

## Can we still accomplish the energy turnaround?

**Impacts. Consequences. Challenges.**

**Municipalities. Pioneers of progress.**

**(AS OF 18/8/2021)**

No topic will shape the coming decades as much as the energy transition. The switch to a sustainable energy supply is the declared global goal. It should be more than just a commitment on paper. It should be a commitment to our future.

Since the turn of the millennium, countries have begun to strongly promote the expansion of renewable energy and to create legal foundations that drive this endeavor forward. National and global measures have been put together to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions towards zero. This will require pushing renewable energy from wind, water, solar, geothermal and biomass while developing green hydrogen technology and plastics strategies.

Europe will have to move even closer together to align the Green Deal, which was initiated before the health crisis, with future requirements. Climate protection also means making sustainable investments in local jobs and regional economic cycles. This will only work in conjunction with appropriate stimulus programs for the economy.

How realistic is it to reduce greenhouse gas emissions EU-wide by 50 to 55 percent by 2030 and to become climate neutral by 2040 or 2050? What will it take and how fast can it be done? Who will pay for this enormous feat?

We will be talking about the impacts, consequences and challenges on the way to a sustainable future at the KOMMUNALE SOMMERGESPRÄCHE 2021. Let's shape this future together.

## THURSDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

- 9.45-10.00 a.m.: **Welcome**

**Erwin DIRNBERGER**, President Styrian Association of Municipalities, Member of the State Parliament of Styria, Mayor Söding-St. Johann (Styria) | **Bernd FISLAGE**, CEO Kommunalkredit | **Franz FROSCH**, Mayor Bad Aussee (Styria) | **Alfred RIEDL**, President Austrian Association of Municipalities, Mayor Grafenwörth (Lower Austria)

Presented by **Meinrad KNAPP**, TV host and radio anchor

- 10.00-10.25 a.m.: **Impulse**

**GREEN DEAL FOR AUSTRIA. FEDERATION AND MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE FUTURE.**

**Leonore GEWESSLER**, Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology

The European Green Deal is one of the largest programs in European history. With it, the European Union wants to take a leading role in climate protection. The Austrian federal government has also included this goal in its government program. Municipalities have a very important role and responsibility here at many levels.

- 10.25-11.25 a.m.: **Impulse**

**CLIMATE POLICY IN THE FIELD OF TENSION BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY CLAIMS.**

**Christoph BADEL**, Head of WIFO (Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung)

Climate change is the biggest issue for modern society. Therefore, there is a need for more public discussion on climate issues: How should the eco-social tax reform be designed? How do we set the right incentives to encourage consumers and producers to behave in a climate-friendly way? How can actual or apparent conflicts with other economic or social goals be resolved?

**LONG TERM BENEFITS OF CLIMATE POLICY STIMULI.**

**Moritz SCHWARZ**, Climate Economist, Smith School of Enterprise and Environment, Oxford University (GB)

COVID-19 has brought the economy to a near standstill at times and will keep policymakers busy for years to come. Extensive stimuli are needed to revive the economy in the long term. The design of such measures is of enormous significance not only for the economy and industry, but also for social and climate policy. The unique opportunity to use a crisis as a chance for the future must not be missed, as was the case after the financial crisis of 2008/2009. Current research results from Oxford University show which investments can make a contribution to combat climate change and at the same time provide sustainable employment stimuli.

**CLIMATE CHANGE. FACTS VERSUS FAKES & FICTION.**

**Marcus WADSAK**, Meteorologist, TV host and radio anchor, author

Climate change is man-made. We can still change our habits and ensure that the climate crisis does not become a climate catastrophe. Everyone can make a contribution and it is better to start today than to wait for tomorrow, because there is not much time left.

