

AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT 2021



HEALTHY PLANET- HEALTHY PEOPLE!

1. Summary

On July 1st 2021, Arnold Schwarzenegger returned to Vienna to attend his 5th annual climate conference, the Austrian World Summit, which once again took place in person. (→ watch the [highlight video](#)). In his keynote speech, he had an urgent appeal for the approximately 350 guests at the Spanish Riding School and the many viewers who followed the climate conference via livestream and live broadcast. Last year's summit was a hybrid event that was mostly online with limited in person participation due to the coronavirus safety concept that required all guests to be either tested or vaccinated. Some of these elements were adopted for the 2021 conference.

The 5th Austrian World Summit - one of the biggest environmental summits in the world - was all about "Healthy Planet - Healthy People". Humans depend on healthy ecosystems - if the planet is sick, then the people get sick. Once more the summit brought together climate action heroes from around the world to pave the way towards COP26, to discuss America's re-entry into the Paris Agreement and to continue Arnold Schwarzenegger's crusade to terminate pollution and create climate action. The conference showed that there is hope. To motivate the international audience, the whole day was about solutions, inspiring people, and successful projects that fight climate change and pollution at the same time.

The goal was to reach out to as many people as possible to raise awareness and to speed up the global climate movement. Therefore, it was particularly important not only to draw attention to the problem, but to focus on the many solutions. Every speaker brought a climate action story ranging from politics, business, finance, science, activism, innovation, to cities and regions as well as encouragement and positive communication. There are already countless projects and products that contribute to a cleaner and healthier future. Anyone and everyone can be a part of these solutions, making conscious choices and participating in climate protection. To enable a high diversity of speakers and content, the conference included both live and virtual guests, recorded video messages and short films highlighting projects and personal stories.

"We want to convince as many people as possible to join us and take action for a healthy planet."

Monika Langthaler, Director, Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative

Due to the continued Covid-19 pandemic we unfortunately had to limit the number of guests in the Spanish Riding School. Therefore, a virtual conference tool was created to fill this gap. Throughout the day, over 500 people took advantage of this special online tool, chatting with the other participants or holding bilateral individual or group meetings. In the afternoon, there were also moderated discussions via the chat.

After opening the Summit with a powerful video featuring clips from the Terminator films, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, EU-Representative Frans Timmermans and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz delivered keynote speeches to build on the theme of Healthy Planet- Healthy People. During the high-level panel, political leaders from the UK, the Seychelles and Latvia as well as speakers from all over the world including Jane Goodall, Greta Thunberg and Varshini Prakash discussed the current state of climate issues, the USA's re-entry into the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal. Regarding the international climate negotiations, COP26 President Alok Sharma and First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon emphasized that the Austrian World Summit was a key event in the run up to the UN's climate change summit, COP 26, which will take place this November in Glasgow. Continuing the conversation, representatives from the business sector, Lisa Jackson from Apple and Jim Farley from Ford, spoke with Arnold Schwarzenegger about their goals and the important role companies should play in tackling the global problem of climate change.

The afternoon started with a strong live video broadcast with John Kerry, US Envoy for Climate, before moving to exciting panels on health and climate change, sustainable economic recovery and the power of consumers. Experts including Michael Ryan from the WHO, economist Kate Raworth, President of the European Investment Bank Werner Hoyer and transformation researcher Maja Göpel as well as representatives from the business community and civil society discussed the intersection of those topics.

This year, it was once again possible to hold an "Expo of Climate Action" including stands from Hallmann Holding, For Forest, Austrian Chamber of Commerce, Austrian [Zirp](#) who sampled their tasty burger made of insects and [Solmate](#), who presented a photovoltaic solution for apartments and small households.

www.austrianworldsummit.com

www.climateactionstories.com

#ClimateAction

2. AWS 2021 – AT A GLANCE

NUMBERS

5 ½ h Livestream national & international

10 short films

40 Climate Action Stories

46 speakers

Participants from 45 nations

350 guests at the Spanish Riding School

1268 media reports worldwide

Potential reach of around 2.1 billion people

TOPICS

Healthy Planet - Healthy People

Green Economic Recovery

European Green Deal

Solutions to fighting pollution and climate change

The US is back in the Paris Agreement

Transformation of businesses

Hopeful climate communication

Sustainable cities & buildings

The power of consumers

3. Opening & Keynote

The conference started with a spectacular [opening film](#) with scenes from Terminator 2 and an adapted storyline thematizing environmental problems in "terminator style" followed by an important message from Arnold Schwarzenegger that there is still hope to solve those problems.

Master of Ceremony **Matt Iseman**, a television host from the US who began his career as a physician, led through the day and was the first to throw his personal Climate Action Story in a vase next to the stage. We also asked all our speakers to bring their climate story to the summit, and during the event we collected 40 stories from virtual and live guests.



These climate action stories should motivate many other people to share their own journey and actively fight for more climate protection. A complete "List of Climate Action Stories" can be found at the end of this report. Moreover, we are constantly searching for projects at our platform www.climateactionstories.com which already contains a compilation of 120 inspiring stories from all over the world.

The audience also had the chance to look back at some of the action taken at the last four Austrian World Summits. Years, packed with powerful guests, speeches, breakout sessions and public events. The highlights can be watched in the [Best of AWS](#) film.

The [opening remarks](#) of the summit came from the founder himself. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** addressed the harsh reality of the environmental crisis but also gave the audience hope that there is still time to prevent the worst.



"All over the world environmentalists are working themselves to the bone, their hearts so full of wanting to make things better - often even risking their lives."

In the end, however, the important messages about combatting the climate crisis hardly gets through to the broad public. The general population is literally flooded with negative headlines about melting icebergs, flooded cities, parched land and what they will have to do without in the future. Schwarzenegger drew a vivid comparison with the movie business: "No one is going to invest huge sums of money in a movie where there is no hope." He therefore urgently asked the audience to keep the messages about fighting climate change simple and, above all, to report on successes in this area. Because: "People need encouragement, not just threats and despair." He knows "If we all work together, we can terminate pollution. We can do it. There is no fate but what we make for ourselves."

