

AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT 2022

CREATING HOPE – INSPIRING ACTION



Summary

On June 14th, 2022, the 6th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT took place at the Hofburg in Vienna. One of the biggest environmental summits in the world was all about "Creating Hope - Inspiring Action", true to the nature of its founder Arnold Schwarzenegger (watch the [highlight video](#)).

Due to the still prevailing and actually worsening COVID situation Arnold Schwarzenegger joined virtually from Toronto – nevertheless with the strong message of the urgency to combat pollution and the climate crisis.

Similar to the last summits, this year's conference was once more set up as a hybrid event, allowing for people all across the globe to join virtually. Around 700 guests were live at the Hofburg.

The goal of the summit as well as the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative was to reach out to as many people as possible to create hope and inspire action. The focus was on the many already existing solutions: Active climate leaders, starting as young as 15-year-old high school students, presented their ideas and products to deliver a message of hope and cooperation.

Further panels discussed the much-needed transformation of the industrial sector, the big transformative processes within our societies due to the climate crisis and digitalization and the environmental impact of today's food production. Reaching people with climate-related topics is crucial to face the current and upcoming challenges: a session dedicated to climate communications included various angles, including the world's greenest football club and a humorist approach to increase eco-literacy.

This year, it was once again possible to hold an "Expo of Climate Action" including stalls from BMW, Hallmann Holding, Holcim, klima:aktiv and the Climate Fund or the City of Vienna and Lower Austria. Other stalls included Perfeggt who sampled plant-based eggs, RevoFoods who let people taste their plant-based salmon and Wunderberg with their hand-made, organic cosmetic products.

www.austrianworldsummit.com

www.climateactionstories.com

#ClimateAction

1. AWS 2022 – AT A GLANCE

NUMBERS

5 ½ h livestream

5 short films

More than 30 speakers

Live music

Participants from more than **70** nations registered online

700 guests at the Hofburg Vienna

500 guests via our Networking tool B2Match

1500 media reports worldwide

Potential reach of around 2.6 billion people

TOPICS

Crises, Conflicts and Climate Change – Climate Action in the Past, Present and Future

Building Bridges, Building Hope

Smart World, Green Life? – Let's get digital!

Don't Look Up – Climate Communication

Healthy Planet, Healthy People

Creating Hope, Inspiring Action – Active climate leaders

2. Opening & Welcome Notes

The conference started with a [wrap-up](#) clip of the last six AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMITs, once more showing key moments and key speakers that participated at the past conferences.



Master of Ceremony **Matt Iseman** welcomed the audience at the Hofburg and at home in front of their screens, together with Monika Langthaler, Director of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative and the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT.

The founder of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, joined virtually to

welcome the guests. Due to the rising COVID cases and potential derailing effects on the major television series production Arnold Schwarzenegger is currently shooting, he heavy heartedly decided to not travel to Austria.

In her welcome words Langthaler referred to the fact that we are facing several crises – however that the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT has always focused on solutions and the conference is a platform for climate stakeholders to present and discuss exactly those solutions. She once more emphasized the need to work together to combat the challenges the climate crisis and pollution impose on us. She then concluded by asking a long-time environmentalist and patron of the conference, the Federal President of Austria, **Alexander Van der Bellen**, on stage to deliver his [welcome notes](#).

President Van der Bellen started his speech by comparing our current way of dealing with climate change and pollution with the TV series *Game of Thrones*. The main protagonists are entangled in wars and power struggles, fighting against each other – however they fail to hear the warnings of a greater danger, a danger that is threatening all of us. In times of highest danger, we tend to look away and engage in destructive activities.



President Van der Bellen drew the line to today's situation: We have known about the climate crisis for many years and the fact that we are running out of time. But we have always shifted our focus away, for instance towards the financial crisis or the war. However, the opportunities and the will to change things for the better have never been

greater. The broad majority want to move out of fossil fuels and use existing climate-friendly solutions such as photovoltaic or geo-thermal energy where the know-how already exists. President Van der Bellen noted that a change of lifestyle would be needed with a focus on energy efficiency; and that a sustainable and greener future is possible if we cooperate across political boundaries. Even though challenges and solutions would become more complex, the Federal President encouraged everybody to believe in ourselves. According to him we have managed to come all this way as we have insights to change our behaviour to circumstances and needs. Our innovative strength – especially also shown by young people at this year's summit – would leave our world better than we have found it.



Following the Federal President of Austria, United Nations Secretary-General **António Guterres** delivered a [powerful message](#) via video. Stating the current problems such as timid climate promises, the energy crisis, higher costs and the impacts of the climate crisis the Secretary-General called on political actors to stop funding fossil fuels and accelerating renewable energies, in all regions. He condemned new funding

for fossil fuel exploration, describing it as “delusional” and calling for an abandonment of fossil fuel finance. He proposed five concrete actions to jumpstart renewable energy transition.

3. Keynote

In his [keynote speech](#) Arnold Schwarzenegger first thanked the [main partners](#) of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT. Then the former Governor of California shared some details about his current life on set in Toronto. Comparing how technological advancements in movies have opened up so many possibilities, he drew the line to clean energy.

“Technology makes the impossible possible. [...] The same is true with our clean energy movement.” Summarizing the huge growth of wind and solar energy as well as e-mobility in the last decade and comparing this trend to the historic mobile phone diffusion Schwarzenegger sees clean energy technology as the means to combat pollution and climate change. As further proof of how cleaner technology has gone mainstream Schwarzenegger pointed out that almost every car commercial at this year's Super Bowl was for an electric car.



