit der Politik zu vernetzen. Das hybride Angebot mit sowohl persönlichen Meetings als auch in digitaler Form schätzen wir sehr. In Zeiten, in denen Grenzen wieder erschwert passierbar sind, steigt die Bedeutung dieses internationalen Netzwerks. Dieser länderübergreifende Dialog unterstützt die Strategie der Österreichischen Post, die mit ihren Tochterunternehmen seit vielen Jahren in CEE und der Türkei aktiv ist.“*

*Mit einem Umsatz von rund 2,2 Milliarden Euro im Jahr 2020 und fast 23.000 Mitarbeiter\*innen ist die Österreichische Post die landesweit führende Logistik- und Postdienstleisterin und mit Tochtergesellschaften auch international stark positioniert. Neben Österreich sind wir in den Ländern Deutschland, Slowakei, Kroatien, Ungarn, Bosnien und Herzegowina, Serbien, Montenegro, Bulgarien und Türkei mit Tochterunternehmen vertreten. 2021 beförderte die Post in all diesen Ländern 452 Millionen Paketsendungen. Weiters stellt die Post seit 2011 alle Sendungen in Österreich CO<sub>2</sub> neutral zu, bis 2030 soll die Zustellung zu 100% emissionsfrei erfolgen.“*



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## Mr. Ahmet Burak DAĞLIOĞLU

*President  
Presidency of the Republic of Turkey  
Investment Office*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“A resilient, fast-growing economy, Türkiye offers global market access at the nexus of Europe, Asia and Africa. The region from Adriatic to the Black Sea plays a crucial role in a changing economic and political environment globally. Türkiye has been actively involved in regional integration and cooperation enhancement initiatives as a hub country. In addition, the Turkish private sector has also been actively investing in the region in various sectors like manufacturing, telecommunication, logistics and infrastructure. Tech entrepreneurship has become a major driver of growth and investments for countries and Türkiye developed itself as center of tech ventures. Many international and domestic venture capital funds with a mandate to invest in the region are located in Istanbul. As such, companies from VEF member countries can access multiple markets and expand their business by virtue of vast opportunities offered by Türkiye’s strategic location. As an investment promotion agency, we value bilateral experience sharing programs with our counterparts in the region. In recent years, we have organized experience-sharing programs with VEF members including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Ukraine. I hope the Vienna Economic Forum, being held in the epicenter of Europe, will take us a step further and enable us to contribute to the economic relations between Türkiye and the countries in the region.”

*„Als robuste, schnell wachsende Wirtschaft bietet die Türkei an der Schnittstelle zwischen Europa, Asien und Afrika Zugang zu den Weltmärkten. Die Region von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer spielt in einem sich wandelnden wirtschaftlichen und politischen Umfeld weltweit eine entscheidende Rolle. Die Türkei hat sich als Schlüsselland aktiv an Initiativen zur regionalen Integration und zur Verbesserung der Zusammenarbeit beteiligt. Darüber hinaus investiert der türkische Privatsektor in verschiedenen Branchen wie Produktion, Telekommunikation, Logistik und Infrastruktur aktiv in der Region. Mit dem Unternehmertum im Technologiesektor als aktuell wichtigem Motor für Wachstum und Investitionen hat sich die Türkei zu einem Zentrum für Technologieunternehmen entwickelt. Viele nationale und internationale Risikokapitalfonds mit einem Mandat für Investitionen in der Region haben ihren Sitz in Istanbul. Damit haben Unternehmen aus den VEF-Mitgliedsstaaten Zugang zu zahlreichen Märkten und können ihr Geschäft dank der enormen Möglichkeiten, die die strategische Lage der Türkei bietet, ausweiten. Als Agentur für Investitionsförderung legen wir Wert auf bilaterale Programme zum Erfahrungsaustausch mit unseren Partnern in der Region. In den letzten Jahren haben wir Programme zum Erfahrungsaustausch mit VEF-Mitgliedern wie Albanien, Bosnien und Herzegovina, dem Kosovo, Nordmazedonien und der Ukraine organisiert. Ich hoffe, dass das Wiener Wirtschaftsforum im Zentrum Europas uns einen Schritt weiterbringt und es uns ermöglicht, einen Beitrag zu den Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen der Türkei und anderen Ländern der Region zu leisten.“*



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The Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office, the official investment advisory body of Türkiye, is a knowledge-center for foreign direct investments and a solution partner to the global business community at all stages of investments. It provides customized guidance and qualified consulting before, during, and after entry into Türkiye.



**INVEST IN  
TÜRKİYE**



### Mag. Peter LENKHX

*Member of the Management Board,  
Corporate Banking  
Raiffeisen Bank International AG*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © RBI, David Sailer IMAGES

“RBI regards Austria, where it is a leading corporate and investment bank, as well as Central and Eastern Europe as its home market – as does the Vienna Economic Forum. We are present in 13 markets of the region with subsidiary banks. In addition, we serve our more than 18 million customers through numerous other financial service providers, for example in leasing, asset management or M&A. The VEF makes an important contribution to supporting both our own international activities and the business development of our customers and has done so for many years. Accordingly, the countries on which the VEF focuses also benefit from its activities in the long term and sustainably.”

*„Die RBI betrachtet Österreich, wo sie als eine führende Kommerz- und Investmentbank tätig ist, sowie Zentral- und Osteuropa als ihren Heimmarkt – genauso wie das Vienna Economic Forum. Wir sind in 13 Märkten der Region mit Tochterbanken präsent, darüber hinaus betreuen wir unsere mehr als 18 Millionen Kunden über zahlreiche andere Finanzdienstleistungsunternehmen beispielsweise in den Bereichen Leasing, Vermögensverwaltung oder M&A. Das VEF leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Unterstützung sowohl unserer eigenen internationalen Aktivitäten als auch der Geschäftsentwicklung unserer Kunden, und das seit vielen Jahren. Dementsprechend profitierten auch die Länder, auf die das VEF seinen Fokus legt, langfristig und nachhaltig von dessen Tätigkeit.“*



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**Money makes  
markets grow  
but not trees.**



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### Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ

*President  
Serbian Association of Economists  
Serbia*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“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.“*



**F**ounded 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.



**T**he 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.



**F**oundation 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.



### Dr. Ognian DONEV

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

*Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The Vienna Economic Forum builds a strong network and allows for the emergence of new perspectives for the development of regional economic cooperation, between the member countries of the Forum, while also presenting an opportunity to exchange new ideas.

The 17th annual Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Dialogue for the Future 2020, has created a platform for sharing solutions and experiences, raising various issues related to mobility in the digital space, the challenges and opportunities for the regional economy and the role our youth plays in our digital world.

Now, VEF is digitally moving towards the goal of supporting regional economic cooperation between entrepreneurs from the member countries of the Forum and will continue on this route as a place for defining, meeting, and implementing various regional projects.

I am grateful for the involvement of all members, partners and friends for the permanent and constant support, which gives us to achieve even bigger goals and to broaden our horizons.

Sharing is becoming more important and helps save resources by finding fast and flexible solutions for improving the general wellbeing throughout Europe. In that sense the Vienna Economic Forum is an invaluable network!”

*„Vienna Economic Forum baut ein starkes Netzwerk auf und ermöglicht die Eröffnung neuer Perspektiven für die Entwicklung der regionalen wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit zwischen seinen Mitgliedsländern, während VEF auch die Gelegenheit anbietet, neue Ideen auszutauschen.*

*Das 17. Vienna Economic Forum - Vienna Future Dialogue 2020 schuf eine Diskussionsplattform für den Austausch von Lösungen und Erfahrungen, die wichtigen Fragen der digitalen Mobilität nachgehen konnte und sich mit den Herausforderungen und Chancen für die regionale Wirtschaft, aber auch mit der Rolle der Jugend in der digitalen Welt auseinandersetzte.*

*Jetzt bewegt sich VEF auch digital in Richtung seines Ziels - die regionale wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen Unternehmern aus den Mitgliedsländern des Vienna Economic Forum zu unterstützen, und wird diesem Weg weiter folgen als ein Ort für Definieren, Zusammentreffen und Umsetzung von verschiedenen regionalen Projekten.*

*Ich bin dankbar für das Engagement aller Mitglieder, Partner und Freunde des Vienna Economic Forum und für die ständige Unterstützung, die uns dazu veranlasst, noch größere Ziele zu erreichen und unser Horizont zu erweitern.*

*Dem englischen Begriff „Sharing“ kommt eine immer wichtigere Rolle zu, da das „Sharing“ einerseits zum Ersparen von Ressourcen und andererseits zu schnellen und flexiblen Lösungen für die Verbesserung des allgemeinen Wohlstandes in Europa verhilft. In diesem Sinne bietet Vienna Economic Forum ein unschätzbbares Netzwerk an!“*

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### Dr. Georg BUCHER

*Member of the  
Management Board of  
Steiermärkische Bank und  
Sparkassen AG*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © estrahl/7872

“With a tradition of almost 200 years, Steiermärkische Sparkasse has established a basis of trust, its customers know they can rely on.

The bank is a major part of the Styrian economy and one of the leading financial institutions in Southeastern Europe. With the successful completion of the accession process of Ohridska Banka AD in 2021, Sparkasse Bank AD Skopje is the second bank in the corporate segment and the third bank in the retail segment. We almost tripled our presence in North Macedonia and can thus be an even more stable economic partner in the region.

We are proud to be again member of the Vienna Economic Forum with immediate effect. The partnership opens up new opportunities to further expand our strong network.”

*„Mit einer knapp 200-jährigen Tradition hat die Steiermärkische Sparkasse eine Vertrauensbasis geschaffen, auf die sich ihre Kund:innen verlassen können.*

*Die Bank ist ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der steirischen Wirtschaft und eines der führenden Finanzinstitute in Südosteuropa. Durch die erfolgreiche Übernahme der Ohridska Banka AD im Jahr 2021, stieg die Sparkasse Bank AD Skopje in die Gruppe der Großbanken auf und positioniert sich als zweitgrößte Finanzdienstleisterin im Kommerzbereich und als drittgrößte im Retailsegment. Wir konnten unsere Präsenz in Nordmazedonien nahezu verdreifachen und sind nun eine noch stabilerer Wirtschaftspartnerin in der Region.*

*Wir sind stolz, erneut Mitglied des Vienna Economic Forum zu sein. Durch die Partnerschaft ergeben sich für uns neue Möglichkeiten, um unser starkes Netzwerk weiterhin auszubauen.“*



# Regional partner. Global solutions.



■ Core market of Steiermärkische Sparkasse Group  
▨ Indirect presence in CEE



**Dr. Achim KASPAR**

*Member of the Executive Board, COO, Verbund AG*

*Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum*

### **“*VERBUND: The Power to Transform*”**

VERBUND is Austria's leading energy company and one of the largest producers of hydroelectricity in Europe. The Group generates around 97% of its electricity from renewable energy, primarily from hydropower. VERBUND trades electricity in 12 countries and generated around €874m group result and €1,579m in EBITDA in 2021 with approximately 3,200 employees. With its subsidiaries and partners, VERBUND is active in the generation of electricity, transmission and in international trading and sales. VERBUND has been quoted on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1988 with 51% of the share capital being held by the Republic of Austria.

