

# news REGION

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## António Guterres

UN High Commissioner  
for Refugees

11 July 2015



We live in a dangerous world, and one of its symptoms is displacement. It is a symptom but is also a relevant indicator of broader humanitarian, social, economic, political and security problems of our times. We recently published the statistics of 2014, and at the end of last year we had 59.5 million people displaced by conflict in the world. Roughly two thirds were internally displaced, and one third refugees. Sometimes the internally displaced live much worse lives than refugees because their government, that is supposed to protect them, can be part of their problem.

I believe the day before yesterday we have reached 150,000 people coming to Europe by boat. 150,000 people seems – and it is – a meaningful number, but let's not forget that we have today 4 million Syrian refugees, just Syrian refugees, and that a country like Lebanon has one-third of its population, as I mentioned, Syrian or Palestinian.

But in any case, it is an important challenge for Europe. Last year Europe had about 600,000 asylum requests. This corresponds more-or-less to 1 per 1000 of the European Union population. Now, think about an island with 1000 people, and if one person comes to that island, we cannot say that the island has not the capacity to absorb that person.

So the first thing we should have is a sense of proportion of what we are discussing. It's a huge challenge for Europe, it's a meaningful movement of people, but it is not something comparable with the impacts that countries like Lebanon or Turkey or Jordan or Cameroon or Ethiopia or Kenya are having at the present moment. We need to avoid the kind of schizophrenic discussion that sometimes exists in Europe, namely about migration.

The problem is that we are now witnessing a movement within this displacement into Europe. It started essentially in the Central Mediterranean, and I would say it started with the majority of people moving because of economic reasons; it was essentially a migration mo-

vement with some refugees, as I mentioned, in the Central Mediterranean. Of course we have seen the marine rescues of last year and then all the difficulties of the beginning of the year, but finally I believe the European Union has increased its capacity to rescue at sea. Now lives are being saved in a much more effective way, and that was for us a first priority in any circumstance.

But things are shifting. The arrivals in Greece are now bigger than the arrivals in Italy, and even if we count from the beginning of the year until now, the majority of the 150,000 already came to Greece. Greece has no capacity at all, either of reception or of integration of people at the present moment. The reception system of Greece has 1100 spaces. Last weekend, 1900 people came to Greece. This gives you an idea of the chaos that exists at the present moment in Greece in relation to the arrivals in the European Union.

Obviously in this situation, and with the worsening of the living conditions of Syrians in the neighbouring countries, 65% of the arrivals to Greece are already Syrians and 85% are from conflict countries, which means that what we are witnessing is less and less of a migration movement and more and more progressively a refugee movement. Which of course highlights all the obligations that Europe has in relation to international refugee law and in relation to the European legislation in itself.

The drama is that people coming to Greece then tend to move onwards. The borders are with Bulgaria, and as you know Bulgaria has had all the difficulties and problems that are well-known, and there is kind of a fence at the Bulgarian border, then the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that also has the vulnerabilities that are known. The next is Serbia and the next is Hungary which has just announced the creation of a wall and a certain number of other very restrictive measures.

Which means that we are going to see, in the months to come, a very complex problem of movements of people from Turkey to Greece and through the Western Balkans, for which I believe Europe needs to be prepared, and Europe needs to have a comprehensive response.

I think we need a European approach, and a comprehensive European approach. First of all, rescue at sea needs to be maintained; saving lives remains a key humanitarian objective that cannot be denied. At the same time, we need to massively support Italy, Greece, and the countries in transit – in between – in order for them to be able to offer proper conditions of reception and proper conditions of integration in their societies, or at least of transit in a humane perspective.

But we also need to do a number of other things. It's essential to crack down more effectively on smugglers and traffickers, and what we have been doing until now is not enough. But cracking down on smugglers and traffickers can only be effective if at the same time we create more legal avenues to come into Europe, espe-

cially for people in need of protection. That is related to resettlement opportunities; that is linked to humanitarian admissions, and obviously two countries in Europe have had the biggest burden on that: Germany and Sweden.

Germany and Sweden received last year 43% of the asylum requests in Europe. There is no fair distribution of the situation within the European Union. We need more legal avenues also in visa policies, in family reunification programmes, and at the same time we need to make sure that a mechanism of responsibility and solidarity is created.

But at the same time we need to recognise that the countries of entry have not the capacity to deal with such a huge problem. We need to have an effective mechanism of solidarity within the European Union. The relocation proposed that was presented was only for 40,000, and was also on a voluntary basis.

Finally, it would be very important also to address root causes. We know that the root causes in relation to the prevention of conflict are difficult, but at least in development cooperation policies a lot can be done. European development cooperation very rarely takes into account human mobility. Spain has been quite successful with its policy in relation to Western Africa, in which a lot of things have been done in order to create the conditions for the populations there to have conditions to stay and not to be forced to move. But in general development cooperation doesn't take into account human mobility or the prevention of displacement.

