



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

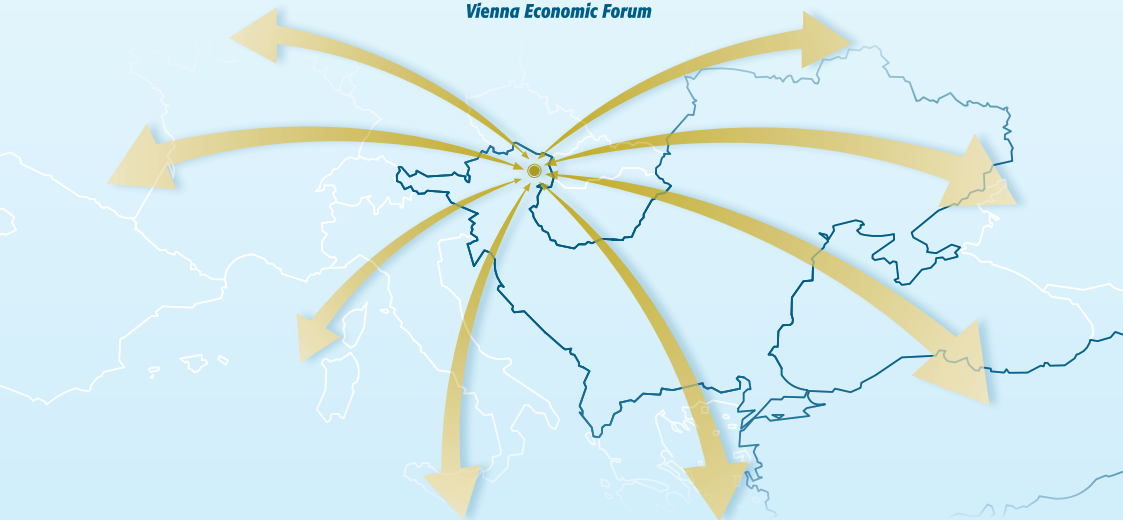


**CONSULTATIVE STATUS  
WITH THE ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS (ECOSOC)**

**Go South East**

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

# VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



**REVIEW 2023  
PREVIEW 2024**

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



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of Commerce



Austria Institut für Europa- und  
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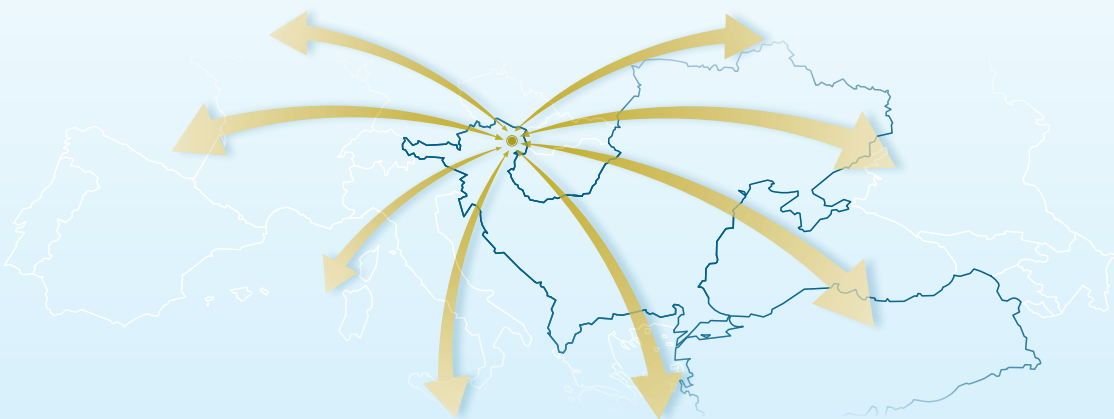
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# VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



**REVIEW 2023**  
**PREVIEW 2024**



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 has received recognition and its international reputation as THE European economic platform based in Vienna has been confirmed!

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**JOIN US  
AND  
BE PART OF**

***The Independent Platform***

# ***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**



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VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM TEAM**

# 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-I.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 I.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!

HONOURED PRIME MINISTERS – PATRONS!

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AMBASSADORS!

DISTINGUISHED HONORARY MEMBERS!

The year 2023 marked a significant milestone in the success story of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)!

On the 13th of November 2023, in the Festivity Hall of the Vienna City Hall, all of us – had the excellent feeling of being an immanent part of this success story, by organising and celebrating the 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2023!

Promoting international and intercultural understanding and supporting the development of the regional economic cooperation has been the goal of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) since its foundation in 2004. VEF was born in an enthusiastic era as a vision, incorporating the dream of the peoples form “The Region from the Adriatic to the Black Sea” for a common life in peace and prosperity.

Registered on 24th of April 2004, under Austrian Association Law, VEF has evolved remarkably over the years. Remaining true to its founding vision, VEF has steadily progressed in its mission and achieved several milestones. It has attained the esteemed Status of an International Non-Governmental Organization (Int. NGO) as per Austrian law; VEF holds Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN); VEF is registered in the Transparency Register of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission (EC). Today, VEF proudly flies its own flag at the VEF headquarters, located in the ambassador's quarter in Vienna. This emblematic presence symbolizes VEF's commitment to its mission and its esteemed stature in the international community.

We proudly stand today, reflecting on 20 years of progress since the beginning, observing the successful development of economic cooperation among entrepreneurs from the member countries of Vienna Economic Forum – Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine – throughout these years.

The recognitions received for VEF's 20 years of dedicated work, acknowledging its longstanding activities in the region and exceptional contributions to international and intercultural understanding, serve as motivation for the VEF Team to persist in consolidating the VEF Region "From the Adriatic to the Black Sea."

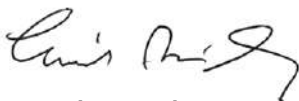
Throughout these years, Vienna Economic Forum has remained committed to its founding goals and encapsulates the vision that inspired the VEF founding in 2004:

- To popularize and promote investment opportunities in the region from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.
- To provide impulses and, based on research, joint projects required in the region for short-term, medium-term, and long-term realization, and promoting their implementation.
- To become a place of definition, encounter, and of realising the public and private interests in connection with the various projects in the region as part of united Europe.
- To pursue a strategy fostering economic cooperation and the development of VEF member countries as a cohesive region, forming a "VEF Economic Area".

We express our gratitude to all VEF members and partners who have supported VEF over the years, contributing to its growth and serving as a symbol of unity for the region. Many of them joined the 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum, offering words of support and praise and honouring the success story of Vienna Economic Forum – 20 years of active and remarkable work, as well as its pivotal role in economic diplomacy over the past two decades.

A sincere thank you goes out to all of you, dear Members, Partners, and Friends of Vienna Economic Forum, for your longstanding trust and support, for joining us in the work and in celebrating all 20 Years and the 20th anniversary of Vienna Economic Forum! We invite you to continue to be with us in all future activities and upcoming jubilees, as we strive for many more successful years of collaborative work and achievement, for better international and intercultural understanding in the Region "From the Adriatic to the Black Sea" and beyond.

Sincerely yours,



Amb. Dr. Emil Brix  
President



Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva  
Secretary General

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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)

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**Irena PAL, BBA**  
*Senior External Relations and Marketing Officer*



**Dijar HASANI, MA**  
*Project and Office Manager*

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# ***Vienna Economic Talks***



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

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

**FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING**



**CONNECT WITH US!**

**YOURS,  
VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM TEAM**



### 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.“*



## „Healthcare that puts the patient first“

AME builds groundbreaking healthcare infrastructure – from turnkey tertiary care hospitals to medical equipment packages and digital health solutions. We also help you finance it through financial engineering services.

So you can build your patient-centered healthcare vision for tomorrow, today.

Throughout the past 29 years, we have worked on 100+ projects that cover the entire patient treatment cycle across Europe, South East Asia, Africa, Central America and the Middle East. Impacting over 200 hospitals with 56,000 beds and resulting in better access to care for more than 165 million people worldwide.

AME International Services:

- 💧 Turnkey tertiary care hospitals
- 💧 Medical equipment packages
- 💧 Digital healthcare (solutions)
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1130 Vienna  
Tel.: +43 1 503 59 79  
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Web: [www.ame.eu](http://www.ame.eu)





**Mr. Veselin BALDZHIEV**

*CEO  
Bulgarkontrola, LTD, Bulgaria*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“Businesses have faced various challenges in the ongoing volatile economic and political environment in recent years, which can be overcome by common efforts for a sustainable future.

As an internationally recognized organization Vienna Economic Forum has a significant role in regional cooperation focussed on equal economic growth. VEF is an important partner providing opportunities to forging strong regional and global relations.”

*„Unternehmen haben in den letzten Jahren verschiedene Herausforderungen in der anhaltend volatilen wirtschaftlichen und politischen Umgebung bewältigt, die durch gemeinsame Anstrengungen für eine nachhaltige Zukunft überwunden werden können.*

*Als international anerkannte Organisation spielt Vienna Economic Forum eine bedeutende Rolle in der regionalen Zusammenarbeit, die auf gleichmäßiges wirtschaftliches Wachstum ausgerichtet ist. VEF ist ein wichtiger Partner, der Möglichkeiten bietet, starke regionale und globale Beziehungen zu schmieden.“*

# BULGARKONTROLA

A glass globe is the central focus of the image, resting on a bed of vibrant green moss. Inside the globe, a lush green landscape with trees and a winding path is visible. The globe is set against a background of soft-focus green foliage. Arched over the top of the globe is the text 'Environmental, Social, Governance' in a blue, sans-serif font.

Environmental, Social, Governance

Bulgarkontrola is a Bulgarian leading company in the field of testing, inspection and certification services, providing tailor-made services to the private and public sectors. The services are designed to ensure that products conform to different standards and regulations in terms of quality, health, safety, environmental protection and social responsibility.

Bulgarkontrola acts as a „third party“, i.e. an independent body issuing reports and certificates independently of contractual obligations, according to international standards, regulations and client specifications to ensure that produced products or assets meet the requisite standards.



### Mag. Nikolaus-Conrad LORENZ

Strategy Director  
Canon CEE GmbH

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © H. C. Sattling

“Over the past decades, we have seen a profound shift in the way we live, work, and connect with each other. Digital technology has become an integral part of our daily lives, revolutionizing every aspect of our society.

Our commitment to innovation is reflected in the way we approach challenges, using creativity and cutting-edge technology to offer innovative solutions on the market.

A key step in digital transformation is the digitalization of paper documents. Our products and solutions come packed with strong security features that provide seamless linkage with cloud services, ensuring we support digital transformation not only rapidly, but also responsibly and sustainably.

Together with our local business partners we are working on assisting governments and companies in accelerating their digital transformation.”

*„In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich die Art und Weise, wie wir leben, arbeiten und miteinander in Kontakt treten, grundlegend verändert. Digitale Technologien sind ein integraler Bestandteil unseres täglichen Lebens geworden und haben jeden Aspekt unserer Gesellschaft revolutioniert.*

*Unser Engagement Innovationen voranzutreiben spiegelt sich in der Art und Weise wider, wie wir an Herausforderungen herangehen. Wir setzen Kreativität und Spitzentechnologien ein, um innovative Lösungen zu entwickeln und auf dem Markt zugänglich zu machen.*

*Ein wichtiger Schritt bei der digitalen Transformation ist die Digitalisierung von Papierdokumenten. Unsere Produkte und Lösungen sind mit starken Sicherheitsfunktionen ausgestattet, die eine nahtlose Verknüpfung mit Cloud-Diensten ermöglichen. So stellen wir sicher, dass wir die digitale Transformation nicht nur schnell, sondern auch verantwortungsvoll und nachhaltig unterstützen.*

*Gemeinsam mit unseren lokalen Geschäftspartnern arbeiten wir daran, Regierungen und Unternehmen bei der Beschleunigung ihrer digitalen Transformation zu unterstützen.“*

# INFORMATION SECURITY

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Canon



**Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang KRÖPFL, MBA**

*Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
enso group*

**MSc. Olha BOSAK**

*Strategic Advisor on Strategy and  
Business Development*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

enso group is an **asset manager and transaction consultant** with over 30 years of individual track record in the energy sector that operates internationally (Europe+, worldwide) and specializes in investments in renewable energy. We aim to boost the sustainable expansion of renewable energies and to contribute to the **energy transition and decarbonization**.

We focus on the **optimized combination of energy resources** (e.g. hydro + solar, solar + hydrogen, and other hybrid concepts) creating successful projects particularly in **partnerships in industry, science and finance**.

We see ourselves as a representative of a sustainable future. With our **strong partnerships** we contribute to an increasing awareness for sustainable energy.

“Since we in the enso Group also believe that **dialogue and joint economic action** are the key to peaceful coexistence across borders, the enso Group is proud to be able to help shape the dialogue as a cooperation partner and active board member of the VEF.”, states Wolfgang Kröpfl, CEO enso group.

*Die enso Gruppe ist ein international agierender **Asset Manager und Transaktionsberater** mit über 30 Jahren individuellem track record im Energiesektor – spezialisiert auf Investitionen im Bereich Erneuerbare Energie. Unser Ziel ist es, den nachhaltigen Ausbau der erneuerbaren Energien voranzutreiben und einen Beitrag zur **Energiewende und Dekarbonisierung** zu leisten.*

*Wir konzentrieren uns auf die **optimierte Kombination von Energiequellen** (z.B. Wasserkraft + Solarenergie, Solar + Wasserstoff und andere Hybride Konzepte) und setzen Projekte auch in Partnerschaften aus Industrie, Forschung und Finanz um. Wir sehen uns als Botschafter einer nachhaltigen Zukunft. Durch **starke Partnerschaften** tragen wir zu einem wachsenden Bewusstsein für nachhaltige Energie bei.*

*„Da wir überzeugt sind, dass **Dialog und gemeinsames wirtschaftliches Handeln** der Schlüssel für ein friedliches Zusammenleben über Grenzen hinweg sind, ist die enso Gruppe stolz darauf, den Dialog als Kooperationspartner und aktives Vorstandsmitglied des VEF mitgestalten zu können.“ so Wolfgang Kröpfl, Geschäftsführer der enso Gruppe.*





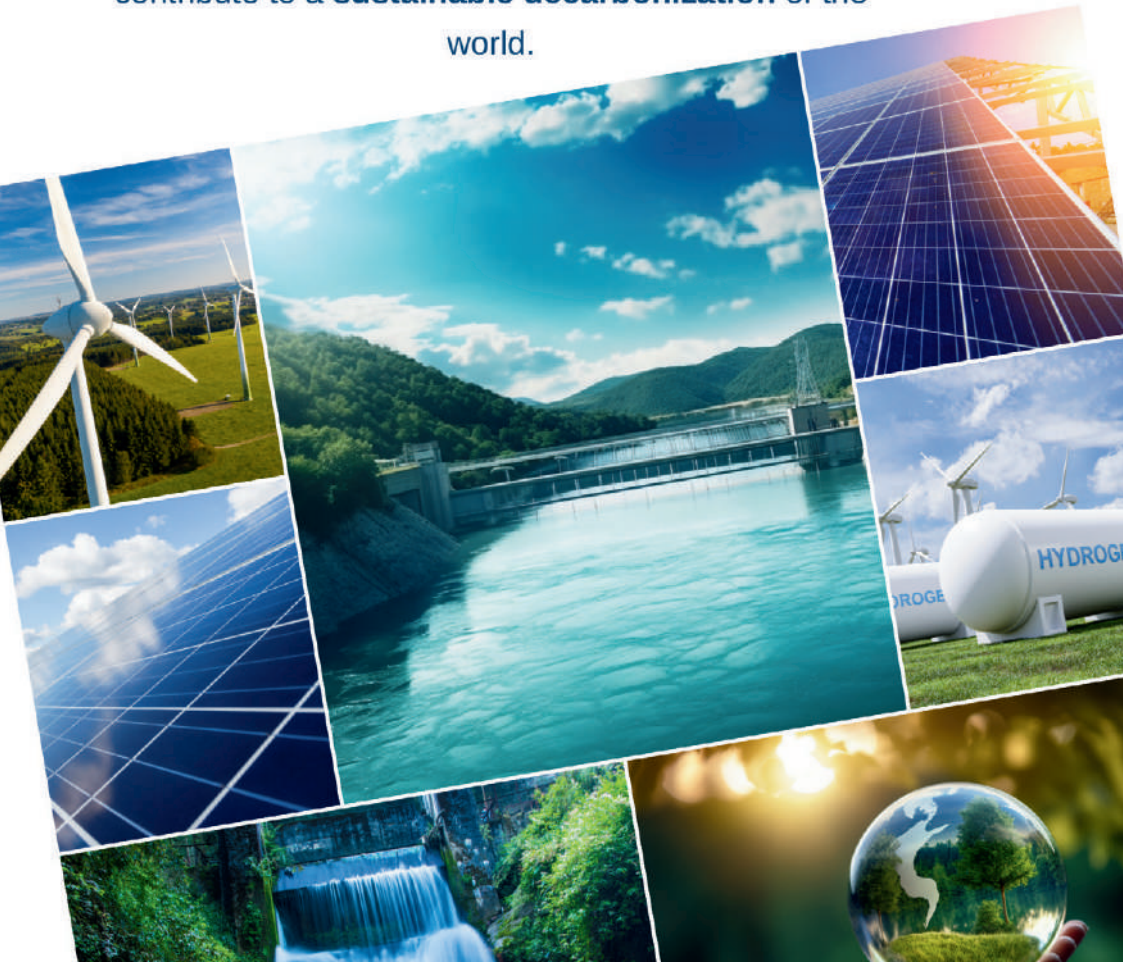
enso  
G M B H

## Sustainable investments in sustainable energy – made in Austria.

Asset Manager, Developer and M&A Advisor in the  
renewable energies sector.