VERBUND is one of the most environmentally friendly energy companies in Europe, contributes significantly to supply security and is particularly committed to climate and environmental protection, careful use of resources and social responsibility. Sustainability is an essential part of the corporate strategy and of the corporate responsibility which is defined in the code of conduct for sustainable management. VERBUND is working intensively on the expansion of renewable energy sources and is thus making a significant contribution to a low-carbon energy future. VERBUND is a signatory to the UN Global Compact and supports the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” Further information: [www.verbund.com](http://www.verbund.com)

### **„*VERBUND: Die Kraft der Wende*“**

*VERBUND ist Österreichs führendes Energieunternehmen und einer der größten Stromerzeuger aus Wasserkraft in Europa. Rund 97 Prozent des Stroms erzeugt das Unternehmen aus erneuerbaren Energien, vorwiegend Wasserkraft. VERBUND handelt in 12 Ländern mit Strom und erzielte 2021 mit rund 3.200 Mitarbeiter:innen ein Konzernergebnis von rund 874 Mio. Euro und ein EBITDA von rund 1.579 Mio. Euro. Mit Tochterunternehmen und Partnern ist VERBUND von der Stromerzeugung über den Transport bis zum internationalen Handel und Vertrieb aktiv. Seit 1988 notiert VERBUND an der Börse Wien, 51% des Aktienkapitals besitzt die Republik Österreich.*

*Als eines der umweltfreundlichsten Energieunternehmen Europas trägt VERBUND maßgeblich zur Versorgungssicherheit bei und engagiert sich besonders für Klima- und Umweltschutz sowie Ressourcenschonung und übernimmt soziale Verantwortung. Nachhaltigkeit ist wesentlicher Bestandteil der Unternehmensstrategie und der unternehmerischen Verantwortung, die im Verhaltenskodex für nachhaltige Unternehmensführung geregelt sind. Intensiv arbeitet VERBUND am Ausbau der Erneuerbaren Energieträger und leistet damit einen maßgeblichen Beitrag zu einer karbonarmen Energiezukunft. VERBUND ist Unterzeichner des UN Global Compact und unterstützt die Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung der Vereinten Nationen und ihre 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).“ Weitere Informationen: [www.verbund.com](http://www.verbund.com)*

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VERBUND's run-of-river power plant in Vienna (Freudenau)



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### Mag. Peter HÖFINGER

Member of the Board  
Vienna Insurance Group  
AG Wiener Versicherung Gruppe

Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © Jan Elm

“We see the Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is an ideal partner for Vienna Insurance Group (VIG), as we are represented by our insurance companies in each of the VEF partner countries. As the leading insurance group in Austria and in the CEE region, VIG acts as a stable and reliable partner and pursues a long-term strategy. We are convinced of the enormous potential of our core market and focus on providing our customers in CEE with custom products and services tailored to their needs. The VEF network thus provides an excellent platform for the VIG Group to jointly drive the positive development of the entire region.”

*„Wir sehen das Vienna Economic Forums (VEF) als einen idealen Partner für die Vienna Insurance Group (VIG), da wir mit unseren Versicherungsgesellschaften in jedem der Partnerländer des VEF vertreten sind. Als führende Versicherungsgruppe in Österreich sowie in der Gesamtregion CEE agiert die VIG als stabiler und verlässlicher Partner und verfolgt eine langfristige Strategie. Wir sind vom enormen Potenzial unseres Kernmarkts CEE überzeugt, wo wir Kunden ein individuelles, bedarfsgerechtes Angebot bieten. Das Netzwerk des VEF bietet somit für die VIG-Gruppe eine hervorragende Plattform, um gemeinsam die positive Entwicklung der gesamten Region voranzutreiben.“*



# PARTNERSHIP

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### Dr. Kurt Gollowitzer

CEO  
Wien Holding GmbH

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © Wien Holding, Barbara Nidetzky

“As a company of the city of Vienna, we ensure and strengthen Vienna's position as a business location. With its projects and companies, Wien Holding is an important engine that boosts economic growth, creates jobs and improves the quality of life in the city. As partner of the Vienna Economic Forum we can rely on its knowledge and expertise, which enables us to make new contacts in the region from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Thus we are able to use possible synergy effects for Vienna.”

*„Als Unternehmen der Stadt sorgen wir dafür, die Position Wiens als Wirtschaftsstandort zu festigen und weiter auszubauen. Mit ihren Projekten und Unternehmen ist die Wien Holding ein wichtiger Motor, der das Wirtschaftswachstum ankurbelt, Arbeitsplätze schafft und die Lebensqualität erhöht. Dabei können wir auch auf das Wissen und die Expertise des Vienna Economic Forum zurückgreifen, dass uns durch seine überregionalen Netzwerke ermöglicht, neue Kontakte in der Region von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer zu knüpfen und so Synergieeffekte optimal für Wien zu nutzen.“*





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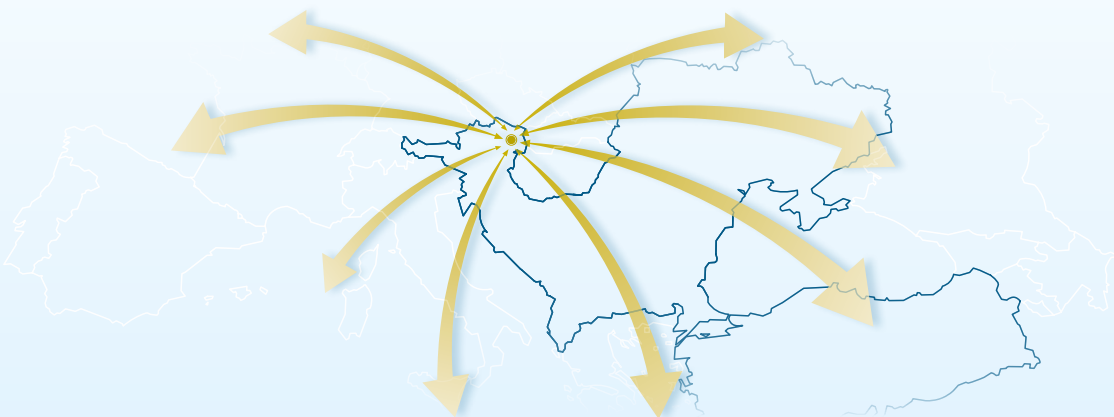
The company of the City of Vienna





**VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM**

**ECONOMY MEETS POLITICS  
IN A DIGITAL WORLD  
2021**



## ANNUAL BOARD MEETING OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

### On 15 February 2021

The annual Board meeting of Vienna Economic Forum in 2021 took place on 15. February at the Headquarters of the Austrian Post in Vienna, hosted by DI Peter Umundum, Board Member responsible for Parcel & Logistics at the Austrian Post and VEF President.

In accordance to the Statute, the VEF President guided through the Agenda, while the Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva reported on the VEF activities in a globally challenging, yet successful year 2020 for Vienna Economic Forum.

Both the VEF office relocation in March 2020 in the Ambassadors district, in Prinz-Eugen Strasse 58, in the 4<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna, as well as the “Summer Cocktail in a Small Setting” organized instead of the 19th Traditional Garden Party with the participation of Ambassadors from the Member countries and VEF Board members, were accentuated.

The VEF Secretary General particularly emphasized the great online success of the 17<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2020 that managed to reach over 1200 viewers from 32 countries.

Deepest gratitude for his and the significant support provided by the Austrian Post was expressed to VEF President DI Peter Umundum.

The subsequent discussion led to the conclusion that it is now more important than ever to build bridges out of barriers, especially in times of restrictions. In this respect the Board members attached great importance to the advantages of digitalization. Therefore, it is to be expected that Vienna Economic Forum, as THE European Economic Platform based in Vienna, is to once again have a stronger hybrid/online presence in 2021.

The Board unanimously accepted the admission of new VEF members – as Cooperation partners, as Members-Legal entities, Members-Natural persons and Honorary members.

Furthermore, it was accepted that the agreed changes in the Board, the election, deselection and co-opting of Board members, as well as updates in the Patrons and Honour committees be proposed for a decision to the General assembly.

The Annual General Assembly of Vienna Economic Forum will take place on 8. March 2021 at the Headquarters of Novomatic AG, Wiener Straße 158, 2352 Gumpoldskirchen.



*Family photo of the Annual Board Meeting 2021 of Vienna Economic Forum  
at the Headquarters of the Austrian Post in Vienna*

*In the first row from left to right, Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ, Spokesman of the Executive Board, EVN AG, Mag. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, DI Peter UMUNDUM, Member of the Board, Österreichische Post AG, Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Dr. Achim Kaspar, Member of the Executive Board of VERBUND AG*

*In the second row from left to right, Dr. Wolfgang Pospischil, CEO, AFRY Management Consulting Austria GmbH, DI Ryszard PRESCH, Executive Board Member, Novomatic AG, Mag. Ekkehart STREMITZER, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER - CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group AG, Dr. Stephan Pachinger, Partner, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP, Mag. Christian PULTAR, Managing Partner, WWV Partner Steuerberatungs GmbH, Tax Consultant*

*Working atmosphere at the Annual Board Meeting 2021 while maintaining a safe distance*





## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

### On 8 March 2021

The Annual General Assembly of Vienna Economic Forum in 2021 took place on 8. March 2021 at the Headquarters of Novomatic AG in Gumpoldskirchen, hosted by the newly elected VEF Vice-President DI Ryszard Presch, Executive Board Member of Novomatic AG.

DI Peter Umundum, Board member of the Austrian Post and VEF President opened the Assembly by greeting the present Members and in accordance with the Statute guided through the Agenda.

In her report on the VEF activities in 2020, the Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva underlined the successful development of Vienna Economic Forum, which was noticeable despite the unusual and very challenging conditions. In reference to the year 2021, as an important topic of the VEF annual planning, she announced the endeavor to continue to organize, in connection with the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, Vienna Economic Talks with high-ranking representatives of regional politics and economy in a hybrid form.

The VEF Secretary General addressed all those in attendance and extended her gratitude that, even under the conditions of the digital present, they are relying on the networking potential of Vienna and driving Vienna Economic Forum forward with their visions.

The VEF President DI Peter Umundum informed about the admission of new VEF Members at the Board meeting held on 15. February 2021, as follows:

As members – legal entities:

- Canon Austria GmbH
- Chamber of Economy of Montenegro

As a member - natural person:

- Mr. Emanuel Forest, Member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-neutral and Smart City

The new VEF members were unanimously welcomed by the General assembly.