4. Welcome Notes

The summit took place again under the patronage of a head of state with a deep commitment to climate protection. **Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen** surprised the audience when he began [his speech](#) by stating that he did not want to talk about the climate. "I want to talk about us people," Van der Bellen said. "Healthy Planet - Healthy People. This phrase sums it up: everything we humans do affects our planet - and the health of our planet in turn affects us." His great hope for a positive development in the climate crisis, he said, is that "we humans can learn from mistakes." With the Paris Climate Agreement and the European Green Deal, the first steps have already been taken, the president said confidently. "We must continue to work together. Many companies have already recognized the signals, but it is now up to the politicians in particular. I am confident that we will master the climate crisis," Van der Bellen emphasized.

Sebastian Kurz, Chancellor of Austria, stated in [his speech](#) that Austria has set very ambitious climate goals, including becoming climate neutral by 2040. He also emphasized the support of the European Union's climate targets. Kurz pointed out that climate protection has been placed at the center of the governments Coronavirus Aid Fund- similar to the EU's "Next Generation EU" reconstruction fund. Kurz is certain that "European companies can play an important pioneering role in the green and sustainable transformation of the global economy. "I am convinced that like the fight against the Corona pandemic, the fight against climate change can be won by the cooperation of science, business, civil society and politics."

5. The European Green Deal

The EU leader responsible for the Green Deal chose last year's Austrian World Summit as the venue for a powerful declaration of political will to deliver more ambitious climate targets. This year, **Vice President of the EU Commission Frans Timmermans** sent a [video message](#) and thanked Arnold as a leader who truly inspires him and stressed that the health of our planet is at stake. The pandemic was a clear warning sign of our fragility and interdependencies but also of our resilience. However, the major issues of our time are the climate and biodiversity crises. He said, "there is no vaccine in the face of these crises." That's why we need profound changes in how we live, produce and consume. "The costs of acting seem to be high but the consequences of inaction or acting too late will be even more devastating." The economic and also human costs will be unbearable. He stressed the new climate law that creates a legally binding commitment to become climate neutral by 2050 and that Europe doesn't need to start from scratch. In recent years, decoupling economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions has been achieved but nevertheless these efforts must be sped up and all sectors have to contribute. "The transition is the opportunity to innovate, to prosper to leave no one behind and to deliver a healthy planet for our children and grandchildren."

6. The USA is back fighting the climate crisis

Besides the EU climate policy, the new US administration was a focus of the fifth Austrian World Summit. Representatives of the US administration reported on the ambitious climate protection plans President Joe Biden has set. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael S. Regan** was the first to take part. He was a guest of Arnold's Stammtisch (see more in the box below) shortly before the summit, where they had a conversation about the concrete steps the USA plans to take. After the Trump Administration made major cuts to the EPA, the mission is now to rebuild trust and to reach the very ambitious but much needed goals set by President Biden. Regan explained that they have a government-wide strategy where the EPA will play a central

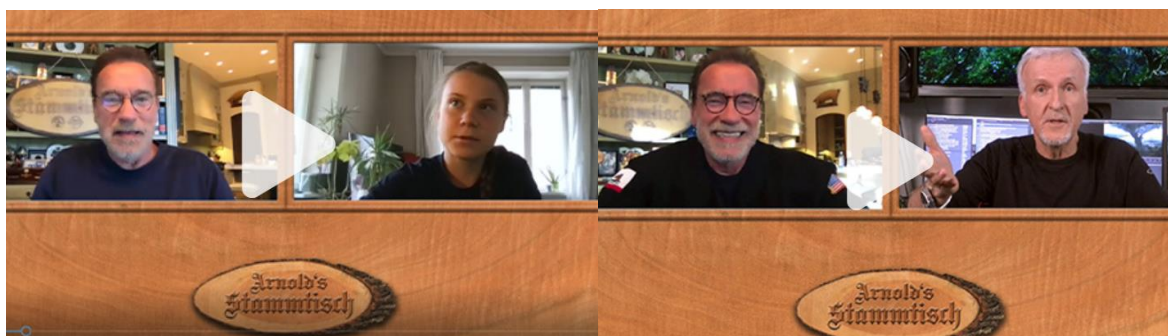
role in transforming energy infrastructure, boosting investments and increasing the number of jobs. "We are all in and we are willing to work together, row the same direction in order to achieve the president's mission. And by the way: it is achievable, and we are going to do it."

Arnold's Stammtisch

Arnold is a person who motivates his staff every single day to invent something new. He wants to communicate with as many powerful people as possible, no matter if a pandemic or any other reason makes communication more difficult. So, the team of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative together with the Schwarzenegger Institute invented "Arnold's Stammtisch".

"Arnold's Stammtisch" is a monthly conversation series featuring the former Governor in one-on-one conversations with environmental leaders and advocates from around the world. The discussions center around current environmental urgencies with the goal of communicating them in a more effective manner to a larger audience.

"Only if we win the communication "war", we'll succeed!"



Have a look at the best of "Arnold's Stammtisch".

In the afternoon another high-level representative from the US government, **John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate**, joined the summit with a [live speech](#). He first thanked Arnold for his climate leadership as former Governor of California and continued by applauding President Biden's deep commitment in the climate crusade. He not only re-signed the Paris Agreement but he has also issued a number of executive orders related to fighting climate change. The new ambitious goal for the national determined contributions (NDC) is to reach 50-52% emission reductions over the course of the next ten years. This is an all-of-government effort and they have a task force that brings together every government agency to move forward. Despite the initial success of the Paris Agreement he stressed that scientists warn governments about "not getting the job done" to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. Regrettably no country in

the world is really on track to meet the international climate goals. The 20 largest economies in the world account for about 80% of all emissions worldwide and half of these economies haven't made the determinations necessary to be able to win this battle. He stressed the urgency to act because climate change dramatically affects people all over the world. "We need to speed up innovation, research and development and finally no more new fossil fuel projects!"