We drive the **expansion** of renewable energies and  
contribute to a **sustainable decarbonization** of the  
world.





**Eng. Kalin PESHOV, MBA**

*Chairman of the Management Board  
„Glavbolgarstroy Holding“ Bulgaria*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © Martina Dräger

“At Glavbolgarstroy (GBS), we are builders at heart, passionate about constructing enduring buildings and facilities, but also about sculpting a resilient and vibrant future. Our alliance with Vienna Economic Forum exemplifies this journey, uniting our forces to positively impact the region.

This collaboration is not just about construction; it is about nurturing our nation’s economy, attracting investments, and embracing the academia closely with the business world.”

*„Bei Glavbolgarstroy (GBS) sind wir im Herzen Bauherren, leidenschaftlich darum bemüht, dauerhafte Gebäude und Einrichtungen zu errichten, aber auch darum, eine widerstandsfähige und lebendige Zukunft zu formen. Unsere Allianz mit Vienna Economic Forum veranschaulicht diese Reise und vereint unsere Kräfte, um die Region positiv zu beeinflussen.“*

*Diese Zusammenarbeit geht über den Bau hinaus; es geht darum, die Wirtschaft unseres Landes zu fördern, Investitionen anzuziehen und die Verbindung zwischen der Akademie und der Geschäftswelt enger zu gestalten.“*



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We inspire,  
We create.**

**For over 54 years, we have  
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projects in every aspect of  
the construction industry.**



We connect cities, countries and continents to keep the world moving by constructing roads, airports and train stations.



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We keep the foundations of society and the wheels of industry running by building hospitals, factories, energy pipelines and waste treatment facilities.



**Dr. Nina DRAKIĆ**

*President, Chamber of Economy  
of Montenegro*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

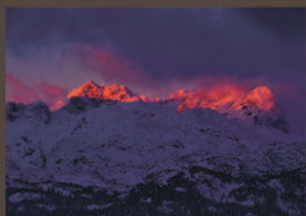
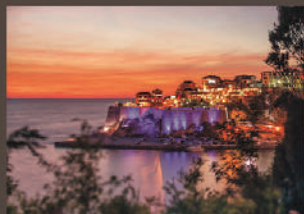
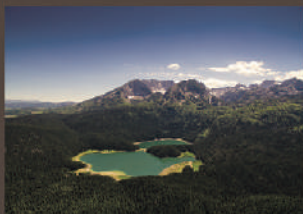
“Chamber of Economy of Montenegro – a business association with rich tradition, independent, professional, inventive and above all authoritative, dates back to 1928. It is aimed at representing interests of the entire business community before the public authorities. As a partner of the Government, it gives opinions in relation to proposals for a law and other regulations and measures of the economic policy. Providing assistance to its members in introducing EU standards, participating in development of the EU association programs, international projects, development of the national education system in line with the needs of the economy, presenting business opportunities in foreign countries are just some of the activities of the Montenegrin Chamber.

Thanks to the membership in international organizations and cooperation on a variety of projects and platforms such as Vienna Economic Forum, the Chamber provides support to its members in achieving their interests abroad and improving the business ties and regional cooperation.”

*„Die Wirtschaftskammer von Montenegro - ein traditionsreicher Wirtschaftsverband, unabhängig, professionell, erfinderisch und vor allem autoritär, geht auf das Jahr 1928 zurück. Ihr Ziel ist es, die Interessen der gesamten Geschäftswelt bevor die Behörden zu vertreten. Als Partner der Regierung gibt sie Stellungnahmen zu Gesetzesvorschlägen und anderen Verordnungen und Maßnahmen der Wirtschaftspolitik. Unterstützung ihrer Mitglieder bei der Einführung von EU-Normen, Teilnahme an der Entwicklung der EU-Assoziierungsprogramme, internationale Projekte, Entwicklung des nationalen Bildungssystems im Einklang mit den Erfordernissen der Wirtschaft und Präsentation von Geschäftsmöglichkeiten im Ausland sind nur einige der Aktivitäten der Montenegrinischen Kammer.*

*Dank der Mitgliedschaft in internationalen Organisationen und der Zusammenarbeit auf Vielzahl von Projekten und Plattformen wie dem Vienna Economic Forum, unterstützt die Kammer ihre Mitglieder bei der Durchsetzung ihrer Interessen im Ausland, der Verbesserung der Geschäftsbeziehungen und der regionalen Zusammenarbeit.“*

CRNA GORA **vaš partner**  
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CHAMBER OF  
ECONOMY OF  
MONTENEGRO





**Mag. Mila NENOVA**

*Executive Director  
InvestBulgaria Agency (IBA)*

*Member of the Board  
and Main Cooperation Partner  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The partnership between Invest Bulgaria Agency and Vienna Economic Forum opens new horizons for collaboration, which will bring to Bulgaria recognizable not only as potential investment destination, but also as a country with a lot of possibilities for high tech development and innovation, thereby positioning it as a key player in the European economic landscape.”

*„Die Partnerschaft zwischen Invest Bulgaria Agency und Vienna Economic Forum eröffnet neue Horizonte für die Zusammenarbeit, die Bulgarien nicht nur als potenzielles Investitionsziel, sondern auch als Land mit vielen Möglichkeiten für die Entwicklung von Hochtechnologie und Innovation erkennbar machen wird. Dadurch positioniert es sich als wichtiger Akteur in der europäischen Wirtschaftslandschaft.“*



InvestBulgaria Agency

# YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR MISSION !

**Invest Bulgaria Agency (IBA)** is an executive agency under the Ministry of Innovation and Growth with the main objective to attract foreign investments, promote Bulgaria as attractive business destination and provide investment incentives through a certification procedure of projects.



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### ABOUT INVESTBULGARIA AGENCY

InvestBulgaria Agency (IBA) is an executive agency under the Ministry of Innovation and Growth, created with the aim of attracting investments to Bulgaria. It supports the construction and successful development of projects leading to economic growth, regional development, the opening of new jobs, export and transfer of know-how in the Bulgarian economy.

IBA operates entirely under the Investment Promotion Act (IPA), through which the state stimulates investment projects that are of high added value and projects in high-tech industries and activities are essential.

In this regard, the IPA provides the opportunity to potential investors to benefit from incentives that will help them and facilitate the implementation of investment projects. The measures are of two types – financial and non-financial. Investment projects that meet certain criteria, such as investment size, sector, and new job creation, can be certified. The investment class certificates are prioritized for large and structurally significant investment projects, class A, and class B. Once a project is certified, it can benefit from the following financial and non-financial incentive measures.

### ABOUT BULGARIA

Bulgaria is a member of the European Union since 2007 and member of the NATO and the WTO. It has a strategic location with 5 Pan-European transport corridors crossing the country, good infrastructure, which gives access to over 1,3 billion potential customers. Bulgaria provides stability and security to foreign investors and is one of the best performing countries in the EU from a macroeconomic point of view with constant economic growth in the last 15 years (1,6% for 2023), low budget deficit (-2,2%), a ratio of government debt to GDP of 22% and 4% unemployment rate.

Bulgaria has nourished educated and skilled workforce – 25 % of population hold university degree; 49,5 % of population speak at least one foreign language; competitive operational costs, attractive taxation system of 10 % corporate and individual tax; competitive cost of labor; favorable office rents and low cost of utilities. Bulgaria is in the Top 10 countries in the world with the fastest mobile internet connection, Bulgaria is among the leaders in the world rankings in mathematics and other scientific competitions. Bulgaria ranks among the richest countries in terms of cultural and historical heritage in Europe. Bulgaria has trade agreements with over 80 countries and as a member of the European Union, exports to other member states are dutyfree.

During the period from January to November 2023, the country reported an important volume of direct foreign investments, reaching almost 3,5 billion euro with a 36% growth compared to 2022. This growth highlights the strengthening economic environment and the increasing confidence among international investors in the country's potential.

Within this period Invest Bulgaria agency processed 31 investment projects which were successfully certified by the Ministry of innovation and growth, with a total value of over 660 million leva. These projects are expected to generate 2 353 new jobs, which will significantly contribute to reducing unemployment and stimulating the local economy.





Interest in investing in the country comes from different countries, including Bulgaria, Germany, Turkey, Austria, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and others. This diversity of investment origins underscores the international recognition of the country as an attractive destination for business and investments, as well as confidence in its economic stability and growth potential. Such a wide geographic distribution of investments shows that the country manages to attract interest not only from traditional partners but also from new markets, which is an excellent basis for expanding economic ties and creating new development opportunities.

One of the main goals of Bulgarian investment agency is to attract investment with high value. Some of the fastest growing sectors in Bulgaria are: automotive, mechanical engineering, health & life science, electronics, IT & BPO, robotics & mechatronics.

**The automotive and mechanical industry** is holding 11% of the GDP of Bulgaria for 2023 with 8 billion Euro turnover. Also 90% of the parts in all European cars are made in Bulgaria. The industry secured more than 75 000 people working in the sector.

**Health and life science industry** is one of the strongest in Bulgaria with 10 billion EUR turnover (7,5% of GDP). Each year in the sector more than 20 000 students finished university in health sector. Here in Bulgaria there is 9 universities with medical and healthcare specialties and 128 medical centers engaged in research. The market value of pharmaceutical products manufactured in Bulgaria is amounted to € 2 Bn. Bulgaria is famous with her own balneology tourism. We are proud to say that we are the second country in the world in terms of mineral water flow. There is 65 balneological resorts, most of them located in the mountainous region, providing perfect conditions for recovery and more than 500 mineral springs with water temperature from 12 to 103 degrees.

**IT & BPO** is the fastest growing sector in Bulgaria with € 3,3 billion turnover in the sector. More than 6000 company are operated in the country. The industry secured more than 77 000 people working in the sector with the highest salaries in the country. The average annual salary is 20 028 euro. Because of this IT education is one of the most prefer among the students. Each year 12 000 students enrolled in ICT specialties, 6 000 in foreign language for the last academic year. Some interesting facts about Bulgaria IT and BPO Industries are the following:

- Bulgaria's broadband internet speed is among the five best in Southeastern Europe, in terms of average price per megabyte;
- Bulgaria is in Top 20 countries in the world with fastest mobile internet connection.

**The electronics sector** is N<sup>o</sup> 1 sector in Bulgaria per export – 11% of the total export of Bulgaria with €1 Bn out of the whole export, production worthed more than 1 Bn euro is exported only to Germany. The annual turnover for this sector is near € 3,7 Bn. Each year around 20 000 students enrolled in engineering.



### Dr. Nikolay TSENKOV

Manager  
Municipal Guarantee Fund for  
SME Sofia

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © Marina Chankarova

“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.“*



#### **OUR GUARANTEE SERVICES:**

- Main warranty scheme: for any SME, registered in Sofia municipality
- Financing Innovative Start-ups Program: for any SME, which provide innovative products, services and/or processes
- Guarantee Instrument for Support: for any SME, with financial problems due to the Covid crisis

#### **OUR MISSION:**

We guarantee future

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#### **FIND US:**

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Tel: +359/2/980-99-38

Web: <https://ogf-sofia.com/en/>



**DI Ryszard PRESCH**

*Executive Board Member  
Novomatic AG*

*Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © NOVOMATIC, Katharina Schill

“The Vienna Economic Forum is a strong network and important partner in promoting economic cooperation along the route from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. The positive developments in this region not only open up space for economic growth and technological innovation, but also for the crucial exchange and understanding between the countries. The close cooperation with VEF also supports our economic commitment, as a high part of our revenue is generated in VEF member countries. For this reason, we would like to congratulate Vienna Economic Forum on its 20th anniversary and look forward to continuing our successful collaboration!”

*„Das Vienna Economic Forum ist ein starkes Netzwerk und wichtiger Partner bei der Förderung wirtschaftlicher Kooperationen entlang der Route von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer. Die positiven Entwicklungen in dieser Region eröffnen nicht nur Raum für wirtschaftliches Wachstum und technologische Innovationen, sondern auch für den so wichtigen Austausch und das Verständnis zwischen den Ländern. Die enge Zusammenarbeit mit VEF unterstützt auch unser wirtschaftliches Engagement, denn ein hoher Beitrag unseres Umsatzes entfällt auf VEF-Mitgliedsländer. Aus diesem Grund möchten wir dem Vienna Economic Forum zum 20. Jubiläum unsere herzlichen Glückwünsche aussprechen und freuen uns auf die weiterhin erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit!“*



# WE ARE ANALYSTS



We are 300 international financial experts out of more than 24,500 employees at NOVOMATIC and responsible for the correct reporting and taxation of our worldwide revenues in Austria.

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**Mr. Ahmet Burak DAĞLIOĞLU**

*President  
Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye  
Investment Office*

*Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“The Turkish private sector has been actively investing across various sectors such as manufacturing, telecommunications, logistics, and infrastructure. With the rise of tech entrepreneurship as a major driver of growth and investments globally, Türkiye has successfully emerged as a burgeoning hub for startups. Many international and domestic venture capital funds with a mandate to invest in the region maintain a foothold in Istanbul. This strategic positioning underscores Türkiye’s pivotal role as a gateway to vast opportunities and facilitate access to diverse markets for companies hailing from Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) member countries. Invest in Türkiye attaches utmost importance to experience exchange with its regional counterparts and values collaborative endeavors. In June 2023, Vienna saw the successful conclusion of the inaugural round of the “Türkiye Century Investment Receptions,” hosted by Invest in Türkiye as part of its commemorative roadshow marking the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. Held at the Turkish Embassy in Vienna, the reception presented a comprehensive overview of Türkiye’s thriving investment landscape and the abundance of lucrative opportunities available to the international business community. Endorsed by Vienna Economic Forum, the event boasted esteemed speakers, including Ambassador Ozan Ceyhun, Austria Post Chairman and CEO Dr. George Pözl, AVL Executive Vice President Gustav Tuschen, and Invest in Türkiye President A. Burak Dağlıoğlu. The addresses delivered at the reception highlighted the importance of bilateral ties and the promising prospects awaiting international investors in Türkiye while participating Austrian investors shared first-hand success stories from their ventures in Türkiye. These testimonials not only emphasized Türkiye’s attractiveness as an investment destination but also showcased its role as a strategic gateway for businesses looking to capitalize on opportunities within the broader region. Invest in Türkiye is dedicated to promoting knowledge-intensive and high-value-added investments that bolster global value chains and sustainability. To achieve this, the Investment Office fosters deeper collaboration with VEF-Member Countries to attract a greater inflow of investments to Türkiye, thereby creating a mutually beneficial environment and enhancing bilateral ties between the two countries. Invest in Türkiye takes pride in being part of VEF’s success story since its founding and congratulates on the occasion of 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum. We look forward to many more successful years of collaboration together.”