Furthermore, the general assembly unanimously reached the following decisions:

- DI Ryszard Presch, Executive Board Member of Novomatic AG was co-opted as Board member and Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum;
- Mr. Vlastimir Golubović, President of the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, was elected Board member of Vienna Economic Forum;



*Family photo of the Annual General Assembly 2021 at the Headquarters of Novomatic AG in Gumpoldskirchen*

The following were appointed as members of the Patrons Committee of Vienna Economic Forum:

- H.E. Mr. Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of Republic of North Macedonia
- H.E. Dr. Zoran Tegeltija, Prime Minister of Bosna and Herzegovina
- H.E. Mr. Denys Shmyhal, Prime Minister of Ukraine
- H.E. Mr. Zdravko Krivokapić, Prime Minister of Montenegro

Honorary membership in the Honorary Committee of Vienna Economic Forum was awarded to the following persons:

- Ambassador Vasilka Poposka Trenevskaa, PhD, Professor of Biostatistics and former Ambassador of the Republic of North Macedonia in the Republic of Austria
- Mr. Ahmet Mesut Ersoy, former Managing director, Denizbank AG and former VEF Board member
- Dr. Ernst Huber, former Austrian Chamber of Commerce (WKÖ)

After a few brief addresses, the VEF President DI Peter Umundum expressed his gratitude and closed the General Assembly.

Following, Novomatic AG, together with the new Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum, invited to a small reception.

The team of Vienna Economic Forum thanks all Members for the constant support of the numerous VEF activities in 2020. The trust placed in us motivates us to conquer new horizons!



MOMENTS ...



Amb. Dr. Elena Kircheva, DI Peter Umundum and the host DI Ryszard Presch



... ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS ...



Mag. Heinz Messinger



Mag. Ekkehart Stremtizer



DI Peter Umundum



Amb. Dr. Elena Kiricheva



DI Ryszard Presch



Exchange of thoughts and ideas



... AUDIENCE AND INTERESTED PARTICIPANTS ...



... MANDATORY FACE MASKS 2021 ...



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... AND FOLLOWS ...





... A SUCCESSFUL FINISH OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021!







**VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS**

**FOCUS ON THE ECONOMIC AND  
INVESTMENT PLAN  
FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS**

19 May 2021  
Lassallestraße 9, 1020 Vienna  
Headquarters of A1 Telekom Austria Group







*Family photo*  
*Vienna Economic Talks – Focus on the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans*

The Hybrid Edition of Vienna Economic Talks with the Focus on the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans took place on 19. May 2021, 4:00–5:30 p.m. (CEST/UTC+2) at the Headquarters of A1 Telekom Austria Group.

The exciting discussion led by **H.E. Mr. Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, with Prime Minister from the Region – Patron of Vienna Economic Forum** and with high representatives of renowned companies, investors and industrialists centred on the **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkan countries (EIP)** for the further development of the regional economy, as well as identification and realization of concrete projects and proposals meeting the specific needs of the countries from the Western Balkans.

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is proud to report that over 600 spectators from over 20 countries worldwide watched the live online broadcast of the Vienna Economic Talks and the highly grasping and informative contributions delivered by H.E. Mr. Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement, H.E. Mr. Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and VEF- Patron, Mr. Gašper Dovžan, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia and VEF - Patron, as well as the other high representatives of the economic, energy and legal sectors.

This highly significant topic, especially during present times, when the Western Balkan region is in the focus of the European Union not only from an enlargement perspective, but rather and even more importantly from a economic point of view bearing in mind the importance of revival of the economy in the region, was highlighted by DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics, Österreichische Post and President of Vienna Economic Forum, as well as Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Founder, Member of the Board and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum.

The Vienna Economic Talks host, Mag. Thomas Arnoldner, CEO of Telekom Austria Group and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum in his statement stressed that it is the A1 Telekom Austria Group's digital infrastructure and digital tools that allow for this event to be hosted and to reach the world-wide audience even under the current conditions. He furthermore pointed out that Central and Eastern Europe is of particular importance to the Group not only in terms of revenue growth but also in terms of foreign investments in the VEF member countries with over 5 billion Euros direct investment since 2015. Digitalization is more important than ever “digital infrastructure, digitalization is paramount in coping with the crisis, in returning to growth, in safeguarding prosperity, catering for high quality jobs, as well as taking other challenges ahead”. What is of utmost importance to the Group is an investment friendly, regulatory framework in the areas where the company operates.

In her opening speech, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva expressed that what brought everyone together was the common goal: “to do our part for a economically better and secure life of the people from the region”. She furthermore highlighted the importance of the Western Balkans region not solely for Europe but for the

whole world, especially from a geopolitical point of view. Vienna Economic Forum, being a Pro-European Platform seated in Vienna, is proud to cooperate with the European Commission, the Prime Ministers of the Member countries, Patrons of VEF, as well as with the newly established WB6 CIF.

The President of Vienna Economic Forum, DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics, Österreichische Post stressed that the main goal of VEF is to connect Europe and to support the business relationship within Europe. Apart from discussing the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, an additional topic of interest and importance is the improvement of the business relationship between the European Union and the Western Balkans thus aiming towards answering: "how can politics and the EU give a framework to support development of the economy in this region" furthermore presenting several examples of members and partners of VEF with business ideas for this region.

The Main Statement, delivered online from Brussels by the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, H.E. Mr. Oliver Várhelyi, conveyed the message that it is in the Union's best interest to bring the whole region into the EU, stressing the clear objective of the European Commission to accelerate this process, which is clearly already integrated from an economic point of view. In order to facilitate the current economic situation in the region, the EC is applying the same growth strategy developed for the EU also to the Western Balkans "large scale investments". The Economic and Investment Plan launched in autumn 2020 is the EC's recovery plan for the WB amounting to 28 billion Euros of funding and leveraging investments in the areas of connectivity of transport, energy, digital and green transition which are to facilitate the process of creating sustainable growth and jobs, thus opening many opportunities for major investments.

The State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Gašper Dovžan, addressed the online and onsite participants from Ljubljana on behalf of H.E. Mr. Janez Janša, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia. In his statement, State Secretary Dovžan focused on three topics: in his general observations on the Western Balkan region and its importance to Slovenia and the EU the State Secretary emphasized that EU's geopolitical ambitions can only be realized through stable and Europeanized Western Balkans; In reference to the plans of Slovenia during their Presidency with the Council of the European Union in the 2nd half of 2021, State Secretary Dovžan discussed three pillars: giving a boost to a credible EU enlargement process, deepening the economic collaboration in areas of mutual interest and thirdly, Slovenia will offer the EU its know-how and good relationships with the region. Slovenia views the Economic and Investment Plan for the WB as an important and strategic tool in all of its areas. He concluded by promising that the Slovenian presidency will give a high priority to all of the important issues, and the enlargement process and the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan will be given a special place in the Slovenian Agenda during the EU-WB Summit which is to take place in October 2021.

H.E. Mr. Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and Patron of Vienna Economic Forum in his address online from Skopje primarily stressed his view on the exceptional success that Vienna Economic Forum achieves in its mission to be the point of

enhancement of the regional cooperation for the WB countries and South-eastern Europe. Prime Minister Zaev expressed his views in regards to the integration Agenda and the fact that: “North Macedonia has been standing for too long on the doorstep of the EU although it has met all conditions for commencement of the negotiations”. As per His Excellency, the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) for the WB is of exceptional importance and comes at the right time, time for rehabilitation and renewal and time for adding a new stimulus for a growing economic strengths. The announcement of the Plan added to the impetus to reorganize the economic strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia and the PM Zaev believes that the crisis can be seen as an encouragement for potential and opportunity to improve each country’s domestic economy. He stated that the Western Balkan countries are like an island surrounded by EU countries and there are no other alternatives for the region, other than a full EU integration supported by the fact that the region and the Union already are very closely connected.

Mr. Janez Kopač, Director of the Energy Community Secretariat spoke about the many challenges for the countries from the region in terms of energy transition, on the path of decarbonization to which the EU is committed, followed by the Western Balkan, in which the Republic of North Macedonia seem to be in the forefront from the countries in the region.

The President of Vienna Economic Forum, DI Peter Umundum in his role as the Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics, Österreichische Post stressed that additionally to the Economic and Investment Plan of the EU we need additional business areas for strengthening the relationship within the European Union and the non – EU states, highlighting the area of e-commerce market as one of the areas offering a high and fast growth potential.

In his statement Dr. Gabriel Lansky, Partner, Lansky, Ganzler + partner and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum pointed out that it is now a good moment and opportunity to put the forces into the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. The past years have seen enormous progress in the economic and business development, witnessing a widely successful transformation of the region.

Dr. Georg Bucher, Member of the Board, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum spoke on three topics: the active and constant presence of Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkasse together with Erste Group since 1997 in the region, the purchase of Ohridska Banka in North Macedonia from Société General and the possibility to maintain and almost finalize the merger on a remote basis thanks to the digital infrastructure, as well as the investment presence of the Bank in the region through active projects, and finally, he spoke about the resilience of the countries in the region and his positive outlook into the future. In terms of the general political remarks, Dr. Bucher believes that the region needs concrete steps, concrete time plans and open communication.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, H.E. Mr. Zoran Zaev made his remarks upon the expressed opinions and experiences as expressed by the other participants. He spoke on concrete projects in the Republic of North Macedonia supported by the EC: gas connection, energy efficiency, waste water treatment station, construction of the railway Corridor 8, establishment of integrated and financially self-sustainable regional waste system, solar

photovoltaic and procurement and installation of photovoltaic of 10MV. Finally, Prime Minister Zaev spoke about the privileges and benefits for foreign investors in the country.

Dr. Achim Kaspar, COO, Verbund AG and Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum spoke about Verbund, the leading Austrian electricity and one of the largest hydro-power producers in Europe with a Green Generation and Agenda for the Western Balkans. Verbund is very much interested in investing in the green future of the region. Mag. Peter Lennkh, Member of the Management Board, Corporate Banking, Raiffeisen Bank International AG, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum addressed the involvement of Raiffeisen in the Western Balkans and the future plans for the region, expressing their firm support for the European integration of the WB and their firm commitment to the region. Ambassador Victor Jackovich, President of Jackovich International, USA, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum stated his views on the rather smooth implementation of the EC Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) and encouraged the EU states and leadership to take on some bold, fast-track steps towards the integration of the Western Balkan countries, furthermore stressing the necessity for a clear road map for the countries from the region with precise milestones. Mr. Mihajlo Vesović, Director of the Sector for Strategic Analysis, Services and Internationalization of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, addressed the participants on behalf of Mr. Marko Čadež, President of the Managing Board of WI6 CIF from Belgrade and addressed the importance of the EU Economic and Investment Plan, especially in the private sector, accentuating on the importance of the offered support by EU on the technical assistance.

