

AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT 2023

WE HAVE THE POWER



Summary

On May 16th, 2023, the 7th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT took place at the Hofburg in Vienna – with the energetic theme: "We Have the Power" (watch [highlights video](#)). As with the last summits, the 2023 conference was once again set up as a hybrid event, allowing people from all across the globe to join virtually. This year, around 700 guests were live at the Hofburg.

Arnold Schwarzenegger welcomed climate action leaders from all around the world. In his keynote speech, he called for new environmentalism. The founder of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT also joined the panel discussion, Climate Change & Security, discussing the close linkage of these two issues.

The other panel sessions focused on various topics, including solutions for the circular economy, measures to achieve climate targets, and possibilities for sustainable living in cities. More than 25 speakers from more than 15 countries shared insights into their environmental contributions and prospective projects.

The afternoon continued with an enthusiastic performance by Kalush Orchestra, the winners of the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest. The following session was dominated by innovative ideas and young entrepreneurs eager to contribute to a sustainable future.

This year, the 'Expo of Climate Action' at the Seitengalerie included booths from Hallmann Holding, Holcim, Klimaaktiv, and the Climate Fund for the City of Vienna & Lower Austria. Die Pflanzerei offered samples of plant-based *Leberkäse*, and Salzgeber IT Revolutions presented IT solutions for climate action.

A special highlight was the Networking Islands in the afternoon. At five dedicated spots in the Seitengalerie, the AWS audience had the opportunity to talk and discuss with representatives of AWS partners and speakers.

www.schwarzeneggerclimateinitiative.com

www.austrianworldsummit.com

www.climateactionstories.com

#ClimateAction

AWS 2023 – AT A GLANCE

NUMBERS

5 h livestream

2 short films

More than 25 speakers

Live music

Participants from more than **70 nations** registered

700 guests at the Hofburg Vienna

300 guests via our Networking tool B2Match

950 media reports worldwide

Potential **reach of around 2.5 billion people**

Advertising value around **EUR 23,5 Mio.**

TOPICS

Climate Change & Security

We Have the Power to Reach Our Climate Targets

I'll Be Back – Going Circular

We Have the Power to Build Green Cities

Matchmaking – We Have the Power to Connect

1. Introduction

The world faces multiple crises, after the COVID 19 pandemic, a war in Europe has resulted in thousands of dead civilians, millions of refugees, and surging fuel and food



prices around the world. The insecure geopolitical situation affects the lives of everyone on different levels: the supply of energy is threatened, and inflation is roaring. The climate crisis seems to fall behind even though climate change showed its devastating effects in many regions in the past years. Many people are overwhelmed. The 7th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT wanted to let the world

know that we, in fact, have the power to solve these challenges and can change the way we live. For the betterment of the future.

In his [keynote speech](#) Arnold Schwarzenegger called for a new environmentalism. He emphasized that there are thousands of clean energy projects waiting to be implemented throughout the United States and Europe. However, bureaucracy and a lack of permits hinder their realization. Schwarzenegger believes that swift and seamless implementation is crucial for build a clean and abundant energy future.

2. Focus Topics at AWS Sessions

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY

Climate change has long been underacknowledged as a security threat, which is also why the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative decided to focus on this topic at the 7th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT ([full panel session](#)). The panel speakers of this session were the founder of this conference, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and former Dutch Chief of Defence, Tim Middendorp. Pekka Haavisto, Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Wladimir Klitschko, Founder of #WeAreAllUkrainians, joined virtually from, respectively, Helsinki and Kyiv.



Climate change is a threat multiplier, it exacerbates existing risks to security. Security experts and international organisations have nowadays recognized this fact:

- European Parliament (2022)
In short, climate change as a risk to global security is here to stay.
- US National Intelligence Council (2021)
(...) there is a growing risk of conflict over water and migration, particularly after 2030 (...)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2022)
Climate change threatens human rights. It increases hunger, poverty, inequality & makes people vulnerable.

The threat not only comes from climate change itself, but also from the interactions with the existing security sector. Therefore, climate change presents both direct and indirect threats to human, national, and international security.

There are direct threats: Climate change directly impacts national security through its effect on the critical infrastructure that supports a nation's security. This includes extreme



weather events that can destroy essential energy, financial, and agricultural systems and operations that are vital for a nation's economic viability. Additionally, sea-level rise is a direct impact of climate change and poses an existential threat to some small island states, such as those in the Pacific region.