I think that it would be very important to look seriously into what Europe is doing in countries of origin, countries of first asylum, and countries of transit, in order to increase there the capacity to absorb populations in distress, to give them opportunities, and to be able to reduce the flows.

Having said this, it is clear that in relation to conflict situations the respect for the protection instruments that international law has established will also need to be maintained and Europe needs to remain a continent of asylum.

It is my belief that this will happen. There are some distressing indications of rising xenophobia in some societies and more and more difficulties for societies to understand the values of tolerance, of diversity, and of the fact that societies will become multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious. But at the same time I also see a lot of very dedicated organisations in civil societies, and several political leaders in different European countries, that are strongly committed to make sure that Europe remains a continent of asylum, and that Europe can have a comprehensive approach to this problem based on a common responsibility, but also a common solidarity.

Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/55ba370f9.html>, (Excerpts from speech)  
Photo: US Mission Geneva, flickr

**COVER:** Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs Sebastian Kurz holding a speech at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IRE in Vienna.

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## Broadband Networks

IRE-expert conference on Broadband Networks, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 in Linz, Austria:

# Putting data on highways instead of man

The development of broadband and high-speed internet connections is crucial for the quality of a location. Only with access to high speed internet, rural and border regions remain competitive. An efficient telecommunication infrastructure contributes to the development of interactive technologies, growth and innovation. Best-practice examples for the development of regional and local IT and business locations on the way into the new digital age were presented at the IRE-conference "Broadband supply for regions and cities as precondition for the reduction of regional disparities" on 28th April 2015 in the Power Tower of the Upper Austria regional infrastructure company Energie AG in Linz, Austria.

### Avoid two-class-system in digital supply

The European Union, national governments, federal states, regions and municipalities have to take all necessary measures in order to prevent a two-class-system in terms of digital supply, urged the chairman of the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE) **Franz Schausberger** at the IRE expert conference. The supply of remote, peripheral and rural regions with solid and ultra-fast information highways is an important structural and socio-political necessity and a part of the classical assignments of public services, comparable to the comprehensive supply of all areas with telephone lines in the 1970s. As part of E-Government, the public administrations offer an increasing number of online services. The aim is to provide faster services for citizens, said **Schausberger**. In addition, fast internet connections are relevant for tourists, who immediately ask for WIFI once they find an accommodation. When moving to a new home fast internet connection very often is more important to people than parking spaces.



from left: Werner Weihs-Raabl, Managing Director of the Group Infrastructure Finance at the Erste Group Bank AG, Franz Schausberger, IRE-Chairman, Josef Pühringer, Governor of Upper Austria and Alexander Schuster, CEO of ZTE Austria GmbH.



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## Comprehensive broadband supply in Upper Austria until 2022

The expansion of the fiber optic network in Upper Austria is underway – all municipalities have already been connected. The current challenge is to lay the fiber optic lines from the approximately 900 distribution points in the municipalities to the companies and private households, explained **Josef Pühringer**, governor of the state of Upper Austria. In urban areas broad band with private households is currently being expanded, which can be co-financed with EU-fundings. A new funding mechanism for companies was set up by the economic department of Upper Austria on 1st January 2015 whereby small and medium-sized enterprises are awarded up to fifty percent (max. € 5000) of non-repayable grants for the production of fiber optic connections. Altogether € 2.5 million are available for this purpose in 2015 and 2016.

The required investments are enormous: According to current calculations the large-scale expansion in Upper Austria amounts for about € 1.2 to 1.7 billion. The public sector alone cannot afford this, therefore, private investors are needed. Many examples in Austria show that the private sector promotes the broadband expansion – with, as well as without – the support of the public sector. However, private investors see no incentives for rural areas. Hence, peripheral regions need supporting measures financed by public subsidy programs.

## Top-speed and highest safety in the best data network

Upper Austria, as one of the first regions in Europe, offers a large-scale fiber optic network provided by "Energie AG Oberösterreich" and its partners. The 4.500 km long data network has connected



from left: Hans-Peter Wilhelmer, CEO of Fibre Network Construction GmbH, Anna Krzyżanowska from the EU-Commission in Brussels, Leo Windtner, General Director of Energie AG Oberösterreich and Alfred Ruzicka from the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology.

tion points in all municipalities of Upper Austria. Thanks to "Energie AG" Upper Austria is one of Europe's pioneering regions. Today's proceeding digitalization demands powerful broadband connections with 100 Mbit/s. A fiber optic connection combines supreme quality, almost unrestricted power and security and is the gateway to a new era of digital communication. The fiber optic network has been recently opened for private households. The data network of the "Energie AG" offers home-office-jobs with unrestricted information access and possibilities for telephone and video conference

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rences for the first time, which until now were not available in this quality. "Data, should be put on the highway, not men." said **Leo Windtner**, Director General of Energie AG.