- 11.25 a.m.-1.00 p.m.: [Impulses & Panel Discussion](#)

**SUCCESSFUL DECARBONISATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS.**

**Elena SKVORTSOVA**, Member of the Executive Board OMV, Executive Officer Marketing & Trading

With Fit-For-55, the European Commission has launched one of the most ambitious energy transformation roadmaps in the world. As Austria's leading integrated energy and chemicals company, OMV is fully aware of its responsibility to make a significant contribution to the energy transition. In addition to innovation and investment, public support and adequate regulation, partnerships will play a decisive role here - sustainably. For OMV, the focus of these partnerships has always been and will continue to be the relationship with the customers, who are looking for safe, reliable, efficient and CO<sub>2</sub>-reduced solutions, especially in the coming phase of the energy transition.

**SYSTEMIC FACT CHECKING.**

**Gerhard CHRISTINER**, Member of the Board APG

What are the facts about the energy turnaround and the “Decade of Electrification”? Where does Austria stand in the areas of grid infrastructure - storage - digitalisation and production?

**GREEN HYDROGEN. THE INNOVATIVE WAY OUT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.**

**Michael STRUGL**, CEO Verbund

Green hydrogen from renewable energies in particular offers enormous potential as a substitute for hydrogen from natural gas, for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in industry and mobility, and as a storage medium for wind and solar power. Verbund is working together with the Linz-based steel producer Voestalpine on emission-free steel production based on green hydrogen. In industry, green hydrogen will be the first to be economically viable. But there are also good application possibilities in the transport sector. In Tyrol, for example, the Zillertalbahn will already be running on hydrogen in real operation from 2022.

**ECONOMIC-ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.**

**Karl STEININGER**, Economist and climate scientist, University Graz, Member of several commissions of the Academy of Sciences

If Austria continues to consume the same amount of energy by 2050 as it does today, climate neutrality can only be achieved with gigantic expansion rates in the field of renewable energy. The number of wind turbines would have to be increased 25-fold, and for the expansion of solar power, twice the area of Vienna would have to be used in addition to all the roofs with solar systems available throughout Austria. What is needed and how realistic are the climate targets for Austria?

**STRENGTHENING THE DOMESTIC ENERGY MARKET.**

**Magnus BRUNNER**, State Secretary

The government's core issue is domestic energy independence. This requires investments in domestic energy production, the promotion of the Renewable Energy Expansion Act, the establishment of renewable energy communities and a reduction in bureaucracy. Security of supply (grid expansion and storage) is a priority.

**HOW CAN WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTION?**

Discussion

- 1.00-2.15 p.m.: [Lunch](#)

- 2.15-2.30 p.m.: **Impulse**  
**MUNICIPALITIES. PIONEERS OF PROGRESS.**  
**Alfred RIEDL**, President Austrian Association of Municipalities, Mayor Grafenwörth (Lower Austria)
  
- 2.30-2.45 p.m.: **Impulse**  
**MASTERING THE ENERGY TRANSITION – WHY MUNICIPALITIES PLAY A KEY ROLE.**  
**Ralph SPIEGLER**, President German Association of Cities and Municipalities, Mayor Nieder-Olm (Germany)
  
- 2.40-3.05 p.m.: **Impulse**  
**GREEN FINANCE. HOW WE CAN SAVE THE WORLD WITH OUR MONEY.**  
**Bernd FISLAGE**, CEO Kommunalkredit

- 3.15-5.30 p.m.: **Parallel Sessions**

**Good-Practice 1: Climate neutrality in action. Regionally and globally.**

The Danish island of Samsø (DK), with its 4,000 souls, is a world leader in terms of energy transition. In just five years, Samsø completely transformed its energy supply and even exports green electricity. Today, there are only electric cars, straw heating plants and a CO<sub>2</sub>-negative balance. In Vorarlberg, 64 people aligned themselves with the Paris climate goals for four weeks in May 2019. This and other model experiments show how global climate goals can actually be lived.

| Impulses: **Soren HERMANSEN**, Director Energy Academy Samsø, **Markus HUNTZINGER**, Climate Protection Manager City Wolfhagen (Hessen), **Theresa PAUL**, Managing Director „energie:autark Kötschach-Mauthen“, **Gregor SELNER**, Institute for Energy Vorarlberg, Head of Communities and Regions,

| Hosted by **Stefan VEIGL**, Salzburger Nachrichten

**Good-Practice 2: Energy turnaround in municipalities. 100 % regionally self-sufficient.**

The energy turnaround requires innovative technologies, solid financing and active commitment of citizens. The Renewable Energy Expansion Act creates improved framework conditions for the system change toward climate neutrality. In particular, the new regulations it contains on energy communities provide scope for creative responses at the local and regional level. What is needed are communities who jointly identify the need, develop the appropriate solutions and successfully implement them together.

