REVIEW

Empowering Europe

Technological Leadership for a Resilient Future

English Edition

Technology Talks Austria 2026

+1000 participants
+140 renowned speakers
+30 hours of top-class programme
12 workshops
6 plenary sessions
5 special events
3 events for young scientists
2 keynote speeches



Europe's future depends on technological strength

Europe is facing a decade in which technological leadership, economic competitiveness, security and resilience can no longer be viewed in isolation from one another. Against this backdrop, this year's Technology Talks Austria 2026 focused on one central question: How can Europe translate scientific excellence into technological and industrial leadership, strategic autonomy and long-term resilience? Under the motto 'Empowering Europe – Technological Leadership for a Resilient Future', Technology Talks Austria 2026 followed a clear thematic structure: from strengthening Europe's strategic infrastructures and its scientific and technological competence base, to translating scientific excellence into industrial leadership, security and, ultimately, technological sovereignty through effective European framework conditions and strong national innovation systems.

Six key guiding questions were formulated:

- What infrastructures and innovation ecosystems enable resilience?
- How do we translate scientific excellence into industrial leadership?
- How do dual-use technologies reinforce both innovation and security?
- What does technological sovereignty actually entail?
- What European framework conditions are necessary to strengthen innovation, competitiveness and technological sovereignty?
- How can national innovation systems strengthen Europe's technological and industrial leadership?

In two keynote speeches and six plenary sessions, these issues were examined from various perspectives by internationally renowned experts from the worlds of research, industry and politics. The twelve workshops, which were integrated directly into the conference, and five special events addressed the key issues and broadened the discussion to include related topics.

On the following pages, this review offers insights into Technology Talks Austria 2026. As you leaf through and read, immerse yourself in the multifaceted debate about nothing less than our future! On page 14, you will also find ten key takeaways from the more than 30 hours of the programme – serving as inspiration and concrete impetus for shaping our future.

Technology Talks Austria is supported by the Austrian research, technology and innovation community. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Event Board of Trustees and the Scientific Advisory Board for their excellent collaboration, as well as to all our partners for their tremendous commitment. This broad support spurs us on to further strengthen Technology Talks Austria as a key meeting place and platform where key players from business, industry, academia, research, politics and the public sector can come together to discuss issues shaping the future. We are particularly pleased that we have succeeded in incorporating the HEALTH theme into Technology Talks Austria for the first time. The extensive feedback from the survey conducted following the events is also being analysed and will inform the further development of Technology Talks Austria.

We look forward to seeing you again at Technology Talks Austria 2027, which will take place on 9 and 10 September 2027 at the MQ in Vienna – once again back-to-back with the FFG Forum!

Brigitte Bach, *Chair of event advisory board and Spokesperson of the management board of AIT*

Andreas Kugi, *Chair of scientific advisory board and Scientific Director of AIT*

KEYNOTE JO DE BOECK

Opportunities for Europe

Jo De Boeck, who has been working in the semiconductor industry for four decades, focused his keynote speech on a key question: How can Europe capitalise on the rapid development of AI and semiconductors, both economically and technologically? In his view, the sector is on the cusp of a new industrial revolution. Whilst traditional semiconductors continue to grow, the AI-driven chip market is recording double-digit growth rates – an enormous opportunity, but also the risk that Europe will, above all, strengthen other regions economically.

A key issue is Europe's dependence on international supply chains: when purchasing modern chips, substantial funds flow to non-European suppliers. Europe should therefore invest more heavily in its own computing, data and semiconductor infrastructure and intensify cooperation across national borders. Instead of 27 separate approaches, what is needed is a united European front that brings together research, industry, capital and infrastructure.

De Boeck does not, by any means, see Europe as having no chance. The continent, he says, has highly qualified talent, strong education systems, excellent research



and a robust industrial base. Europe can play to its strengths particularly in AI applications – for example, in the automotive industry, robotics, healthcare and industrial production. It is crucial to link the entire value chain more closely, from algorithms through chip design and materials to manufacturing and application.
He expects a particular momentum to arise from the shift away from centralised cloud systems towards 'Physical AI' and edge computing. AI is increasingly being integrated directly into vehicles, robots and medical devices – which requires chips with low latency and low energy consumption. New architectures, chiplets, 3D integration, photonics and specialised computing units are opening up areas in which Europe can become active.
He attaches particular importance to scaling up European start-ups. Many innovative firms have a great deal to offer technologically, but are unable to grow from national markets into global players. An integrated European capital market and joint programmes could help; standardisation and certification are also crucial for modular, interoperable chip architectures and access to international markets.
His closing message: Europe should bring together research, strong ecosystems and concrete applications. It is crucial not only to develop technologies, but also to scale them up and manufacture them in Europe – because it is where new products are created that value is ultimately generated.



Jo de Boeck is Chief Strategy Officer at imec, a Belgian micro- and nanoelectronics research organisation.



Christian Ehler, Member of the European Parliament, rapporteur for the next European Research Framework Programme (FP10).