*„Der türkische Privatsektor investiert aktiv in verschiedenen Sektoren wie Fertigung, Telekommunikation, Logistik und Infrastruktur. Mit dem Aufstieg des Tech-Unternehmertums als wichtiger Motor für Wachstum und Investitionen weltweit hat sich die Türkei erfolgreich zu einem aufkeimenden Zentrum für Start-ups entwickelt. Viele internationale und einheimische Risikokapitalfonds, die in der Region investieren wollen, haben in Istanbul eine Niederlassung. Diese strategische Positionierung unterstreicht die zentrale Rolle der Türkei als Tor zu enormen Möglichkeiten und erleichtert Unternehmen aus den Mitgliedsländern von Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) den Zugang zu verschiedenen Märkten. Invest in Türkiye legt größten Wert auf den Erfahrungsaustausch mit seinen regionalen Partnern und schätzt die Zusammenarbeit. Im Juni 2023 fand in Wien der erfolgreiche Abschluss der ersten Runde der “Türkiye Century Investment Receptions” statt, die von Invest in Türkiye als Teil der Roadshow zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Republik Türkiye veranstaltet wurden. Der Empfang, der in der türkischen Botschaft in Wien stattfand, bot einen umfassenden Überblick über die florierende Investitionslandschaft der Türkei und die Fülle an lukrativen Möglichkeiten, die der internationalen Geschäftswelt zur Verfügung stehen. Zu den hochkarätigen Rednern der vom Vienna Economic Forum unterstützten Veranstaltung zählten Botschafter Ozan Ceyhun, Dr. Georg Pözl, Vorstandsvorsitzender der Österreichischen Post AG, Gustav Tuschen, Vorstandsvorsitzender der AVL, und A. Burak Dağlıoğlu, Präsident von Invest in Türkiye. Die Reden auf dem Empfang unterstrichen die Bedeutung der bilateralen Beziehungen und die vielversprechenden Aussichten, die internationale Investoren in der Türkei erwarten, während die teilnehmenden österreichischen Investoren aus erster Hand über ihre Erfolge in der Türkei berichteten. Diese Erfahrungsberichte unterstreichen nicht nur die Attraktivität der Türkei als Investitionsstandort, sondern zeigen auch die Rolle der Türkei als strategisches Tor für Unternehmen, die Chancen in der Region wahrnehmen wollen. Invest in Türkiye widmet sich der Förderung von wissensintensiven und wertschöpfungsintensiven Investitionen, die globale Wertschöpfungsketten und Nachhaltigkeit unterstützen. Um dies zu erreichen, fördert das Investitionsbüro eine engere Zusammenarbeit mit VEF-Mitgliedsstaaten, um einen stärkeren Zufluss von Investitionen in die Türkei zu erreichen und so ein für beide Seiten vorteilhaftes Umfeld zu schaffen und die bilateralen Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Ländern zu stärken. Invest in Türkiye ist stolz darauf, seit seiner Gründung Teil der Erfolgsgeschichte von VEF zu sein und gratuliert anlässlich des 20. Jubiläums des Vienna Economic Forum. Wir freuen uns auf viele weitere erfolgreiche Jahre der gemeinsamen Zusammenarbeit.“*

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worth over 1 billion USD increasing sixfold from 9 to 54.

An eye-catching performance that expanded **GDP**  
from \$238 billion to **\$1,119 billion** in 21 years.

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**



**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.



**F**or more than three decades now, Kopaonik Business Forum has been drawing attention of the scientific and business circles, gathering renowned experts and eminent figures from the local and regional economic and political domain. Originally starting back in the early 1990s as an idea of a group of enthusiasts from the Serbian Association of Economists about the need to organize a scientific and thematic meeting

focusing on key issues of economic transition and persisting to this very day, the Forum has continuously grown and evolved both in terms of content and organization, thus becoming the most prestigious business event in Serbia and the region. In addition to this, the continued improvement of quality of the Forum has been attained in a setting predominantly marked by discontinuities and shifts in virtually all segments of society. From the aspect of its relevance and impact, Kopaonik Business Forum has become an important national brand with strong regional identity, known among the general public as “the Serbian Davos”.



**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  
Chief Executive Officer of Sopharma PLC,  
Bulgaria*

*Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

“In November 2023, we had the pleasure of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Vienna Economic Forum. For the past two decades, Vienna Economic Forum has played pivotal role to promoting the economic cooperation among its members - the countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Furthermore, it has been addressing the key topics regarding Europe and beyond and has established itself as a strong platform for the exchange of ideas, experience, and good practices.

The topic of the 20th jubilee edition of the Vienna Economic Forum was on building strong economic bonds and bridges during difficult times. Vienna Economic Forum welcomed guests from more than 41 countries which signifies both the importance of the topic and the leadership role of the Vienna Economic Forum.

In conclusion, I am extremely honored that Sofia will be the host of the upcoming Vienna Economic Forum in 2024. Aligning to the forum's longstanding tradition, we will collaboratively seek for sustainable solutions on vital present-day topics for the region.”

*„Im November 2023 hatten wir das Vergnügen, das 20-jährige Jubiläum des Vienna Economic Forum zu feiern. In den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten hat Vienna Economic Forum eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Förderung der wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit seiner Mitglieder – den Ländern vom Adriatischen bis zum Schwarzen Meer - gespielt. Darüber hinaus hat es sich mit den wichtigsten Themen Europas und darüber hinaus auseinandergesetzt und sich als starke Plattform für den Austausch von Ideen, Erfahrungen und bewährten Praktiken etabliert.*

*Das Thema der 20. Jubiläumsausgabe des Vienna Economic Forum war der Aufbau starker wirtschaftlicher Bindungen und Brücken in schwierigen Zeiten. Vienna Economic Forum begrüßte Gäste aus mehr als 41 Ländern, was sowohl die Bedeutung des Themas als auch die Führungsrolle des Vienna Economic Forum unterstreicht.*

*Abschließend fühle ich mich äußerst geehrt, dass Sofia Gastgeber des kommenden Vienna Economic Forum im Jahr 2024 sein wird. Im Einklang mit der langjährigen Tradition des Forums werden wir gemeinsam nach nachhaltigen Lösungen für vitale Themen der Region suchen.“*



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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 © Werner Krug

“Especially in tense times, a trusting network is important to defy crises and grow socially and economically. The Vienna Economic Forum has been creating something like this for 20 years. We congratulate on the anniversary and are proud to be a member.

At Steiermärkische Sparkasse we have been following the path of cross-border economic cooperation for around 30 years and are a reliable financial partner in Southeastern Europe. We strengthen SMEs in the SEE countries and establish relationships with Styrian companies. In addition to economic strength, shared success is based on the financial health of the people in the region. Promoting this and supporting people with financing, investment and pension issues is the essence of a savings bank. With our contemporary strategy around the financial health of our customers, we are also meeting this founding requirement in Southeastern Europe.”

*„Vor allem in angespannten Zeiten ist ein vertrauensvolles Netzwerk wichtig, um Krisen zu trotzen und gesellschaftlich wie wirtschaftlich zu wachsen. Ein solches knüpft das Vienna Economic Forum seit 20 Jahren. Wir gratulieren zum Jubiläum und sind stolz, Mitglied zu sein.“*

*In der Steiermärkischen Sparkasse gehen wir seit rund 30 Jahren den Weg der grenzüberschreitenden wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit und sind ein verlässlicher Finanzpartner in Südosteuropa. Wir stärken KMU in den SEE-Ländern und knüpfen Beziehungen zu steirischen Unternehmen. Neben wirtschaftlicher Stärke fußt gemeinsamer Erfolg auf der finanziellen Gesundheit der Menschen in der Region. Diese zu fördern und Menschen in Finanzierungs-, Veranlagungs- und Vorsorgefragen zu begleiten, liegt im Wesen einer Sparkasse. Mit unserer zeitgemäßen Strategie rund um die Finanzielle Gesundheit unserer Kund:innen kommen wir diesem Gründungsanspruch auch in Südosteuropa nach.“*

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### Mag. Peter HÖFINGER

*Deputy General Manager  
and Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board  
Vienna Insurance Group AG*

*Vice-President  
of Vienna Economic Forum*

Photo © Jan Elm

“The Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) serves as an ideal partner for Vienna Insurance Group (VIG), given our presence in each of the VEF partner countries through our insurance companies and pension funds. As the leading insurance group in Austria and the CEE region, we firmly believe in the immense potential of our core market and follow a long-term strategy. A strong local focus, a multi-brand approach and our principle of local entrepreneurship ensure customer proximity in each country. The VEF network provides an excellent platform for VIG to drive the positive development of the region together.”

*„Das Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) ist für die Vienna Insurance Group (VIG) ein idealer Partner, da wir mit unseren Versicherungsgesellschaften und Pensionskassen in jedem der VEF-Partnerländer präsent sind. Als führende Versicherungsgruppe in Österreich und der Gesamtregion Zentral- und Osteuropa sind wir fest vom enormen Potenzial unseres Kernmarktes überzeugt und verfolgen eine langfristige Strategie. Ein starker lokaler Fokus, eine Mehrmarkenstrategie und unser Prinzip des lokalen Unternehmertums gewährleisten Kundennähe in jedem Land. Das VEF-Netzwerk bietet der VIG eine hervorragende Plattform, um die positive Entwicklung der Region gemeinsam voranzutreiben.“*



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### Dr. Kurt Gollowitzer

CEO  
Wien Holding GmbH

Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum

Photo © Wien Holding, Barbara Nidetzky

“Since its inception 50 years ago, Wien Holding ensures and strengthens Vienna's position as a business location. As partner of Vienna Economic Forum, we benefit from their extensive expertise and supraregional network, which extends from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. This facilitates making new contacts and supports the optimal use of synergy effects.”

*„Seit ihrer Gründung vor 50 Jahren sorgt die Wien Holding dafür, die Position Wiens als Wirtschaftsstandort zu festigen und weiter auszubauen. Als Partner des Vienna Economic Forum profitieren wir von der umfassenden Expertise und dem überregionalen Netzwerk des VEF, das sich von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer erstreckt. Dadurch fällt es leicht, neue Kontakte zu knüpfen und Synergieeffekte optimal auszuschöpfen.“*



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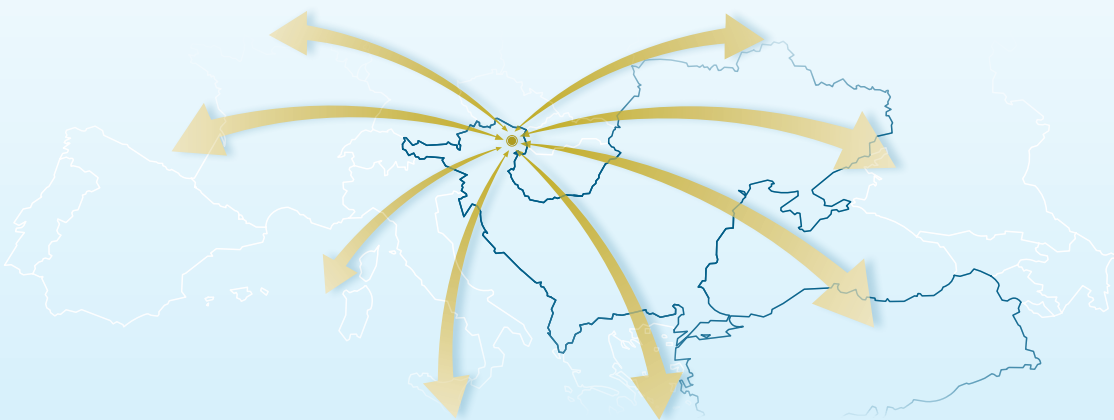




# VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

## ECONOMY MEETS POLITICS

### 2023



## REGULAR BOARD MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM 2023

**On 13 February 2023**

The **Regular Board Meeting**, followed by the **Annual General Assembly of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)** in 2023 took place on 13 February at the Vienna headquarters of the **VEF Founding member – Vienna Insurance Group AG (VIG)**.

The host **Mag. Peter Höfner**, **Member of the VIG Board and VEF Vice-President**, welcomed the present participants on the top floor of the Ring Tower.

The **Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** reported on the VEF activities in yet another special and volatile year, which despite all global challenges can be described as very successful for Vienna Economic Forum.

In the special year 2022, VEF managed to adapt to the requirements of the time and made a further contribution to regional economic development with the organization of **Vienna Economic Talks – Istanbul Meeting 2022** in May 2022. After the long break of the pandemic period, the **21st Traditional Garden Party of Vienna Economic Forum** took place on 10 June 2022 in the **Paradise garden of Villa Flora**.

The VEF Secretary General particularly emphasized the great success of the **19th Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2022**, which took place on 14. November 2022 at the **Raiffeisen Bank International in Vienna** under the motto **“Economy meets politics in difficult and uncertain times”**.

According to the Statute, the **VEF President DI Peter Umundum** led through the Agenda and the following Board Members have been elected: **Dr. Christian Schwarz, Mr. Veselin Baldzhiev, Mag. Olha Bosak, DI Wolfgang Anzengruber, Ambassador Dr. Emil Brix, Mag. Nikolaus-Conrad Lorenz**.

After the election and appointment of the new members, **DI Peter Umundum** handed over the office of VEF President to **Ambassador Victor Jackovich**.

Following the conclusion of the Agenda, the General Assembly was closed at 6.00 p.m. Following this year's Board meeting and General Assembly, **Mag. Peter Höfner, Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum**, invited to a small reception, where the members had the opportunity to discuss various possibilities and ideas for further cooperation in the Vienna Economic Forum region.



**Regular Board Meeting, followed by the Annual General Assembly 2023 of Vienna Economic Forum at the Headquarters of Vienna Insurance Group**

*Family Photo*

*In the first row from left to right: Mag. Hermann Anderl, Managing Director, Canon Austria GmbH, MSc. Olha Bosak, Strategic Advisor on Strategy and Business Development, enso group, Eng. Mouddar Khouja, Secretary-General, Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC), Country Advisor, H.E. Mag. Desislava Naydenova-Gospodinova, Ambassador of Bulgaria, Member of Ambassadors Committee, Dr. Heinz Fischer, former President of the Republic of Austria (2004–2016), Ambassador Dr. Emil Brix, Director, Diplomatische Akademie Wien-Vienna School of International Studies, Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, DI Peter Umundum, Member of the Board, Österreichische Post AG, Mag. Martin Gikov, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Fund of Funds (FoF), Mr. Mustafa Kemal Kafadar, Senior Advisor, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office, Mr. Semih Özcan, Director Wholesale Banking, DenizBank AG, H.E. Michaela Mocanu, Ambassador of Moldova*

*In the second row from left to right: Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang Kröpfl, MBA, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), enso group, Mag. Stefan Krenn, LL.M., Executive Board Member, Novomatic AG, DI Dr. Markus Bolhar-Nordenkampf, MBA, Managing Director, Vamed, Ms. Adi-Cristina MITEA, Dr. Ing., Consilier economic, Embassy of Romania, Dipl.-Eng. Wolfgang Anzengruber - Former CEO of Verbund AG (2009-2020), DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum, Mag. Peter Höfner, Deputy General Manager and Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board, Vienna Insurance Group AG, Mr. Vladimir Glamoclija, Counsellor, Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mag. Ekkehart STREMITZER, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, KR Ing. Otto Musilek, Consultant, MEC Management Energy Consulting, Mr. Veselin Baldzhiev, CEO, Bulgarkontrola, LTD, Bulgaria, Dr. Nikolay Tsenkov, Manager of Municipal Guarantee Fund of Sofia Municipality, Mag. Heinz Messinger, Managing Director, AME International GmbH, RNÖ, Mr. Artan CANAJ, Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Republic Of Albania*

*In the third row from left to right: Mag. Christian PULTAR, Managing Partner, WWV Partner Steuerberatungs GmbH, Tax Consultant, Dr. Willibald Plesser, Attorney at Law, Mr. Marko Stevanovic, Counsellor, Embassy of Montenegro, Dr. Ernst Huber, Former Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)s*



*VEF Annual Board Meeting 2023*



*Mag. Heinz Messinger, Vice President and  
Financial Referent of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Common Ideas*



*Common Vision*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich  
President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Common Work*



*Common Responsibilities*



*Amb. Dr. Brix inspiring words*

WORKING TOGETHER



*Mag. Peter Höfner, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mag. Heinz Messinger, Vice President and Financial Referent of Vienna Economic Forum*



*VEF-Success Story*



*Dipl.-Eng. Wolfgang Anzengruber*



*Mr. Veselin Baldzhiev*



*MSc. Olha Bosak*





*Dr. Heinz Fischer  
Former President of the Republic of Austria  
(2004–2016)  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Eng. Mouddar Khouja  
Secretary General  
Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)  
Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Willingness to work for the common vision*





*Friendly atmosphere*





*The future depends ...*





... on what we do in the present





*Secretary General and Mag. Martin Gikov, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Fund of Funds (FoF)*



*Proud to be part of VEF!*



*Honorary President DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner and VEF Member Dr. Willibald Plessner*



*There is no substitute for hard work*





Vienna Economic Forum



Go South East

# VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS PRISHTINA MEETING 2023



## REGIONAL COOPERATION IN A FRAGMENTED ENVIRONMENT

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF  
**Prime Minister of Kosovo H.E. Mr. Albin KURTI**  
 Patron of Vienna Economic Forum

**8 May 2023, Hotel Emerald, Strauss Hall, Prishtina**

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Special thanks to:









## VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS

## PRISHTINA MEETING 2023

Under the Patronage of

**H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti**  
**Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo**  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum

8 May 2023, Prishtina  
Hotel Emerald, Strauss Hall  
Prishtina, Republic of Kosovo





*Family Photo  
Vienna Economic Talks – Prishtina Meeting 2023*

**Vienna Economic Forum** is proud to have organized this successful event under the **Motto "Regional Cooperation in a Fragmented Environment"** together with the **Government of the Republic of Kosovo**.