Arnold Schwarzenegger emphasized how crucial it is to keep the clean energy engine running, and to finally stop fossil fuels: "This is a climate emergency. It is a pollution emergency. I agree with you. This IS an emergency." As it is about combating pollution – Schwarzenegger welcomed **Rosamund Adoo Kissi-Debrah** in the audience who had

tragically lost her 9-year-old daughter Ella to pollution nearly 10 years ago. Ella became the first person whose official cause of death on the death certificate was pollution. Schwarzenegger called on everyone to start to tell the truth: "[...] we grownups can't stop burning fossil fuels and get off our addiction. With the horrific consequence, that more people die off pollution than malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, terrorism, drugs, alcohol, or war." Schwarzenegger continued to speak about funding the Ukrainian war with our antiquated energy policies. "No matter how you look at it, we have blood on our hands, because we are financing the war." Schwarzenegger called to terminate fossil fuels as we have a moral obligation to use clean technology and concluded with the hopeful message that we can make the impossible possible.

4. Panel Sessions

Crises, Conflicts and Climate Change – Climate Action in the Past, Present and Future

The first panel session was hosted by **Hannelore Veit**, an experienced journalist and former ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) anchorwoman. After a [short film](#) summarizing the last 30 years of climate diplomacy and the meagre outcomes of most COPs, Veit welcomed the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) **Michael S. Regan** and Executive Vice-President of the European Commission **Frans Timmermans** on stage. Arnold Schwarzenegger also joined this high-level panel discussion virtually (see [here](#) the whole panel session).

Schwarzenegger started the discussion by asking EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan to share his personal story of becoming the "Pollution Terminator" of the US. The Administrator then continued talking about the US engagement of fighting the climate crisis and pollution, at home and on the global stage. The entire US government of President Joe Biden would be aligned in the fight against the climate crisis, spearheaded

by the EPA. "The President has a vision, but more than just a vision - he has a blueprint and EPA is taking action", Regan stated.



The former Governor then asked Executive Vice-President Timmermans to explain the European perspective on current climate policies in light of the war in Ukraine. Timmermans referred to the past approach towards Russia as "greedy". According to him now the war is increasing the sense of urgency to get out of fossil fuels – speeding up green transition in Europe and therefore fighting for

European values is key. Climate neutrality by 2050 is a legal obligation for all EU countries, a concrete plan is in place. Timmermans emphasized the responsibility of the current generation to prevent future wars over water and food.

The panelists then looked back at the Earth Summit in 1992, as the date of this year's AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT coincided with the 30th anniversary of the historic conference in Rio. They did so by listening to **Severn Cullis-Suzuki**, the girl who silenced the world for 5 minutes back then with her speech as a twelve-year-old girl. While acknowledging the positive outcomes of Rio but stating that climate change has not been stopped Cullis-Suzuki critically questioned the role of corporations in today's society and economy. To her the issue of climate change has become such a polarized topic, and corporate power has prevented real change on a political level. Cullis-Suzuki compared the reaction and response of world leaders to the Corona pandemic to what would be needed in the face of the climate emergency.

"Young people are holding us accountable", Administrator Regan reminded the audience while being very optimistic about the young generation and their approach to sustainability and green matters. According to the Executive Vice-President Timmermans solidarity with the young generation is needed as well. And businesses would need to realize that they are in the midst of an Industrial Revolution, reminding them to invest in the future. Fair re-distribution is another key element of the current age that are much needed, according to Executive Vice-President Timmermans.

This brings in a core pillar of President Biden's agenda and at the EPA: Environmental justice is a moral obligation, or as Administrator Regan said, "Everyone deserves clean air, clean water and to be safe from environmental hazard and harm."

Whilst, as host Hannelore Veit pointed out, political leaders in the US still seem to haggle over the approach to the climate crises, Administrator Regan responded that the political

rhetoric do not match the actions on the ground. There, it would not be the matter if we move forward but rather how quickly – this would also be the viewpoint of business leaders and representatives.

Bipartisanship is another key element to fight pollution and the climate crisis, as Administrator Regan and Arnold Schwarzenegger pointed out. Educating the broader public about the climate emergency is crucial according to Schwarzenegger, as they are part of the solution. Once more the former Governor emphasized that to talk about pollution rather than climate change - this makes the issues more relatable to everyone.

In his last statement Executive Vice-President of the EU Commission Timmermans explained the EU approach to climate neutrality by 2050 by allowing transitioning energies such as nuclear power. Whilst some EU countries disagree with using nuclear power as a bridging technology Timmermans argued that other countries would need nuclear in the energy mix.

Administrator Regan in his last statement was optimistic with regards to transitioning towards climate neutrality, with even exceeding the goals put in place.

Building Bridges, Building Hope

Every month the world is building the equivalent of New York City – this needs to be done in a greener way. Without involving the industry sector, CO₂ emissions will not decrease. The panel “Building Bridges, Building Hope” aimed to include various perspectives on this matter (see whole panel session [here](#)). The session started with a [short clip](#) explaining the building sector, cement production, its environmental impact as well solutions to decrease CO₂ emissions.