KEYNOTE CHRISTIAN EHLER

Making Europe's Research Resilient

How can Europe translate its scientific strength into lasting technological leadership? Christian Ehler, Member of the European Parliament, made this question the focus of his keynote speech. Austria has a special role to play in this regard: it has helped shape European research programmes for decades and embedded research in a European context at an early stage. For Ehler, resilience does not begin with defence, energy or supply chains, but with the very foundations of research and innovation. Three dimensions are crucial:

- Setting priorities without losing our openness to the unexpected
- truly pooling European resources
- protecting the democratic and academic freedoms that make excellent research possible in the first place.

The first challenge is the tension between strategic prioritisation and free research. Geopolitical pressure is forcing Europe to decide which technologies are relevant to competitiveness, security and sovereignty. At the same time, groundbreaking innovations often emerge where no one had recognised their significance – as quantum research demonstrates.

A resilient research framework must enable both: strategically oriented programmes and scope for curiosity-driven ideas. Ehler warns against the dominance of established companies and technology sectors: priorities should only be set where the path to development is clear. Secondly, European efforts must not only be coordinated but also more strongly pooled. To achieve technological leadership, Europe needs common strategies and a genuine pooling of resources – without sacrificing scientific diversity and competition. The third dimension concerns the freedom of research and science: academic freedom is no longer a given, even in Europe, and must be actively protected. With the rise of artificial intelligence, this becomes even more urgent, as AI can enormously accelerate research, whilst at the same time facilitating surveillance and disinformation. Technological and democratic resilience are inseparable. His conclusion: Europe possesses scientific excellence. The task is to develop this into sustainable technological leadership – through smart prioritisation, genuine cooperation and the protection of those freedoms on which innovation is based.

PLENARY SESSION 1

Infrastructure and Innovation Ecosystems



Marie-Hélène Ametsreiter (Speedinvest), Gerhard Christiner (Austrian Power Grid), Laura Halenius (Sitra) and Jo De Bock (imec) discussed the prerequisites for a resilient European innovation ecosystem.

How can Europe secure its technological sovereignty and translate innovation into industrial strength? In the first panel at Technology Talks Austria 2026, leading representatives from research, technology, industry and finance discussed the establishment of a resilient innovation ecosystem.

For **Marie-Hélène Ametsreiter** (Speedinvest), access to growth capital is crucial – Europe is losing promising companies to the US as they move towards scaling up. Private savings, pension funds and a functioning capital market must be mobilised more effectively for innovation.

Gerhard Christiner (APG) emphasised that critical infrastructure extends far beyond physical assets; high-performance electricity grids and digital infrastructures are necessary to integrate renewable energies securely.

For **Laura Halenius** (Sintra), strong industries, skilled workers and valuable industrial data are key prerequisites for playing a leading role in the next generation of AI. Crucial to this is implementation through greater cooperation between industry, politics and the capital market, for example following the Nordic model.

Europe is strong in research and applications, but has gaps when it comes to translating these into value creation, emphasised **Jo De Bock** (imec). This requires coordinated industrial policy, investment across the innovation chain and the courage to make strategic decisions.

The closing session summarised the key perspectives: a European capital market, investment in infrastructure, Europe's own capacity for implementation and the targeted closing of strategic gaps are set to secure Europe's technological resilience by 2035.

PLENARY SESSION 2

The Way Forward: From Scientific Excellence to Industrial Leadership



During the second panel discussion, Lisa Smith (Prewave), Carin Forsling (Saab), Alfons Albert Riek (Festo) and Michael Mertin (R&S) discussed innovation, regulation, technological sovereignty and the path to implementation.

Lisa Smith (Prewave) used her scale-up, Prewave, as an example to illustrate how research can give rise to a growing business. Early-stage funding, research grants and a supportive environment for innovation were crucial. At the same time, she argued that Europe needs to be more daring when it comes to unconventional ideas. Policymakers and technology companies must work more closely together to develop solutions that keep pace with technological change.

Michael Mertin (AT&S) called for a focus on key European technologies. Europe cannot be a leader in every field, he said, but must invest where unique innovations emerge. Crucial factors, he noted, are the integration of research, production and customer needs, as well as joint development plans across the value chain.

Carin Forsling (Saab) emphasised the importance of small, interdisciplinary teams, iterative development and direct user feedback. Europe must align research and industry more closely with practical applications.

Alfons Riek (Festo) placed the focus on Europe's identity and strengths. Rather than copying other economic regions, Europe must confidently build on its own expertise and experiment more boldly. Innovation requires collaboration and shared goals.

In the closing session, concrete steps were called for: application-oriented incentives for research, a leading role in physical intelligence and the removal of regulatory barriers. The key message: Europe's potential is there – the crucial thing is to put it into practice more quickly and consistently.



Opening

Andreas Kugi (Head of the Scientific Programme Advisory Board (Scientific Director, AIT), **Brigitte Bach** (Chair of the Event Board of Trustees, Managing Director, AIT), **Peter Hanke** (Federal Minister for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure) and **Georg Knill** (President of the Federation of Austrian Industries; from left to right) expressed their conviction at the opening that research, technology and innovation are essential keys to the future of Austria and Europe. It is important, they said, that all stakeholders – research/science, business/industry and politics/the public sector – pull together.