The discussion highlighted the importance of investments especially during these difficult and critical times, focusing on some of the most important and critical sectors of today's times: banking, insurance, infrastructure, energy, water management. The high-ranking participants and audience had the opportunity to learn about some of the projects and initiatives presently ongoing in the Republic of Kosovo, the advantages that Kosovo is offering in a time when global investments and economy are in peril and are undergoing profound transformations and tackled the topic of investments remaining sustainable and resilient toward climate change. Furthermore, the absolute necessity and importance of innovation and technology as a precondition for future economic development were discussed and accentuated. Many companies already present at the Kosovo market shared their experiences and presented their near-future development strategies.

Vienna Economic Talks – Prishtina Meeting 2023 under the **moderation of Mr. Astrit Panxha, Executive Director and Co-founder, Kosovo Manufacturing Club (KMC)** was opened by **Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Member of the Board and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum** who highlighted the excellent and long-standing collaboration between Vienna Economic Forum and the Republic of Kosovo. She stressed that Vienna Economic Forum is the first international organization that Kosovo entered upon the announcement of its independence 15 years ago and how proud VEF is of this fact. In her **Opening Statement** Ambassador Kirtcheva emphasized the ever-rising importance of regional cooperation and the view to the future always having in mind the consolidation of the VEF region **"From the Adriatic to the Black Sea"**.

In his Introductory Statement **Ambassador Victor Jackovich, President Jackovich International LLC, USA, President of Vienna Economic Forum** stressed the fact that the businesses and politics are not separable, they are always intertwined. Very often business can precede politics, business can set up the environment in which political solutions can be made more possible. In this regard, Vienna Economic Forum ought to continue its valuable work, the same way it has been doing it in the past 20 years and as an integral part of how VEF views the excellent relationship with the Republic of Kosovo. Vienna Economic Forum will continue its work with Kosovo and continue to assist Kosovo on its path to full and complete Euro-Atlantic integration.

During his **Keynote, H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo** expressed how happy he is having Prishtina serve as a seat from which stronger ties with members of the Western Balkan countries and the Western European partners are forged and his hope that Prishtina serves as a joyous and productive ground for many more talks on cooperation in the future. H.E. Prime Minister Kurti exchanged his thought on regional cooperation and sustainable investments via technological innovation. The Prime Ministers accentuated that aligning the core values of Kosovo with their economic objectives has been the approach with which the Government of Kosovo has set out to master the tasks at hand.

H.E. Prime Minister Kurti shared many of the achievements of Kosovo in the past and his enthusiasm about the future, as well as about the ambitious and great years to follow. He especially emphasized that the questions surrounding supply chains, energy security, ethical technological development, climate action and environmental sustainability require that we put our best efforts forward to brainstorm, plan and solve the demands and challenges of the future.

In her **Keynote, Dr. Lilyana Pavlova, Vice President of the European Investment Bank** stated that in order to ensure stable, strong, unfragmented and resilient region we must ensure unity and joined efforts despite the multiple challenges we are all facing. She accentuated that nowadays “uncertainty is the new certainty” however at the same time we are given an opportunity to have a more forward looking and visionary approach. At this very moment we need to make sure that there are massive investments, especially in the time of crises. We need to ensure mobilization of the private and the public sector resources together, provide support for the energy transition, decarbonization, digitalization and connectivity. Dr. Pavlova emphasized that in order to step up the support, the European Investment Bank last year created a special branch called EIB Global intended to strengthen the local presence of the EIB in the Balkans and in all of the countries that the EIB is operating in globally in order to ensure a more tailor made, specific support in delivering the investment.

Vienna Economic Forum gave the Republic of Kosovo an **Award** for 15 years excellent cooperation and contribution to the economic development on national and regional level. The award was accepted by the **Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo and Patron of Vienna Economic Forum, H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti.**

During the **Second Session: “Sustainable Investments in Times of Crises and Fragmented Environment”**, in her **Keynote H.E. Dr. Artane Rizvanolli, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Kosovo** accentuated that policy making and investment decision have never been more challenging due to the ongoing crises but at the same time has never been easier in the context of energy independence, renewable energy and fighting climate change where there are clear, no regret investments in the fields of energy transitions and renewable energy which are the top two priorities.

During his **Keynote, H.E. Mr. Liburn Aliu, Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of the Republic of Kosovo** stated that renewable energy is one of the sectors in Kosovo where sustainable investments can have a significant impact. The innovative policies of Kosovo for development and job creation combined with the environmental protection policies complement each other. The many ongoing renewables projects will greatly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Dr. Christian Schwarz, Head of Corporate Development/M&A at Kelag and Spokesman for the Management Board of Kelag International and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** described in his presentation how the path to renewable energies leads to holistic value creation and emphasized the economic and environmental benefits that come with investing in green technologies. **Ms. Merita Gjushinca Peja, M.A., CFO Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo J.S.C.** spoke about the importance of the Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and stressed that Raiffeisen Bank International has been combining financing support with

social responsibilities for over 130 years by supporting different sustainable businesses and projects that have a positive impact on society and environment in general. **Mr. Genond Mesreja, MBA, CEO, Sigma Interallbanian Vienna Insurance Group Sh.A. Kosovo Branch**, highlighted the position of Sigma Vienna Insurance Group as the highest ranked in the insurance market in Kosovo, certified by the Kosovo regulatory institution, Central Bank of Kosovo. Sigma has been accompanying the economic development of Kosovo during the past 15 years by supporting the private and public business in Kosovo via different products more typical for developed, Western countries and markets. **Mr. Mustafa Kamal Kafadar, Senior Advisor, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office, Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**, spoke about the relation of the energy and infrastructure policies to sustainability, a relation which is essential to secure freedom and welfare in the future. He shared Türkiye's experiences with diversifying its energy constellation and spoke about the importance of regional and international cooperation in creating sustainable economies, environmental policies and climate change. **Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang Kröpfl, MBA, CEO, enso group, Austria, Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum** addressed the transition of the energy systems. He presented the rich portfolio of enso GmbH, particularly in Asset management, Project and Portfolio Development, M&A, Operations and Special Task Projects, elaborating on Renewable Energy Projects and on emerging innovations for the integration of the renewables. **Mr. Thomas Waclavicek, MSc., Head of Project Implementation, Hydrophil GmbH, Austria, Member of Vienna Economic Forum** spoke about the water security in the Western Balkans and the implementation of the ongoing project together with the International Institute for Applied System Analysis for the World Bank looking at the water security in different countries.

The Second Session was finalized with a short **Q and A Session** with the participants.

The Third Session: “**Innovation and Technology as a Precondition for Future Economic Development**”, moderated by **Ambassador Victor Jackovich, President, Jackovich International LLC, USA, President of Vienna Economic Forum**, commenced with the **Impulse Statement** provided by **Prof. Dr. Danica Purg, President IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia, Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**. Prof. Dr. Purg spoke about the profound relationship with the Republic of Kosovo, especially in terms of academic collaboration. In her contribution she highlighted the importance of the quality in management education and education in general, as well as quality in economic growth and the importance of ethical management.

In her **Keynote H.E. Mr. Rozeta Hajdari, Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade of the Republic of Kosovo** stressed the importance of youth as the most valuable resource for economic development. She accentuated innovation and its crucial role in the development of firms but also in the areas of competitiveness, productivity on a national and regional level. Nowadays the strength of the economy is based on the extent of its technological progress. There is a clear vision that by 2030 Kosovo will have a more stable, innovative and competitive industry. **Ms. Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General “Research and Innovation”, European Commission** stressed that particularly in view of the current particularly complex environment, the importance of research and innovation has never been greater. She accentuated the necessity of new technologies and new solutions that

can quickly be rolled out, new companies that can grow and reach the necessary critical mass to ensure that Europe can face this challenging context with guarantees of success. In her **Keynote** Ms. Ratso focused on the Western Balkans Agenda for Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport launched together with the Western Balkan leaders at the Brdo Summit in 2021 and its many results 2 years later, particularly in the area of innovation.

**Mag. Stefan Krenn, Secretary General, Novomatic AG, Austria, Representative of the Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum** spoke about the innovation play in a gaming technology group like Novomatic AG, as well as the very strong representation of the company in the CEE region and the influence of the technological progress in this region, and accentuated the importance of well-educated and well-motivated employees that are the basis of success, something that can be strongly felt in the region of the CEE. **Ing. Wolfgang Schaffer, Senior Project Director, eee austria international projects GmbH, member of Vienna Economic Forum** spoke about the importance of vocational training and dual education providing individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to perform specific jobs in various industries. He accentuated that vocational training and dual education are critical components of a healthy economy and elaborated on the intersection of digitalization and digital skills in education. **Dr. Georg Serentschy, Managing Partner Serentschy Advisory Services GmbH, Member of Vienna Economic Forum** spoke about arbitration as an important tool, especially in view of possible disputes when dealing with direct foreign investments where arbitration contributes whether it is a matter of state or commercial disputes. **Dr. Erik Sidney Krojher, Director, International Relations & Business Development, Kapsch TrafficCom AG** spoke about mobility guaranteeing and safeguarding the development of infrastructure, being the prerequisites of economic, social and educational development and growth, which require specific conditions. He accentuated the long-standing experience and involvement of the company in many countries, aiming towards making traffic safer, more sustainable, more calculable, controllable and profitable for government, regions and to the benefit of all people. **Prof. Dr. Edmond Hajrizi, President, University of Business and Technology (UBT), Republic of Kosovo** shared his experience with establishing the University of Business and Technology and about building a new system based on international European standard best practices in transition countries and the impact of this system in society affecting the economic system.

# PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 8 MAY 2023

**LOCATION**  
Hotel Emerald  
Strauss Hall

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8:00–8:45 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

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8:45–8:55 a.m. **FAMILY PHOTO** (by invitation)

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9:00–9:30 a.m. **I OPENING SESSION**

## REGIONAL COOPERATION IN A FRAGMENTED ENVIRONMENT

### Moderation

**Mr. Astrit PANXHA, MSc.**, *Executive Director and Co-Founder, Kosovo Manufacturing Club (KMC)*

### Opening

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

### Introduction

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**  
*President, Jackovich International LLC, U.S.  
President of Vienna Economic Forum*

### Keynote

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

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9:30–11:00 a.m. **II SESSION**

## SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS IN TIMES OF CRISES AND FRAGMENTED ENVIRONMENT

### Impulse Statements

**H.E. Dr. Artane RIZVANOLLI**, *Minister of Economy of the Republic of Kosovo*

**H.E. Mr. Liburn ALIU**, *Minister of Environment Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo*

### Keynote

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

**Participants in the Discussion****Dr. Christian SCHWARZ***Head of Corporate Development/M&A/International Affairs, KELAG AG, Austria  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum***Ms. Merita GJYSHINCA, M.A., ESG Expert***Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo J.S.C. (RBKO)***Mr. Genond MESAREJA, MBA, CEO***Sigma Interlbanian Vienna Insurance Group Sh.A. Kosovo Branch***Mr. Mustafa Kemal KAFADAR, Senior Advisor, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye**  
*Investment Office Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum***Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang KRÖPFL, MBA, CEO, enso group, Austria**  
*Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum***Mr. Thomas WACLAVICEK, MSc., Head of Project Implementation,**  
*Hydrophil GmbH, Austria*  
*Member of Vienna Economic Forum***Q and A Session**

With the Audience (led by the Moderator)

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**11:00–11:30 a.m. COFFEE BREAK**

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**11:30 a.m.–**  
**1:00 p.m. III SESSION****INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY  
AS A PRECONDITION FOR  
FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****Moderation****Amb. Victor JACKOVICH***President, Jackovich International LLC, U.S.  
President of Vienna Economic Forum***Impulse Statement****Prof. Dr. Danica PURG, President IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia**  
*Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum***Keynotes****H.E. Ms. Rozeta HAJDARI, Minister of Industry**  
*Entrepreneurship and Trade of the Republic of Kosovo***Ms. Signe RATSO, Deputy Director-General Directorate-General “Research and Innovation”, European Commission Brussels****Participants in the Discussion****Mag. Stefan KRENN, Secretary General Novomatic AG, Austria, Representative of the Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum****Ing. Wolfgang SCHAFFER, Senior Project Director**  
*eee austria international projects GmbH, Austria*  
*Member of Vienna Economic Forum***Dr. Georg SERENTSCHY, Managing Partner**  
*Serentschy Advisory Services GmbH, Austria*  
*Member of Vienna Economic Forum*



**Dr. Erik Sidney KROIHER**, *Director*

*International Relations & Business Development, Kapsch TrafficCom AG, Austria*

**Prof. Dr. Edmond HAJRIZI**, *President*

*University of Business and Technology (UBT), Kosovo*

**Mr. Serdar KUMBASAR, MSc.**, *Business Development Director*

*Karpowership, Türkiye*

**Q and A Session**

With the Audience (led by the Moderator)

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1:00–1:15 p.m.

**SUMMARY**

**AWARD CEREMONY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM**

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1:15–2:30 p.m.

**NETWORKING LUNCH** for all participants

**Possibilities for**

**BILATERAL MEETINGS FOR VEF MEMBERS**

(organized by VEF)

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2:30 p.m.

**END OF VIENNA ECONOMIC TALKS  
PRISHTINA MEETING 2023**

Vienna Economic Forum  
is proud to cooperate with:



Special thanks to:



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*Vienna Economic Talks – Prishtina Meeting 2023*

*Opening*

*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti*

*Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo*

*Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*

PHOTO GALLERY



H.E. Prime Minister Kurti  
EIB Vice President Dr. Pavlova  
Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva  
VEF President Amb. Jackovich



Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva



Amb. Victor Jackovich  
President of Vienna Economic Forum



H.E. Prime Minister Albin Kurti  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum

## EXCITING EXCHANGE OF IDEAS



*Discussions about the future*



*Dr. Lilyana Pavlova  
Vice President of European Investment Bank (EIB)*



Mr. Mustafa Kemal Kafadar  
Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office



Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang Kröpfl, MBA  
Enso Group, Austria



Mr. Thomas Waclavicek, MSc.  
Hydrophil GmbH, Austria





Q&A Session



Impulse Statement  
H.E. Dr. Artane Rizvanolli  
Minister of Economy of Kosovo



Podium discussion



Interested audience



Prof. Dr. Danica Purg  
President, IEDC-Bled School of Management

STIMULATING STATEMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS



H.E. Ms. Rozeta Hajdari  
Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade  
of Kosovo



Ms. Signe RATSÖ, Deputy Director-General  
Directorate-General "Research and Innovation"  
European Commission Brussels



Ing. Wolfgang Schaffer  
Director Austria International Projects GmbH, Austria



Dr. Georg Serentschy  
Serentschy Advisory Services GmbH, Austria



Dr. Erik Sidney Kroither  
Kapsch Trafficcom AG, Austria



Prof. Dr. Edmond Hajrizi  
University of Business and Technology (UBT), Kosovo





*Amb. Victor Jackovich  
President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Ms. Merita Gjysinca, M.A.  
Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo J.S.C.*



*Mr. Genod Mesareja, MBA  
Sigma Interallbanian Vienna Insurance Group Sh.A  
Kosovo Branch*



*H.E. Mr. Liburn Aliu, Minister of Environment,  
Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo*



*Dr. Christian Schwarz  
Kelag AG, Austria*



*Mag. Stefan Krenn, LL.M.  
Executive Board Member, Novomatic AG, Austria*

## AWARD CEREMONY



*H.E. Prime Minister Albin Kurti*

*receives the Award from Secretary General  
Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva and  
President Ambassador Victor Jackovich*



*on behalf of the  
Government of the Republic of Kosovo*



*VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
AWARD*

*to the  
**Republic of Kosovo***

*for 15 years excellent cooperation and contribution to the  
economic development on national and regional level.*

## The loved Culinary and Musical Journey through the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum



Photo © SOCIETYKarakan

*Family Photo*

## 22<sup>ND</sup> TRADITIONAL GARDEN PARTY OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

**On 16 June 2023 in the Paradise-Garden of Villa Flora**

Together with the **Ambassadors of the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum, Members of the VEF – Ambassador Committee, the Secretary General and VEF Founder Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva and Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer, Publisher of Society Magazine, long-standing VEF – Media Partner and VEF Honorary member,** invited on 16 June 2023 to the **22nd Traditional Garden Party "Culinary and Musical Journey through the Member Countries of Vienna Economic Forum"** in the Paradise Garden of **Villa Flora**.