He compared the challenges we are facing right now with a war we have to win and that we still have time to succeed. "2020 to 2030 is the critical decade and if we do what we know we can do, which means buying into the largest market the world's ever known, the energy market, to create millions of jobs, a technology boom and wealth to wind up with a healthier planet." In regards to Arnold's follow up question "what needs to be done differently," Kerry answered that we have to treat this crisis differently and that the big countries have to support developing countries more to transform their economies fast and justly.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Switching from politics to business, the program continued with [a conversation](#) between Arnold Schwarzenegger and **Jim Farley, CEO of Ford Motor Company**. In 2006, when Schwarzenegger was Governor, he signed legislation requiring the automotive sector to reduce air pollution, and at that time it was not well received by the car industry. Fifteen years later, it seems like common sense legislation and big car companies are investing a lot of money in fossil-free technologies. The Ford Motor Company and its new CEO Jim Farley have many plans regarding the future for the automotive sector. In August 2020,

California finalized a deal with automakers including Ford, Honda, Volkswagen and BMW that binds them to comply with its stringent state-level fuel efficiency standards that ultimately cut down on climate-warming tailpipe emissions.

Arnold asked him why he decided to reshape the company towards clean technologies. "We're the only full-line manufacturer committed to Paris. When we did that, we really had to commit to California. We think we'll be on the right side of history over time because of this choice." Schwarzenegger noted that when he was Governor, his vision for cleaner jobs and tighter regulation was dismissed initially by critics as a job killer — a plan that would ruin the state economy and leave a legacy of failure. Instead, today California is the most successful economy in the United States with the strictest environmental laws. Ford plans to only sell electric cars in Europe from 2030 on. Moreover Ford has built an e- truck that can power a house for three days during a power outage. The hybrid and all-electric trucks also have the ability to power worksites across America and Europe without workers needing diesel generators.

On the question "What do you say to naysayers?", Farley said "So far, they're wrong. We aren't the biggest car company in America but we have more U.S. jobs and we build more vehicles in the U.S. than any other brand. We bet on America even though it's more expensive." Ford is spending a billion dollars transforming its Ford site in Cologne, Germany, to be all-electric. The company is moving to insourcing motors and transforming transmission and engine work to maintain jobs in the move to electrification, he said.



Following up with the US focus, Arnold Schwarzenegger spoke about the role of companies and their goals with another representative of the business world. **Lisa Jackson, Vice President of Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives at Apple** and former head of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under President Barack

Obama, said in [this conversation](#): "Apple is carbon neutral today, and we've made a commitment to bring our entire supply chain and customer product use to carbon neutral by 2030. In order to tackle the global problem of climate change, companies need to show just how possible it is to achieve carbon neutrality and work with governments to create systemic change." She also announced that Infineon Technologies AG has joined the Apple Supplier Clean Energy program. Jackson said, "I'm excited that Infineon is joining our program and that they are going to use 100 percent green energy for their Apple production." As the world's largest technology company - and, as of January this year, the most valuable company on the planet - Apple's impact on our lives is vast and wide-reaching. For this reason, the company's VP of Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives says it has a responsibility to be a leader when it comes to climate change.

7. High-Level Panel



The prominent [hybrid high-level panel](#) was kick-started by the film about climate action stories, a [platform](#) for showcasing solutions. In this spirit, the follow up discussion focused on leadership from grassroots to politics and possible actions to fight the climate crisis. **Melinda Crane** opened the panel by saying that "we have to act faster, and that we can move faster." Technology and policies are already available to fix the climate crisis and we simply need to apply these powerful levers to do so.

The first question went to **Jane Goodall, UN Messenger of Peace**, asking how sick our planet really is. The answer was as clear as it was alarming. "It is very sick indeed and everyone listening knows that. The environment is sick – and humans are sick too. The oceans and the forests acting as our two important lungs and sources of biodiversity are compromised. Every little species has a role to play in this tapestry. It's like pulling a thread from the tapestry and everything collapses. The window is closing and we need to act now." She added that there is hope but people need to understand that climate change is our fault. Scientists had been warning us for years of an approaching

pandemic. If we don't stop, climate change pandemics will become more frequent. "We depend on healthy ecosystems and nature can regenerate if you give it the chance."

Due to the pandemic, COP26 had to be postponed from 2020 to November 2021. **Alok Sharma, President of COP26**, summed up the urgency for action which has only intensified due to the pandemic: "In Paris we said we would do anything to keep it below 1.5° and I believe that Glasgow is our last chance to keep this goal alive." Unfortunately, poorer countries suffer the most from the effects of climate change - mainly caused by rich industrialized countries, which is why climate justice is essential in achieving an equitable solution to climate change. Therefore, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which governs the use of market mechanisms like a carbon price, are at the center of the UN climate negotiations and provide much needed financial support for developing countries. It's still a long way but Sharma is confident we will make important progress at the next COP.

Latvia met its 2020 climate targets and already uses a carbon price, 40% of the energy production is renewable and 50% of the country is covered with forests. **Eglis Levits, President of Latvia**, also wants to push the environmental goals on national, EU and UN levels. "We've doubled our carbon tax in 2019 but it's not enough. We are working on a tax reform including a price on emissions and pollutions in general to include in all taxes." In regards to the question about what Latvia is doing to address the interlinked crises of ecosystem deterioration, Levits mentioned the mission Water 2030, which helps mobilize citizen involvement, innovation, investment, and sustainable development to regenerate the land and the Baltic Sea.

Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Seychelles, a small island nation existentially threatened by climate change, had a clear message to the rich countries; he stressed that rising sea levels are a result of the industrial development in the world. When the glaciers melt – the small island states suffer the consequences. Every day they can observe how their islands are being swept away. He asks very clearly for financial help and for more justice – because one country has to help the other in need. "Please bring about the change! We are tired of seeing beautiful figures on paper, in statements, we need action."