WORKSHOP 1 (VFFI/IV)

Taking the quantum leap: How can Europe become the industrial powerhouse of quantum tech?



Panel participants:
Alberta Bonanni, Vize Rector, Johannes Kepler University Linz
Kilian Gross, Director, European Commission
Freeke Heijman-te Paske, Vize President, QuIC
Sabine Herlitschka, CEO, Infineon Austria / Vize President, IV
Thomas Monz, Founder and CEO, Alpine Quantum Technologies
Alexandra-Gwyn Paetz, German Ministry for Research (BMFTR)
Felix Tiefenbacher, Gründer und CEO, zerothird

The international race for quantum research is currently gathering pace at an extraordinary rate. Europe must therefore translate its high standards of excellence and international reputation into products and services that can be scaled up globally in fields such as quantum computing, quantum communication and quantum sensing. Europe must act decisively to secure a leading position in the field of quantum computing, ensure it does not lose start-ups and scale-ups, and establish European value chains for quantum technologies for global markets.

The workshop had two clear objectives. Firstly, it aimed to raise awareness of the future opportunities offered by quantum technologies. And secondly, it sought to encourage policy-makers to take concrete decisions that ensure Europe acts in a targeted and effective manner in this field, for example by taking steps towards a 'Quantum Act' and quantum computers.

WORKSHOP 2 (JOANNEUM RESEARCH/LAND STMK.)

Mobility – the backbone of the Austrian economy!

Nowadays, mobility no longer emerges from individual sectors, but from interconnected innovation ecosystems. Representatives from industry, research and infrastructure discussed in the workshop what this means in practice. The discussion highlighted a key bottleneck: whilst Austria is often strong in research, expertise and prototyping, the transfer to large-scale applications remains challenging.

The consensus was that Austria possesses not only individual technological strengths but also a dense innovation ecosystem. It will be crucial to link these capabilities more closely, make regulation more innovation-friendly and bridge the gap between research, demonstration and scalable application more quickly. Those who consistently link existing strengths in materials, data, infrastructure, vehicle development and research will be able to retain value creation and technological expertise in Austria, even under increasingly fierce competitive conditions.



Panel participants:
Astrid Wolfbeisser, CEO, A3PS
Christa Zengerer, CEO, ACstyria Mobilitätscluster GmbH
Jacqueline Erhart, ATTC; Manging Director, ASFINAG Maut Service
Martin Wipfler, Area Manager, Kristl, Seibt & Co Ges.m.b.H.
Stefan Erlach, Vice President, Siemens Mobility Austria GmbH
Kurt Satzinger, Head of R&D voestalpine AG; ASMET
Moderation: Jost Bernasch, CEO, Virtual Vehicle Research GmbH
Begrüßung: Heinz Mayer; JOANNEUM RESEARCH

WORKSHOP 3 (BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM/LBG/ SIEMENS HEALTHINEERS)

Health Data: 'Quo vadis?' From smart diagnostics to European data spaces



Panel participants:
Impuls-Statement: Alexander Degelsegger, BMASGPK
Christoph Ehrendorfer, Boehringer Ingelheim
Jan David Smeddinck, LBI Digital Health and Prevention
Bettina T. Resl, Siemens Healthineers
Stephan Horvath, Volkshilfe Wien
Moderation: Köksal Baltaci, Die Presse

As the first workshop in the Technology Talks Austria series focusing on Health and Life Sciences, the event was well received. The focus was on health data as an essential foundation for medical care, research and innovation. The European Health Data Space (EHDS) opens up the possibility of making digital health data more accessible across organisations and national borders. Contributions from the public sector, research, medical technology, the pharmaceutical industry and clinical practice highlighted differing requirements but a shared objective: data and new technologies should deliver tangible benefits for patients and those in care. This depends as much on the quality and interoperability of the data as on its secure and responsible use. The discussion highlighted how closely health issues are linked to technological development and the contribution that applied research can make. This inaugural event lays the groundwork for establishing health and life sciences as an integral part of Technology Talks Austria in future and for continuing the dialogue on research, innovation and their implementation in the healthcare sector.

WORKSHOP 4 (AI FACTORY AUSTRIA AI:AT)

Turning AI potential into impact: Services from the AI Factory

How does an AI idea become an application that actually makes an impact in business, the media and public administration? This was the question addressed by the AI Factory Austria AI:AT workshop. The event combined a concise overview of the AI Factory with three practical discussions, in which companies from the media, Earth observation, telecommunications and AI development sectors shared their experiences.
A common theme emerged across all the discussions: impact through the use of AI does not arise in isolation. It requires a clear problem statement, suitable data and technology, and, above all, the right partners at the table. Whether it is computing power for media AI, the integration of data, product and market, or the partnership between infrastructure and application: often, a single ingredient is missing from the mix. AI:AT highlights these gaps and brings the right stakeholders together. It will be crucial to translate Austria's strengths in research, data and business into scalable applications more quickly through shared access to infrastructure, expertise and the ecosystem.