As industrial production heavily relies on energy supply and in many cases still on fossil fuel energy, **Leonore Gewessler**, Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology in Austria, explained the current situation for the Austrian industry sector in light of the war in Ukraine. Fossil fuel energy supply is still a huge issue in the industry sector. According to Gewessler, the Austrian government is working on legislation and funding to move away from fossil fuels in all sectors more quickly. The willingness is there, also in business but also in the general public.

Jan Jenisch, CEO of Holcim, a global leader in building solutions and market leader in global cement production, believes that the war in Ukraine will accelerate sustainability and decarbonisation, also within his company group. Holcim has committed to net-zero by 2050 and therefore implements decarbonization strategies globally in their production areas.

Zero-energy buildings are also an important tool to reach climate neutrality as **Klemens Hallmann**, CEO of Hallmann Holding, explained. Giving hands-on examples, Hallmann stated that the existing building stock bears several issues, such as changing current gas heating systems. The construction of new, sustainable buildings is not the major challenge. Decentralized heating systems might be another solution, as well as bringing green back into the city (removing of sealed areas).

After being asked for her opinion on the discussed issues, **Luisa Neubauer**, a climate activist from Fridays for Future in Germany, stated that it is not up to her to decide if any developments presented are worthwhile enough, as global warming is an emergency that would affect all of us. She criticized the set-back to fossil fuels due to the war in Ukraine, and the way the climate crisis is perceived as time to act is running out. According to Neubauer, we could not stick to business as usual. "A climate-just world and cities are possible as the solutions are out there. Hope without action is betrayal to the most vulnerable", Neubauer ended her contribution to the panel discussion.

Minister Gewessler responded by briefly sharing updates on a legislative proposal to accelerate green energy adoption. She pointed out that besides a technological transformation there will be a social and institutional transformation in our society which asks for involvement of all stakeholders along this change. Everyone will need to encompass a strong sense of responsibility for the challenges ahead.

Speaking of concrete examples, Klemens Hallmann named the use of hydrogen and saltwater batteries, to make buildings energy self-sufficient and provide energy security. He also pointed out that working together is vital for this energy transition.

Jan Jenisch outlined Holcim's decarbonization roadmap for the next years, but also their focus on recycling, pointing out that they are already the second biggest recycling company in the world, also using alternative raw materials in their production. In general, he is optimistic about Holcim's own climate protectors within in the company that drive its sustainability agenda.

Adding a critical perspective, Neubauer advocated for a different business model, in a sense of de-growth and climate justice. She pointed out that it is not up to Fridays for Future to take responsibility for everything governments have failed to do. She argued that the majority was in favor of the Paris agreement (1.5 °C) so therefore there is no option to change and transformation away from exploitation and injustice. People would see the beauty in the fact that human beings have more rights in a city than cars. "Can we

be inherently good as people?", Neubauer asks, and she believes we can – with climate justice and fair transitions. Minister Gewessler once more reminded us that change always brings up fear; courage and hope therefore would be needed to face this fear of change. But enough people are fighting for climate protection which gives everybody courage and more and more will follow, according to the Austrian minister.

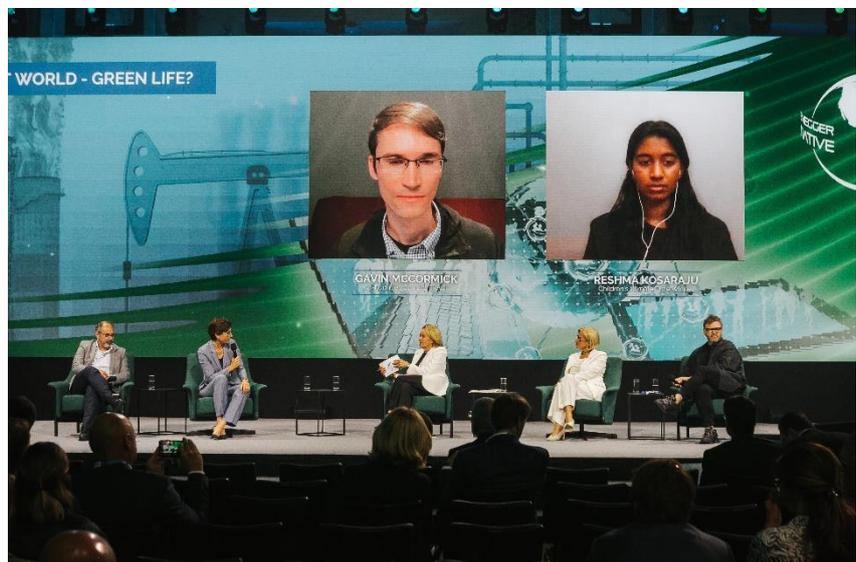
Take aways of the panel session

The war in Ukraine has shifted perspectives and approaches and it remains to be seen if it accelerates or slows down the transition towards renewable energies. The industry sector itself plays a major role in reducing emissions worldwide. The transition towards more sustainable energy sources and a climate-friendlier production must be supported and implemented on a political level. Such a transition requires change on all levels.

Smart World, Green Life? – Let's get digital!

Digitalization of our daily lives: Is this a curse or a blessing – or both? Digitalization and climate change are currently the two biggest transformative trends in society. Hannelore Veit discussed with her panelists how they are interlinked and how digitalization could help tackle the climate crisis (see whole panel session [here](#)). The panel session started with a [short film](#) about smart farming in relation to climate action.