A matching [contribution](#) came from **Carlos Quesada, President of Costa Rica** who described the importance of the ocean to our climate and health by making the comparison that 70% of the planet is covered with water and likewise 70% of our body is made up of water. Oceans are a major carbon sink and a source of biodiversity and the largest oxygen producer in the world. However, there are massive problems with pollution (e.g. plastic) and destruction (e.g. mangroves, coral reefs) which are greatly diminishing the capacity of these bodies of water to further provide us with their ecosystem benefits. In Costa Rica, they have banned destructive fishing practices by law. This should exist all over the world and Costa Rica offers partnership to countries who

would like to join this action. "We are part of nature and what harms nature will ultimately harm us."

From **Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland**, as host of COP26, Melinda Crane wanted to know how she can support Mr. Sharma in ensuring that this COP is make and not break when it comes to the battle against global warming. Sturgeon answered: "The climate crisis – with its inter-related threats of climate change, nature loss and pollution – remains the single biggest challenge the world faces. COP26 represents the world's best chance – and possibly one of our last chances – to limit global warming to 1.5°. She referred to the responsibility and the moral obligation industrial countries have to cut emissions and stressed Scotland's commitment to making sure people across the world benefit from a just transition to net zero. As a concrete example, she mentioned a funding model which is being made available to support a fourth year of the Malawi Climate Youth Leaders Project, in recognition of the inter-generational impacts of climate change. She added that at COP26 in Glasgow, the needs of the countries who are most affected by climate change must be recognized, and their voices must be heard. "All of us – and governments in particular – now need to summon that same sense of urgency in tackling the climate crisis. If we do this, COP26 can become a global turning point – one which ensures that as we recover from the pandemic, we create a greener and fairer world."

In addition to that, **Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC** stressed in her [video message](#) that it's crucial to make this year's COP a success for the benefit of all humanity. She mentioned four key aspects to make this happen: First, we must provide financial support to developing countries. Second, we must address any pending issues preventing us from fully implementing the Paris Agreement. Third, we must raise ambition in all areas of the climate agenda. Forth, we must ensure that every voice and every proposal is heard.

Also, **Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany**, drew attention in [her speech](#) to the urgency to become climate neutral as quickly as possible. "In Germany, we have resolved to achieve climate neutrality by 2045. Our Climate Change Act sets out the path to this goal. We are relying on comprehensive carbon pricing [...] we are supporting measures such as retrofitting buildings to improve energy efficiency." The transition has to be economically viable and socially responsible. Finally, she added that emission reduction is only possible with a global approach requiring all countries to make a greater effort. The Austrian World Summit is an important step towards a successful COP26.

This aspect was also underlined by the remarks of **António Guterres, Secretary-General** of the United Nations. He mentioned once more that we must use the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as a unique opportunity to restore balance with nature, end the pollution crisis and tackle the climate emergency. "It is imperative that we cut global

emissions by 45% compared to 2010 so we can reach net zero emissions by 2050." He pointed out three priorities to ensure that the 1.5-degree goal is attainable:

- In this decade, renewable energy must overtake fossil fuels which means phasing out coal and investing in a just transition.
- Developed countries must deliver on their promise to provide \$100 billion dollars each year to developing countries.
- 50% of climate finance in support of the developing world must go to adaptation, with easier access to finance for the most vulnerable.

In reaction to the statements from the political leaders, climate change activist **Greta Thunberg** vehemently criticized the inaction of decision makers stating "the gap between your rhetoric and reality keeps growing wider and wider."

150 weeks have already passed since the start of the school strike for the climate, putting public pressure on political leaders. They started to act but more in communication tactics than in responding to the climate emergency. "You — especially leaders from high income nations — are pretending to change and listen to the young people while you continue pretty much exactly like before." The climate commitments are still vastly insufficient to reach the climate goals even after the pandemic, where huge sums of money have been locked in for unsustainable projects. "The G7, as an example, is spending billions more on fossil fuels and fossil fuel infrastructure than on clean energy." The climate crisis isn't something distant in the future but it's affecting people every day and 2021 is currently forecasted to be the year with the second highest emission rise ever. "We will not be able to solve a crisis we do not treat as a crisis."

Varshini Prakash, Executive Director of the Sunrise Movement, another powerful voice, took over the floor to further endorse Greta's words and to add her own perspective from the US. This week the Sunrise Movement protested again in front of the White House because the action taken by the United States does not go far enough. The historic responsibility of the developed countries to support countries in the global south in the transition to a greener economy is insufficient (she referred to the President of the Seychelles). In addition to this, the current plans of investments and legislation within the country are falling short. She pointed out that for example the plans for clean energy investments are only 1/6 of what was pledged on the campaign trail and that "the plan doesn't create the millions of climate jobs we need to do the work of averting a climate catastrophe." She described the ongoing heatwaves in Canada and the US as a warning sign that the consequences of climate change are getting worst and derived: "We desperately need the political will behind that level of mobilization, and I think grassroots pressure like the way Greta is doing it, like Sunrise and so many other millions of young people around the world, is one of the key ways to influence that political will."

8. AFTERNOON PANELS

HEALTHY PLANET – HEALTHY PEOPLE

The motto of this year's conference was Healthy Planet - Healthy People. In times of multiple crises, we have to ask ourselves how we can fight these crises at the same time because everything is connected, something we saw very clearly during this pandemic. In the last thousands of years, the earth has provided a hospitable environment for human societies. This is currently threatened because of the massive global increase in environmental destruction and overexploitation of the natural resources (e.g. deforestation or the conversion of wild spaces for human food production). Estimates of our total impact on nature suggest that we would require 1.6 earths to maintain the world's current living standards. Ecosystems, such as tropical forests or coral reefs, have already been degraded beyond repair, or are at imminent risk of 'tipping points' which could have massive consequences for our economies and well-being. The leading questions of [the panel](#) were: How can we act as part of nature? How do we better protect and re-green our earth?