Panel participants:
Karl Kugler, Project Lead, AI Factory Austria AI:AT
Markus Stöhr, Project Lead, AI Factory Austria AI:AT
Verena Krawarik, Lead APA-medialab, Innovationsmanagement, APA
Felix Geremus, Co-Founder & CTO, Another Earth
Michael Steindl, Sales Manager, A1 Telekom Austria
Ruben Hetfleisch, Founder, Klartext AI; Board Member, AI Austria
René Mähr, Co-Founder & CEO, Synfia Labs
Moderation: Julia Eisner, AI Factory Austria AI:AT

The Power of Regions

Innovation does not take place solely within national and international networks. Regional innovation systems, in particular, play a crucial role. Speaking on behalf of the Province of Styria, **Heinz Mayer,** Managing Director of JOANNEUM RESEARCH, highlighted the strengths that regional innovation ecosystems bring to the table – and what needs to be done to ensure that Europe's economy and industry remain competitive. The Province of Styria sponsored the lunch on the first day of the conference.



WORKSHOP 5 (FWF)

The quest for scientific breakthroughs: Creating Aatractive conditions for excellence



Panel participants:
Robert Legenstein, TU Graz
Tracy Northup, Universität Innsbruck
Thomas Pieber, Med-Uni Graz
Paul Adam, Boehringer Ingelheim
Mark Thomson, Director General, CERN
Barbara Weitgruber, Director General, BMFWF
Moderation: Christof Gattringer, President, FWF

How do scientific breakthroughs come about – and what conditions do researchers need to be able to break new ground? What progress are Austria's clusters of excellence making? And what can be learnt from cutting-edge research at CERN and from collaboration between academia and research-intensive industry? These questions were discussed by a panel comprising representatives from industry, academia and the public sector.

The workshop made it clear that scientific breakthroughs cannot be planned – but the conditions under which they can emerge certainly can. Freedom to explore new ideas, long-term funding, interdisciplinary collaboration, high-performance research infrastructures and international networks lay the foundations for scientific progress and technological innovation 'made in Europe'.

CERN Director-General Mark Thomson emphasised one key factor: by pooling resources, expertise and infrastructure, countries can create research and technology projects that individual states could not achieve on their own – thereby providing fresh impetus for Europe's innovative strength and international competitiveness.

WORKSHOP 6 (ACR/BMWET)

Speed to market: Collaborative research as a catalyst for innovation

How can research findings be turned into marketable products more quickly? At the joint workshop organised by ACR and BMWET, representatives from politics, research and industry discussed the impact that strong partner networks can have. In his opening statement, Section Head Florian Frauscher (BMWET) emphasised that Austria and Europe are pioneers in key areas such as quality of life, cutting-edge research and highly specialised industries. However, in order not to fall behind in global competition, the main focus over the coming years must be on turning existing weaknesses into strengths.

Three fireside talks covering the entire innovation journey led to a clear realisation: innovation requires speed, and this cannot be achieved acting alone. Only when companies, start-ups, research institutions, investors and the public sector pool their strengths and bring together the right people, skills and resources will the many individual potentials be transformed into collective innovative power. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular, given their limited resources, rely on easy access to specialised know-how and modern infrastructure in order to realise their innovative potential.



Panel participants:
Begrüßung Florian Frauscher, Director General, BMWET
Fireside-Talk 1: Georg Kopetz (CEO, TTTECH) and Iris Filzwieser (Mettop GmbH, President ACR)
Fireside-Talk 2: Evelin Fisslthaler (Austrian Centre for Electron Microscopy and Nanoanalysis Graz), and Philipp Schwemberger (M&H CNC Technik GmbH)
Fireside-Talk 3: Gerhard Prossliner (COO/CFO, BRAVE Analytics GmbH) and Hannah Wundsam (Austrian Startups)
Moderation: Rita Kremsner (ACR)



ASciNA Tech Innovation Award

The first ASciNA Tech Innovation Award – established by ASciNA (Austrian Scientists & Scholars in North America) and supported by TU Wien – was presented to the Austrian scientist, inventor and entrepreneur **Peter Sagmeister** (MIT). The award recognises innovators who translate cutting-edge research into concrete technological solutions with a genuine economic and social impact. The prize was presented by ASciNA President **Alexandra Lieben** and **Peter Ertl,** Vice-Rector for Research at TU Wien.

WORKSHOP 7 (BMIMI)

Buy European: Strategic procurement as a driver of greater innovation



Panel participants:
Impulse Statements: Henriette Spyra (BMIMI), Ville Valovirta (VTT Finnland), Sabine Herlitschka (Infineon Austria), Manuela Waldner (ÖBB), Thomas Monz (Alpine Quantum Technologies), Peter Klimek (ASCII)
Moderation: Claudia Falkinger (Point&)

The 'Buy European' workshop focused on how the Austrian public sector's annual procurement volume of around 70 billion euros can be used more effectively as a strategic lever for innovation and technological sovereignty. Against the backdrop of global 'first-mover policies' (USA, China) and new EU regulations (the 'Procurement Act' and the 'Innovation Act'), public procurement came into focus as a crucial instrument for strengthening domestic industry and critical infrastructure.