Mr. Emmanuel Forest, Member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-neutral and Smart City, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum took on the challenging role of preparing several summary remarks and addressed the participants from Paris, expressing his hope that by 2050 the Western Balkans cities will join the objective for Climate-neutral, Smart cities.

In her final remarks, Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva expressed her conviction that: “through the prism of the regional specificity, we will be able to do something good for the region”, furthermore emphasizing that without this region Europe is not whole, sending the message that “Europe needs this region, more than this region needs Europe”.

Vienna Economic Forums thanks its members for the constant support, dedication to the cause and the placed trust driving us to grow and broaden our horizons and expand our activities!

The subsequent echo that has reached Vienna Economic Forum so far has been extremely positive and will be published on this website shortly.

Special thanks goes to: A1 Telekom Austria Group, AFRY AF Pöyry, AME International GmbH, Bouygues Europe SA, CANON CEE GmbH, EVN AG, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Jackovich International LLC, LANSKY, GANZGER + Partner, Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, Novomatic AG, Österreichische Post AG, Raiffeisen Bank International, Serbian Association of Economists, Sopharma PLC, The Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Investment Office, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, Verbund AG, Wien Holding GmbH.

In addition, Vienna Economic Forum would like to thank AI Telekom Austria Group in particular for their hospitality and strong technical support.

The following link to the VEF Web-site provide a direct access to the Vienna Economic Talks recorded video where all of these very interesting and highly informative statements and contributions are available for viewing:

<https://www.vienna-economic-forum.com/index.php/en/>

Vienna Economic Forum have once again had the privilege to be live broadcasted on the European Union's TV information service channel - Europe by Satellite (EbS):  
<https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-205674>

## PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021

4:00–5:30 P.M. (CEST/UTC+2), VIENNA

**Location**

**Headquarters of A1 Telekom Austria Group AG**  
Lassallestraße 9, 1020 Vienna

**ONSITE Participants**

**Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**

*CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group*

**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Dr.h.c. Ivo IVANOVSKI**, *M&A, International Affairs and Regulation,*  
*Group Director A1 Telekom Austria Group*

**DI Peter UMUNDUM**, *Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics,*  
*Österreichische Post AG*

**President of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**

*Founder and Member of the Board*

**Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Dr. Achim KASPAR**, *COO, Verbund AG*

**Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Mag. Peter LENNKH**, *Member of the Management Board, Corporate Banking*  
*Raiffeisen Bank International AG*

**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Mag. Heinz MESSINGER**, *Managing Director AME International GmbH*

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

**DI Ryszard PRESCH**, *CEO Novomatic AG*

**Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Dr. Georg BUCHER**, *Member of the Board*

*Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG*

**Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Mr. Janez KOPAČ**, *Director of the Energy Community Secretariat, Vienna*

**Guest of Honour**

**H.E. Mag. Ksenija SKRILEC**

*Ambassador of Slovenia to Austria*

**Member of the Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum**

**ONLINE Participants**

**H.E. Mr. Oliver VÁRHELYI**, *European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and*  
*Enlargement, from Brussels*

**H.E. Mr. Janez JANŠA**, *Prime Minister of Slovenia,*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, from Ljubljana**

**H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV**, *Prime Minister of North Macedonia*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, from Skopje**

**Dr. Erhard BUSEK**, *Former Vice-Chancellor of the Republic of Austria*

**Founding Member and Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum**  
*from Vienna*



**Mr. Marko ČADEŽ**, *President of the Managing Board of Western Balkan 6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF), President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (CCIS), from Belgrade*

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, *President of Jackovich International, USA Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, from Washington*

**Mr. Emmanuel FOREST**, *Member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-neutral and Smart City, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, from Paris*

**LIVE STREAMING LINK**

available on the [Vienna Economic Forum Homepage:](http://www.vienna-economic-forum.com)

[www.vienna-economic-forum.com](http://www.vienna-economic-forum.com)

and

on the TV information service of the European Union:

Europe by Satellite (EbS)

4:00–4:10 p.m. **Welcome and Opening**

**Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**

*CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group*

**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**

**DI Peter UMUNDUM**, *Member of the Management Board*

*Parcel & Logistics, Österreichische Post AG*

**President of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**

*Founder and Member of the Board*

**Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**

4:10–4:40 p.m. **MAIN DISCUSSION**  
**FOCUS ON THE ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN**  
**FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS**

**Speakers of Honour**

**H.E. Mr. Oliver VÁRHELYI**

*European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement*

**online from Brussels**

**H.E. Mr. Janez JANŠA**

*Prime Minister of Slovenia, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*

**online from Ljubljana**

**H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV**

*Prime Minister of North Macedonia, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*

**online from Skopje**

4:40–5:20 p.m. **Participants in the discussion**

**DI Peter UMUNDUM**, *Member of the Management Board*  
*Parcel & Logistics, Österreichische Post AG*  
**President of Vienna Economic Forum – onsite**

**Dr. Achim KASPAR**, *COO, Verbund AG*  
**Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum – onsite**

**Mag. Peter LENNKH**, *Member of the Management Board, Corporate Banking Raiffeisen Bank International AG, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum – onsite*

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, *President of Jackovich International, USA Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum – online from Washington*

**Dr. Erhard BUSEK**, *Former Vice-Chancellor of the Republic of Austria Founding Member and Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum – online from Vienna*

**Dr. Georg BUCHER**, *Member of the Board Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum – onsite*

**Mr. Marko ČADEŽ**, *President of the Managing Board of WB6 CIF – online from Belgrade*

**Mr. Janez KOPAČ**, *Director of the Energy Community Secretariat – onsite*

5:20–5:30 p.m. **Summary remarks**

**Mr. Emmanuel FOREST**, *Member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-neutral and Smart City, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum – online from Paris*

**Closing words**

**Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**

*Founder and Member of the Board*

*Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum – onsite*

5:30 p.m.

**END OF VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS –  
FOCUS ON THE ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN  
FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS**

**END OF THE EXTERNAL STREAM**

Vienna Economic Forum  
is proud to cooperate with:



Media Partner



PHOTO GALLERY



*Onsite speakers*



*Amb. Dr. Elena Kircheva*



*DI Peter Umundum*



*Mag. Thomas Arnoldner*



*Dr. Achim Kaspar*



*Dr. Georg Bucher*



*Mag. Peter Lennkh*



*Dr. Ivo Ivanovski*



*Mag. Stefan Krenn*



*Dr. Gabriel Lansky*



*Dr. Janez Kopac*



*H.E. Mr. Oliver VÁRHELYI  
European Commissioner  
for Neighbourhood and Enlargement*



*H.E. Mr. Zoran ZAEV  
Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia  
Member of the Patrons Committee of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Amb. Victor JACKOVICH  
President, Jackovich International, USA  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mr. Mihailo VESOVIC  
Director for Sector for Strategic Analysis  
Services and Internationalization of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (CCIS)*



*Mr. Emmanuel FOREST  
Member of the EU-Mission Board for Climate Neutral and Smart Cities, Brussels, Belgium  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*





*Dr. Achim Kaspar, DI Peter Umundum, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, the host Mag. Thomas Arnoldner and Mag. Stefan Krenn at the A1 Telekom Austria premises*



*Excellent cooperation between A1 Telekom Austria and Vienna Economic Forum with the Moderator Ms. Patricia Been Frgacic*


































**Vienna Economic Forum**  
**VEF**  
 Go South East

## VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS

*Focus on the Economic and Investment Plan  
 for the Western Balkans*

Wednesday, 19 May 2021, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CEST/UTC+2)  
 Headquarters of A1 Telekom Austria Group AG, Vienna

**A1** **AFRY** **AME** **Canon** **EVN** **E.ON Energy Research Center** **E.ON Energy Research Center** **E.ON Energy Research Center** **E.ON Energy Research Center**

**NOVOMATIC** **U** **INVESTMENT OFFICE** **XRBI** **COOP** **Sophomo** **SPARKASSE** **Verbund** **elektro**

## TWO DECADES TRADITIONAL GARDEN PARTY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

**“From the Adriatic to the Black Sea”**

**Culinary and Musical Journey through  
the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum**



## THE 20<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE TRADITIONAL GARDEN PARTY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

**On 18. June 2021 in the guest garden of the  
“Donau Restaurant & Grill” in Kritzendorf,  
on the banks of the Danube River**

On behalf of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, the President of Vienna Economic Forum, DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Board of the Austrian post, responsible for Parcel & Logistics and the Member of the Board and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, welcomed the guests to the 20<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Traditional Garden Party under the Motto “Culinary and musical journey through the partner countries of Vienna Economic Forum” on 18. June 2021 in the guest garden of the “Donau Restaurant & Grill” in Kritzendorf.

In a small setting due to the current circumstances, the Ambassadors and Diplomats from the VEF Member countries, Members of the Board, Honorary members and longstanding partners enjoyed a sunny afternoon in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, good regional cuisine and a great view of the sunny banks of the Danuber river.

Vienna Economic Forum thanks its Members, Partners and Friends for their constant and active support!

Special Thanks goes to the Austrian Post AG.

## PHOTO GALLERY

*Members of the Board, Ambassadors, Members of the Honorary Committee and Arbitrators  
of Vienna Economic Forum*





*Celebrating together 20 years Garden Party of Vienna Economic Forum in a special setting*



SUNNY DAY FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION ...





... FRIENDLY AND SMILING ATMOSPHERE ...



... ENJOYABLE ATMOSPHERE ...



... VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM MAKES NEW FRIENDS WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ...



... WONDERFUL ATMOSPHERE AT THE DANUBE RIVER BANKS ...





... ENJOYING THE JUBILEE



IMPRESSIONS





*The VEF Team thanks the "Donau Restaurant and Grill" in Kritzensdorf*



Vienna Economic Forum  
is proud to cooperate with:



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Ein Unternehmen der Stadt Wien

Special thanks to



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Dear Members, Partners and Friends of Vienna Economic Forum!

We are pleased to invite you to **virtually attend** the forthcoming  
**18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum - Vienna Future Dialogue 2021**

**"Economy meets Politics in a Digital World"**

**During the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of EU 2021**

to take place

**on Monday, 22 November 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)**  
**in the House of Industry (Federation of Austrian Industries)**

Following the Impulse Statement of

**H.E. Ms. Kadri SIMSON,**  
**European Commissioner for Energy**

the 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum  
 will be focused on

**Energy Transition,**  
**Infrastructure and Financial Challenges for the Countries of the VEF Region.**

This **Hybrid Edition of the 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum**  
 with **Prime Ministers from the Region – Patrons of Vienna Economic Forum**  
 and with high representatives of politics and the regional, European and worldwide economy  
 aims to give important insights into the new prospects for the further development of the regional  
 economic cooperation with and between the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum.