In terms of indirect threats, climate change can also threaten security by increasing stresses and pressure on critical resources, including water, food and energy. These resources are regarded as vital for national security as they are crucial for national stability and governance. Any issues in terms of water, food, and energy supply and

availability can destroy livelihoods, and contribute to a broad range of destabilizing trends, including internal population displacements and migrations, and political unrest ([source](#)). Some observers assume that by 2100 there will be up to one billion desperate climate change migrants who have no livelihood in their original homeland. These pressures can contribute to state fragility, internal conflict, and potentially state collapse. According to a 2015 study, a severe drought, worsened by a warming climate, drove Syrian farmers to abandon their crops and flock to cities. That helped trigger a civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people. This research provides a first deep look at how global warming may have already influenced armed conflict ([source](#)). Climate change can also indirectly change or disrupt existing international security dynamics in geostrategic environments, such as the Arctic and the South China Sea.

Another angle to look at the interlinkage of climate change and security is from a pollution point of view, as armed conflicts also have detrimental environmental impacts, for instance, contaminated water and destroyed soil.

Apart from direct and indirect threats and impacts, defence forces are huge CO₂ emitters, contributing to a substantial share of government emissions. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Defence Sector accounts for 50% of the UK Central Government's emissions ([source](#)). Not only in the UK the defence sector works on reducing their CO₂ emissions but also in other countries such as the US ([source](#)).

With highlighting these different perspectives on climate change and security, the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT aimed to make this interlinkage more acknowledged and known to the public.

WE HAVE THE POWER TO REACH OUR CLIMATE TARGETS

Security experts, climate scientists, and NGOs around the world urge for quick actions as the world is not on track to meet the agreed climate goals ([source](#)). To reach the agreed



climate goals, implementation of climate projects need to speed up, to reduce greenhouse gases pollution. In only one year, Europe managed to become less dependent of Russian gas in a tremendously short amount of time ([source](#)). The way forward is clear – towards renewable

energies. The same response is needed to face the climate crisis in general. At the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, the audience was able to listen to different perspectives from Austria, Pakistan, and Scotland on how they approach this matter ([full panel session](#)). Leonore Gewessler, Federal Minister for Climate Action in Austria, and Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs Culture in Scotland were joined by Sherry Rehman, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, who called in from Islamabad.

I'LL BE BACK – GOING CIRCULAR

WE HAVE THE POWER TO GO CIRCULAR



The concept of circular economy addresses how we use resources and is an answer towards climate change mitigation. The world's population is growing and with that, the demand for resources. By 2050, the world will be consuming as if there were three planet Earths. Our current linear economy with its "take-make-use-dispose" model continually increases its demands of (scarce) natural resources. This leads

to higher levels of pollution, increased use of soil and water, and more waste, to name a few consequences. Also, 90% of biodiversity loss is caused by resource extraction and processing. By using and consuming in a more circular way, we can substantially reduce the impact of human (economic) activities on the environment. As up to 80% of products' environmental impacts are determined at the design phase, it is essential to transition to a regenerative growth model to keep resource consumption within planetary boundaries ([source](#)).

The Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE) has identified four sectors that are most relevant for circular economy strategies to deliver climate change mitigation benefits; built environment, transport, food system and clean energy. These strategies can also enhance decarbonization measures ([source](#)). At the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, experts shared their expertise on how to contribute to the circular economy in today's business world, but also on individual level.



Business representatives from BMW, Holcim, and Allianz Versicherung presented their approach in their respective sector such as mobility and building materials ([full panel session](#)).

WE HAVE THE POWER TO BUILD GREEN CITIES

It is estimated nearly 70% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050. With an ever-increasing global population and rising urbanization, creating green and sustainable cities are a top priority.

According to World Economic Forum, cities are responsible



for more than two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, many are already taking action to make themselves more environmentally friendly ([source](#)). At the AUSTRIAN

WORLD SUMMIT panel session ([full panel session](#)), the focus was directed to the city of Vienna, as an example of how climate adaptations can be implemented by the city government and building companies. Speakers of this session were Klemens Hallmann, CEO Hallmann Group and Jürgen Czernohorszky, Executive City Councillor for Climate of the City of Vienna.