After introducing the topic, **Chris Cummins**, the host of the panel, asked **Michael Ryan**, Executive Director of the Health Emergencies Programme at the World Health Organization to explain the connection between the environment, the pandemic, and us. Michael stated that "we are living on a planet which is out of balance; we're living with a climate that is changing and driving negative health and economic impacts. We are driving those changes such as climate change, urbanization, migration environmental exploitation, animal husbandry practices, social injustice, misuse of antibiotics..." He added that also our connectedness is a major threat to us, as we are not using it to our advantage. All those changes lead to massive risks which ultimately resulted in this pandemic. "This hit us like a tsunami and we reacted very quickly but what we're not

doing is reacting to the climate crisis which is a slower process." Despite the different time scales, the responses must be the same. He proceeded that for some of us the pandemic was disruptive in terms of changing our mind or our behavior. "Sometimes you have to be faced by your own mortality and fragility to change". But he also has the fear that the amnesia from the pandemic which will come very quickly because everybody wants to go back to normal. He noted that the optimist in him is saying that he can feel the desire for change in all parts of society and that resolutions and promises don't work anymore.

We are taking huge risks with our future if we don't manage the planet in which we live. Unfortunately, air pollution is already life-threatening in cities right now. New studies show fossil fuel pollution kills twice as many people as previously thought- almost 8.8 million premature deaths per year. **Rosamund Kissi-Debrah**, Co-Founder of the Ella Roberta Family Foundation from London has already experienced the consequences of air pollution in a very painful way. Her 9 year old daughter, Ella Roberta, died in 2013. She was a healthy kid but lived just 25 meters from one of the UK's busiest roads, London's South Circular. She was taken to the hospital several times with severe asthma attacks before she died. Rosamund used this terrible loss to fight for better air because what happened to her daughter can happen to any child. Thanks to her tireless investigations, Ella's cause of death became the first in the UK to be officially ruled as air pollution. But still there are illegal levels of air pollution right now, affecting every organ in the body causing illness. Rosamund emphasized that this affects governments everywhere and they have a legal duty to protect their citizens. It is a human right to breath clean air. She referred to John Kerry when she said that we continue to repeat the same mistakes again instead of building back better after the COVID pandemic. That's why she is continuing her work to raise awareness with her foundation and to continue to fight towards adapting the air pollution limits worldwide.

Panelist **Maja Göpel** is a political economist at The New Institute and is an important voice for a sustainable transformation of society, working at the intersection of economy, politics and society.

"I think what we are facing is that we don't get paralyzed by the bad messages but we do take the messages serious." Our society is stressed by the phase of transformation, and we have to leap forward to the horizon, That's why she would like to change from using "building back better" to "building forward." There is also a need to change that metric of success from GDP to aspects which are really valuable, e.g. with true cost accounting. Impacts (from e.g. investments) on environment and society must also be taken into consideration, which is what the EU taxonomy for sustainable financing is leading to. In this kind of systemic shift, taxes must be higher on dirty solutions than on sustainable ones. In this regard "honesty and accountability from my point of view is the most important thing right now." To reach out to the greater public she presents her ideas in scientific publications ("The Great Mindshift") as well as in public books "Unsere Welt neu denken", which has been on the German bestseller list for months. Therefore it was

extremely important for her to turn science into a personal story. The most important message of the book was that we need everybody to make that journey happen and so she decided to make an "invitation to rethink the world" for everybody. The positive feedback from readers gave her hope that we have reached the people.

Another example about creating attention and awareness came from **Herbert Waldner**, CEO and Founder of For Forest. In 2019 he brought a spectacular, temporary art intervention to Austria. 299 trees of up to 14 meters high were placed on the football field of the Wörthersee Stadium. The project was met with international media coverage in over 80 countries. Now this project will be transformed into the "For Forest Innovation Park" in the Tullnerfeld to further create awareness about the climate crisis and to combine transformation with innovation. Business and research companies based there will all have the same goal: to look for practical solutions, to research and to put them into action. The focus will be on sustainable materials that will help to drastically reduce CO₂ emissions in the construction industry. In addition, art institutions and artists are invited to be inspired by the theme of sustainability and forests. Business, education and culture will inspire each other at this location and thus create a lighthouse project in Austria.

Our diet has a massive impact on our ecological footprint. If we change to a plant based diet, we could cut up to 30% CO₂ of our personal carbon footprint. And this is something every one of us could do. There are only four vegetarian restaurants in the world with a Michelin one star rating and **Paul Ivić** is the only chef in Austria who has won a Michelin one star rating for vegetarian cuisine. The story behind this is a story of personal transformation. He decided to specialize in vegetarian cuisine after having experienced that poor quality food made him sick. His unhealthy diet habits led not only to burnout but also to coronary heart disease. To prevent a surgery, he listened to his doctor who said that he had to change his diet to higher quality and more plant-based food. He learned that high quality food is not only good for his health but also made him happier. That was the point where it was clear: "As a chef I need to bring the taste back. The quality of the ingredients is key and the eating habits influence our economy, our ecology, our social behavior and our health."

The President of Costa Rica mentioned earlier that oceans cover 70% of the earth's surface which makes it obvious that for a healthy planet, we need healthy oceans. Yet they are under constant threat. Overfishing, marine pollution, ocean warming or acidification – today the oceans and the ecosystem benefits they provide are under more serious threat than ever before. Since the 1970s **Paul Watson**, Founder of Sea Shepherd, has been an activist fighting against those threats, and he brought us an alarming message: He compared our planet to a spaceship with a life support system that provides us with the air we breathe, the food we eat, and also regulates climate and temperature. This life support system is run by a crew - not us, we are just passengers - but what we are doing is murdering our crew members. The more crew members we are

eliminating the faster the machinery will break down. He ended up with: "If the oceans die, we die."