Johanna Mikl-Leitner, Governor of Lower Austria, in reference to the film shown in the beginning of the session, emphasized that farmers are working with nature rather than against it by using digital tools. According to the governor the film shows how important it would be to invest in research and technology in order to move agricultural



practices even closer towards climate protection. The House of Digitalization, a digital project in Lower Austria, wants to be part of the solution - by building a digital network and cross-industry platform for economy and for research. An actual building, the "real" House of Digitalization, will be inaugurated in 2023 in Tulln. The heart piece of the House will be a showroom displaying joint projects of science and business in order to show how digitalization can make our lives more liveable and that solutions are out there to combat climate change. Mikl-Leitner explained that the city of Tulln will be transformed into a smart city and gave some concrete examples from digital projects in Tulln.

Board Member of the BMW Group **Ilka Horstmeier** shared that as a student she participated in the Earth Summit in Rio – and 30 years later now she is happy to be able to be in the position to drive the transformation at BMW: “BMW goes digital, electric and circular.” Horstmeier explained that BMW is rethinking the whole supply chain including renewable energies for producing the components and circularity. BMW can only manage this with partners along the supply chain, and with IT: The company co-initiated the Catena X project with the aim of a fully transparent, data-based value chain starting from the cobalt mine up to the recycling. This is crucial as 70 % of the whole value chain is created at supplier level. A high level of transparency would allow for optimising the supply chain and the CO₂ footprint thereof, and also meeting BMW’s own transparency standards with regards to achieving their own targets: “Digitalization is one of the greatest enablers driving that transformation towards sustainability”, Horstmeier stated.

According to climate scientist **Keywan Riahi** digitalization can help across the board with combating climate change. The most striking need for digitalization is on the demand side: “How can we maintain high well-being while decoupling that from high material and energy use?” The demand system would need to fundamentally change towards a sharing system and approach – which is only possible through digitalization, i.e. smart appliances and services. In future mobility digital tools would provide you with the best and fastest option to get from A to B which is according to Riahi usually not your own car. The climate scientist drew a picture of far less cars on the streets with greener and more spacious cities with better mobility opportunities. Horstmeier agreed with Riahi’s analysis and added that different transport options should not compete against but complement each other.

Gavin McCormick, the Co-Founder of Climate TRACE, explained how his organisation uses AI (Artificial Intelligence) and big data to combat climate change. Climate TRACE applies AI to a huge set of satellite imagery to build a global tracking system to determine where emissions are exactly coming from. The network at Climate TRACE connects data from various sources and is therefore able to identify and visualize greenhouse gas emissions stemming from for instance, power plants, ships and planes. As a large-scale science project McCormick and his partners hope that it will be easier to implement concrete actions and reduce emissions when knowing where they are actually coming from.

Entrepreneur and Philanthropist **Steven Schuurman** who comes from the tech world shared why he is actively involved in climate action. According to him, the climate crisis must be considered a humanitarian crisis. He founded a think-and-do tank called *The International Center for Future Generations (ICFG)* which helps policy makers to access information for better decision-making. The Center also supports youth movements all around the world to give them a voice.

High-school student **Reshma Kosaraju** who designed a machine-learning based model to predict forest fires (AI against forest fires) joined the panel virtually from California, USA. Forest fires form a feedback loop (in a sense of a downward spiral) with other climate change related processes which makes it harder and harder for firefighters to

combat and control the fires. According to Reshma the main problem with current solutions is that they are detection-based, so forest fires have already occurred. Furthermore, current technology used is also very expensive and can be impacted by weather conditions such as fog or heavy rain. Additionally, the timely response is impacted as there is a gap between the time of detection and time of response. The high school student aims to create a predictive method to give firefighters a tool to respond better to occurring forest fires. She uses meteorological data such as temperature, relative humidity, wind speed or moisture content of the soil to feed them into the AI model, therefore being able to predict the chance of forest fires occurring.

In his intervention, **Rémi Vrignaud**, the CEO of Allianz Austria, stated that as an insurance company in the light of this transformative process they would be investing in new technologies and assets, in e-mobility and digitalization. With digitalization and automation processes within their own company they managed to save a massive amount of resources, such as heavily reducing the use of white paper.



Going back to Reshma Kosaraju Hannelore Veit asked the high school student what her next steps would be. Kosaraju shared her plans to develop a web/app-based version of her model and go global with her model, by using global data to predict forest fires in other regions of the world. However, it had been difficult to find appropriate data. Gavin McCormick of Climate TRACE agreed to share data with Kosaraju to support her with her plans. As Hannelore Veit then pointed out, the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT aims to be a platform to connect people, as shown with this example.

Having heard about the chances of using digitalization to combat the climate crisis, Keywan Riahi pointed out that digitalization could also be the source of energy-intensive processes such as digital currencies or the increased use of entertainment and communication appliances. Data itself is a very valuable resource – an approach to share data anonymously and effectively and determining who the owner of this data will be is needed, according to climate scientist Riahi. Corporations that currently collect data would need to share data as data is a public good. With democratizing this process we would be able to work against the risks of digitalization such as increasing consumption or manipulating behaviour.

Steven Schuurman once more pointed out that a vast amount of data is available which must be analysed to find solutions, also hidden solutions that we are currently not aware of, for instance for detecting geothermal energy opportunities requires a massive amount of data to know where to drill, how to drill and how to extract.