| Impulses: **Jakob EDLER**, Managing Director Bioenergie Wärmeservice, **André FELKER**, CEO backbone, **Frank HASSELWANDER**, Managing Director Kommunalkredit Public Consulting, **Johann MAYRHOFER**, General Secretary Ökosoziales Forum, **Stephan SHARMA**, CEO Energie Burgenland, **Christoph WALLA**, Managing Director ENGIE Energie

| Hosted by **Anita KIEFER**, Kurier

**Good-Practice 3: Green technologies. Key element of the energy future.**

The demand for green technologies remains unbroken. Whether it is the use of water or for ecological temperature control of interiors, the installation of PV panels on noise barriers or green hydrogen in the steel or chemical industry ... they all help to achieve climate neutrality. Not only to revolutionise the economy, but also advance the energy transition.

| Impulses: **Wolfgang ANZENGRUBER**, ÖBAG, **Gerhard CHRISTINER**, Member of Board APG, **Florian NIEDERSUESS**, Member of Board eww Wels | **Josef TRUMMER**, Consultant

| Hosted by **Maria JELENKO-BENEDIKT**, Regional Media Austria

- 7.30 p.m.: **Traditional Austrian Dinner at the „Blaa Alm“**  
 Musical Guest: **Holatrio**

## FRIDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

- 9.00-9.30 a.m.: **Impulse**  
**WE NEED TALENT FOR SOLUTIONS.**  
**Markus HENGSTSCHLAEGER**, Geneticist, Medical University Vienna  

We need to prepare for both predictable and unpredictable parts of the future. In order to cope with challenges such as a pandemic, climate change, racism, terrorism, etc., we need a collective talent for solutions. How can this talent be promoted and kept active?
- 9.30-9.55 a.m.: **Impulse**  
**GREEN CITIES. REALITY OF LIFE.**  
**Erwin F. SORAVIA**, CEO SORAVIA  

The environment must function like a mixed forest. With large developments, you need a clear vision of what the future holds. And you have to believe in its implementation. To do justice to such a process, project developers sometimes have to accept short-term sacrifices to ensure long-term success.
- 10.00-10.30 a.m.: **Impulse**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE. CHANCE & BURDEN.**  
**Johannes SEITINGER**, Member of the Regional Government of Styria  

Recent extreme weather events are tangible proof that climate change is a reality. But we can already do something about it. Starting at the regional level. From local suppliers to agriculture to forward-looking forestry, we can all contribute.
- 10.30-11.00 a.m.: **Impulse**  
**DIGITALISATION AS THE KEY TO THE ENERGY TURNAROUND. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS.**  
**Margarete SCHRAMBOECK**, Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs  

The switch to renewable energy offers great potential for local businesses. Through in-house photovoltaic systems on company premises and charging stations for electronic vehicles, companies can save electricity costs and actively participate in the fight against climate change. What role does digitalisation play in the energy transition?
- 11.00-11.30 a.m.: **Impulse**  
**CLIMATE PROTECTION BEGINS IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD.**  
**Johannes HAHN**, EU Commissioner for Budget and Administration  

What are the energy targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050? Which sectors are affected by a sustainable climate policy? What are the challenges, especially on a small scale? What can communities and individuals do and how is the EU supporting these measures?
- 11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.: **Discussion**  
**ARE WE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WITH OUR CLIMATE POLICIES?**
- 12.30-12.45 p.m.: **Closing**  
**Bernd FISLAGE**, CEO Kommunalkredit | **Alfred RIEDL**, President Austrian Association of Municipalities, Mayor Grafenwörth (Lower Austria)
- 12.45 p.m.: **Lunch at the Kurhaus**