TAKE AWAYS FROM THE PANEL

We need action now to handle those multiple crises. We must ensure that our demands on nature do not exceed its sustainable supply. We must expand and improve management of clean air and water, speeding up investment in sustainable solutions and deploying policies that discourage damaging forms of consumption and production. It's important to invite people in this journey of change and creativity, as we can only do it together. A sustainable, honest and just transformation of our economies, institutions, financial sector, education systems is needed as well as a changing mindset through all levels of societies. We are all part of nature. When we protect nature, we are protecting ourselves.

GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

A green recovery focuses on long term policies and solutions that are designed to benefit both people and our planet. This involves creating not only measures which focus on safeguarding the environment, protecting ecosystems and addressing issues relating to climate but it also includes creating a resilient, sustainable and inclusive society.

This panel aimed to shed light on what individual actors (entrepreneurs, politicians, representatives from finance) are doing to respond to the climate and COVID crises in equal measure, because the economic consequences of the pandemic also hold great opportunities. As it was already stated in the panel before, instead of going "back to the old mistakes", a green economic recovery should be pursued.



Host of [the panel](#) **Barbara Buchner**, CEO of the Climate Policy Initiative reminded us of the statement from Vice President Timmermans earlier that morning, that we can no longer leave out a single opportunity to attain the EU's 55% emissions target. Keeping in mind that many investments have a lead time of six to eight years, we absolutely have no time to waste.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) supports the global green recovery and is one of the largest climate finance institution in the world which plans to invest 1 trillion euros in climate-related projects by 2030 including a just transition. It also pledged at the 2019 climate summit to be aligned with the climate goals of the Paris Agreement by 2021 and it has reached that goal. President of the EIB **Werner Hoyer**, explained that the best way to access money from the bank is to come to them with good projects linking innovation, climate and development. "The idea of the EIB is to be an engineer and scientific driven bank which is quite unusual." For example, during the COVID pandemic, the EIB was very active in the area of vaccine research. In Africa, electrification needs to be sped up by a factor of five within the next decade and therefore we must invest in innovative technology to reach this goal. Moreover you need the courage to fail, to get up, try again, and continue to learn from it.

After learning about how the EIB works to support climate action, the next question went to **Leonore Gewessler**, Minister of Climate Action in Austria. He was asked about what exactly it means for Austria to respond to both the climate and the COVID crises at the same time. She made it clear that this is a crucial moment in time as we are in the middle of a huge transformation. Now if the time to invest in a better, greener future and it's an opportunity to shape the economy and society for the better. This requires action from everybody. "We need to invest smart, we need to invest green, we need to reform smart and we need to stop investing in the past." To put these words into action she described what Austria is doing to phase out oil and gas heating systems and she announced a new climate action plan in which Austria will have a carbon price in 2022. A short video about a former oil worker who, after he lost his job in the oil crash, switched to the solar industry led us to the next crucial issue: green and healthy jobs. Austria is rebuilding towards a more clean and green economy, e.g. with new train tracks and solar power on rooftops which creates green job opportunities for many people such as the electricians, plumbers, train drivers etc. The minister stressed that Austria invests heavily in those areas to make this happen.

The global economy is expected to expand 5.6% in 2021, the fastest post-recession pace in 80 years, largely because of strong rebounds from a few major economies. However, many emerging markets and developing economies continue to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. **Gerd Müller** has been the Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany since 2013. Due to his position and related travel activities, he has a lot of practical experience and expertise in working with developing countries. In regards to the question about what must be done now in the face of the crises in these countries, he mentioned a crucial aspect: We don't terminate climate in Austria or Germany alone (responsible for 0,2 % of the global emissions / in Germany: 2%), but that doesn't mean that we don't need ambitious climate goals here. We can only save the climate if we involve all countries and the big emitters such as China. "Climate change hits those hardest who haven't really contributed to it." This leads to devastating consequences and generates climate refugees. Right now, 450 coal fired power plants are in the pipeline to be built on the African continent and are financed by investors from the US, China and Europe. This is an example of the lack of a holistic view on tackling the climate crisis. He further proposed that "we need the expansion of the Green Deal for Africa." We need easier access to investments for developing countries. We have to walk the talk. Therefore I founded the Alliance for Development and Climate Foundation where everybody can contribute to climate protection and can become climate neutral."

Panelist **Kate Raworth** is a senior research associate and lecturer at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute, and a senior associate of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. She presented her "Doughnut Economic Model" for healthy economies which should be designed to thrive not to grow. "We know we need to

transform our economies profoundly and the model of the 20th century was endless growth to shape the economies." However, this is not compatible with the current limitations of the planet. She explains that Doughnut means that nobody should fall short in essential supplies (e.g. water, food, health care, education...) but at the same time we should not exceed the resources we have and destroy the systems that support life on earth. "It is not endless growth, it is driving in balance." We are becoming regenerative and distributive by design not only within nations but also between nations. There is one success story where Doughnut Economics has been brought into practice. Amsterdam's goal is to bring all 872,000 residents inside the doughnut, ensuring everyone has access to a good quality of life, without putting more pressure on the planet than is sustainable. Guided by Raworth's organization, the Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL), the city is introducing massive infrastructure projects, employment schemes and new policies for government contracts to achieve that end.

Klemens Hallmann, CEO of the Hallmann Holding has a lot of experience in the building sector, and he plans to make the company climate neutral well before 2040. Buildings must become emission-free in both construction and operation and currently, a milestone for ecological construction is being planned: An urban plus-energy-quarter with a gross floor area of 34.000 m² (living + commercial spaces) will be built in Pilzgasse in Floridsdorf, Vienna, in cooperation with the City of Vienna. Based on the "Productive City" concept adopted by the City of Vienna in 2017, the site in Pilzgasse will have not only innovative construction and impressive energy technology, but it will also be zoned as a "mixed commercial area". This is intended to create sufficient space for Vienna's businesses in the city's core areas and thus strengthen the business location. "With our green building concept, we want to make our contribution as a responsible real estate developer on the way to a climate-neutral Austria." In addition, the systematic incorporation of alternative energy systems in real estate construction significantly reduces operating costs for future residents.