In her last statement Ilka Horstmeier shared the circular vision of BMW represented by the concept car BMW *i Vision Circular* which is made of 100 % recycled materials and is also 100 % recyclable. Horstmeier pointed out that the tasks for leaders in these transformative times must be to deal with multiple crises, and conflicting priorities. It is also about inspiring people to work jointly on tackling these crises, and simultaneously building trust.



Gavin McCormick specified how smart and more effective solutions are possible, if the appropriate data is available: A wind farm in Poland would reduce twice as much emissions as the exact wind farm in Sweden, as it would be replacing fossil fuelled plants rather than adding to the mix of already existing renewable energy production. Having precise data available right away for governments, companies, NGOs and policy makers on what happens would open up ways for new technologies.

True to the spirit of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT to connect people and actions Johanna Mikl-Leitner invited several participants to present their activities at the House of Digitalization, for instance joint projects with BMW at Tulln when it comes to sustainable mobility.

Take aways of the panel session

Digitalization – in a sense of acquiring precise and robust data and using that data for smart decision making – is already used for combatting the climate crisis and its detrimental effects; and scaling that up would support that further. A sharing economy in today's world is only possible through digital tools. There is huge potential for using data, artificial intelligence and smart solutions to make our world more sustainable. The risks involved such as intense energy use or misuse of data must not be ignored.

Don't Look Up – Climate Communication

After the lunch break the band **Russkaja** started the first afternoon session "[Don't Look Up – Climate Communication](#)" with a powerful song and a short interview led by Matt Iseman (see chapter *Additional sessions and assets*).

After this energetic start we once more looked back at the past, with Arnold Schwarzenegger talking to former Secretary of State **James Baker** about his take on Russia and the war in Ukraine.

Iseman then welcomed the chairman of the Forest Green Rovers (FGR), **Dale Vince**, on stage to learn more about his very own story of climate action and the green activities of the FGR.

Vince shared that he has cared for sustainability and the environment since he was a child. After living off the grid and out of society, he came back in the early 90ies to build a big windmill because he already knew back then that climate change was an issue. He identified energy production as the biggest problem.

Rather than choosing an altruistic approach Vince set up Ecotricity in 1995, the world's first green energy company, with a business perspective as going green would be a strong business case.



According to Vince, despite existing problems business has a lot to offer as model: he took the best parts of it, the efficiency and the focus and dropped the bad parts of it (i.e. the sole focus on the bottom line at the expense of everything else) – it is therefore a mission-led business, not paying out shareholders but rather investing it back in the work they do. "It is the kind of business that can help unwind the climate

crisis."

When it comes to talking to people about the climate Vince argued that it is not about giving up the things we like but rather doing them differently. Vince also shared how he started to produce diamonds made out of CO₂.

The chairman of the FGR then revealed the right answers to the Mentimeter quiz (the Engagement Platform Mentimeter was used to add interactivity to the event using live questions, quizzes and polls on different topic):



The FGR is indeed a vegan football club, all the meals offered at the venues are plant-based. The second question posed was correct as well; the wooden stadium will have the lowest carbon footprint stadium globally. Referring to the third question, Vince gave the correct answer stating that the entire club is to 100 % powered by green energy. The FGR are achievers off and on the pitch, with succeeding the second promotion within the last 5 years and now playing in the 3rd league of English football.

Vince then shared his recommendations on how to convince people to go green: being genuine (“walk the talk”) and keeping it simple.

Iseman then introduced **The Juice Media** that creates and produces the Honest Government Ads. One climate related Honest Government Ad was shown during this session for better understanding: [Juice Media's Honest Government Ad Net Zero by 2050 clip](#)



The creator and founder of The Juice Media, **Giordano Nanni**, then joined virtually from Melbourne/Australia. They/He started with the Honest Government Ads due to their frustration and anger over the former government of Australia that in their opinion had denied and delayed climate action and was controlled by fossil fuel interests. Impersonating the government in an honest way was the means for The

Juice Media. “There is a craving for honesty”, as Nanni put it. It was the aim to educate people on climate topics, to increase public literacy in a fun and humoristic way. Humour could also take away fear which is empowering given the situation and the related feelings such as climate anxiety. Nanni shared that The Juice Media's work was also applauded by climate scientists based in Australia. It also helped to debunk misinformation. Nanni and The Juice Media will continue to demand more ambitious climate policies in Australia. They were also asked to expand their activities to other countries, such as Brasil, Canada and the UK.