The link where the forthcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum will be live broadcasted  
 will follow per E-Mail.

Yours,  
 VEF-Team

With the kind support of:





## **18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021**

### **ECONOMY MEETS POLITICS IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

### **DURING THE SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU 2021**

### **ENERGY TRANSITION. INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE VEF REGION**

22 November 2021  
Federation of Austrian Industries  
House of Industry  
Schwarzenbergplatz 4  
1030 Vienna



Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia  
to the Republic of Austria

Honorary Consulate  
of the Republic of Slovenia  
in Lower Austria



The **Special Edition** of the **18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021** under the Motto “**Economy meets Politics in a Digital World**” during the **Slovenian Presidency of the Council of EU 2021** was to take place on 22 November 2021 in the Federation of Austrian Industries, House of Industry.

The **18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum**, originally structured in a combined onsite and online special format, had to be cancelled due to Force Majeure and the Austrian wide introduced security measures.

Vienna Economic Forum rose to the challenge and the ambitions and strives to not only honour this years **18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum** but to also give the **high-ranking participants**, stemming from various backgrounds, from economic decision makers, political representatives, policy makers and legislators, to financial global institutions and experts in the respective fields, the proper recognition and the space to present their already prepared statements, speeches, recorded video materials and give the Main Topic: “**Energy Transition. Infrastructure and Financial Challenges for the Countries of the VEF Region**” the **special attention** it deserves.

Dear Members, Partners and Friends,

Vienna Economic Forum has prepared a **special video** enveloping all of the received materials. Each keynote, statement and contribution has been prepared **with deep and excellent** understanding of the most current state of affairs concerning this highly actual topic that affects the lives and future developments in all spheres of the everyday living.

We are truly proud that all participants have agreed to communicate their **experience, expertise, knowledge** and expectations and are eager to share them with you in this special format!


Thank you to all of the participants that agreed to take part onsite or online, thank you to all VEF partners, long-term supporters and friends. The digital composition can be found on the VEF website under: <https://www.vienna-economic-forum.com/index.php/en/18-vef-en>

Vienna Economic Forum is grateful for your constant encouragement and companionship on this journey so far.

We are expecting to welcome and greet each and every one of you in Vienna at the **19<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Vienna Economic Forum on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022!**

Special thanks goes to: **AI Telekom Austria Group, Afry Management Consulting Austria GmbH, AME International GmbH, BOUYGUES Europe SA, Belgium, Canon CEE GmbH, EVN AG, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Jackovich International, LLC, LANSKY, GANZGER, GOETH, FRANKL + Partner (LGP), Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, Novomatic AG, Austrian Post, Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Investment Office, OMEKS, d.o.o., Slovenia, Raiffeisen Bank International AG, President of the Serbian Association of Economists, Serbia, Sopharma AG, Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG, Verbund AG, Vienna Insurance Group (VIG) and Wien Holding GmbH.**

# *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

## PROGRAMME

SUNDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2021

**LOCATION**

**Hotel Imperial**  
**Kärntner Ring 16, 1015 Vienna**

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



MONDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2021

**LOCATION**

**Federation of Austrian Industries, House of Industry**  
**Schwarzenbergplatz 4**  
**1030 Vienna**

**ONLINE Participants**via **LIVE STREAMING LINK:**

**<https://juraczka-live.at/events/d1ykiEq2OelbYuom>**

also available on the

**Vienna Economic Forum Homepage:**

**[www.vienna-economic-forum.com](http://www.vienna-economic-forum.com)**

**and on Europe by Satellite (EbS)**

**Moderation**

**Ms. Daniela PHILIPP**

9:00–9:30 a.m. **OPENING OF THE HYBRID EDITION OF THE**  
**18<sup>th</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM**

**Welcome Words**

**Mr. Georg KNILL**

*President of the Federation of Austrian Industries, onsite*

**Opening**

**Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, *Member of the Board*

*Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Greeting Words**

**DI Peter UMUNDUM**, *Member of the Executive Board of the Österreichische Post AG*

*President of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Video Messages**

**H.E. Mr. Janez JANŠA**, *Prime Minister of Slovenia*

*Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, Video message*

**DI Dr. Erwin PRÖLL**, *Former Governor of Lower Austria Honorary Consul of*

*Slovenia with the Consular District of Lower Austria, Honorary member of Vienna Economic Forum, Video message*

**Outline**

**Dr. Erhard BUSEK**, *Former Vice-Chancellor of Austria Founding Father and*

*Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*



9:30–10:40 a.m. **1<sup>st</sup> SESSION****ENERGY TRANSITION****Impulse Statement****H.E. Ms. Kadri SIMSON***European Commissioner for Energy, **Video statement*****Keynote****H.E. Mr. Denys SHMYHAL**, *Prime Minister of Ukraine**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Statements****H.E. Mr. Kreshnik BEKTESHI***Minister of Economy of North Macedonia, **onsite*****Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ**, *President of Serbian Association of Economists**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Mr. Marko PERUNOVIĆ**, *State Secretary for Energy and Mining, Ministry of Capital Investments of Montenegro, **onsite*****Mr. Admir ANDELIJA***General Manager of JP Elektroprivreda d.d.**Bosnia and Herzegovina, **onsite*****Onsite/Online Discussion****Dr. Achim KASPAR**, *Member of the Executive Board COO, Verbund AG**Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ**, *Spokesman of the Executive Board, EVN AG**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Ahmet Burak DAĞLIOĞLU**, *President, Presidency of the Republic of Turkey**Investment Office, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum****online from Istanbul*****DI Peter UMUNDUM**, *Member of the Executive Board of the Österreichische Post AG**President of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Dr. Gabriel LANSKY**, *Partner, LANSKY, GANZGER, GOETH, FRANKL + partner,**Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite*****Session Summary****Dr. Janez KOPAČ**, *Director**Energy Community Secretariat, Vienna, **onsite***10:40–10:50 a.m. **SHORT BREAK**

10:50 a.m.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SESSION**

12:30 p.m.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FOR THE  
COUNTRIES OF THE VEF REGION****Keynote****H.E. Mr. Edi RAMA**, *Prime Minister of Albania**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, **online from Tirana*****H.E. Mr. Albin KURTI**, *Prime Minister of Kosovo**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, **onsite***

**Main Statement**

**Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA**, *Vice-President  
European Investment Bank (EIB), onsite*

**Onsite Discussion**

**Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**, *CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Mr. Wilbert VERHEIJEN**, *Managing Director Canon CEE GmbH  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Mag. Peter HÖFINGER**, *Member of the Board of Vienna Insurance Group AG  
Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Dr. Friedhelm BOSCHERT**, *Managing Director MIFI GmbH, CEO  
Oikocredit Austria, Member of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Participants Onsite/Online**

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

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

**Mr. Emmanuel FOREST**, *Member of the EU Mission Board for Climate-neutral and  
Smart City, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum online from Paris*

**Amb. Prof. Dr. Vasilka POPOSKA-TRENEVSKA**, *Honorary member of  
Vienna Economic Forum Representative of OMEKS d.o.o. Slovenia, onsite*

**Dr. Nina DRAKIĆ**, *Acting President, Chamber of Economy of Montenegro  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, onsite*

**Dr. Dennis HESSELING**, *Head of Department Infrastructure, Gas and Retail,  
EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) with Headquarters in  
Ljubljana, onsite*

**Session Summary**

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**, *President, Jackovich International LLC, USA  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, online from Washington*

12:30 p.m.

**END OF 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021**

**“Economy meets Politics in a digital world”**

**END OF THE EXTERNAL STREAM**



Vienna Economic Forum  
is proud to cooperate with:



PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Csaba KEMEL  
Minister of Agriculture  
of the Hungarian Government  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board

Mrs. Dr. Shela KRITCHEVA  
Member of the Board  
Executive Director of the International Centre  
for Economic Research  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board

Dr. Peter URAMELMI  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
22 November 2021

H.E. Mr. Zoltan ZANKA  
Minister of Economy  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
22 November 2021

H.E. Mrs. Katalin SZABÓNÉ  
Minister of Energy

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
22 November 2021

H.E. Mr. Danyal SHYKH  
Minister of Economy  
Member of the VEF Advisory Board

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
22 November 2021



Dr. Robert KIMMEL  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Prof. Dr. Gerd SCHMIDTKE  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Alexander TOFFI  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Tobias REINOLD  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Andrej HANDEL  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Dr. Julian ANDRES  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Stefan STAMBERG  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Bernd BACH  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Dr. Ewald LAMERT  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

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 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Mr. Thomas HANDEL  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Herbert LINDNER  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Stefan WITTMANN  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Dr. Friedhelm EISENHART  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

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 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Dr. Stephan CONY  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Andrej HANDEL  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Dr. Sebastian FRIEST  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Stefan WITTMANN  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Dr. Alexander HERRMANN  
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 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Andrej HANDEL  
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 European Commission

Mr. Tobias REINOLD  
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 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
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 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

Dr. Wolfgang STAMBERG  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Andrej HANDEL  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Mr. Kurt BECKER  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

Dr. Stefan WITTMANN  
 Director General  
 Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
 European Commission

18<sup>TH</sup> VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
 VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2021  
 27 November 2021

PHOTO GALLERY



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



*DI Peter UMUNDUM  
Member of the Executive Board,  
Österreichische Post AG  
Member of the Board  
President of Vienna Economic Forum*





Fragments of the Digital Composition of  
18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021  
under the Motto “Economy meets Politics in a Digital World”



*H.E. Mr. Janez JANŠA  
Prime Minister of Slovenia  
Member of the Patrons Committee of  
Vienna Economic Forum*



*H.E. Ms. Kadri SIMSON  
European Commissioner for Energy*





*H.E. Mr. Albin KURTI  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo  
Member of the Patrons Committee of  
Vienna Economic Forum*



*Dr. Dr. Erwin PRÖLL  
Former Governor of Lower Austria  
Honorary Consul of Slovenia with the  
Consular District of Lower Austria  
Member of the Honorary Committee of  
Vienna Economic Forum*




**Mag. Thomas ARNOLDNER**  
CEO, A1 Telekom Austria Group

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum




**Mr. Wilbert VERHEUEN**  
Managing Director, Canon CEI GmbH

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum




**Mag. Stefan SZYSZKOWITZ**  
Spokesperson of the Executive Board, EVN AG

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum



**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**  
President, JI Group International, USA

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum



**Dr. Gabriel LANŠKY**  
LMNRS, GAZDAR, IRETA, HANV, + Partner (COP)

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum



**Mr. Ahmet Burak DAĞLIOĞLU**  
President,  
Ministry of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce Office

Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum



**Mr. James KOPAC**  
 Minister of the Energy Community Secretariat,  
 Vienna



**Mr. Aleksander STAJDICH**  
 President, Institute of Economics  
 Member of the Board of  
 Vienna Economic Forum

*Dr. Friedhelm BOSCHERT*  
 Hon. Prof. (FH), Certified Expert in  
 Sustainable Finance  
 Managing Director MIFI GmbH, CEO  
 Oikocredit Austria  
 Member and Arbitrator of  
 Vienna Economic Forum



**Mr. Admir Anđelić**  
 Representative Member of the  
 Agency for Economic Cooperation  
 with Western Balkan Region



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM DAILY BUSINESS 2021



### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – AMONG THE BEST CRISIS MANAGERS IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

At the end of 2020, 23,000 opinion leaders from Austria's business network platform and an eleven-member expert jury ranked the 300 best managers in the time of crisis.