The following areas for action and suggestions were identified by workshop participants as priorities for the action plan:

- Setting strategic objectives & anchoring them in European legislation (e.g. the Procurement Act)
- Reform of public procurement law & focus on life-cycle costs
- Risk management & agility (e.g. pilot schemes)
- Empowering & training procurement professionals
- Establishing a database and a procurement portal
- Sustainability & autonomy

The conclusion of the workshop is clear: public procurement can be a key driver of innovation, security and economic strength. This requires political will, the overcoming of entrenched prejudices and close, cross-departmental cooperation.

WORKSHOP 8 (AWS/ACCENT/TU WIEN SPIN OFF FACTORY/ ESA PHI-LAB AUSTRIA/AIT)

Science to sovereignty: Europe in the global tech Rrce

Europe is, for example, heavily dependent on non-European suppliers and supply chains in areas such as cloud infrastructure, semiconductors and critical raw materials. At the same time, a new dynamic is emerging in space, defence and dual-use technologies, driven by artificial intelligence. In this workshop, representatives from tech diplomacy, deep-tech spin-offs, industry and venture capital discussed how excellent research can be transformed into sovereign European solutions. The topic was examined from two perspectives in particular: the first session was entitled 'Geopolitics, Tech Diplomacy and the Reality of European Innovation', whilst the second was titled 'Spin-offs in Key Technologies: Team, Capital, Market"
Across both sessions, a common conclusion emerged: Europe does not lack ideas, but rather viable pathways from demonstrator to product and from the first contract to a scalable business. Capital remains necessary, but is not sufficient on its own; reliable demand is needed, above all from public sector clients as early adopters, as demonstrated by the ESA with its Launcher Challenge, for example. In this context, technological sovereignty does not mean manufacturing every component in Europe, but rather being able to control, operate and, where necessary, replace critical systems.



Panel participants:
Martin Rauchbauer, Founder, Tech Diplomacy Network
Moritz Novak, Founder, GATE Space
Susanne Katzler-Fuchs, Managing Director, BRIMATECH Services
Philipp Spenger, EIC Fund Investment Services
Andreas Perotti, Group Director, Frequentis
Angie Quarry, Founder and CEO, Shama AI
Christoph Tscherne, Co-Founder, Confident Space Technologies
Begrüßung und Moderation: Stefan Embacher, FOREUS

TU Austria Innovation Marathon

At the TU Austria Innovation Marathon, students and young researchers throw themselves into an energetic 24-hour sprint, during which interdisciplinary teams tackle real-world challenges from industry. Supported by professional innovation coaches, the participants experienced first-hand what genuine collaboration and creativity can achieve in just one day. TU Austria President **Horst Bischof** was delighted with the high level of creativity demonstrated in the solutions.



WORKSHOP 9 (SALZBURG RESEARCH/INNOVATION SALZBURG)

Hospital@Home: When the hospital comes to the patient



Panel participants:
Katharina Reich, Director General Public Health, BMASGPK
Daniela Gutschi, Memeber of Government Health, Salzburg
Gregory Fretz, Project Manager Hospital@Home, Klinikum Chur
Thomas Gamsjäger, Managing Director, Salzburger Landeskliniken
Franz Feichtner, Director Health, JOANNEUM RESEARCH
Moderation: Köksal Baltaci, Die Presse

The workshop highlighted Hospital@Home (H@H) as a forward-looking, patient-centred care model: eligible patients receive treatment at home that is equivalent to that provided in a hospital – supported by mobile teams, telemonitoring, video consultations and digital documentation. This does not replace the hospital, but rather complements it effectively. H@H is also seen as the 'missing link' to the principle of 'digital before outpatient before inpatient' – illnesses often heal more quickly at home, although this also requires greater health literacy amongst the population. The focus is on safety, quality of care and the patients' familiar surroundings, as well as psychosocial factors, which are crucial to the success of treatment.
With ELGA, e-medication and telemonitoring, Austria is increasingly well equipped technically. The main hurdles lie in the lack of, or unclear, legal frameworks; the separation of outpatient and inpatient funding; liability issues; staffing requirements; and ensuring equitable access in both urban and rural areas.
As a next step, it was recommended that pilot projects with low-risk indications – such as pneumonia or cellulitis/erysipelas – be implemented swiftly and supported by scientific research.

WORKSHOP 10 (BMFWF)

How can technology serve democracy? Digital humanism, democracy and peace

The workshop brought together experts from academia, international organisations and the professional sector to discuss how a people-centred and values-based approach to technology can safeguard democratic values, protect fundamental rights and contribute to peace. It became clear that the relationship between technology and democracy is ultimately not just a question of technological development, but also of values, rights, power and social responsibility. Bringing together perspectives from the fields of data science, digital humanism, critical internet studies, gender equality and PeaceTech highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to shaping technologies that strengthen democratic societies.
The lively participation in the World Café discussions showed that the participants' views were very much in line with the topics addressed by the panellists and that the audience shared the desire for a more human-centred approach to digital development.