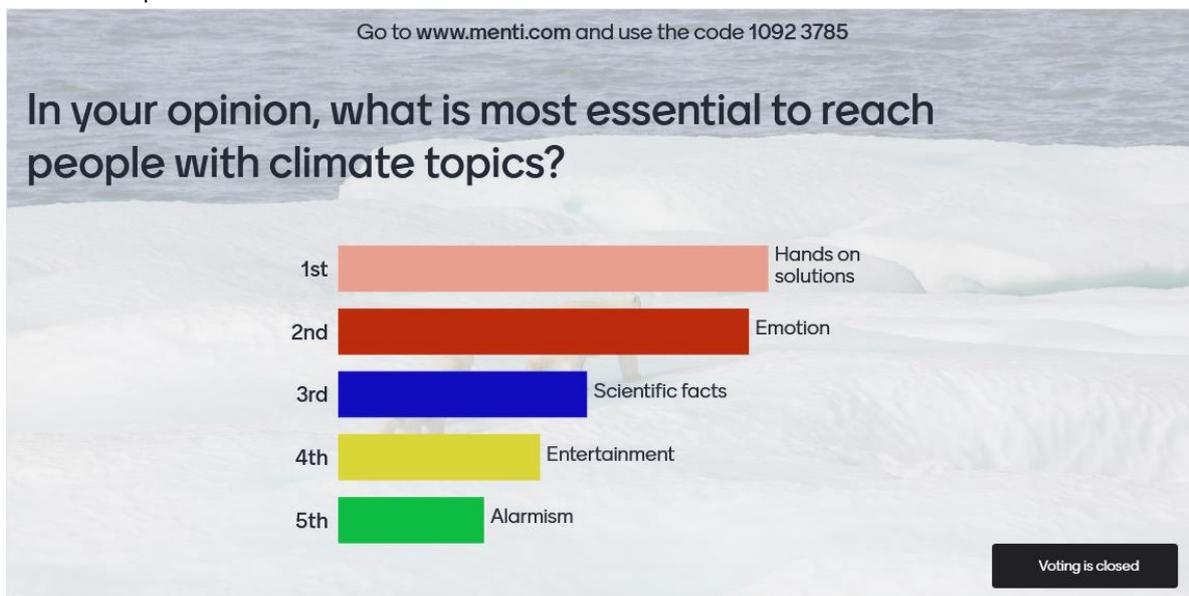
A further tool for direct communication of climate topics are climate councils. There have been several climate councils in Europe, like in France, Finland, Scotland, Germany, or Ireland. And also in Austria: At the beginning of June this climate council made up of one hundred Austrians had their last meeting talking about concrete climate action and recommendations for the government. **Maria Prem** was a participant at the Austrian climate council and shared with Matt Iseman and the audience how much knowledge about climate related topics she has acquired thanks to the climate council. As she and her colleagues became more knowledgeable, they felt more competent and knew what recommendations they wanted to give. These recommendations were sent to the government and Prem shared her hope that they will be implemented.



The participants of the climate council decided to found an association to continue working together.

Take aways of the panel session

There are many ways to talk about the climate crisis and pollution: Presenting better, more climate-friendly solutions, humour and engaging the public on climate action are only a few options to increase public literacy on climate topics. According to the Mentimeter poll hands-on solutions and emotion are most essential to reach people with climate topics.



Whatever approach and tool, bringing awareness to climate action and a message of hope is urgently needed to fight the climate crisis.

Healthy Planet, Healthy People

You are what you eat – healthy food and diet for the people and the planet. Agricultural production is strongly affected by and a major contributor to climate change. Today, agriculture and forestry activities account for around a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock production, deforestation and crop burning are among the main drivers (see here [short clip](#) shown at beginning of the panel session). At the same time industrial agriculture does not guarantee food security, fair pricing or access to (healthy) food.

Barbara Meier hosted this afternoon session (see [here](#) the whole session) and started by asking **Clare Hill**, who is the Regenerative Agriculture Director at FAI Farms, how her work contributes to improving agricultural practices. Hill first defined regenerative agriculture as a food production system that puts more back than it takes out: "We are not sustaining, we need to start regenerating", it would be about understanding how an ecosystem works and mimic nature in the best way to produce food sustainably. Hill specifically works in animal agriculture, with ruminants (cattle).

Meier asked **Jürgen Czernohorszky**, Executive City Councillor for Climate, City of Vienna how we can convince people to buy more responsibly and more climate friendly despite of the multiple crises we are facing and how a city like Vienna can be part of the solution. For the councillor it is not a matter of convincing people but rather enabling them to buy responsibly – it is a matter of social justice. Their day-to-day life will need to be climate friendly. 14 % of Vienna city surface is farmland, and Czernohorszky will try to boost farming in Vienna; there are subsidies for organic farming – combining affordability with organic production is his goal. The politician explained that they would not merely talk to people but with people in regard to climate topics.

In between questions host Barbara Meier asked the audience the following Mentimeter question:



The correct answer of 500 000 tons of food wasted in Austrian households is an extremely high number. According to city councillor Czernohorszky the City of Vienna is aware of the food waste issue, and - having in mind the social and climate aspects – is working on tackling the problem.

As seen in the short film in the beginning of the session, food is not only wasted in households but also during production. **Maria Lettini**, Executive Director at FAIRR explained what big food producing companies should do against climate change. FAIRR is an institutional investor network that works on raising awareness of the environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities brought about by intensive livestock production and food production. Institutional investors have the opportunity for companies to gain or deny access to capital – this would be particularly relevant as today's food production accounts for 30 % of total greenhouse gas emissions and would be responsible for climate-related issues such as deforestation or intense water use, as Lettini specifies. Lettini also broached the issue of health-related problems for people living around intensive livestock production facilities. From a financial point of view, food-

producing companies may need to mitigate to climate-related risks and adapt to future developments in that regard. The food system is not only a big contributor to the climate crisis, but Lettini sees it as part of the solution as well.