After the warm welcome words by **Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer, the Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** commenced her opening speech, reflecting on the **founding of the beloved VEF-Garden Party in 2002**. She also highlighted the subsequent expansion of the **commitment to regional cooperation with the founding of the Vienna Economic Forum** just two years later in **2004**.

Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva extended an invitation to all participants to **“to save the date”** for the **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2023** which under the motto **"Economy meets Politics"** will take place on **13 November 2023** in the **Vienna City Hall –Wiener Rathaus!** This notable occasion commemorates the long-standing and commendable efforts of Vienna Economic Forum in its numerous and unwavering commitment to the economic development and consolidation of the entire **VEF-Region “From the Adriatic to the Black Sea”**.

The **President of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Victor Jackovich, President, Jackovich International LLC, USA,** emphasized the role of VEF as a place of definition, encounter, and of realising the public and private interests in connection with the various projects in the region as part of a united Europe.

The present **Ambassadors, Members of the Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum, Diplomats** – Representatives of VEF – Member Countries and of the whole diplomatic corps, were invited to take part in the traditional Family Photo:

**H.E. Mag. Desislava NAYDENOVA-GOSPODINOVA**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Austria; **H.E. Mag. Michaela MOCANU**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Moldova to the Republic of Austria; **H.E. Ambassador Dragana RADULOVIĆ**, Chargé d'Affaires a.I. of the Embassy of Montenegro to the Republic of Austria; **H.E. Mr. Osvit ROSOKLIJA**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of North Macedonia to the Republic of Austria; **H.E. Mr. Emilian Horatiu HUREZEANU**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Romania to the Republic of Austria; **H.E. Mr. Ozan CEYHUN**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Türkiye to the Republic of Austria; **Mr. Artan CANAJ**, Minister, as a representative of Ambassador of Albania **H.E. Mr. Roland BIMO**; **Mr. Ivica DRONJIC**, Counselor, Head of consular department, as a representative of the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina **H.E. Dr. Kemal KOZARIĆ**; **Ms. Kaltrina ADEMI ORUC**, First Secretary, as a representative of the Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo **H.E. Mr. Lulzim Pllana**; **Mr. Vadym KOVALEVSKYI**, Minister, as a representative of the Ambassador of Ukraine **H.E. Mr. Vasyl KHYMENETS**.

Vienna Economic Forum also welcomed a high-ranking presence of the Corps diplomatique: **H.E. Ian David Grainge BIGGS**, Ambassador of Australia; **H.E. Haytham SHOJAAADIN**, Ambassador of Jemen; **H.E. Mme. Guna JAPINA**, Ambassador of Latvia; **H.E. Mme. Lina RUKSTELIENE**, Ambassador of Lithuania, **H.E. Mme. Susan ECKEY**, Ambassador of Norway, **H.E. Mr. Magdi A. M. ELNOUR**, Ambassador of Sudan, **H.E. Annika Lisa MARKOVIC**, Ambassador of Sweden, **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Samir KOUBAA**, League of Arab States, **Mr. Gyanveer SINGH**, First Secretary, India, **Mr. Cafer Mert ÖZMERT**, Consul General Türkiye, **Mr. Tarek KAZEM**, Minister, Iraq.

The more than 300 guests were indulged by many of the **Vienna Economic Forum member countries** with country specific, traditional culinary delicacies. **The artistic performances** from Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Romania were the highlight of the evening and with the regional folk dances encouraging many of the guests to dance along.

The guests have once again enjoyed the unique atmosphere that showed the remarkable connections and shared experiences that connect the people of the **Vienna Economic Forum Region “From the Adriatic to the Black Sea”**.

## OPENING

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*Welcome Words from the host  
KR Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer*



*Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*President, Amb. Victor Jackovich*



*Celebrating together the 22nd Traditional Garden Party of Vienna Economic Forum*

PHOTO GALLERY



*H.E. Amb. Emil Hurezeanu, Amb. Victor Jackovich*



*H.E. Amb. Ozan Ceyhun, H.E. Amb. Emil Hurezeanu  
Amb. Victor Jackovich*



*Mr. Alattin Temur, H.E. Amb. Ozan Ceyhun  
H.E. Amb. Osvit Rosoklija*



*D.I. Meixner, H.E. Amb. Desislava  
Naydenova-Gospodinova, Mr. Calligaris*



*H.E. Amb. Emil Hurezeanu, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*Ms. Ayse Pelin Morgan, Mr. Marko Stevanovic, M.A.*





*KR Prof. Mag. Gertrud Tauchhammer  
H.E. Amb. Annika Lisa Markovic  
Mag. Tanja Tauchhammer*



*VEF TEAM fosters international economic cooperation and cultural exchange*



*Joy in being part of international and cultural understanding*

FRIENDLY AND SMILING ATMOSPHERE ...



*H.E. Amb. Desislava Naydenova-Gospodinova  
Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva*



*H.E. Amb. Mihaela Mocanu*

... ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION



## LOCAL FLAVORS



EMBRACING DIFFERENCES, BUILDING CONNECTIONS.



CELEBRATING TOGETHER COLORFUL  
REGIONAL GOURMET HERITAGE



## BUILDING FRIENDSHIP AND MAINTAINING BANDS



EMBRACING DIVERSITY





## STRENGTHENING BONDS



GET TOGETHER TO GROW TOGETHER ...



*...for cultural and mutual understanding*

CULTIVATING CULTURE ...



...Fostering Unity

## CULTURAL KALEIDOSCOPE



*It's great to come together and exchange cultural experiences*

Vienna Economic Forum  
is proud to cooperate with:



Special thanks to:



Special thanks to the Host and Media Partner:



**Vienna Economic Forum**  
Go South East

**20<sup>th</sup> JUBILEE  
VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2023**

**CONTINUING TO BUILD ECONOMIC BRIDGES  
DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

**13 November 2023**

Vienna City Hall / Wiener Rathaus  
Lichtenfelsgasse 2  
1010 Vienna

Working Languages: German and English  
Simultaneous translation will be provided



## **20<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2023**

### **CONTINUING TO BUILD ECONOMIC BRIDGES DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

12 November 2023  
Hotel Imperial, Vienna

13 November 2023  
Festive Hall, Vienna City Hall/Festsaal, Wiener Rathaus  
Vienna/Wien



The **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum** was marked by a special ceremonial opening, where on the eve of November 12, 2023, high-ranking participants gathered at the renowned Hotel Imperial in Vienna. **Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Founder and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**, recalled in her moving opening remarks the enthusiastic time of VEF's founding in 2004 and how the strong support of all the founding fathers had spread across various economic circles in Austria and VEF member countries.

**VEF President Ambassador Victor Jackovich** expressed the pride of the VEF board in being able to contribute to the development of economic relations in the VEF region "From the Adriatic to the Black Sea".

Highly commendatory words on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were expressed by **Ambassador Nikolaus Marschik, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs**, emphasizing the important significance and the remarkable contribution of Vienna Economic Forum to further positioning Vienna as an important location for international economic relations.

**The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ms. Mariya Gabriel**, winner of the VEF annual award "Partner of the Year 2020", emphasized in her emotional words the visionary and inspiring role of the Vienna Economic Forum and her pride in the long-standing connection with VEF, as well also as a former EU Commissioner, that it has proven to be a place where common solutions are sought, found and implemented.

**The Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Albin Kurti, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum** and recipient of the Annual Award of Vienna Economic Forum "Partner of the Year 2023", expressed his great appreciation for the success story of Vienna Economic Forum, the first international organization where Kosovo became a member as an independent state, and his joy in deepening cooperation between VEF and Kosovo.

**President of Marmara Group Foundation, Dr. Akkan Suver**, a longstanding strategic partner of Vienna Economic Forum and recipient of the Annual Award of Vienna Economic Forum "Strategic Partner Award 2014," honored by the President of the Republic of Austria H.E. Alexander Van der Bellen with the "Decoration of Honour in Gold" in 2018, expressed his great satisfaction with the efficient cooperation between the two organizations over the years and the exclusive role of VEF for economic relations between Austria and Türkiye. As a sign of great gratitude for the long-standing good cooperation and the wonderful partnership, Dr. Akkan Suver presented the VEF Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva with a special "Marmara Foundation Award", dedicated specifically to 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum.



In his opening remarks, **Eng. Kalin Peshov, Chairman of the Management Board of Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD (GBS)** and member of the VEF board, the host of the ceremonial opening evening, emphasized the important significance of cooperation with Vienna Economic Forum for the entire region.

A special recognition on behalf of the government of Montenegro was awarded by Ambassador Dragana Radulović to **VEF honorary member and VEF founding father Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl Fink**, for his merit to the Republic of Montenegro as a longstanding honorary consul of Montenegro with the Consular District of Burgenland, Austria.

The **ceremonial opening** of the 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum ended with a warm **reception cocktail** in the Marble Hall of the Hotel Imperial, setting the stage for the fruitful discussions and idea exchanges for effective economic cooperation in the VEF region.



The **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2023** took place on 13th November 2023 in the **Festive Hall of the Vienna City Hall/Wiener Rathaus**. Under the motto **“Continuing to Build Economic Bridges During Difficult Times”**, the Board of Vienna Economic Forum had the honour and the pleasure to welcome the invited participants, high-ranking decision-makers from economy and politics from **41 countries**.

In her **Opening Words** **Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Founder and Member of the Board, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum** underlined **the vision** of the founding fathers of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) **in 2004** to support **active economic cooperation in the region “From the Adriatic to the Black Sea”** and under the Motto **“Economy meets Politics”** to encourage the development of common activities. This inspiring vision enabled the successful work of Vienna Economic Forum throughout these two decades and contributed to the consolidation of the whole region and its recognition as a common economic area by many investors and representatives of different regional, European and worldwide branches of the economy. The Secretary General expressed a big Thank You to the City of Vienna and especially to the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig for the exclusive possibility to organise the **20th Anniversary of Vienna Economic Forum** at the remarkable **Festive Hall of the City of Vienna**.

**Welcoming Words** on behalf of **Dr. Michael Ludwig, Mayor and Governor of Vienna**, were held by **Mr. Jürgen Czernohorszky, Executive City Councillor of the City of Vienna**, focusing on the **special importance and symbolic meaning of this 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum** taking place in the centre of Vienna, as well as the special role of the City of Vienna in fostering relations and building bridges, especially in times when it is most needed.

**H.E. Ms. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister** for the EU and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery of the **Republic of Austria**, stated in her welcoming words how particularly relevant it is to "**Continue to build economic bridges during difficult times**", against the backdrop of **multiple conflicts and crises** that we are currently facing. She mentioned the recovery plan for Ukraine, emphasized the importance of EU integration for the Western Balkans, and highlighted bridging with the private sector as crucial to driving forward the common aims of addressing these challenges.

**The former Federal Chancellor of Austria Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel, Founding Father and Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum**, spoke about the historical context of the 20 years of existence of Vienna Economic Forum. He mentioned the momentum of optimism during the establishing of Vienna Economic Forum in 2004 and when 10 new countries accessed the EU. Dr. Schüssel highlighted the need for free market development to go hand in hand with liberal democracy. He mentioned the special responsibility of **Vienna as being once again at the centre of transformations**, as well as the **special role of Vienna Economic Forum as crucial to these processes**. He closed his remark by saying: *We need to be not optimists, not pessimists, but possibilists.*

**DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner, Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum** highlighted the **role played by Vienna Economic Forum** in economic diplomacy for the **past 20 years**, and the role of this event as a **new starting point for an intensive thought process**, which require the **strengthening of economic relations** as a supporting and connecting role in conflict resolution. **DI Dr. Rabensteiner** stressed how this sort of **event is a plea for the future** and that the past initiatives of VEF on building infrastructure networks for transport, energy, telecommunications, banking and insurance, the areas of education and health becoming increasingly important in these circumstances.

This session was concluded by the statement of the **President of Vienna Economic Forum Amb. Victor Jackovich**, who emphasised the **importance of this 20th Jubilee of Vienna Economic Forum**, stemming from the vision to create a region "**From the Adriatic to the Black Sea**". He stressed that **Vienna Economic Forum is a platform for discussing the region's most important issues**, such as supporting those countries that seek to join the European Union and the Euro-Atlantic community of democratic states, as well as a **meeting point for business leaders who meet with government representatives** to identify future markets, find common projects and achieve common goals.

In a Festive Ceremony at the end of the Opening Session, the **SPECIAL AWARD "20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum"** was presented to the **Former Federal Chancellor of Austria, Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel**, in appreciation of his outstanding support and significant contribution to the founding of Vienna Economic Forum in 2004.

Two consecutive sessions were moderated by **Ms. Daniela Philipp**.

**Session II** "Ensuring Economic and Financial Stability on the Path to Europe – Challenges and Responsibilities", was opened by the Main Statement of **H.E. Dr. Magnus Brunner, Federal Minister of Finance of the Republic of Austria**. He started by wishing Happy 20th Anniversary to Vienna Economic Forum and mentioned the special role of Austria to the integration of the region. In the light of very challenging times, Dr. Brunner focused on three crucial aspects: firstly, on the need to address the fragmentation of multilateralism, to intensify free trade and become more resilient; secondly on the need to redefine the role of the government and curb the public expectations upon it, and thirdly, the need to focus on green transition and energy security through innovation and by relying also in private capital. Dr. Brunner ended his note by stressing that *We don't need to agree on all items, but we need to speak to each other and dialogue for common solutions.*

**Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris**, Vice President, **European Investment Bank (EIB), Luxembourg** shared from his personal experience in Cyprus the importance of such Forums for countries accessing the EU. In his Impulse Statement he stressed that EIB is a reliable ally for the economic resilience, climate security and energy threats of the Western Balkans region as well as invest in education, transport and the water sector. He stressed the need to accelerate structural reforms in the WB region to benefit from the opportunities from cooperation with the EU, such as such as the new Growth Plan, to diversify energy sources, build infrastructure, invest in renewables and achieve energy efficiency, decarbonization and just transition.

**Mr. Mark Bowman**, Vice President, Policy & Partnerships, **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), UK**, stressed that we need more bridges in a multipolar world. With the multifaceted global challenges with transborder implications, no single actor can deal with these alone. He mentioned the role of multilateral banks as made to deal with crisis, amongst which the EBRD, works with the private sector and SMEs to improve corporate governance, digitalisation, close gender gaps and enhance sustainability and green projects. Mr. Bowman stressed the importance of partnerships and better coordination among International financial institutions, mobilisation of private sector and other policy actors to enable future investments.

Discussion started with **Mag. Peter Höfner**, Deputy General Manager and Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board, Vienna Insurance Group AG (VIG), **Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum** opened the round of discussion on challenges to economic and financial stability by stating that he is always looking for opportunities. While admitting that we all are headed towards an unpredictable volatile world, Mr. Höfner considers the resilience of the society and citizens as the biggest advantage of Central Eastern Europe, a region used and prepared to live in a volatile world. Furthermore, he added the importance of securing supply chains with the increase of foreign direct investment and the local communities as a lesson learned from the times of covid.

**Mr. Bekir Polat**, Vice-President, Presidency of the **Republic of Türkiye** Investment Office, **Representative of the Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** picked up on the topic of resilience and the importance of international cooperation and the opportunities provided by Vienna Economic Forum in building bridges. Recognizing the importance of stability, he mentioned that Türkiye is taking a different approach, focusing on the reconstruction of the supply chains, as well as local technology entrepreneurship, start-ups as a significant investment driver for the country which is now a billion-dollar business at early stage.

**Dr. Georg Bucher**, Member of the Management Board Steiermärkische Bank and Sparkassen AG, **Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**, mentioned how the economic key figures raised during the first years after the accession of the new countries to the EU 20 years ago, and the key role that a resilient and stable financial sector plays for development. His concern with this round of enlargement is the staged accession as an alternative to full membership. Since it will delay progress will be delayed and take the perspectives of progress away from the young generations. This should be a wakeup call for the EU.

**Mr. Aleksandar Vlahović**, President of **Serbian Association of Economists**, **Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** held a thorough presentation about growth figures in 6 Western Balkans Countries (GDP, GDP per capita) and throughout the years, making the point of how far are actually countries of the region from converging on verge with European standards. He made an expose' on how each of these countries tackle trade deficit and public debt as compared to the Maastricht criteria, how they deal with inflation and especially unemployment, and highlighted the low level of competitiveness and how intra-regional trade is important for the region. Finally, he exposed the difficulties that the Western Balkan countries are facing with economic freedom in terms of the quality of democracy and corruption levels.