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is proud to be able to congratulate the **VEF President DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Board, responsible for Parcel & Logistics at the Austrian Post**, on his TOP classification in the current "LEADERSNET" ranking of the best crisis managers in Austria in the most challenging year in recent world history. By maintaining the quality assurance when shipping around 165 million parcels last year, DI Peter Umundum took the second place in the ranking.



### VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM REPRESENTED AT UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE ON DIGITAL COOPERATION AND CONNECTIVITY

We are proud to inform that **Ambassador Victor Jackovich, President of the Jackovich International USA and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** represented Vienna Economic Forum and participated at the United Nations High-Level Debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity, held at UN headquarters in New York on 27. April 2021.

On behalf of Vienna Economic Forum, and upon an invitation by the organizer, Ambassador Jackovich stressed that Vienna Economic Forum is a platform where experts from the governments and peoples of Central Europe and Southeast Europe meet to discuss economic and related issues, as well as a platform for implementation of programs developed by the Vienna Economic Forum and by the states with whom VEF directly cooperates. "Some of these activities have been in the field of digital technology and among Vienna Economic Forum members are some of the most prestigious institutions dealing with digital technology in Austria and Europe", Ambassador Jackovich said.

Ambassador Jackovich posed the following question to be considered by the speakers: "What can be done to protect more vulnerable societies (such as those in Southeast Europe aspiring to European Union membership) from the misuse of digital technology, i.e. the dissemination of



false information or purposely misleading data that can have a deleterious impact and greater resonance on the populations of less developed information environments than on those in more developed environments?”

The Debate to follow included the highly valuable and interesting interventions and remarks provided by the high-level participants and experts on the matter including: Volkan Bozkir, President of General Assembly, UN, Munir Akram, President of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of UN, Patrick Gelsinger, CEO Intel, Javier Villamizar, Operating Partner, SoftBank Vision Fund, Solinn Lim, Oxfam Cambodia, Country Director, Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant UN Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, Isabelle Durant, Acting UN Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Jose Ranon Lopez-Portillo, 10 Member Group, Technology Facilitation Mechanism, as well as some thought-provoking UN video presentations.

The importance of the issue – digital cooperation and connectivity – was conveyed by the fact that this was a very high-level conference addressed by several senior level officials of the UN, individual governments, company CEOs and NGOs. The debate was useful in identifying problems, however more attention ought to be paid to providing specific programs and implementable solutions.

Vienna Economic Forum is very proud to have been represented by the **VEF Board Member Ambassador Jackovich** who used this opportunity to highlight the VEF role from its headquarters in Vienna in supporting the aspirations of the governments and peoples of Central and Southeast Europe for the good development of the regional cooperation. Among others, Vienna Economic Forum has also been granted the significant Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is constantly being invited to participate in important UN debates, as well as to support further development of the civil society worldwide.



## **STRONG FINANCIAL YEAR IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE VEF COOPERATION PARTNER A1 TELEKOM AUSTRIA GROUP**

**Mag. Thomas Arnoldner, CEO of A1 Telekom Austria Group AG and member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** was also ranked at the TOP of the list and took the fifth place in the “Service” category.

Vienna Economic Forum is proud with the result of A1 Telekom Austria Group in the challenging environment of 2020. Mag. Thomas Arnoldner, CEO of A1 Telekom Austria Group, and Member of the VEF Board emphasized that: “The operational and financial performance of A1 Telekom Austria Group in the financial year 2020 was significantly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The results reflect the resilience of our business model and the positive impact of the measures taken in this challenging environment.

The Group continued to deliver a strong operational performance for the full year 2020 despite the operating environment. Revenues decreased slightly by 0.3%, while service revenues remained stable despite roaming losses and negative foreign exchange effects. Excluding foreign exchange and one-off effects, total revenues grew by 1.5%. Group EBITDA increased by 1.0%. The net result for 2020 was EUR 388.8 million, above the 2019 result. We continue to benefit from our operational strength, efficiency and solid capital structure. We have succeeded in consistently reducing debt in recent years. In Austria alone, we again invested EUR 456.4 million, making us the largest investor in digital infrastructure. The strongly growing demand for high-performance networks requires more investments and continuous expansion. This is only possible with investment-friendly framework conditions. At the same time, these investments would also be a multiplier to grow out of the current crisis, increase innovative strength and secure long-term competitive advantages for Austria in global competition. CEE markets showed solid overall operational performance in 2020 due to fixed line growth and strong demand for mobile WiFi routers.”

We wish our VEF founding member A1 Telekom Austria Group further significant successes both in Austria as well as in the VEF Member countries and are looking forward to an excellent collaboration in the many years to come.

**Vienna Economic Forum** is pleased to have some of the TOP managers on board as President and Board Member and wishes them continued success!



## INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THE PREMISES OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

The Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum **Dr. Sonja Sagmeister-Brandner**, Author and Journalist, ZIB 2, ORF visited on 12 May 2021 the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva in the premises of Vienna Economic Forum. In a “tour d’horizon” many topics about future collaboration were discussed, among which also about geographic growth of Vienna Economic Forum on other continents as well.



## WORKING MEETING WITH H.E. ABAT FAYZULLAEV AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN TO AUSTRIA

The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva on 4. June 2021 met **H.E. Mr. Abat Fayzullaev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Austria.**

The main topic of the discussion at the Vienna Economic Forum premises were the future steps and developments in the collaboration between Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) and Uzbekistan. Concrete projects for common collaboration, as well as the possibility for active participation of representatives of the Usbekistan economy in the VEF- Activities, inkl. the potential signing of a Memorandum of Understanding were examined.



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM CO-ORGANIZER OF THE “WESTERN BALKANS LABOUR MARKETS REVIEW – REGIONAL TALK TOWARDS EU ACCESSION”

On 10 June 2021, Vienna Economic Forum, together with **EastEuroCo Executive Search Group**, long-standing Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum, co-organized the “Regional Talk Towards EU Accession-Western Balkans Labour Markets Review”, with the partners on-site in Budapest.

The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, has had the honour, online from the Vienna Economic Forum premises in Vienna, **to open the discussion** on this very important topic.

In her Opening Remarks Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva spoke about the necessity for constant growth and adjustment to the changing conditions of the global happenings through the prism of the regional specificity and underlined that: “Only by putting in the efforts, we can assure that the ongoing brain drain process and massive migration for employment purposes will be stopped, thus securing a proper and highly skilled work force on the hand and fair and well paid working environment on the other”. In her greeting words to the **EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Olivér Várhelyi**, and to all of the high-ranking online participants and viewers the Secretary General said that: “Vienna Economic Forum was built on a vision, to contribute to the economic cooperation and development of the 13 VEF Member countries as a region that grows together” and only if we follow this vision and put in all of our efforts we can achieve “a social change, a real synergy of employers and employees and courage to see the future of the region and Europe”!

On the topic of Investors’ experiences, among others we had the honour to also hear the experts views of **two Board Members of Vienna Economic Forum**.

**Mr. Wilbert Verheijen, Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH, Member of the Board of VEF** talked about his views of the Western Balkans as a growth opportunity, especially in the developing economies of the countries of the region. He sees the biggest opportunity in the future in what is called digital transformation, i.e. moving the business processes from analogue to digital for which improving the digital skills of the work force from the region would be highly valuable. Canon's philosophy: “living and working together for the common good” is something Mr. Verheijen hopes to be applicable in the countries of the region in terms of not only doing business but also making a positive contribution to the social development in each country where the company is present.



Mr. Wilbert Verheijen, Managing Director,  
Canon CEE GmbH,  
Member of the Board of VEF





Dr. Stehan Pachinger, LL.M., Partner,  
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer,  
Member of the Board of VEF



**Dr. Stehan Pachinger, LL.M., Partner, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Member of the Board of VEF** provided several aspects which based on the experience of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer are highly relevant and should ultimately provide means to make sure that any undertaken investment results in the positive expectation associated with it and ensures that the aspirations put into place materialize and are not jeopardised. Dr. Pachinger presented several Considerations for Investors in the Western Balkans and introduced respective areas that are of utmost importance from a legal perspective.

The consequent presentations, contributions and discussions from the high representatives of all of the countries from the Western Balkan region, followed by the most interesting insights offered by the initiator of the online Discussion, host and main organizer from Budapest, Hungary, on this very important topic were very informative and knowledgeable.

Vienna Economic Forum thanks to **Mr. Sándor Söpkéz and to EastEuroCo Executive Search Group** for the excellent cooperation and co-organization of the online Discussion and for the close and fruitful collaboration over the many years.



### WORKING MEETING WITH DI DR. ERWIN PRÖLL FORMER GOVERNOR OF LOWER AUSTRIA, HONORARY CONSUL OF SLOVENIA WITH THE CONSULAR DISTRICT OF LOWER AUSTRIA AND HONORARY MEMBER OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva held a working meeting on 11. June 2021 with **DI Dr. Erwin Pröll, former Governor of Lower Austria, Honorary Consul of Slovenia with the Consular District of Lower Austria and Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum.**

They talked about an activation and deepening of the mutual cooperation. Details of a potential co-organization of the upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum which is to take place on 22. November 2021, together with the Honorary Consulate of Slovenia, were discussed. Both sides welcome such a co-organization, especially since during the second half of 2021 Slovenia will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Additionally, other subject areas for active collaboration have been defined as well.



### WORKING MEETING WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE REGIONS OF EUROPE (IRE), FORMER GOVERNOR UNIV. PROF. DR. FRANZ SCHAUSBERGER AT VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 16 June 2021 the **former Governor Univ. Prof. Dr. Franz Schausberger, Chairman of the Board of the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE)** in Salzburg and the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF), Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, held a working meeting at the premises of Vienna Economic Forum. During the intensive exchange of views, topics of mutual interest, as well as potential possibilities for intensifying the cooperation between VEF and IRE were discussed, including the co-organization of future events.

In the light of the many years of excellent cooperation, at the end of their talks, the **VEF Secretary General** had the honour to award former Governor Univ. Prof. Dr. Schausberger with the "Decoration of Honour of Vienna Economic Forum".

