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INDustrial TECHNOLOGIES 2018: Key technologies are crucial to keeping Europe competitive

Kick-off of 'Innovative industries for smart growth' conference – over 1,300 experts convene in Vienna

For the next couple of days, Vienna will be a hotspot for future key technologies: this morning, INDTECH2018 opened at Messe Wien Exhibition & Congress Center. Until 31 October, more than 1,300 experts from the fields of research and industry will discuss current research developments in production, materials, nanotechnology and biotechnology at the 'INDustrial TECHNOLOGIES 2018 – Innovative industries for smart growth' conference. On the occasion of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference, which is jointly organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT), the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and the European Commission, is held in Vienna for the first time.

This morning, Jean-Eric Paquet (Director-General Research and Innovation, European Commission), Andreas Reichhardt (Secretary-General, BMVIT) and Klaus Pseiner (Managing Director, FFG) opened INDTECH2018. Jean-Eric Paquet referred to the importance of "Horizon 2020" for supporting industrial research. "Nanotechnology, materials, production and biotechnology are key technologies for Europe and its citizens," he said. "This conference gives the opportunity to participants to provide input for the new EU framework programme 'Horizon Europe' and in particular in the cluster 'Digital and Industry'".

BMVIT Secretary-General Andreas Reichhardt, who attended the conference in the place of Federal Minister Norbert Hofer, emphasised the significance of investments in key technologies: 'We need more effective innovations in a larger number of key technologies such as production technologies, nanotechnologies, digital technologies and cybertechnologies in order to be able to increase and foster prosperity, growth and the quality of life in Austria and Europe as well as to strengthen our position on the international markets. Without innovations, we will not be able to meet future challenges posed by global competitors.' He also referred to the great success of the Austrian grant applicants in the field of Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Biotechnology, and Advanced Manufacturing and Processing (NMBP) of the EU framework programme Horizon 2020. 72 million euros in subsidies have been secured in this field so far, making up a success rate of 22 percent. Andreas Reichhardt: 'BMVIT annually invests about 130 million euros in production and materials research, among other things aiming to boost industry and research institutions, thus enabling them to participate in international programmes such as Horizon 2020. This strategy has been paying off so far.'

'The Austrian Research Promotion Agency FFG is a strong national and European partner in the field of industrial technologies', says FFG Managing Director Klaus Pseiner. With regard to future key technologies, FFG is currently carrying out the 'Production of the Future' programme for BMVIT. In the framework of this programme, more than 270 projects have received subsidies amounting to about 150 million euros since 2011. 'Our national programmes lay the groundwork for successful applications on a European level', underlines Klaus Pseiner. A national contact point for European programmes, FFG counsels and supports businesses and research facilities in a comprehensive way. While Horizon 2020 is well under way, the Austrian EU Presidency is currently overseeing the development of the next framework programme. Klaus Pseiner: 'Intelligent production technologies and procedures are essential to producing goods in a competitive and efficient way. Efficient production is also key for

profitable and sustainable growth and for employment in Europe. Against this backdrop, the future research framework programme Horizon Europe is also intended to be a strong impetus for industrial technologies.'

Esteemed solar technology pioneer Bertrand Piccard and Infineon CEO Sabine Herlitschka delivered the keynote speeches at the conference. Bertrand Piccard presented his project of identifying 1,000 clean, efficient and profitable solutions for a turnaround in energy policy. 'If we want to pull innovations to the market, we need to create a need for them with modern and ambitious environmental targets and energy policies', the environmental pioneer demanded. Infineon CEO Sabine Herlitschka, in turn, pointed to key technologies as the new global currency in her address. 'Digital transformation is not only a question of technology. It is also a commercial, political and cultural competition. A global European competition strategy is key for us to stay ahead in this competition. We have to develop a strong European way', Sabine Herlitschka said.

At the conference, the 'Horizon Prize on Materials for Clean Air' was awarded for the first time. The award, including prize money of 3 million euros, is conferred to cost-efficient, sustainable and innovative design-orientated material solutions. Among air pollutants, particulate matter is the greatest health hazard. About 90% of people living in European cities are exposed to particulate matter that exceeds the WHO air quality guidelines. The European Commission received 16 applications from 12 countries. A jury made up of independent experts selected the winner upon reviewing the project on site. Dr Jean-Jacques Theron of Corning SAS from France developed a ceramic honeycomb air filter that removes up to 95% of particulate matter from the air it filters. John Gallagher, assistant professor at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, took second place. 'We are honoured that the winner of such a prestigious award is announced at the INDTECH2018 conference in Vienna', said BMVIT Secretary-General Andreas Reichhardt.

95 expert talks on topics such as frugal innovation, circular and bioeconomy, design innovations, artificial intelligence and energy efficiency in production are complemented by an exhibition offering insights into current developments and initiatives in European research funding as well as product innovations developed by various companies. The Austrian Innovators booth presents activities and the expertise of Austrian technology platforms working on key technologies. They include associations such as Industrie 4.0, nanoNET, Photonics Austria, GMAR (a platform for the measuring, automation and control technology industries), Smart Textiles, Additive Manufacturing Austria, ECSEL, BioNanoNet and ÖWGP (the Austrian scientific platform for production research). In addition to site visits and matchmaking, the programme also includes interactive offers, such as world café and fishbowl conversations.

On the eve of the conference, the 2nd EU-Asia Dialogue on Nanosafety took place. The event was initiated and organised by BMVIT in cooperation with BioNanoNet, the European Commission and the Asia Nano Forum, a network organisation of funding institutions and research ministries mainly active in the nanotechnology field in Asia. BMVIT has been an active member organisation of the Asia Nano Forum since 2014. More than 80 participants discussed current challenges in nanosafety research and reconfirmed their commitment to cooperation as numerous issues can only be solved in cross-border collaborations. They agreed to further explore and kick off joint projects for topics such as the definition of standards and testing guidelines, nanocharacterisation as well as data and social implications of nanosafety research at the 3rd EU-Asia Dialogue on Nanosafety to be held in Bangkok in March 2019. To this end, not only the Horizon 2020 EU framework programme but also national funding programmes targeting nanosafety research – including the Austrian NANO EHS (Environment, Health, Safety) programme – are to be optimised to better accommodate such issues.

<https://www.indtech2018.eu/>

#IndTech2018

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Photos:



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