Coming back to the financial aspect, **Rémi Vrignaud**, CEO of Allianz Austria, followed up with an intervention from the audience. Back in 2014, Allianz became the first financial company in Austria to commit to specific, measurable sustainability targets in its investment portfolio. "In 2015 we were the first insurance company in Austria to permanently remove coal mining from our investment portfolios. And today, more than 90 percent of our investments meet sustainability criteria." The goal is to reach 100 percent by 2030. Allianz Austria will use capital as a lever by investing in areas that have potential for a sustainable future. In the end he said "I would like to call on other players in the capital market to do the same!"



Another intervention came from **Ingmar Höbarth**, CEO of the Austrian Climate and Energy Fund. With a funding budget of €1.8 billion, the Climate and Energy Fund has developed 31 programs and funded more than 162,000 projects over the past fourteen years in Austria. They are dealing with very concrete solutions and following the bottom-up approach supported by citizens' commitments. One of the main pillars supporting Austria's attempt to achieve its share of the European climate targets will be to implement what are known as energy communities. He explained that energy communities, are non-profit-orientated legal entities intended to decentralize the generation, distribution, and consumption of renewable energy mainly for the public benefit. This is an essential component to ensure people are actively involved in the energy transition.



TAKE AWAYS FROM THE PANEL

Moving to a green, decarbonized economy requires far-reaching structural change and huge investments around the world. High-income countries must support the developing countries in their economic transformation. It's necessary to come up with new economic models that recognize natural resources are finite and create a better environment for all people on earth. The EU Taxonomy will turn all sectors towards carbon neutral goals and there are no more excuses for investing in the past as there are much more economically feasible and healthy options available today.

LIFESTYLE: THE POWER OF CONSUMERS

Although people often define sustainable consumption and production differently, they are both essential in creating a circular economy. Sustainable consumption and production is about systemic change, decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and applying a lifecycle thinking approach, taking into account all phases of resource use in order to do more with less. Only by paying attention to both sides of the equation - consumption and production - will the type of transformative change that is needed, be possible. According to recent surveys, more and more people are consciously paying attention to climate-friendly consumption, but it is often difficult to make the most environmentally friendly purchase. Environmental awareness is particularly high when it comes to food, but when it comes e.g. to car purchases SUVs are still booming. The commitment to environmental protection obviously does not necessarily coincide with actual consumer behavior.

[This panel](#) focused on different sectors tackling the challenges of sustainable decision making in daily life. From food to fashion, to mobility and development of a sustainable city to the impact of the corona pandemic and progressive digitalization, this panel explored which trends are accelerating sustainable consumption and healthy living and what solutions are available to inspire people towards an environmentally friendly lifestyle.



Host of the panel **Barbara Meier**, a model who is very familiar with the fashion industry, has experienced herself how dirty this business has been and still is even as there are more and more sustainable alternatives. The first speaker of the panel was 21 years old **Maya Penn** who is the CEO of her own fashion company "Maya's Ideas". She founded the brand at just 8 years old with a passion for design and a drive to tackle "fast-fashion" and its effects on the environment and on people who work in this industry. She explained that slow fashion is really about looking at the whole life cycle of each piece of clothing, using resources that are already available or using the cradle-to-cradle approach. It's important to enhance the circularity of fashion and also big companies should implement these sustainable methods to make the changes they need to make. "Consumers are speaking with their dollars and they're asking for more sustainable products." Her advice

to make daily changes follows a very individualistic approach. She said you have to start with a sustainable mindset in regards to your existing personal circumstances (where you live, the kind of job you have, your income, your talent or what you have access to). Once you establish your framework, you can then choose to change your daily life habits (e.g. bike instead of car), engaging people in school or at work or becoming an advocate for clean oceans because you live near one. In general, it is important to make sustainability more accessible and to "humanize sustainability".

Rodolphe de Campos, CFO of IKEA Austria, explained how the international company is working on becoming a circular business, including when it comes to the design of its products. It wants all of its products to have circular capabilities: designed from the very beginning to be repurposed, repaired, reused, resold and recycled. This is a bold vision given that IKEA is the largest furniture retailer in the world operating in more than 50 markets. "We are a company trying to be good [...] and we have a clear plan, by 2030 all of our products will be made out of renewable or recycled resources and all products will be designed to be circular." This plan is also communicated to consumers and encouraged in their "Circular Labs" that are about design, sustainability and practicability of new products and allow consumers to be part of the development process. It's also possible to bring back furniture for reselling or repairing. Consumer behavior is constantly changing, and the pandemic has accelerated existing consumer trends. The future of retail is focused on where and how products are sold. A good example is the city store in Vienna. At Westbahnhof, a sustainable, innovative, inviting furniture store is being built with green facades and plenty of space for people – from appealing gastronomy to a generally accessible, green rooftop terrace. The entire seven-story building is designed for pedestrians, cyclists, subway, and streetcar riders without space for cars. It will be open by the end of August 2021.

Rowan Barnett, who is the Head of Google.org EMEA & APAC, explained what google is doing to foster business sustainability as it is part of daily life for most of us. In the founding decade, Google became the first major company to be carbon neutral. In the second decade, it was the first company to achieve 100% renewable energy. By 2030, it aims to be the first major company to operate carbon free. For google this means no offset, no credits or accounting tricks but it also means fully decarbonizing the energy supply everywhere. Its AI and machine learning technology (for example for better energy efficiency of google data centers) is made available for other uses in other sectors. He added that "Google's philanthropy" funds and supports nonprofits and social innovators to build and scale effective tech-based solutions, tackling issues such as pollution, emission analyses, deforestation." He continued, that in 2020 people google searched "How to live a more sustainable lifestyle" more than ever before. A trend that underscores what Greta was saying in the morning session. Rowan pointed out that more and more people are waking up and searching for ways to take action. With 1 billion users, Google has the responsibility and tools to help people making everyday decisions more sustainable and less carbon intensive.