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AS CO-ORGANIZER OF A DISCUSSION ON THE TOPIC OF: “THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS IN THE BALKAN REGION” IN HEADQUARTERS OF NOVOMATIC AG



**Vienna Economic Forum, together with Novomatic AG**, long-standing Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum and the Institute for Security Policy (ISP) co-organized a discussion on the important topic of **“The Security Aspects of Financial Transactions in the Balkan Region”**. The hybrid event held on 17. June 2021 included online participants world-wide and onsite participants at the Headquarters of Novomatic AG in Lower Austria.

**The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, had the honour to welcome** the participants deriving from various social spheres among which: Novomatic heads of divisions, technical experts, managing directors, well-known representatives from science, politics, industry, the public sector and the diplomatic corps. She extended her gratitude to be able, along the **Director Group Marketing & Communications of Novomatic AG, Mag. Stefan Krenn, LL.M.**, the Group Security Manager, Dr. Hans-Peter Stückler as moderator of the discussion, the high representative of the Institute for Security Policy, as well as with the speakers - Prof. Dr. Severin Gasser from the Institute for Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure and Criminology at the University of Innsbruck and Mr. Srecko Latal, Journalist and Regional editor of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, to be part of such an important discussion.

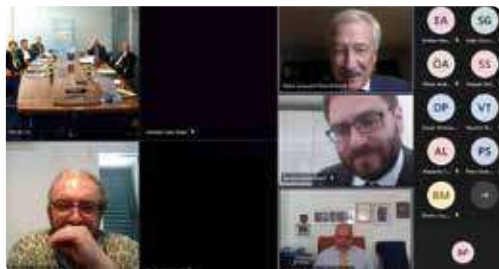




Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva stressed her conviction that: “taking care of all Security Aspects of the Financial Transactions involves two directions: legal and moral duty – from and to the Balkans!” Furthermore she highlighted her view on this being applicable for all stakeholders Europe- and worldwide, and not for the Balkan Region only. She ended her Welcome address by accentuating the importance of accelerating the international cooperation and coordination!



All participants onsite and online had the pleasure to hear the knowledgeable views of the keynote speakers **Ambassador Victor Jackovich, CEO of Jackovich International, USA and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, as well as Prof. Dr. Milan Parivodic, Parivodic Advokati/Lawyers; Minister of International Economic Relations of Serbia (2004–2007), Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum.**



During the lively discussion, the audience had the opportunity to hear the many interesting contributions from all of the active participants, who shared their extensive and important knowledge and expertise, having the know-how to

discuss the topic oriented towards the Balkan region! During the consequent “Q&A session”, the opportunity was used for short personal exchange of ideas as well. After the Discussion **Mag. Stefan Krenn received the “Decoration of Honour of Vienna Economic Forum” on behalf of Novomatic AG, awarded by Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva, on behalf of the VEF Board for the excellent Cooperation during the many years!**

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE NEWEST EDITION OF SOCIETY MAGAZINE

Society Magazine, led by its Publisher, **KR Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer** is a strong supporter and Media Partner of Vienna Economic Forum! VEF is very thankful to Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer, elected also as a **Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum.**

## FURTHER SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION OF VEF FOUNDING MEMBER AND COOPERATION PARTNER EVN AG



Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to inform about the exemplary teamwork for the energy transition between the Subsidiary Netz NÖ of the **VEF- Founding member and Cooperation partner EVN AG** and Austrian Power Grid (APG).

**The EVN AG Spokesman of the Executive Board, Mag. Stefan Szyszkowitz, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum,** together with the other parties

involved, took part in the ceremonial inauguration of the 300-ton APG transformer “Carlo” in the Zaya substation.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates on this important step towards expanding the electricity infrastructure and is proud of the success of its Cooperation partner EVN.



## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AT THE 24TH EURASIAN ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN ISTANBUL

Upon the invitation of **Dr. Akkan Suver, President of Marmara Group's Strategic and Social Research Foundation,** **Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva,**

**Secretary General and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** actively participated at the **24<sup>th</sup> Eurasian Economic Summit** which took place online on **8 and 9 July 2021 in Istanbul.**

Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva spoke on the highly current and important Topic of Energy “Making Energy’s Building Better for the Common Future of Humanity”.

In her speech, Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva expressed her wishes for an improved “international coordinated expansion” and stressed the high importance of utilization of “the current transition period for capacity building and for becoming access to trade excess power from renewable sources”. **Vienna Economic Forum is proud of the long-standing, fruitful cooperation with the Marmara Strategic Group** and Social Research Foundation, **VEF Strategic partner for many years!**

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE SUCCESS OF THE VEF COOPERATION PARTNER STEIERMÄRKISCHE BANK UND SPARKASSEN AG IN THE VEF MEMBER COUNTRY NORTH MACEDONIA



Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to be able to congratulate its Cooperation partner Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG and their Board Member, **Dr. Georg Bucher, Member of the VEF Board**, on the successful completion of the accession of Ohridska banka AD Skopje to the Sparkasse Bank Makedonija AD Skopje.

With total assets of 1.15 billion Euros, Sparkasse Bank Makedonija AD positions itself strongly in the ranking

of the major banks in the domestic market - first place in the custodian banks, second place in corporate customers and third in the household segment, and offers its customers attractive products and services, as well as the valuable expertise of **Steiermärkische Bank und Sparkassen AG**.



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM FOUNDING MEMBER AND COOPERATION PARTNER RAIFFEISEN BANK INTERNATIONAL (RBI) WINS THREE REGIONAL GLOBAL FINANCE SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to be able to congratulate its **founding member and Cooperation partner Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI)** for the great recognition by Global Finance Magazine in its first Sustainable Finance Awards 2021.

RBI was honoured with three awards for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE): Outstanding Leadership in Sustainable Finance \* Outstanding Leadership in Sustainable Bonds \* Outstanding Leadership in Green Bonds (for more info:

<https://www.rbinternational.com/en/media/2021/rbi-wins-three-regional-global-finance-sustainability-awards.html> ).



## WORKING MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF ROMANIA H.E. MR. EMILIAN HUREZEANU AT VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 7. September 2021, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva welcomed to a working meeting **H.E. Mr. Emilian Hurezeanu, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Romania** at the premises of Vienna Economic Forum.

In addition to the many years of excellent cooperation and the possibilities of an even more intensive collaboration with the Embassy, special attention was paid to the organization of the forthcoming 18. Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021 which is to take

place on 22. November 2021 on the topic: “Energy Transition, Infrastructure and Financial challenges for the countries of the VEF region”.

Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to be able to welcome **H.E. Mr. Emilian Hurezeanu as a new member of the Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum.**

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM FOUNDING MEMBER AND COOPERATION PARTNER RAIFFEISEN BANK INTERNATIONAL (RBI) SIGNS AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE CRÉDIT AGRICOLE SRBIJA

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to inform about the acquisition of **Crédit Agricole Srbija** through Raiffeisen banka a.d. - the Serbian subsidiary of the VEF founding member and cooperation partner Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI).

VEF congratulates RBI on the promising acquisition in Serbia and wishes its cooperation partner a successful closing of the transaction (for more information: <https://www.rbinternational.com/en/media/2021/rbi-sees-growth-potential-in-serbia---agreement-signed-for-acqu.html>).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. EMMANUEL FOREST MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM ON HIS SUCCESS IN THE "BLIND AUDITIONS" COMPETITION TELEVISION SERIES "THE VOICE SENIOR"



Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is proud of and congratulates the long-term cooperation partner and **Member of the VEF Board, Mr. Emmanuel Forest** on his success in the “Blind Auditions” of the fourth season of the singing casting show “The Voice Senior” in Russia (Russian Голос 60+).

VEF published the video recording of the performance by the talented VEF Board member with one of the most popular Russian songs “Podmoskovnye Vechera”.



## WORKING MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF SLOVENIA H.E. MR. ALEKSANDER GERŽINA AT VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 17. September 2021, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva welcomed H.E. **Mr. Aleksander Geržina, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Slovenia** to a working meeting at the premises of Vienna Economic Forum.

The discussion focused on the coordination activities concerning the upcoming 18. Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021 on 22. November 2021, which will take place during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, on the highly current

topic: “Energy Transition, Infrastructure and Financial challenges for the countries of the VEF region”.

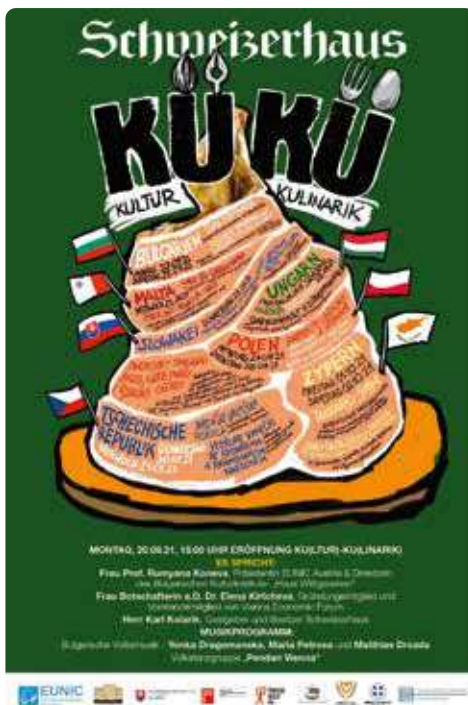
Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to be able to welcome **H.E. Mr. Aleksander Geržina as a new Member of the Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum.**

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM COOPERATION PARTNER NOVOMATIC AG ONCE AGAIN RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL G4 CERTIFICATION

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to announce another success of its Cooperation partner Novomatic AG and to congratulate on the renewed granting of the so-called G4 certification, which is internationally recognized as the highest benchmark for meeting the strictest standards in the field of player protection.

## EUROPEAN UNION NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR CULTURE (EUNIC)

### VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AT THE “KULTUR-KULINARIK” TABLE IN THE VIENNA-PRATER SCHWEIZERHAUS



On 20. September 2021, in the emblematic culinary gathering point at Vienna's Prater – the Schweizerhaus, the “Kultur-Kulinarik” initiative of the network of the **European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)** was given a festive start.

Upon the invitation of **Dr. Rumjana Koneva**, Head of the Bulgarian cultural institute in Vienna “Haus Wittgenstein” and of the Austrian clusters of EUNIC, the **Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** opened the two-week culinary-musical marathon, together with the friendly host and owner of the Schweizerhaus, **Mr. Komm. Rat Dkfm. Karl J. Kolarik**.

The VEF recommendation was: Visitors to the Schweizerhaus can experience the diverse tastes of European cultures every day until 2. October 2021.