MATCHMAKING – WE HAVE THE POWER TO CONNECT

This afternoon session ([full session](#)) was aimed to inspire our audience and connect like-minded climate action leaders. More than 400 students were invited for this year's afternoon session, and were able to listen to speakers from all over the world who spoke about their journey of building their green business; ranging from Douglas McMaster, an English chef and founder of the zero waste



restaurant in London, Silo, to a young Nigerian engineer named Olugbenga Olubanjo who created a technology to provide clean, reliable and affordable electricity to individuals, households, and businesses operating in energy-poor regions of the world, over to a social media superstar, Younes Zarou, who shared his own tips and



tricks for reducing his carbon footprint (watch here Arnold Schwarzenegger's [video](#) with Younes Zarou). Other speakers included Maria Hauser and Johannes Hauser who run the famous sustainable 5* hotel, Stanglwirt, in Tyrol/Austria, and Luca Fichtinger, one of co-founders of Kerntec. He as well as Siddharth Hande, CEO Kabadiwalla Connect, work in waste management, however in different sectors: Kern



Tec uses fruit pits - a waste stream of the fruit industry - to process and develop new and ultra-sustainable food products, whereas Kabadiwalla Connect aims to integrate the informal recycling ecosystem into the formal waste management system in cities of the Global South. Garry Cooper joined virtually from Chicago, explaining that his company Rheaply works to scale reuse and the circular economy by helping lower procurement and storage costs and reduce waste. Inna Braverman from Eco Wave Power and Polar Night Energy's Tommi Eronen shared how they have been building their clean energy (storage) companies. General Partner at Include Ventures and Managing Director of Climate Innovations at JFF

(Jobs for the Future) Taj Ahmad Eldridge talked about his personal journey of climate action.

3. Additional Highlights

Kalush Orchestra

The Eurovision Song Contest winners 2022, Kalush Orchestra, performed live at the summit. The Ukrainian band raised awareness for their war-torn home country. The Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative wanted to show their continued support for the people of Ukraine and send a strong message for peace.



Networking Islands

After the AWS program sessions on stage, the Green Matchmaking & Networking continued at the Seitengalerie in the Hofburg. At five dedicated spots, the AWS audience

had the opportunity to talk and discuss with representatives of our partners and our speakers.

- Circular Built Environment
- A Sustainable Life For Everyone
- Sustainable Cities & Mobility
- Green Business
- Green Buildings & Innovative Energy Solutions



School Classes at AWS 2023

More than 400 school students were gifted tickets to attend the AWS afternoon sessions at the Hofburg. After the program sessions at stage, they had the opportunity to talk to speakers and partners at the Networking Islands.

4. Speakers

The presenters of the AWS 2023 were **Matt Iseman** and **Silvia Schneider**; they were joined by **Hannelore Veit** and **Barbara Meier**.

Name		Session
Arnold Schwarzenegger	Founder AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT	Keynote speech: Climate change and security
Alexander Van der Bellen	Federal President, Republic of Austria	Welcome notes
António Guterres	Secretary-General United Nations	Video message
Karl Nehammer	Chancellor, Republic of Austria	Welcome remarks

Pekka Haavisto	Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland	Climate change and security
Wladimir Klitschko	Founder #We Are All Ukrainians	Climate change and security
Tom Middendorp	<i>Climate General</i> and Former Chief of Defense of the Netherlands	Climate change and security
Pete Buttigieg	U.S. Secretary of Transportation	Video message We have the power to reach our climate targets
Leonore Gewessler	Federal Minister of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austria	We have the power to reach our climate targets
Sherry Rehman	Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Pakistan	We have the power to reach our climate targets
Angus Robertson	Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Scotland	We have the power to reach our climate targets
Jan Jenisch	CEO and Chairman Holcim	I'll be back – Going circular
Barbara Stoll	Director Clean Cities Campaign	I'll be back – Going circular
Thomas Becker	Head of Sustainability, Mobility BMW	I'll be back – Going circular
Ke Wang	Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy - World Resources Institute	I'll be back – Going circular
Rémi Vrignaud	CEO Allianz Austria	I'll be back – Going circular
Klemens Hallmann	CEO Hallmann Group	We have the power to build green cities
Jürgen Czernohorszky	Executive City Councillor for Climate, City of Vienna	We have the power to build green cities
Younes Zarou	Content Creator	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Maria Hauser and Johannes Hauser	Stanglwirt	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Douglas McMaster	Chef and Owner Silo	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Olugbenga Olubanjo	Founder REEDDi Capsules	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Inna Braverman	Founder and CEO Eco Wave Power	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Luca Fichtinger	Co-Founder Kerntec	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Siddharth Hande	CEO Kabadiwalla Connect	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect

Taj Ahmad Eldridge	General Partner Include Ventures and Managing Director of Climate Innovations at JFF	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Garry Cooper	Founder and CEO Rheaply	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect
Tommi Eronen	Co-Founder Polar Night Energy	Matchmaking - We have the power to connect

Thank you to all our partners, speakers, and supporters for
creating hope and inspiring action!

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