Stefan Frank, a climate scientist, explained that efficiency in food production has increased, but also emissions – and projected that they would continue to rise. It is of utmost need to cut emissions today to be in line with the 1.5 °C target, the scientist emphasized. Practices and technologies to do so would be available today, for instance measures against land use change – these practices and technologies must however be deployed on a large scale. Restoring carbon sinks (e.g. through agroforestry or silvo-pastoral systems) would be another measure to reduce emissions – Frank sees a win-win situation to reduce carbon and increase food security. Besides food waste, the scientist mentioned reducing animal-protein intake by replacing it with plant-based sources; in overconsuming countries this would be huge lever to reduce food-related emissions.



Bearing in mind the multiple crises we are currently facing Lettini called for a collaborative approach to ensure food security – including not only developed but especially developing countries. According to Lettini policy makers must take measure in food production to reach the 1.5 °C target, include farmers and support their transition away from a purely yield-focused approach, and implement innovations such as precision or regenerative farming. Consumers would understand the connection between their food choices and the climate, and Lettini argued for incentivizing more-climate friendly choices.

Hill criticized the way how we farm animals (cows) today – she sees her work as relevant to show a more circular farming system, with improved social well-being for farmers as well. A different way of thinking, a different paradigm is needed for future food production. Mimicking and working with rather than fighting nature is such a paradigm shift.

With regard to food security, Frank explained how climate change affects food security: firstly through the negative direct impacts such as droughts, but secondly also through climate change mitigation policies that might be negatively impacting food security (e.g. biofuel production which is considered positive from a climate point of view but affects food prices). Implementing sustainable solutions in agriculture across several aspects such as enhancing biodiversity and combating climate change would ensure adoption on a larger scale.

The City of Vienna decided to become climate neutral by 2040, a huge challenge in every sector as Czernohorszky pointed out, and a transformative process for the whole city. A good, sustainable life for everyone is the center piece of the "Klimafahrplan" (translated to climate guide/roadmap). The city councilor is fully convinced that cities, so urban areas, are majorly relevant for tackling climate change.

In the final round, the panellists shared their recommendations on what each and everyone can do in terms of climate-friendly food production: Lettini encouraged people to reduce their intake of animal protein (Meatless Monday) as it would have a significant impact on the environment. Czernohorszky added that he strongly suggested that people choose a dish with regionally produced veg for their next meal. Hill recommended to watch "Kiss The Ground" as it is a great movie about regenerative agriculture. Frank stated that incremental change is needed – not only thinking about your dietary choices, but your holiday destinations and transport options from a climate point of view.

Take aways of the panel session

The way our food is currently produced has major negative impacts on our planet and the climate. There are however solutions out there such as different ways of farming that work with nature rather than against it and changes in diets e.g., lowering animal protein intake. Today's food production needs a major shift to meet the 1.5 °C target; a shift that includes all stakeholders such as farmers and consumers. Especially in light of climate change food security is a major issue that will become even more relevant and serious in future.

Creating Hope – Inspiring Action

The last session of the 6th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT pointed the spotlight to active climate leaders, to entrepreneurs, innovators and NGO activists that inspire us with their passion, engagement and optimism as they work to create a cleaner, greener world. Matt Iseman and Barbara Meier welcomed many interesting personalities.

Matt Iseman talked to 15-year-old **Vinisha Umashankar** from Tiruvannamalai, South India. In her home country charcoal powered street irons are widely used for ironing clothes. A few years ago, Vinisha started to question this tradition, considering its environmental and negative health impact. To date, she has a patent and a prototype for a solar powered ironing cart. Vinisha Umashankar wants to save 15 million kilograms of charcoal being burned every day in India. Spoken as a true innovator, the 15-



year-old wants to bring her prototype to the market: "The true potential of innovation can only be revealed if it reaches the market". Besides focusing on her education, Vinisha Umashankar wants to further develop the solar ironing cart, to make it more affordable for the vendors.



Toni Piëch, the founder of the Toni Piëch Foundation, was up next to talk about his very own approach to fight the climate crisis. Joining virtually, he shared with Barbara Meier and the audience that he feels he has the responsibility to act for a better future given the unfair amount of resources and opportunities he has received in the past. His foundation focuses on climate, renewables, future of cities, clean construction materials and communications, emphasizing on early-stage projects.

Matt Iseman then talked to **Lorna Rutto** about her company EcoPost; Rutto joined virtually from Kenya. Lorna Rutto's vision is an Africa free from poverty. With her company EcoPost she is on a mission to create sustainable jobs for people in marginalized communities and conserve the environment. EcoPost converts post-consumer plastic waste using extrusion technology into environmentally friendly plastic lumber and pellets. The lumber is used in applications such as fencing, signage, outdoor furniture and building materials. The pellets are sold to plastic manufacturers supply chain to be used for other consumer plastic items thus closing the circular economy loop. EcoPost has so far created over 100 direct and over 12 000 indirect jobs and recycled 13 million kg of plastic waste. By taking waste and converting it into alternative products to timber the company has saved 4 500 acres of forest and prevented 160 million kg of CO₂ emissions from the environment further mitigating climate change.



Lorna Rutto pointed out the importance of platforms such as the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, as it would often be difficult for African businesses to connect and network to acquire capital to expand and scale up businesses.