Panel participants:
Joan Donovan, Boston University
Peter Knees, TU Wien
Fariba Karimi, TU Graz / Complexity Science Hub
Gerda Binder, UNICEF
Nathan Coyle, AIT
Moderation: Elka Xharo, FH Wien der WKW



FFG Beyond Talks

How do innovative ideas emerge at the intersection of the arts, business, science and technology? Together with experts from various disciplines, the discussion focused on how interdisciplinary collaboration opens up new perspectives, what challenges this presents, and what factors contribute to the success of such collaborations.

WORKSHOP 11 (WKO)

Bringing digital sovereignty to businesses at scale



Panel participants:
Markus Haas, CEO, SEPTISYS GmbH
Esther Görnemann, Weizenbaum Institut, Berlin
Anne Lidgard, Senior Advisor, Vinnova
Patricia Grimm-Hajek, Bundeskanzleramt
Moderation: Mikolaj Norek, Außenwirtschaft Austria
Schlussworte: Mikael Anzén, schwedisches Außenministerium

This workshop centred on the question of how digital sovereignty can evolve from a strategic objective into everyday practice within organisations. The focus was on Europe's dependencies in the areas of digital infrastructure, software, artificial intelligence and data, as well as on the question of how SMEs in particular can deploy sovereign digital solutions rapidly, cost-effectively and on a large scale.
Funding instruments, test and experimentation environments, public-private partnerships and innovation-oriented public procurement were identified as key levers for the transition to widespread economic application.
The conclusion: digital sovereignty does not arise through isolation, but through concrete choices and the ability to utilise these economically. To achieve this, technological alternatives must be made available, expertise built up, demand aggregated, and successful solutions from pilot projects brought into widespread economic use. If Europe focuses on its strengths, expands cooperation and shifts its focus from regulation to implementation and scaling up, digital sovereignty can become a practical locational

WORKSHOP 12 (ÖAW/BMLV/AIT)

Quantum technologies for dual-use aplications: From innovation to sovereignty

This workshop focused on the strategic importance of quantum technologies as dual-use technologies at the interface between science, industrial applications, and security and defence. The aim was to link current technological developments with issues of industrial scaling, critical technological dependencies and Europe's technological sovereignty. It became very clear that, whilst scientific excellence forms the indispensable foundation, it is not sufficient on its own to ensure technological sovereignty. Rather, the transition from research findings to scalable and operational technologies is crucial.
Overall, the workshop underlined the importance of close collaboration between science, industry, the public sector and security and defence stakeholders. Europe's key challenge lies in consistently translating scientific excellence into scalable technological capabilities and strengthening strategically relevant dual-use technologies. To this end, the workshop provided important impetus for further cooperation at both the Austrian and European levels.



Panel participants:
Introduction: Rudolf Zauner (BMLV), Josef Eberhardsteiner (ÖAW-BMLV-Kommission), Andreas Kugi (AIT)
Francesca Ferlaino, Scientific Director, IQOQI Innsbruck (ÖAW)
Thierry Debuisschert, Quantum Sensors Expert, THALES
Nathalie Guichard, European Defence Agency (EDA)
Hannes Hübel, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology
Philip Walther, QUBO Technology
Moderation: Christian Resch, BMLV

Falling Walls Lab

At the Falling Walls Lab, talented researchers present their research ideas in a three-minute pitch. As winners of the two national qualifying rounds, **Claudia Steinbach** (Vienna University of Technology) and **Emily Bezerra Alexandre** (Silicon Austria Labs) represented Austria at the Falling Walls Lab final on 9 November in Berlin. The first to offer her congratulations was jury chair **Helga Nowotny.** The Vienna qualifying round was organised by ACR, Complexity Science Hub, Fraunhofer Austria, CDG, LBG, the Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences and xista innovation GmbH.



SPECIAL EVENT GAIA-X-HUB AUSTRIA & PLATTFORM INDUSTRIE 4.0

Meet the builders: Who is responsible for implementing digital sovereignty?



To build a house, you need bricklayers; to commission a solar power system, you need electricians. To be digitally capable, we need IT companies; they are the architects of digital sovereignty. The range of services on offer is diverse, extending from traditional IT support to the creation of entire data spaces. This special event focused on the question: What building blocks do Austrian IT companies provide for digital sovereignty? Where are these already fit for purpose, where do the challenges lie, and where are compromises unavoidable?

SPECIAL EVENT BMLV

A resilient energy supply and energy self-sufficiency for Austria's future

This breakfast session brought together experts from the worlds of politics, defence, research, industry and technology. The focus was on how Austria can make its energy supply resilient and crisis-proof, and keep critical systems operational even in the event of supply disruptions, including blackouts.