**Dr. Barbara Kolm**, President, Friedrich A. v. Hayek Institute, **Vienna**, **Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum** took up on the topic of **education and brain drain** from the entire central eastern Europe in the past 20 years. She elaborated on the good education of the youth of the central eastern region as combined with the values of achievement, competition, and self-responsibility, which make them sought after in the western part of the world, and leaves their origin countries unable to keep them, due to inadequate frames for to provide opportunities and frameworks. If this is tackled, together with foreign direct investment, good results could prove in the region.

**Mr. Kalin Peshov**, MBA Chairman of the Management Board of Glavbolgarstroy Holding (GBS), **Bulgaria**, **Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**, spoke about the Economic stability and competitiveness of the SEE region (including increasing energy prices, workforce, qualified personnel), public-private partnerships in SEE, and the financing of large-infrastructure projects and access to finance. He mentioned three main challenges, being the **inflation** which has been addressed to a certain level of success with public-private initiatives; **the energy prices**, which if invested in renewable and sustainable technologies with the help of the state could prove efficient, and in the end, **access to qualified labor** (qualified or non-qualified), which could be mitigated by providing education and the free movement of people.

The discussion was further enriched through a Q&A session.

**III Session** “Acting Together with Responsibility for the European Future – Infrastructure, Energy, Digital Technology, Innovation” was opened with an Impulse Statement from **DI Wolfgang Anzengruber**, Former CEO of Verbund AG (2009–2020), **Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**. After congratulating on the 20th Jubilee, passed to the challenges for Europe: from increasing nationalism and populism to climate crisis, dependency on energy, resources, and AI. He proposed 5 fields of action for the future decades in sustainable energy and infrastructure: **Decarbonisation** in favour of renewables; **Energy-intense industries to be electrified** which would bring big gains in terms of emissions; The **hydrogen industry** of the future as a fuel instead of the traditional fossil fuels; **Digitalization**, to make sure that all these challenges are met, and **Circular energy** to reduce dependency on resources and energy. All these, he concluded should be done through increased and the erase of barriers to transport and energy.

**Mr. Wilbert Verheijen**, Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH, **Cooperation Partner and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum** covered in his Impulse Statement the topics of digitalization and digital transformation and the rise of digital entrepreneurship, start-up ecosystems in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Türkiye, emphasizing its profound influence on business, government services, and education. As an answer to current challenges, Mr. Verheijen proposed prioritizing cybersecurity, enact data protection legislation, and recognize differences between countries in developmental work. He recognized the role of Canon as an innovation-oriented company, aiming at empowering workers and building up partnerships to ensure responsible digital transformation.

**Dr. Lilyana Pavlova**, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria (2014–2017), Minister of Bulgaria's Presidency of the Council of the EU (2017–2018), Vice-President of European Investment Bank (EIB) (2019–2023), started by thanking Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva for being a driving force for VEF and stressed the need to build through such Forums not just physical but also emotional bridges and bringing people together. Dr. Pavlova continued her discussion emphasizing that the pillars of the European growth and sustainability such as infrastructure, environment, energy, digitalization, and innovation are interlinked. She illustrated the need for conceptualizing intersectionality bringing the example of innovation as a necessary pre-condition for green transition and concluded that political is of utmost importance to make these pillars succeed.

To the question what Greece has to offer on the given challenges, **Mr. Yiannis Thomatos**, Vice-President, Delphi Economic Forum, **Greece, Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum** replied that Greece, regardless of its 10 years of financial crisis, is still the only country in the Eurozone, in the NATO and in moving forward the EU integration process. He reminded the audience that the perspective of the European integration of the Western Balkans started in Thessaloniki in 2004. By accentuating the role of the Delphi Forum to policy discussion. Mr. Thomatos concluded that Greece has the answer to Euroscepticism and the answer is not more Euroscepticism, but more Europe.

**H.E. Mag. Bogdan Bogdanov, Minister of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Bulgaria** mentioned the importance of SEE for growth and development, a region to which western Europe should look into for partnerships. He stressed that it is time to leave the emotional political decisions and focus on important decisions for us and Europe. On top of **infrastructure, energy, digitalization, and innovation**, he added the fifth element in which there is a need to invest to succeed, and that is which people. This is precisely what Bulgaria is doing, in creating an Institute for artificial intelligence and computer science and machine learning and investing in the education of the people.

**Amb. Prof. Dr. Vesna Borozan**, Head of Power Systems Department, **University “Sts. Cyril and Methodius”, Skopje, North Macedonia, Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum** introduced her views on the responsibility for the European Energy Future and actions taken through the Horizon Europe project TRANSIT at her University. Throughout the presentation, Amb. Prof. Dr. Borozan tackled intersectional topics such as sustainability, circularity and externalities, human capital, innovative educational resources; workforce training, upskilling, and reskilling; employment competencies as well as society engagement, behaviours, and gender disparities as intertwined and crucial to tackle for current and future generations' development.

**Prof. Dr. Danica Purg**, President IEDC-Bled School of Management, **Slovenia, Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**, picking up from her colleague's presentation, Mr. Bogdanov the concept of the hidden phenomena, sharing the experience of Bled School of Management on hidden champions, companies that are the most innovative in the world, in their market niche, sometimes not known even from their own countries, such as for example, the candle production in Bosnia, the masks for the Venice carnival produced in Shkodra, Albania, Slovenia's innovation lab to healthcare in Boston. She concluded with the importance of excellent, innovative and imaginative education, to prepare responsible, resilient people for future industries.

**Dr. Līga Kurevska, State Secretary, Ministry of Climate and Energy of the Republic of Latvia** displayed in her presentation focused on the green transition process, renewable energy, energy security and energy efficiency. She laid Latvia's aims which are : energy independence, the effective use of resources, and market economy. She stressed on the importance of interconnectedness and how it helps for energy security in times of ban of Russian gas by the Baltic states. Besides the energy independence as the main aim, she pointed at the need for the transition towards renewable energy and energy efficiency, not as only sustainable, but also just.

**Mr. Lulzim Rafuna**, President of the Managing Board, Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum, **President of Kosovo Chamber of Commerce**, started by displaying facts and figures on the economic development of the Western Balkans as a whole, accentuating the fact that the EU is its main trade partner, fostering together a climate of cooperation and partnership that benefits both regions. He mentioned particularly the special role of the Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum in Infrastructure Development in WB6, Green Energy Transition in WB6 and Digital Technology and Innovation in WB6.

The 4th and last Session, namely the **Alpha Session**, was moderated by **Mr. Christian Ultsch**, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Head of Foreign Policy Department, Austrian Newspaper **Die Presse**.

The Impulse Statement was delivered by **H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economy**. He considered the VEF Forum as an observatory and bridge for the turbulent times we are undergoing, as well as timely, since it comes 5 days after the publishing of the new Enlargement Package for the Western Balkans. As he mentioned, geography is destiny, but these sor of crisis have the potential to bring us closely together. He mentioned the momentum for the Western Balkans to grasp possibilities to develop through the new EU growth plan, which will help boost economic growth in the region, reduce the socio – economic gap, deepen regional integration, accelerate fundamental reforms, and increase pre-accession funds, as well as provide access to the single market and the digital single market. H.E Mr. Gentiloni reconfirmed the EU's commitment to the integration of the region and to the process of enlargement and asked the Western Balkans to play its part in accelerating regional market integration and substantial reforms.

**H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum** put forward his vision for economic success and the big potential of shifting the mentalities of the region and converting problems into opportunities. Looking back to the time when EU borders and identity were fuzzy, he accentuated that when the security crisis erupted lately, it allowed Bulgaria to better self-define and choose between its European identity and the wish to remain undefined. In today's world, this is not possible, he added. Elaborating on the need for a shift in cooperation mindset, he mentioned the untapped potential of the region and the neighbours, which turned suddenly in opportunity and projects which were there for decades, turned important to digital, railway, infrastructure paths from the south throughout the Danube and to the north, as natural pathways of development of the region which still need unlocking.

**H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of Kosovo, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**, shared his view to the key of economic success in Kosovo, and while considering economic growth crucial, he focused on three main challenges at the local, regional, and global level: security threats, social inequality and climate change. He mentioned positive growth figures of the economy of Kosovo for the past years, together with the reduction of the trade deficit, the decrease of inflation, the investment in renewables, as well as the anti-corruption measures and the rise in democracy indexes that enable the citizens to trust the system, pay taxes and spend more. H.E Prime Minister Kurti expressed his commitment to value-based economic development and the integration of the Western Balkan region towards the EU, with the EU.

**H.E. Mr. Dimitar Kovachevski, Prime Minister of North Macedonia, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum** brought his experience in improving regional economy and boost economic development in North Macedonia. He stressed the power of integration from his experience and stressed the geopolitical momentum for Europe to accelerate integration to close the gap between its outside and inside borders, and for the Western Balkans to accelerate the deepening of the single regional market and the agreements thereof, mentioning the benefits it could bring for infrastructure, development and foreign direct investments. He showcased his plans for turning North Macedonia into an infrastructural crossroad and an example of renewable energy for the region, with the cooperation of the partners and the neighbours.

**H.E. Mr. Nik Gjelošhaj, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy, Minister of Economic Development of Montenegro** focused in his speech on the perspectives on how we mutually reinforce our cooperation in a challenging and uncertain context, how all these challenges are interconnected and they require a strategic approach and multilateral cooperation. He laid down the new economic perspective and priorities of the Government of Montenegro, such as the economic growth strategy, a digital, smart and green economy, the strong development of the ICT sector, infrastructure, transport, trade and the development of the agricultural sector. He laid his trust on the government to implement the necessary reforms for the EU integration and accentuated the importance of regional cooperation such as the Berlin Process or the CEFTA Agreement, and commitment to the EU Growth Plan as prerequisites for growth and success.

A most anticipated **External View** was offered to the panellists and participants by **Dr. Ivan Krastev, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, Permanent fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna**. He reflected upon the time factor and the dramatic changes in the geopolitical landscape, at a higher speed than ever and radical changes in thinking about enlargement, energy, and other processes. He mentioned the turning of the Western Balkans from a waiting room into an emergency room and the complexities of enlargement as a process of re-invention of the EU. He mentioned that in times of peace, reward is given to the ones who can see the risk, and in times of crisis, to the ones who are able to see the opportunities. He continued further with the concept of pluri-crisis, how the solution to one crisis can contribute to another crisis, and the need to uphold the public debate to better contribute to decision-making and policies.

The discussion continued with a Q&A session.

In her **Concluding Remarks, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Founder and Member of the Board, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**, expressed warm appreciation to various contributors. She thanked the City of Vienna for generously hosting the event, acknowledged distinguished participants for their insightful contributions to the discussions, and expressed gratitude to all participants for their fruitful engagement. She also conveyed thanks to all Members and Strategic Partners of Vienna Economic Forum for their longstanding cooperation and trust in the economic potential and successful development of the entire VEF-Region. A Special thanks were extended to the Supporting Members and Partners of Vienna Economic Forum.

The Secretary General expressed her appreciation to the skilled moderators, translators, and everyone who contributed to the seamless organization of the entire conference day. She particularly emphasized a special and heartfelt thank you to the Vienna Economic Forum Team, whose tireless efforts made the outstanding success of **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum** possible.


**The 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum was concluded by a SPECIAL AWARD CEREMONY OF THE 20th JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM to the participants of the Alpha Session and Patrons of Vienna Economic Forum.**



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# ***Vienna Economic Talks***



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

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

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VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM TEAM**

## PROGRAMME CEREMONIAL OPENING

SUNDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2023

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### LOCATION

Hotel Imperial, Festsaal

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5:00 p.m.

### Opening Words

**Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**

*Member of the Board*

**Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**

**President of Vienna Economic Forum**

*President, Jackovich International LLC, U.S.*

### Greeting Words

**Amb. Nikolaus MARSCHIK**

*Secretary General for Foreign Affairs*

*Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of AUSTRIA*

**H. E. Ms Mariya GABRIEL**

*Deputy Premier Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of BULGARIA*

*Former EU-Commissioner and longstanding Supporter of Vienna Economic Forum*

**Recipient of the Annual Award of Vienna Economic Forum**

**“Partner of the Year 2020”**

*for her contribution to economic development of the whole region.*

**H.E. Mr. Albin KURTI**

*Prime Minister of KOSOVO*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Recipient of the Annual Award of Vienna Economic Forum**

**“Partner of the Year 2023”**

*presented to the Republic of Kosovo for 15 years excellent cooperation and contribution to the economic development on national and regional level.*

**Dr. Akkan SUVER**

*President, Marmara Group Foundation, TÜRKIYE*

*Longstanding Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum*

**Recipient of the Annual Award of Vienna Economic Forum**

**“Strategic Partner Award 2014”**

*Honoured by the President of the Republic of Austria H.E. Alexander Van der Bellen with the “Decoration of Honour in Gold” in 2018.*

**Investors Greetings**

**Mr. Kalin PESHOV, MBA**

*Chairman of the Management Board of*

**Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD (GBS), BULGARIA**

**Cooperation Partner of Vienna Economic Forum**

*considered as Vienna Economic Forum-Sofia Branch*

**AWARDING OF THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT CERTIFICATE  
AS A LONGSTANDIG HONORARKONSUL OF MONTENEGRO**

**Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl FINK**

*Member of the Supervisory board*

*Wiener Städtische Versicherung AG*

**Founding Member and Member of the Honorary Committee of**

**Vienna Economic Forum**

**Former Honorary Consul of Montenegro**

*with Consular District Burgenland, Austria.*

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6:00–8:00 p.m.

**Followed by**

**WELCOME COCKTAIL in Marmor Hall of Hotel Imperial**

(Possibility for some bilateral meetings, organised by VEF)

PHOTO GALLERY



*Family photo*

*From left to right: Amb. Nikolaus Marschik, Amb. Emilia Krалеva, H.E. Amb. Desislava Naydenova-Gospodinova  
H.E. Mag. Bogdan Bogdanov, H.E. Ms Mariya Gabriel, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti  
H.E. Amb. Ozan Ceyhun, H.E. Ambassador Dragana Radulović, Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl Fink, Mr. Artan Canaj*

## CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



*Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich  
President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*H.E. Ms Mariya Gabriel  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria*



*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti  
Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Amb. Nikolaus Marschik  
Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs  
of Austria*



*Dr. Akkan Suver  
President, Marmara Group Foundation, Türkiye*



*Special Award from Marmara Fondation for the  
20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum*



*Festive atmosphere*



Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA  
Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD (GBS)

*H.E. Ambassador Dragana Radulović presents the Acknowledgment Certificate as a Longstanding Honorary Consul of Montenegro to Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl Fink.*



*Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl Fink, Founding Member and Member of the Honorary Committee of Vienna Economic Forum, expresses his gratitude for the Acknowledgment Certificate received as a Longstanding Honorary Consul of Montenegro.*





*Together for the regional cooperation*



*DI Wolfgang Anzengruber  
DI Dr. Günther Rabensteiner*



*Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva  
Dr. Ognian Donev*

WHERE THERE IS A WILL ...



*H.E. Amb. Naydenova-Gospodinova  
Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, H.E. Ms Gabriel*



*Eng. Mouddar Khouja, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*Dr. Akkan Suver, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*H.E. Amb. Desislava Naydenova-Gospodinova  
H.E. Ms Mariya Gabriel, Amb. Emilia Krалеva  
Amb. Nikolaus Marschik*



*Mag. Maximilian Hennig  
H.E. Amb. Mag. Siniša Bencun  
H.E. Amb. Dragana Radulović*

... THERE IS A WAY



*Amb. Victor Jackovich, Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva  
H.E. Mr. Ozan Ceyhun, DI Wolfgang Anzengruber*



*Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, H.E. Ms Gabriel*



*Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, Amb. Prof. Dr. Vesna Borozan  
Ms. Daniela Philipp*



*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum  
Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, Mr. Artan Canaj*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich, Dkfm. Dr. (h.c.) Karl Fink*

IF YOU CAN IMAGINE IT, ...



COOPERATION ...

... YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT



... FOR A REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS





*Special Thanks to GBS for the Imperial Jubilee giveaway.*


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**GBS is one of Southeastern Europe's leading construction groups**, specializing in energy, transport, water infrastructure, residential, commercial, and industrial projects. **We collaborate with renowned organizations** like Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), Build Europe, Eurogas, European Clean Hydrogen Alliance, European Construction and Technology Platform (ECTP), IPUCOA, Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils (GFCC), the Vienna Economic Forum, etc. shaping EU projects and discussions. **We foster innovation through our collaborations with prestigious universities** like Germany's Technical University of Darmstadt, the Netherlands' Delft University of Technology, the Danish Technological Institute, Paris's CY Cergy University and others.