Jürgen Czernohorszky, Executive City Councilor for Climate from the City of Vienna is responsible, among other things, for the "Environment and Climate". Vienna has set the goal of being CO₂-neutral by 2040 – the first federal state in Austria to do so. He told us about the new government program for climate protection and what climate actions have already been implemented. "Vienna will also be a pioneer in the field of energy transition in order to fight climate change and terminate pollution, that's why we started the largest solar power initiative in history." On average, there will be as more photovoltaic systems built annually from now until 2025 than the last 15 years combined -which equates to about 100 football fields of solar on rooftops, surfaces and facades. By 2030, 10 percent of the required electricity is to be generated from solar energy. We need civil society, the regional economy and the entrepreneurs on this journey. "Together we want to make Vienna the city of the sun to get the job done". He also mentioned another initiative he's pushing and referred back to the idea of a Circular Economy: Vienna has set the goal to become a zero waste city. As an example, a repair voucher was implemented in 2020 which was a huge success as 22,000 repairs were funded.

Parallel to the energy sector, transportation and mobility are other key areas that need to be fundamentally transformed -especially in cities- because noise and air pollution are greatly impacting people. **Peter Sagan**, Cycling World Champion used his voice in a video message to propose a simple solution to this. Live from the Tour de France he told us about his passion for cycling because it keeps him fit and healthy. Biking instead of driving can easily save thousands of tons of emissions and pollution every year and by the way it is so much fun.

Another sector that is relevant to everyone and where we also face huge challenges is food. According to FAO about one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tons per year. **Mette Lykke**, CEO of the App Too Good To Go has developed a solution to reduce food waste worldwide. The free mobile application connects restaurants and stores that have unsold, surplus food with customers who can then buy whatever food the outlet considers surplus at a much lower price than normal. This reduces the waste of food that would otherwise be discarded. In the three years it has been active, the app has reached more than 40 million users. More than 17,000 establishments have been associated with it, and 10,092,382 food packs have been saved. "Using the app contains also elements of a treasure hunt which creates a moment of excitement during a day and finally the app makes quality food available for a lot of people."

To produce and distribute food, we need farms, soils and logistics. Agriculture and land use together are responsible for about ¼ of our emissions. This is huge. We have to change the way of agriculture and focus more on regional and seasonal consumption. **Theresa Imre** came up with an innovative solution and founded markta, a digital farmer's market that is also a reimagined platform for regional food. As a startup they began from

zero and have since become a blueprint and an ambassador for change while also leading by example with an innovative, decentralized logistic system. markta is focusing on regional food producers – only small-scale farms in Austria. This is so important because every year 2500 small farms are closing in Austria because of mass production, monoculture and also because of the EU funding scheme. "A big challenge at the beginning were the consumers, because the delivery wasn't as fast as with Amazon or as cheap as in the supermarkets." But the corona crisis has changed consumer behavior and at the beginning of the first lockdown in 2020 the orders exploded from one day to another. It was a huge challenge to organize the logistics in a decentral way in that short time period, but in the end, it worked out. 2020 markta generated around 2.3 million euros in turnover.

TAKE AWAYS FROM THE PANEL

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the way of consuming. More consumers shop online and the shift towards a more digital world has accelerated. But the demand for sustainable alternatives is on the rise. The big players can have a huge impact on their consumers and must support them in making sustainable (buying) decisions. The goals are far-reaching from circularity to zero waste, terminating pollution to engaging people for being part of these transformations. No matter the sector, from energy, food, fashion, furniture, or mobility, the solutions for a clean future are out there!

9. List of Climate Action Stories

Name	Nachname	CAS Name
Alexander	Van der Bellen	Implementing sustainable solutions whenever possible
Alok	Sharma	Consign coal to history
Alpaslan	Deliloglu	Ikea Wien Westbahnhof
Arnold	Schwarzenegger	Arnold's Stammtisch for better climate communication
Barbara	Buchner	Global Innovation Lab for Climate Finance
Barbara	Meier	Making fair fashion an experience for everyone
Chris	Cummins	Climate communication for young people
Egils	Levits	Mission: Water 2030
Gerd	Müller	Established an alliance for Development and Climate Foundation
Greta	Thunberg	Climate Strike
Herbert	Waldner	For Forest Innovation Park
Ingmar	Höbarth	Paris-Vorderwald model region
Jane	Goodall	Mutuba Project: Reforestation in Uganda
Jürgen	Czernohorszky	Vienna Solar Power Initiative
Kate	Raworth	Doughnut Economics Action Lab (D.E.A.L.)
Klemens	Hallmann	Sustainable Holding
Leonore	Gewessler	Building future – for a better, more climate friendly Austria
Maja	Göpel	Breaking Boundaries
Marieke	van Doorninck	Driving the change
Matt	Iseman	American Ninja Warrior Fighting for the Earth
Maya	Penn	Maya's Ideas
Melinda	Crane	Travel climate-friendly
Mette	Lykke	Too Good To Go

Monika	Langthaler	Austrian World Summit
Nicola	Sturgeon	Scottish Government's just transition to net zero by 2045
Paul	Ivić	Cookbook – Restlos glücklich
Paul	Watson	Sea Shepherds
Peter	Sagan	„Ambassador for Biking Cities“
Rémi	Vrignaud	Sustainable Finance for a better future
Rosamund	Kissi-Debrah	Ella Roberta Family Foundation
Rowan	Barnett	Clean Air for African Cities, With the Help of AI
Theresa	Imre	markta, digital farmers market
Varshini	Prakash	Sunrise Movement
Wavel	Ramkalawan	Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EBA) Project
Werner	Hoyer	EIB Group Climate Bank Roadmap



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