SPECIAL EVENT TU AUSTRIA

TU Austria Talent Breakfast



At the TU Austria Talent Breakfast, leading companies provided valuable insights into their working culture and career opportunities. Interested students were able to discover what drives today's industry leaders – and make important contacts for their future.

SPECIAL EVENT AMS OSRAM

How digital photonics unlocks a new wave of innovation

The ams OSRAM breakfast event offered visitors a whole new perspective: they were able to discover the company's innovations in the fields of optical interconnect technologies and wearable health monitoring solutions. There were also presentations on how innovative semiconductor solutions are produced on a large scale.



PLENARY SESSION 3

Dual-Use Technologies



Nathalie Guichard (European Defence Agency), Polyvios Hadjiyiangou (European Cybersecurity Competence Centre, ECCC), Marco Protti (Leonardo) and Andreas Knopp (University of the German Armed Forces, Munich) discussed the topic 'Dual-use technologies: innovation, security and spillovers'.

The first day of the Technology Talks Austria 2026 conference concluded with a focus on the growing importance of dual-use technologies – from AI and quantum computing to semiconductors, robotics, space exploration and cyber security.

Chief of the General Staff **Harald Vodosek** emphasised three priorities: greater speed, stronger innovation ecosystems and responsible technology development. Research must move more quickly into testing, procurement and operational application.

Nathalie Guichard from the European Defence Agency underlined the importance of technological sovereignty without adopting an isolationist mindset. Europe must reduce its dependencies. At the same time, long-term investment in research is needed: innovation is both a sprint and a marathon.

During the panel discussion, **Polyvios Hadjiyiangou** (ECCC), **Marco Protti** (Leonardo) and **Andreas Knopp** (University of the German Armed Forces, Munich) discussed implementation. Hadjiyiangou called for stronger European networking and clear pathways from research to application. Protti highlighted AI as a key technology and pointed to the opportunities for cross-fertilisation between civilian and military markets. Knopf highlighted AI, semiconductors and space technology as strategic technology sectors. There was consensus that fragmented markets, a lack of funding and individual national interests are holding back progress. The future of European resilience lies in shared technological foundations, secure supply chains and the ability to translate innovation more quickly into operational solutions.

PLENARY SESSION 4

Technological Sovereignty and Resilience



Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Security and Defence), Jakob Edler (Director of Fraunhofer ISI), Andrea Schenker-Wicki (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Basel) and Lars Reger (CTO of NXP Semiconductors).

Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (MEP) emphasised in her keynote address that economic interdependence alone is no longer a sufficient basis for security. Europe must reduce critical dependencies, make infrastructure resilient and safeguard technological capabilities from research through to industrial production.

Jakob Edler (Fraunhofer ISI) stressed that technological sovereignty must not be confused with self-sufficiency. Europe must strike a balance between openness, efficiency, security and strategic priorities. At the same time, European coordination, common standards and political legitimacy are crucial.

The discussion with **Andrea Schenker-Wicki** (University of Basel) and **Lars Reger** (NXP Semiconductors) explored the practical implementation in greater depth. Reger advocated global partnerships, European research and production networks, and trustworthy technologies. Schenker-Wicki emphasised academic freedom and the 'third mission' of universities: knowledge must be channelled more effectively into societal impact, start-ups and technology transfer.

There was consensus that Europe can only capitalise on its strengths through collaboration, speed and long-term investment. In doing so, technological transformation must not leave socially disadvantaged groups behind. The panellists identified the following as key issues crucial to Europe's future: sustainable digital infrastructure, freedom of research, cooperation across the boundaries of academia and industry, and the lessons to be learnt from technological innovation in Ukraine.

PLENARY SESSION 5

European Frameworks for Innovation, Scaling and Impact

How can Europe better translate its strong research base into industrial value creation? After **Tatiana Lopez Garrido** had outlined the planned architecture of the next European Research Framework Programme, FP10, and the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), as well as the links between them, **Jesus Valero**, using hydrogen as an example, and **Sabine Herlitschka,** using quantum computing as an example, highlighted where Europe's innovation journey is currently stalling.

Jana Kolar, an expert in research infrastructures, pointed out that the challenges vary depending on the technology.

Christian Ehler warned against the notion of a 'seamless' innovation journey. Innovation, he said, is fundamentally iterative, complex and fraught with many setbacks. In addition to public funding programmes, Europe needs a functioning internal market and capital market, as well as better coordination of national and European investments.

To conclude, the key areas for action were highlighted: Valero called for greater speed, Herlitschka for 'China Speed' and agile partnerships. Kolar cited faster decision-making and greater European expertise, whilst Lopez Garrido called for less fragmentation and a stronger single market.

Christian Ehler advocated for greater ambition, less bureaucracy and the protection of an independent research budget. The common message: Europe's challenge is not merely the funding of research, but the ability to turn knowledge into industrial strength more quickly, in a more coordinated manner and with higher standards.



Christian Ehler (European Parliament/ ITRE), Tatiana Lopez Garrido (European Commission/DG GROW), Jesus Valero (Tecnalia, EARTO), Sabine Herlitschka (Infineon Austria/IV) and Jana Kolar (research infrastructure expert).