The co-founder and CEO of Normative **Kristian Rönn** was up next on stage to share in detail how his company helps with climate action. According to Rönn, he combines the scary topic of climate change with the boring topic of accounting. "Accounting can change the world", he stated. Normative would help companies to calculate and account for their full carbon footprint, including the whole value chain. Rönn sees good intentions in companies but these are combined with bad mathematics – which he calls "unintentional greenwashing". He reminded us that 90 % of company emissions stem from the value chain therefore there would be demand and need for accurate and correct measuring and sensible corporate climate action: "Because if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it." Rönn stated that most companies commit to net zero and therefore increasingly listen to Normative's suggestions and proposed actions. Normative provides small companies their software for free; for large enterprises Rönn sees their responsibility in financing the transition towards greener production (especially for smaller companies in the Global South) given the large footprint in their value chain.

Evelyn Acham is a climate activist from Uganda. She shared how much the African continent is already negatively impacted by climate change, for instance by the drought in the Eastern part or severe floodings in the Southern areas of the continent. Many communities in the Global South are affected by climate change. Acham called for immediate action, advocating for climate justice for a liveable and sustainable future. In Uganda, the activist implements her +Tree projects with the target to plant 9 million fruit trees.



Acham was accompanied by several other activists from the Ugandan Rise Up Movement. At the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT they displayed their projects at a stall and had the opportunity to raise awareness for their causes. The activists are working on the installation of eco-friendly cooking stoves in schools, empowering young women and girls in the climate crisis. Acham shared that young people speaking up gives her hope for a better future which is not only necessary but also possible. Acham and people from the Global South will continue to demand climate action, by for instance phasing out fossil fuel, and climate finance as it was promised to them by rich countries. Acham called out to the audience to support Rise up activists and to get them to COP 27 in Egypt in autumn 2022.





Jaruwan Khammuang, the founder of Fang Thai Company, joined virtually from Thailand. She started Fang Thai, a sustainable packaging company, to help her village. Her family, like most of the other residents, are rice farmers; and they would face several challenges. The income generated from harvesting rice is not sufficient and the burning of rice straw contributes to climate change and health problems.

Khammuang and her husband had the idea that rice straw could contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the paper industry and at the same time give the residents of their village full employment all year round. Khammuang then participated at UNIDO's Global Cleantech Innovation Programme which helped her set up her business and encouraged her to scale up the business for greater impact in their community and beyond. In the future Khammuang would like to see all crop residues converted to paper pulp, to help decreasing the environmental impact. She also shared that she would be looking for financial partners to scale up her business. As Khammuang put it, her products are net zero waste products that can solve environmental issues and improve the quality of life and economic situation of farmers.

Matt Iseman then welcomed **Birgit van Duyvenbode**, the founder and CEO of the Austrian start-up REEDuce noise protection technologies. As van Duyvenbode points out, noise is a severe type of pollution. High noise levels cause stress and illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases. The current way of mitigating noise would be to build walls using non-sustainable materials. Van Duyvenbode and her team developed the first ecological noise barrier technology with reed as the foundation. With that natural material which is locally harvested in Austria as a basis CO₂ could be stored on every square metre. REEDuce products are circular, so it would not cause any hazardous waste at the end of its use time. The clay in the REEDuce walls helps to clean the air, and furthermore the product itself serves as an insect hotel (i.e. a manmade structure created to provide shelter for insects). REEDuce noise protection technologies will be available on the market in 2023.



Andreas Diesenreiter actively works on reducing food waste with the Austrian company Unverschwendet, which he co-founded. They use surplus food that does not fit market standards. These can be fruits and veg that are either too big, too small or too crooked. As Diesenreiter specified at the moment too much is being produced, and overproduction is cheaper than disrupting the supply chain. The goal of Unverschwendet



is to save all the surplus food from getting wasted by producing spreads, jam, chutney etc. Their goal is scale up and to collaborate with hospitality businesses. As food waste occurs on every step of the supply chain (at the farms, packaging, processing and household level, to name a few) Unverschwendet aims to tackle that problem at every stage. Diesenreiter shared that in the past years they had been offered way more surplus

food than they could have had processed at Unverschwendet: As food waste is enormous, Diesenreiter wants their company to grow as fast as possible to save as many fruits and vegetables as possible.

5. Additional sessions and assets

Russkaja

Since 2005, Russkaja have been touring through Europe and guaranteeing turbo party power at festivals and in clubs all over world – and in 2022 also at the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT. The audience at the Hofburg and in front of the screen enjoyed listening to three Russkaja songs during the afternoon sessions. After the first song *Hometown Polka* frontman Georgij Makazaria expressed his



sympathies with the Ukrainian people and condemned the war against Ukraine. He pointed out that contrary to some musicians in Russia who have to leave the country if they voice their opinions, Russkaja would have the possibility to protest against the war. He shared the hope that humanity will find a way to live peacefully. Bassist Dmytro who was born in Ukraine and whose wife comes from Russia expressed his sorrows about the war, as he knows people on both sides. He shared his feelings for everyone who must endure this horrible situation. He will try to focus on those few people he is able to help.

“Russkaja stands for love, unity and humanity. It keeps representing peace and says STOP THE WAR in Ukraine!” – Georgij Makazaria

Interactive tools

As previously mentioned, the online tool Mentimeter was chosen to interact in a light-hearted way with the audience. More than 160 people participated live, sharing their opinions and guessing the correct answers to the questions that were posed. More than 500 people from more than 70 countries registered at an online tool called B2Match, which allowed them to chat with the other participants or hold bilateral individual or group meetings. Throughout the whole day, there were also moderated discussions via the chat.

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