Excellent and cheerful atmosphere in Vienna-Prater Schweizerhaus







## THE VEF COOPERATION PARTNER VERBUND AG WANTS TO MOBILIZE AUSTRIA FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) with great pleasure and pride informs about the campaign launched in autumn by its cooperation partner Verbund AG. The campaign, created with Heimat Wien and Peter Dirnberger, is based on the story of the world's first female marathon runner,

Kathrine Switzer, who stands as a role model for the first step that everyone has to take to turn things around.

Thus, Verbund stages the positioning of the company as „The Power to Transform“ with strong images and an impressive story. Vienna Economic Forum greets its Cooperation partner and is confident that the Verbund campaign will inspire Austrians for the energy transition and the achievement of climate targets.



## WORKING MEETING WITH AMB. DR. MEGLENA PLUGTSCHIEVA AT VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

The Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva welcomed **H.E Dr. Meglena Plugtschieva, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Montenegro** to an intensive discussion in the premises of the Vienna Economic Forum on 22. September 2021.

The current policies of the EU Accession candidate Montenegro, significant for the country on its way to future full EU membership, were discussed. Furthermore, some of the most important developments in the other VEF Member countries from the region were also in the focus of the discussion.

In order to be able to effectively support cooperation between economy and politics, a multitude of components must be taken into account. For VEF it is very important to be familiar with the main priorities of the diplomatic missions of the countries of the VEF region.

With this in mind, **Vienna Economic Forum engages in an intensive exchange** – both with the diplomatic representations of the VEF Member countries in Austria, as well as with Austrian Ambassadors in the Member countries and with other Embassies belonging to the VEF-Family.



## THE VEF COOPERATION PARTNER LAW FIRM LANSKY, GANZGER & PARTNER RECHTSANWÄLTE HAS TWO NEW NAME PARTNERS

Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to announce that the **long-standing VEF-Cooperation partner Law firm Lansky, Ganzger & Partner Rechtsanwälte (LGP)**, represented on the VEF Board by Dr. Gabriel

Lansky, **has appointed two new name partners.**

In the 30th year since the firm was founded, LGP is expanding its partnership with two top lawyers: Tax and Banking lawyer Philip Goeth and Business and Corporate lawyer Ronald Frankl.

From now on, the **law firm** will operate under the name of **Lansky, Ganzger, Goeth, Frankl & Partner Rechtsanwälte GmbH.**

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates its Cooperation partner on this significant step, which, building on the last 30 years of successful, qualitative growth towards one of the leading commercial law firms in the country, extends the foundation for many more international successes.

## ÖSTERREICHISCHE POST AG OPENS LATEST EXPANSION AT THE VORARLBERG LOGISTICS CENTER

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is very pleased to report about the ongoing expansion of the logistics infrastructure of its Cooperation partner - Österreichische Post AG.

With the rapidly increasing volume of parcels, over 500 million Euros are expected to be invested into the expansion of logistics centers and post offices of Austrian Post over the next few years.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates its Cooperation partner, represented on the VEF Board by the VEF President, DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics at Österreichische Post AG, for achieving an important milestone for Western Austria, where the state-of-the-art facility of the Vorarlberg logistics center was solemnly opened. This enables an enhanced sorting capacity of 8.000 parcels per hour and provides 40 new jobs.

## NOVOMATIC AG WITH A SUCCESSFUL PRESENCE AT THE MOST IMPORTANT TRADE SHOW IN NORTH AMERICA

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to report that the **VEF Cooperation partner Novomatic AG**, as the largest European exhibitor, was able to present itself at one of the most important international trade fairs: "G2E" in Las Vegas.

The excellent feedback at the trade show, after almost two years of a Corona-related hiatus and with an interested audience of around 12,500 people on site, stands as a **clear proof of the success of the Novomatic strategy in international markets.**



## THE AUSTRIAN POST INVITED TO THE FIRST „GREEN POSTAL DAY“

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is pleased to inform about the successful initiative of the Cooperation partner - Österreichische Post AG, which invited around 150 stakeholders from economy and politics to the first “Green Postal Day” at the Vienna Hotel Hilton on 11 October 2021.

The discussion focused on the question how the economy can become greener and what kind of contribution it can make in achieving the climate goals.

The Austrian Post, which has long been concerned with sustainability and has been delivering all parcels in Austria CO<sub>2</sub>-neutrally since 2011, presented its current initiatives in this area.

**The General Director Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Georg Pözl, Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum** expressed his confidence that the Austrian Post AG will reduce its own CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 40 percent by 2030 as a proof of the central integration of sustainability in the corporate strategy. Therefore, all the letters, parcels, advertising mail and print media in Austria shall be delivered completely CO<sub>2</sub>-free.



## THE AMBASSADOR OF UKRAINE H.E. DR. VASYL KHYMYNETS TO A WORKING MEETING AT VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

On 19 October 2021 the new **Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine H.E. Dr. Vasyl Khymynets** and the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva met for a working meeting at the VEF premises.

The possibility for further, deepened collaboration was discussed in a very friendly atmosphere. In the course of the intensive preparations for the upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue

2021 which is to take place on 22 November 2021, the focus was placed on planning the high-level participation of the VEF Member country, Ukraine.

Vienna Economic Forum welcomes **H.E. Ambassador Dr. Vasyl Khymynets as a new member of the VEF Ambassadors Committee** and wishes him a big success during his diplomatic mission in Austria.

## VEF MEMBER COUNTRY KOSOVO WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON ITS NEARSHORING POTENTIAL



On 10. November 2021, the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva welcomed **high-ranking delegation from the Republic of Kosovo** at the VEF premises.

During the intensive discussion and in a friendly atmosphere, the **Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade, H.E. Ms. Rozeta Hajdari** and the **Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Mentor Arifaj**, accompanied by **H.E. Mr. Lulzim Pllana, Ambassador of Kosovo and Member of the VEF Ambassadors Committee**, expressed their high appreciation of the active cooperation with Vienna Economic Forum. Furthermore, the details of Kosovo's

high-level participation in the forthcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum - Vienna Future Dialogue 2021 were discussed.

The restructuring processes in the world economy caused by the world pandemic are urging Kosovo to present itself even more strongly as a suitable investment location for the EU economy.



## INTENSIVE TALKS BETWEEN VEF AND KOSOVO

During his working visit **H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of Kosovo and Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**, who was also to take part as a high-level guest speaker at the 18<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2021, held several discussions with VEF Board members and cooperation partners.



With the **Member of the Management Board, Parcel & Logistics, Austrian Post and VEF President DI Peter Umundum**, and in the presence of the CEO of Austrian Post **DI Dr. Georg Pölzl, Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum**, in view of the increasing interest of the Austrian Post in Kosovo, next steps for the cooperation were discussed.



At the meeting with **Mag. Peter Höfninger, Board member of the Vienna Insurance Group and VEF- Vice-President**, key areas of greatest importance for the further development of the insurance market in Kosovo were discussed.



During the talks with the **COO of Verbund AG and VEF Vice-President Dr. Achim Kaspar** the focus was on various topics relating to the energy transition.

In a concluding conversation between **H.E. Prime Minister Albin Kurti and the Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, the framework for further cooperation between Kosovo and VEF was set. Opportunities for future VEF cooperation partnerships from Kosovo were sighted and concrete plans for a VEF Pristina Meeting in the coming year 2022 were discussed.

As a sign of the excellent cooperation between VEF and Kosovo, represented in Austria by **H.E. Ambassador Lulzim Pllana**, Member of the VEF Ambassadors Committee, the **Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva**, on behalf of the VEF Board, awarded **H.E. Prime Minister Albin Kurti with the “Decoration of Honor of Vienna Economic Forum”**.

## THE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM MEMBER TPA GROUP WITH AN EXCITING STUDY ON THE TOPIC: QUANTIFYING PERSONNEL COSTS AS A FACTOR FOR CHOOSING A BUSINESS LOCATION

In their daily advisory activities, which the TPA Group has been carrying out for decades in 12 countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe, the highly respected Member of Vienna Economic Forum is currently observing the massive management trend towards relocating (nearshoring) in the corporate decision-making processes.



## VEF DELEGATION VISITS MOLDOVA

This year's international activities of Vienna Economic Forum commenced with a high-level working visit of the **two VEF Vice-Presidents Dr. Ognian Donev, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria and Mag. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director, AME International GmbH**, to the VEF Member country Moldova.



Photo right: **H.E. Mrs. Natalia Gavrilița, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova**, left: the **VEF Vice-Presidents, Dr. Ognian Donev**, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria and **Mag. Heinz Messinger**, Managing Director, AME International GmbH

Due to the excellent cooperation between VEF and the representatives of the Moldovan Government, a series of high-level working meetings were held on site as part of the two day visit program (25–27 January 2022).

During the first meeting with **H.E. Mr. Sergiu Gaibu, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Moldova and Mr. Stelian Manic, Director of the Investment Agency of the Republic of Moldova**, the **VEF Vice-Presidents** presented the milestones of economic projects implemented in the country by Sopharma PLC and AME International GmbH, and discussed prospects for investment expansion.

In an additional meeting with **H.E. Ms. Ala Nemerenco, Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova**, and taking into consideration the current challenges, focal points in the further development process of the health system, withing the interest areas of the two VEF cooperation partners, were discussed.



Ms. Ala Nemerenco, Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova

At the meeting with **H.E. Mr. Dumitru Budianschi, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Moldova**, focus of the talks was on the domestic banking sector as well as the current status of financing options for foreign investment projects. In a concluding meeting, the two **VEF Vice-Presidents**, accompanied by **Mr. Nikolay Borissov, CEO of Moldindconbank S.A.** met with **H.E. Mrs. Natalia Gavrilița, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and Member of the VEF Patrons Committee**. During the talks with the Prime Minister the investment climate in Moldova was discussed, including the good practices of financing for interested investors based on the intensive intergovernmental cooperation between Moldova and Austria.



Photo left: Mr. Stelian Manic, Director of the Investment Agency of the Republic of Moldova, H.E. Mr. Sergiu Gaibu, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Moldova  
right: VEF Vice-Presidents, Mag. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director, AME International GmbH and Dr. Ognian Donev, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria

As a member of the **VEF Patrons Committee**, **Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilița** was presented with the VEF agenda for 2022 and invited to participate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Vienna Economic Forum in November this year. In addition, possible steps towards Moldova-oriented economic talks in Vienna Economic Talks format were considered.

For the excellent cooperation between VEF and the Republic of Moldova, the delegation, on behalf of the VEF Board, presented **H.E. Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilița** with the **“Badge of Honour of Vienna Economic Forum”** for her support as a member of the **VEF Patrons Committee**.





VEF Vice-Presidents, Dr. Ognian Donev, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Director, Sopharma PLC, Bulgaria and Mag. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director, AME International GmbH

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ORGANISATION  
SINCE 2011, RECONFIRMED STATUS  
AS OF 1. JANUARY 2022



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

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