**GBS Representative Office, Brussels:**  
Ensuring a prominent role in EU decisions and sustainable construction, we host events and dialogues with EU institutions.

**GBS Representative Office, Washington:**  
Expanding our network, we engage in discussions on infrastructure, green construction, energy security and collaboration with U.S. businesses.

**GBS Representation in Vienna:** Strengthening connections and fostering academic partnerships in Central and South Eastern Europe, we strive to advance our industry and improve the business environment.



Cooperator Partner of VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM, considered as Vienna Economic Forum Sofia Branch

## PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2023

**LOCATION**

Vienna City Hall/Wiener Rathaus  
Festive Hall/Festsaal  
Lichtenfelsgasse 2, 1010 Vienna

8:00–8:45 a.m. **REGISTRATION**8:45–8:55 a.m. **FAMILY PHOTO (by personal invitation)**9:00–9:30 a.m. **1<sup>ST</sup> OPENING SESSION****CONTINUING TO BUILD ECONOMIC BRIDGES DURING DIFFICULT TIMES****Opening**

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

**Welcoming Words**

**Mr. Jürgen CZERNOHORSZKY**

*Executive City Councillor of the City of Vienna*

**H.E. Mag. Karoline EDTSTADLER**, *Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at  
the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria*

**Greeting Words**

**Dr. Wolfgang SCHÜSSEL**

*Federal Chancellor of Austria (2000–2007)*

*Founding father of Vienna Economic Forum*

**DI Dr. Günther RABENSTEINER**

*Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum*

**Introduction**

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**

*President of Vienna Economic Forum*

*President, Jackovich International LLC, U.S.*

9:30–11:00 a.m. **2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION****ENSURING ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STABILITY ON THE PATH  
TO EUROPE CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES****Moderation**

**Ms. Daniela PHILIPP**

**Main Statement**

**H.E. Dr. Magnus BRUNNER**, *Federal Minister of Finance of the Republic of Austria*



**Impulse Statements**

**Mr. Kyriacos KAKOURIS**, *Vice President  
European Investment Bank (EIB), Luxembourg*  
**Mr. Mark BOWMAN**, *Vice President  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), UK*

**Participants in the Discussion**

**Mag. Peter HÖFINGER**, *Deputy General Manager and Deputy Chairman of the  
Managing Board Vienna Insurance Group AG (VIG)  
Vice-President of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Mr. Bekir POLAT**, *Vice-President, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye  
Investment Office  
Representative of the Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Dr. Georg BUCHER**, *Member of the Management Board Steiermärkische Bank  
and Sparkassen AG Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Mr. Aleksandar VLAHOVIĆ**, *President of  
Serbian Association of Economists  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Dr. Barbara KOLM**, *President, Friedrich A. v. Hayek Institute, Vienna  
Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Mr. Kalin PESHOV**, *MBA, Chairman of the Management Board of  
Glavbolgarstroy Holding (GBS) Bulgaria, Cooperation Partner of  
Vienna Economic Forum*

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**Q and A Session** (led by the Moderator)

11:00–11:30 a.m. **COFFEE BREAK**  
**BILATERAL TALKS** (organized by VEF)

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11:30 a.m.–  
1:00 p.m. **3<sup>rd</sup> SESSION**

**ACTING TOGETHER WITH RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE EUROPEAN FUTURE – INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY,  
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION**

**Moderation**

**Ms. Daniela PHILIPP**

**Impulse Statements**

**DI Wolfgang ANZENGRUBER**  
*Former CEO of Verbund AG (2009–2020)  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*  
**Mr. Wilbert VERHEIJEN**  
*Managing Director, Canon CEE GmbH  
Cooperation Partner and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*

**Participants in the Discussion****Dr. Lilyana PAVLOVA***Minister of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria (2014–2017)**Minister of Bulgaria's Presidency of the Council of the EU (2017–2018)**Vice-President of European Investment Bank (EIB) (2019–2023)***Mr. Yiannis THOMATOS**, *Vice-President**Delphi Economic Forum, Greece***Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum****H.E. Mag. Bogdan BOGDANOV***Minister of Economy and Industry of Bulgaria***Amb. Prof. Dr. Vesna BOROZAN**, *Head of Power Systems Department,**University "Sts. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, North Macedonia***Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum****Prof. Dr. Danica PURG***President IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia Strategic Partner of***Vienna Economic Forum****Ms. Līga ROZENTĀLE**, *Deputy State Secretary Ministry of Climate and Energy of Latvia***Mr. Lulzim RAFUNA**, *President of the Managing Board, Western Balkans 6**Chamber Investment Forum President of Kosovo Chamber of Commerce***Q and A Session** (led by the Moderator)

1:00–2:00 p.m.

**NETWORKING LUNCH****BILATERAL TALKS** (organized by VEF)

2:00–2:05 p.m.

**FAMILY PHOTO** (by personal invitation)

2:05–4:00 p.m.

**4<sup>th</sup> SESSION****ALPHA SESSION – ASK THE DECISION MAKERS BUILDING ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN DIFFICULT TIMES****Moderation****Mag. Christian ULTSCH**, *Deputy Editor-in-Chief,**Head of Foreign Policy Department, Die Presse***Opening****Amb. Dr. Elena KIRTICHEVA**, *Member of the Board***Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum****Impulse Statement****H.E. Mr. Paolo GENTILONI***European Commissioner for Economy*

**Participants in the Discussion**

**H.E. Acad. Nikolai DENKOV**, *Prime Minister of BULGARIA*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**

**H.E. Mr. Albin KURTI**, *Prime Minister of KOSOVO*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**

**H.E. Mr. Dimitar KOVACHEVSKI**

*Prime Minister of NORTH MACEDONIA*

**Patron of Vienna Economic Forum**

**Mr. Dumitru ALAIBA**, *Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development and Digitalization of MOLDOVA*

**H.E. Mr. Nik GJELOSHAJ**, *Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy Minister of Economic Development of MONTENEGRO*

**External View**

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

**Q and A Session** (led by the Moderator)

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4:00–4:20 p.m. **Summary**

**Amb. Victor JACKOVICH**

**President of Vienna Economic Forum**

*President, Jackovich International LLC, U.S.*

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4:20–4:30 p.m. **Concluding Words**

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

**SPECIAL AWARD CEREMONY of the  
20<sup>th</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM**

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4:30 p.m.

**END of the 20<sup>th</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC  
FORUM – VIENNA FUTURE DIALOGUE 2023**

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*Family photo*

*20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum – Vienna Future Dialogue 2023  
Continuing to Build Economic Bridges During Difficult Times*

## PHOTO GALLERY



*Festive Hall in the Vienna City Hall  
with exclusive ambience*



1<sup>ST</sup> OPENING SESSION



*Festive opening of the 20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum*

*The Secretary General proudly presents the brochure of the 1st Vienna Economic Forum on November 8, 2004*



*Mr. Jürgen Czernohorszky, Executive City Councillor of The City Of Vienna, on Behalf of Dr. Michael Ludwig, Mayor and Governor of Vienna*



*H.E. Mag. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria*





*Inspiring words from Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel, Former Federal Chancellor of Austria and Founding Father of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Dr. Pavlova, Amb. Radulović, Amb. Rosoklija*



*Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel  
Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Dr. Pavlova, Amb. Radulović, Amb. Rosoklija*



*Dr. Georg Bucher  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*DI Dr. Gunther Rabensteiner, Honorary President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*President Amb. Jackovich*



*Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel*



*Mr. Jürgen Czernohorszky*



*Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*

## 20<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AWARD CEREMONY



*Awarding Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel the Former Federal Chancellor of Austria*



*President Amb. Jackovich and Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva awarding Former Federal Chancellor Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel for his significant role and valuable supportive contribution as Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria to the establishment of the Vienna Economic Forum in the year 2004.*

## 20<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AWARD CEREMONY



*Family Foto of Opening Session  
20. Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum*

*20 Years of Success of  
Vienna Economic Forum*



2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION



*Main Statement by H.E. Dr. Magnus Brunner, Federal Minister of Finance of Austria*



*Lively podium discussion*



*H.E. Dr. Magnus Brunner  
Federal Minister of Finance of Austria*



*Witness the fusion of modern technology and timeless beauty*



*Mag. Peter Höfner  
Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*



*H.E. Dr. Magnus Brunner*



*Mr. Bekir Polat, Vice-President  
Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office  
Representative of the Member of the Board  
of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris  
Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB)*



*Dr. Georg Bucher  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mr. Mark Bowman, Vice President  
European Bank for Reconstruction and  
Development (EBRD)*



*Mr. Aleksandar Vlahović  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris  
Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB)*



*Mr. Mark Bowman*





*High-level podium*



*Under the moderation of Ms. Daniela Philipp*



*Mag. Peter Höfnger  
Deputy General Manager  
and Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board  
Vienna Insurance Group AG (VIG)*



*Dr. Barbara Kolm  
President, Friedrich A. v. Hayek Institute, Vienna*



*Mr. Bekir Polat, Vice-President  
Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office*



*Moderation Ms. Daniela Philipp*



*Dr. Georg Bucher  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Mr. Bekir Polat  
Representative of the Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum*



*Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA  
Chairman of the Management Board  
Glavbolgarstroy Holding (GBS), Bulgaria*



*Mag. Messinger, Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva*



*Dr. Georg Bucher  
Member of the Management Board  
Steiermärkische Bank and Sparkassen AG*



*Mr. Aleksandar Vlahović  
Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Dr. Barbara Kolm  
Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Interested audience*





*Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA  
Chairman of the Management Board  
Glabvolgarstroy Holding (GBS), Bulgaria  
Dr. Barbara Kolm*

*Dr. Pavlova, Mr. Verheijen, Mr. Rafuna*



*2nd SESSION  
ENSURING ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STABILITY ON THE PATH  
TO EUROPE CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*



*Family Foto*

*2nd. Session  
Ensuring Economic and Financial Stability on the Path  
to Europe Challenges and Responsibilities*

### 3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION



3<sup>rd</sup> SESSION  
ACTING TOGETHER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EUROPEAN FUTURE –  
INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION



Amb. Prof. Dr. Vesna Borozan, Mr. Lulzim Rafuna



Dr. Lilyana Pavlova



DI Wolfgang Anzengruber



*Mr. Wilbert Verheijen  
Cooperation Partner and Member of the Board of  
Vienna Economic Forum*



*Important role of Canon CEE in the VEF region*







*Active podium discussion*



*H.E. Mag. Bogdan Bogdanov  
Minister of Economy and Industry of Bulgaria*



*Prof. Dr. Danica Purg, Mr. Wilbert Verheijen  
DI Wolfgang Anzengruber*



Amb. Prof. Dr. Vesna Borozan, Honorary Member of Vienna Economic Forum  
Ms. Līga Rozentāle, Deputy State Secretary Ministry of Climate and Energy of Latvia



Answering the questions from the audience  
Q&A Session

Mr. Yiannis Thomatos  
Strategic Partner of  
Vienna Economic Forum



Ms. Daniela Philipp  
Dr. Lilyana Pavlova

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION – ALPHA SESSION



*4th SESSION  
ALPHA SESSION – ASK THE DECISION MAKERS  
BUILDING ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN DIFFICULT TIMES*



*Bringing together regional decision-makers*



*Participants in the session*



*H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni  
European Commissioner for Economy*



*H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*How to shape the future*



*Discussion under the moderation of Mag. Ultsch*



*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti  
Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*





*H.E. Mr. Nik Gjeloshaj  
Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy  
Minister of Economic Development of Montenegro  
Representative of the Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni  
European Commissioner for Economy*



*H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*

## HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES



*H.E. Mr. Dimitar Kovachevski  
Prime Minister of North Macedonia  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*Side point of view*



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





*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti  
Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Patron of Vienna Economic Forum*



*H.E. Mr. Nik Gjeloshaj  
Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy  
Minister of Economic Development of Montenegro*



## LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS



Q&A Session

H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni  
European Commissioner for Economy



*Family Foto Alpha Session*



*VEF President Amb. Dr. Jackovich*



*Concluding words  
Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva*



*Awarding of the honorary award*



*VEF Honorary Award*



*H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, Amb. Dr. Elena Kircheva*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich, H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti*



*H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of Kosovo, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, VEF-Secretary General  
H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, H.E. Mr. Dimitar Kovachevski, Prime Minister of  
North Macedonia, H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economy*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich, VEF-President  
H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner  
for Economy*



*Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Former Foreign Minister of  
Austria and Former European Commissioner  
Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, Secretary General*



*H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov  
Amb. Victor Jackovich*



*H.E. Dr. Magnus Brunner, Federal Minister of Finance  
of Austria, Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel, Former Federal  
Chancellor of Austria*



*H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, VEF-Secretary General  
H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economy, Amb. Victor Jackovich, VEF-President  
H.E. Mr. Dimitar Kovachevski, Prime Minister of North Macedonia*



*H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



*Planning the next regional initiatives*



*Secretary General Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva and H.E. Mag. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister of Austria*



*H.E. Mag. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister of Austria and Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris, Vice President of European Investment Bank (EIB), Mr. Hubert Cottogni Director, EIB-Group, Austria*



*H.E. Mag. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister of Austria and President Amb. Victor Jackovich*



*Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva*



*Amb. Prof. Vasilka Poposka Trenevsk, Phd Mag. Dr. Margareta Griesler-Hermann City of Vienna*



*Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Dr. Ernst Huber*



*Amb. Victor Jackovich, VEF-President, Dr. Samuel R. Schubert, Webster Private University Vienna*



*Mr. Hubert Cottogni, Director, EIB-Group, Austria  
Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva, Dr. Pavlova Former Vice-President  
of EIB and Mr. Kyriacos Kakouris, Vice President of  
European Investment Bank (EIB)*



*H.E. Maya Dobрева, Ambassador of Bulgaria to  
Moldova, Secretary General Amb. Dr. Kirtcheva  
Amb. Dr. Meglena Pluťschieva*



*Engaged in regional development*



*MSc. Olha Bosak, enso group  
Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*

LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS







Family photo with H.E. Acad. Nikolai Denkov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Patron of Vienna Economic Forum



Mr. Faruk Kurtuluş, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office



Mr. István Szente, MSc, MADIS Consulting Kft.  
Mr. Sándor Söpkéz, EastEuroCo Executive Search Group Ltd.



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Special thanks:



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES 2023

### WORKING MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ H.E. MR. BAKER FATTAH HUSSEN AT THE PREMISES OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



On the 9th of January 2023, the **Secretary General of the Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** had a working meeting with **H.E. Mr. Baker Fattah HusSEN Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq and Permanent Representative to the International Organizations**, accompanied by **Dr. Zahim M. Muslim**, Counsellor responsible for the Economic Relations, at the premises of Vienna Economic Forum.

In a very friendly and open atmosphere, interesting potential opportunities and concrete initiatives for a future cooperation between the Republic of Iraq and Vienna Economic Forum were discussed.



### WORKING MEETING WITH H.E. MR. HAMAD ALI MOHAMMED SUBAIH ALKAABI, AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

On 11 January 2023, **Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Member of the Board and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum** was received by **H.E. Mr. Hamad Ali Mohammed Subaih Alkaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates and Permanent Representative to the International Organizations** for a working meeting at the Embassy of the UAE.

The **main topic of the discussion** were various possibilities for a **cooperation** and potential active participation of representatives of the United Arab Emirates economy in the VEF-Activities.

## VEF COOPERATION PARTNER – VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP (VIG) COLLABORATES WITH WORLD BANK GROUP MEMBER IFC IN THE VEF – MEMBER COUNTRY BULGARIA

Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to inform about the further development of the **VEF Cooperation partner Vienna Insurance Group (VIG)**, represented on the VEF Board by **Mag. Peter Höfinger** as a **VEF Vice-President**.

The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, a member of the World Bank Group, has acquired a stake of around 10% in the Bulgarian pension fund **Doverie**, which is majority owned by the **VEF Cooperation partner – Vienna Insurance Group (VIG)**. The aim of the cooperation is to strengthen private pension provision in the VEF-Member country Bulgaria and to jointly expand the pension insurance market in the country.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates the Vienna Insurance Group on this important step and is proud of the successes of its Cooperation partner.