PLENARY SESSION 6

National Innovation Systems

The closing panel at Technology Talks Austria compared the Austrian framework conditions with those of Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland. **Malin Frenning** (RISE) attributed Sweden's strength to four key factors: trust, close collaboration between research, industry and the public sector, an international outlook, and a high degree of openness towards new technologies. **Annelieke van der Giessen** (AWTI) emphasised that it is not merely the level of R&D expenditure that is decisive, but how it is used. The Netherlands combines stable core funding with competitive grants, interdisciplinary approaches and a broad policy mix. **Dominique Foray** from EPFL highlighted two 'pillars' of Switzerland's innovation system: the widespread adoption of new technologies through vocational training, universities of applied sciences and innovation intermediaries; and cutting-edge research and radical innovation at leading research universities. He also referred to regional clusters and the principle of 'flexicurity'. From an Austrian perspective, **Georg Knill** (IV) emphasised the existing strength of the domestic innovation system, but also the need to improve implementation and speed. **Theresia Vogel** (FORWIT) particularly highlighted the gap between research and the market. Austria could learn from early adopters, targeted public procurement and a stronger international focus. In the European context, the panellists called for greater cooperation rather than 27 parallel innovation systems. Shared infrastructure, cross-border value chains and European funding could pool existing strengths.



Malin Frenning (CEO of RISE), Annelieke van der Giessen (Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation), Dominique Foray (EPFL Lausanne), Theresia Vogel (FORWIT) and Georg Knill (President of the Federation of Austrian Industries).

Food for Thought: 10 Impulses for the Innovation Ecosystem

Turning research and innovation potential into a lasting strength: Europe boasts excellent research, innovative start-ups and a strong industrial sector. It is crucial to develop these into globally successful companies and generate industrial value, whilst at the same time securing technological leadership through long-term capacity-building, high-performance research infrastructures and critical mass.

Ensuring access to critical resources: Technological sovereignty requires reliable access to critical raw materials, energy and intermediate goods. Europe must reduce one-sided dependencies, promote the circular economy and substitution, and make its supply chains more resilient through diversified international partnerships.

Bringing research and industry closer together: Scientific excellence must be translated more quickly into technological and economic impact – through seamless transfer pathways between universities, non-university research organisations, start-ups and industry, as well as through better opportunities for demonstration, testing and scaling up.

Greater speed: In the global technology race, speed is increasingly becoming a decisive competitive factor. Europe must speed up decision-making and approval processes, mobilise investment more quickly and scale up successful technologies more rapidly.

Mobilising growth capital: A deeper and more integrated European capital market, more private growth capital and attractive exit opportunities are crucial to enabling innovative companies in Europe to scale up.

Strengthening technological sovereignty: Technological sovereignty does not mean self-sufficiency, but rather Europe's ability to make decisions and take action independently when it comes to critical technologies, and to possess the necessary expertise and capacity to do so – whilst remaining open to trustworthy international partnerships.

Focusing on European strengths: Europe does not need to be a leader in every technology, but should build up critical mass and establish international leadership in those areas where scientific excellence, industrial strength and strategic relevance converge.

Taking dual-use potential into account from a strategic perspective: Many key technologies are relevant to both civilian and security and defence applications. These interdependencies should be taken into account at an early stage, and security should be factored in from the outset.

Building resilience right from the start: Critical infrastructure and technological systems must be designed to be robust, adaptable and secure from the outset; this also includes diversified supply chains and reliable access to critical technologies.

Thinking of Europe as a single market: Technology companies need a European home market in which they can scale up rapidly. To achieve this, national fragmentation and regulatory barriers must be reduced, and strategic investment must be coordinated more closely at European level.

Community & Connections

SPECIAL EVENT

EXHIBIT

Numerous exhibitors took the opportunity to showcase their work at Technology Talks Austria 2026 in the foyer and catering area of Hall E at the MuseumsQuartier Vienna.





















Get-Together: Visitors exchanged views in a relaxed atmosphere at the get-together. The evening, which was supported by the City of Vienna, was opened by Vienna's Deputy Mayor **Bettina Emmerling,** Member of the Provincial Parliament **Omar Al-Rawi** and AIT Supervisory Board Chair **Peter Schwab.**



Press conference: Peter Hanke, Minister for Technology (BMIMI); **Georg Knill,** President of the IV; **Eva-Maria Holzleitner,** Minister for Science (BMFWF); and **Florian Frauscher,** Head of Section (BMWET) addressed media representatives on the key topics of Technology Talks Austria 2026.



Save the Date: Brigitte Bach and **Andreas Kugi** (with moderator **Cornelia Ertl** in the centre) also announced the dates for the next Technology Talks Austria: 9 and 10 September 2027.

Technology Talks Austria by AIT

10.-11. September *2026*
MuseumsQuartier Wien

Empowering Europe – Technological Leadership for a Resilient Future

TEC26 REVIEW & TEC27 DATE
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