*Vittorio Di Bello (IFC) and Peter Höfinger (VIG)*



## WORKING MEETING WITH SECRETARY GENERAL OF AUSTRO-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AACC) DIPL.-ING. MOUDDAR KHOUJA

On 9th January 2023, the **Secretary General of the Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** had the pleasure to welcome **Dipl.-Ing. Mouddar Khouja, Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)** in the premises of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF).

The conversation took place in a very friendly atmosphere and focused on the options for future cooperation. New perspectives were identified, for the development of which the two parties discussed the possibility of signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**.

## ACTIVE COOPERATION OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO



On 12 January 2023, **Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum** and **H.E. Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of Kosovo and Patron of Vienna Economic Forum** signed a **Cooperation Agreement** regarding the organization of “**Vienna Economic Talks – Prishtina Meeting 2023**” on 7–8 May in Prishtina.

The signing of the **Cooperation Agreement** took place in the premises of the Diplomatic Academy Vienna and was followed by intense talks with the **delegation of the Prime Minister** incl. **H.E. Mr. Lulzim Pllana, Ambassador of Kosovo and Member of the Ambassadors Committee of Vienna Economic Forum**, and in the presence of **Ambassador Dr. Emil Brix, Director of the Diplomatic Academy Vienna** and a longstanding supporter of Vienna Economic Forum.



*Signing of the cooperation agreement*



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM & AACC SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

25 January 2023, Vienna, Austria

With the aim of enhancing mutual relations and strengthening cooperation between Austria, Southeastern European countries and Arab countries, the **Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)**, represented by its Secretary-General **Eng. Mouddar Khouja**, and the Vienna Economic Forum (VEF), represented by its Secretary-General **H.E. Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** on 25 January 2023. The MoU ceremony was honoured by the presence of **Dr. Ernst Huber**, Member of AACC Board of Directors and Member of the VEF Honorary Committee. **Dr. Snezana Kearns**, Senior Project Manager, **Ms. Irena Pal (BBA)**, Project & Office Manager, and **Mag. Niko Petković**, Project Manager additionally attended the ceremony from VEF's side, whereas **Mag. Leila Kaplan**, Office Director and Chief of Staff attended from AACC's side.

The signing of this MoU was the result of deliberations that took place during a courtesy visit paid by Secretary-General Khouja to Secretary-General Kirtcheva earlier this month. H.E. Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva has already met with a number of Arab ambassadors in Vienna, in an attempt to further **consolidate coordination and cooperation with the Arab region**, an area in which SG Khouja reiterated his readiness to support by all means.

This **bilateral agreement** between AACC and VEF demonstrates the will of both parties as **strategic partners to establish cooperation and good relations** between both institutions, by means of **mutual support** of each other's initiatives and activities, organising **joint events** and **sharing useful information on the economic situation and developments** aimed at supporting the goals of both institutions.



In this context, Ambassador Kirtcheva announced the upcoming **“Vienna Economic Talks- Prishtina Meeting 2023”**, scheduled to take place on 7–8 May 2023 in Prishtina, Kosovo and invited SG Khouja and AACC members to attend. SG Khouja extended an invitation to Ambassador Dr. Kirtcheva and VEF members to take part in the 12th edition of the **“Annual Investment Meeting (AIM)”** and the **“Entrepreneurs Investment Summit: Investing in Arab and African**

**Entrepreneurs”**, which will be held under the support of the **Union of Arab Chambers (UAC)** from 8–10 May 2023 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Pursuant to the agreement on widely publishing information and news pertaining to each other's activities, each of the institutions will reciprocally share information about the above-mentioned meetings and vigorously promote the other's events within its extensive network.

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM EXPRESSES GRATITUDE

Vienna Economic Forum would like to express its **gratitude to THE HEAT COMPANY** for the generous donation to the victims of the terrible earthquakes in Türkiye and has the privilege to publish the Thank you Letter of **Mr. Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office and Board Member of Vienna Economic Forum.**



## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – COOPERATION PARTNER NOVOMATIC AG SUCCESSFUL AT ICE LONDON 2023

Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to inform about the further successes of the **VEF Cooperation partner NOVOMATIC AG**, represented on the VEF Board by **DI Ryszard Presch** as VEF Vice-President.

After a tremendously busy show, NOVOMATIC takes stock of ICE London 2023, which proved to be the best, the busiest and by far the biggest ICE ever. Alongside the success on the show floor, the company was also delighted to win two first places in key categories at the prestigious European Casino Awards.





### VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM IS PROUD TO CONGRATULATE THE SERBIAN ASSOCIATION OF ECONOMISTS FOR THE 30<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE KOPAONIK BUSINESS FORUM

This year's 30th jubilee edition of the **Kopaonik Business Forum** was again an important place of gathering, business connectivity and dialogue between the business, political and academic elite. **Kopaonik Business Forum** was held in **Serbia** from 5th to 8th of March 2023, at the Congress Centre of Hotel Grand in Kopaonik. The central topic of the 30th edition of the Kopaonik Business Forum was **"Pursuing Resilient Economy in Uncertain Times: Major Challenges for Serbia and the Western Balkans"**.

**Vienna Economic Forum** congratulates especially **Mr. Aleksandar Vlahović, President of the Serbian Association of Economists** and **Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum**, for the excellent organization of the **Kopaonik Business Forum** and wishes many further successes in their significant endeavours.

**PRESIDENT OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM  
AMBASSADOR VICTOR JACKOVICH  
PARTICIPATED AT THE UN DESA SDG SUMMIT 2023**

On behalf of **Vienna Economic Forum** on 7th June 2023 the **VEF President Amb. Victor Jackovich** participated on the **Sustainable Development Goals Summit 2023**, organized by the **United Nations** Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

This virtual Informal Stakeholder Dialogue created an opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to share inputs to the Zero Draft Political Declaration for the SDG Summit 2023.



Hereby is the text of the VEF contribution to the discussion, given by Ambassador Victor Jackovich: **Vienna Economic Forum** is an International non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Vienna, Austria. It gathers the most prominent members of business communities from Austria and from a total **13 member Countries** in Southeast Europe and in the region **“from the Adriatic to the Black Sea”**. The organization has been active for **20 years** as a platform for substantive discussions about regional and global economic issues. The Vienna Economic Forum has **consultative status within the framework of the UN's ECOSOC**.

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates the efforts and progress made by DSDG and DESA in developing a relevant agenda and draft declaration for future action to be adopted at the Summit 2023 in September. This includes efforts to invite stakeholder organizations, such as VEF, to provide additions and comments. In this regard, from the standpoint of **Vienna Economic Forum**, we focus on our priority of Southeast Europe and the region “from the Adriatic to the Black Sea”. In this regard, we hope the draft declaration can provide strengthened emphasis on education, youth organization, health care, digitalization and regional cooperation (particularly in post-conflict areas). Vienna Economic Forum, of course, also supports the “Vienna Program of Action for Landlocked Countries 2014–2024”.

The **2023 SDG Summit** will be chaired by the President of the General Assembly (PGA) and convened on 18-19 September 2023 in New York, during the **United Nations General Assembly high-level week**. The outcome of the Summit will be a negotiated political declaration.

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AND DELPHI ECONOMIC FORUM SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



On 29. April 2023, Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) and Delphi Economic Forum (DEF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the Annual Delphi Economic Forum VIII conference in Dephi, Greece.

The Secretary General and Founder of Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva and the Founder and President of Delphi Economic Forum, Mr. Symeon Tsomokos emphasized that this is yet another and very important step in the long-term cooperation of both organizations, which corresponds to their strong commitment to promoting regional cooperation and is of immense importance for the economic development of the region.

The signing took place at the end of the Session “Building a Safe, Fair and Responsible Migration Policy for European Societies” in the presence of H.E. Mr. Karl Nehammer, MSc, Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, speaker in the “World Affairs” and “Immigration” Sessions.

## PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE INVESTMENT OFFICE ORGANISED THE INITIAL ROUND OF “TÜRKİYE CENTURY INVESTMENT RECEPTIONS”



The Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office, longstanding Vienna Economic Forum Cooperation Partner and Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, has launched the first round of its “Türkiye Century Investment Receptions” series in Europe, as part of a commemorative roadshow in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye, and successfully concluded with a reception at the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Vienna.

The reception provided the **international business community** with an **up-to-date overview** of the growing investment environment and lucrative opportunities **in the Republic of Türkiye**. The reception was opened by the **Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye in the Republic of Austria, H.E. Mr. Ozan Ceyhun**, Member of VEF – Ambassadors Committee and **Mr. Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu**, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office and Board Member of Vienna Economic Forum.

On behalf of the VEF Board, the **Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** congratulated the hosts on the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye.

**Vienna Economic Forum is pleased** about the unique **excellent cooperation** with the **VEF founding member country Republic of Türkiye since 2004**, and especially about the resulting **successful investments by numerous VEF members** in various sectors, as well as about the further fruitful cooperation!



## INTERVIEW WITH KR. ING. OTTO MUSILEK, FOUNDING MEMBER AND AUDITOR OF VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

Vienna Economic Forum congratulates **KR. Ing. Otto Musilek**, Consultant at MEC-Management Energy Consulting and former Managing Director of OMV Gas GmbH, founding member, long-time active supporter, and auditor of Vienna Economic Forum, for sharing his extensive knowledge in an interview for the first daily **energy news service** in Austria, the Energate Messenger Austria.

## PRESIDENT OF IEDC-BLED SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT PROF DR. DANICA PURG RECEIVES THE DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA BY THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, AUSTRALIA

Photo © Simon Kupferschmid



Vienna Economic Forum congratulates **Prof Dr. Danica Purg**, President of **IEDC-Bled School of Management**, Slovenia, **Strategic Partner of Vienna Economic Forum** on being conferred the highest academic degree – the honorary doctorate degree – Doctor Honoris Causa. The conferral took place at the University of Wollongong’s alumni event in Vienna on July 26th, hosted by Prof. Colin Picker, Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law, University of Wollongong.

This recognition, marking Prof. Purg’s sixth honorary academic title, is a testament to her global accomplishments in shaping management education. Her commitment, innovative mindset, and drive for excellence have consistently put forth the value of ethical and responsible leadership.

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM AND GLAVBOLGARSTROY HOLDING AD (GBS) SIGN A COOPERATION AGREEMENT



Vienna Economic forum is very pleased to inform that on 3. August 2023, at the VEF premises in Vienna, the **Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum (VEF), Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** and the **Chairman of the Management Board of Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD (GBS), Eng. Kalin Peshov, MBA** signed a **Cooperation Agreement**. Vienna Economic Forum is proud to have **Eng. Peshov** as member of the VEF Board!

The signing of this Cooperation Agreement comes as a result of the strong dedication and commitment of both Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD and Vienna Economic Forum to enable the implementation of future joint projects through intensive cooperation!



## OPENING OF VEF-BRANCH OFFICE SOFIA AT GLAVBOLGARSTROY HOLDING (GBS)



In a very friendly atmosphere at the headquarters of **VEF-Cooperation partner Glavbolgarstroy** in Sofia, on September 12, 2023, the Secretary General of the Vienna Economic Forum Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva met Mr. Svetoslav Lyubomirov, Chairman of the Board of Glavbolgarstroy Holding and CEO of 'GBS International', responsible for the operational management of the entire Glavbolgarstroy Holding Group, as well as with Mr. Kalin Peshov, Chairman of the Management Board of Glavbolgarstroy Holding AD (GBS) and the GBS team, including Ms. Plamena Nenkova, Deputy Executive Director 'Strategies, Communications and International Affairs', and Ms. Gabriela Alexieva, Corporate Lawyer at GBS HOLDING.

During the working meeting, the two cooperation partners discussed a wide range of topics related to future collaboration between **Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)** and **Glavbolgarstroy (GBS)**, such as the upcoming **20th Jubilee of the Vienna Economic Forum**, scheduled for November 13 at Vienna City Hall, as well as specific initiatives of VEF in 2024.

Particular attention was given to the establishment of a **Vienna Economic Forum – Sofia Branch Office** at the GBS headquarters.

## VEF-PRESIDENT AMBASSADOR VICTOR JACKOVICH PARTICIPATED AT THE PEACE INSTITUTE'S EVENT

On 12th September 2023 **VEF President Amb. Victor Jackovich** presented **Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)** at the International Peace Institute's webinar, on the subject of "Multilateralism by the Numbers: How to Address Interconnected Challenges of Our Time."

## WORKING VISIT OF H.E. MAG. SINIŠA BENCUN AMBASSADOR OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO AUSTRIA



On September 20, 2023, the **Secretary General of the Vienna Economic Forum, Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva**, received the designated **Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Republic of Austria, H.E. Mag. Siniša Bencun**, for a working visit at the premises of **Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)**.

In a very friendly atmosphere, ideas for further deepening of the cooperation with the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina were exchanged. The focus of the discussion was on the intensive preparations for the upcoming **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum**, scheduled to take place on **13 November 2023**, at **Vienna City Hall**. Further concrete initiatives for the year 2024 were also discussed.

Vienna Economic Forum (VEF) is delighted to welcome H.E. Mag. Siniša Bencun as a new member of the Ambassadorial Committee of Vienna Economic Forum and wishes him great success in carrying out his important diplomatic mission in Austria.

## VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM – COOPERATION PARTNER NOVOMATIC AG WITH A SUCCESSFUL PLAYER PROTECTION SYMPOSIUM

**Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)** is pleased to inform about the great response at the Player Protection Symposium which was part of the Responsible Gaming Symposium held at the **VEF Cooperation Partner Novomatic AG** Headquarters and to congratulate on this successful and very important day for the company!



## H.E. MR AMBASSADOR ROLAND BIMO RECEIVES VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM'S HONORARY DECORATION



The **Secretary General of the VEF Ambassador Dr. Elena Kirtcheva** has the honor to present to **H.E. Roland Bimo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Albania to Austria**, the Vienna Economic Forum's Honorary Decoration, on the occasion of his remarkable ten-year tenure in Vienna.

During the warm farewell conversation in the VEF premises, the outstanding record of the **long-standing cooperation between the Embassy of Albania and Vienna Economic Forum** was highlighted. The excellent performance and personal commitment of **Ambassador Roland Bimo**, who made a significant contribution to deepening bilateral relations between Albania and Austria, were particularly recognized. On behalf of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum **Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva awarded H.E. Ambassador Roland Bimo with the "Decoration of Honor of Vienna Economic Forum"** as a sign of recognition for his outstanding achievements and his extraordinary commitment to **promoting economic and cultural relations in the VEF region**.

**Vienna Economic Forum** wishes **Ambassador Bimo** all the best for his future as he returns to his homeland after a successful decade in Vienna. His work will always leave a lasting impression in the memories of a fruitful partnership.

## INTENSIFYING COLLABORATION BETWEEN CANON CEE GMBH AND VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM



During a working meeting on 11 October 2023 at the premises of Vienna Economic Forum, **Mag. Nikolaus Conrad Lorenz, Canon CEE Strategy Director**, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum, along with the **Secretary General of VEF Amb. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva**, discussed further and more intensive collaboration. The main focus of the discussion was the upcoming **20th Jubilee Vienna Economic Forum** on November 13, 2023, and the significant role of Canon CEE, both in its organization and in the planned VEF activities for the year 2024.

Canon CEE, headquartered in Vienna, is responsible for 24 countries, including several VEF member countries.

## VEF-COOPERATION PARTNER NOVOMATIC AG HONoured AS AUSTRIAN LEADING COMPANY FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS IN A ROW



**Vienna Economic Forum (VEF)** is pleased to report, that the **VEF-Cooperation partner Novomatic AG**, which employs around 24,500 people in more than 50 countries worldwide, was once again recognized as a leading company by the independent, cross-industry excellence platform “Leitbetriebe Austria” for its group-wide sustainable business strategy, high innovative strength and promotion of youth talent.

VEF congratulates its Cooperation partner Novomatic AG, one of the largest employers in Lower Austria, on both this important recognition, as well as on the other important awards for their employee-friendly working climate and wishes them many more successes.

**DIPLOMACY & COMMERCE AUSTRIA MAGAZINE**  
**VEF-MEDIA PARTNER**



Vienna Economic Forum is pleased to be informed about the collaboration with Ms. Svetlana Nenadovic Glusac, CEO of Diplomacy & Commerce Austria Magazine, VEF Media Partner.



**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)**

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

**Dear Members and Strategic Partners, dear Supporters!**  
**Your ongoing support and trust in Vienna Economic Forum**  
**has been instrumental in our continued commitment and**  
**dedication to the further economic consolidation of the**  
**Region “From the Adriatic to the Black Sea”.**

**Vienna Economic Forum remains strongly focused on**  
**the regional economic cooperation and will continue to**  
**establish, maintain and develop close collaboration with the**  
**other regional, European and global initiatives.**

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