## Public-private partnerships for financing

In Germany and France private funds have already been used for the expansion of the broadband network in recent years. The broadband expansion cannot solely be financed by the public sector, if a satisfying and modern quality is expected. This has also been recognized by the EU, which has set up so-called "Project Bond". The Project Bond is an initiative by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), which finances the broadband networks for municipalities and cities, reported **Werner Weihs-Raabl**, Managing Director of the Group Infrastructure Finance at Erste Bank AG. The aim is to make large investments in infrastructure projects attractive for capital market investors. According to the European Commission € 2 trillion must be invested in infrastructure in order to fulfil the objectives of Europe's 2020 strategy.

The Project Bond Initiative mobilizes private funds from lead partners who carry out eligible infrastructural projects. The eligible projects are mostly public private partnerships. The funding period is 20 to 25 years. "Broadband access is a basic service and the investment pays off", added **Weihs-Raabl**.

## Broadband paves way for smart regions

Broadband supply with ultra-fast data connection is essential for the competitiveness of an area. Smart applications based on a stable infrastructure could be established in fields such as education, administration, tourism and transport. **Alexander Schuster**, CEO of ZTE Austria explained: "Smart regions are not a trend or even luxury. Densely populated regions in China and South America feel the pressure to make social interaction more stable. And that is exactly what technology does – provide innovative solutions in order to supply people nationwide, reduce disparities and minimize the social and economic gaps." Even Austria is facing the challenge of strengthening its regions, linking business locations nation-wide and creating a future vision by investing in broadband expansion. "It is crucial not to miss out on the technological development. A smart Austria is within reach if it sets the right course for the future now. The broadband billion is an important step towards Austria's digitalization and improvement of competitiveness", said **Schuster**. The technology expert sees the cooperation between regions, the federal government, the telecommunications industry, technological neutrality and innovative consortium solutions as an important precondition for an efficient broadband expansion.

## EU financing of the expansion

The broadband infrastructure is also a top priority for the Juncker Commission, reported Anna Krzyżanowska from the EU Commission in Brussels. Half of all households in the EU are to be supplied with 100 Mbit/s by 2020. The Commission offers three different financial instruments for the period of 2014 -2020: the European Structural and Investment Fund with more than € 6 billion, the



from left: Ernst-Olav Ruhle of SBR-net Consulting AG, Marcus Grausam, Chief Technical Officer of A1 Telekom, Jan Trionow, CEO of Hutchison Drei Austria and Christian Kohr from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) with € 150 million and Juncker's investment plan with € 315 billion. Still, a major part of the funding needs to be made available from the federal government to position Austria among the top ICT nations like Finland, Singapore and Sweden.

Currently 81 percent of all Austrians use the internet, most of them use the basic access with 2 Mbit/s, only about 48,2 percent of Austria's citizens have a 100 Mbit/s connection.

Therefore, the working program of the Austrian Federal Government "Digitale Offensive" for 2013-2018 has been implemented to facilitate the nationwide availability of high-performance broadband infrastructure, explained **Alfred Ruzicka** from the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology. The broadband billion for the period of 2015 to 2020 was adopted. The concrete objective is to supply 70 percent of households with an ultra-fast broadband connection by 2019 and to reach almost all households by 2020.

In other panel discussions experts from the telecommunication sector such as **Marcus Grausam**, the Chief Technical Officer of A1 Telekom, **Ernst-Olav Ruhle** of SBR-net Consulting AG and **Jan Trionow**, CEO of Hutchison debated on future developments for broadband coverage in rural areas.

The challenges of Open Networks in terms of construction, operation and financing were analyzed by **Hans-Peter Wilhelmer**, CEO of Fibre Network Construction GmbH, **Christian Kohr** of the European Investment Bank (EIB) from Luxembourg, **Henri Piganeau** of Cube Infrastructure Funde from Paris as well as **Huib van Etteken** of OpenNet Europe from Amsterdam.

The aim of the conference was to highlight best-practice examples for the development of regional and local IT and business locations on the way into the new digital age. The Institute of the Regions of Europe had organized its first broadband conference a year ago, on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in Hallwang near Salzburg, Austria.

*It is crucial not to miss out on the technological development.*

Alexander Schuster,  
CEO of ZTE Austria

# Supplying broadband in the regions: prerequisite for removing regional disparities

by Alexander Schuster, CEO of ZTE Austria

Nobody would dispute how important it is to supply broadband services to the regions of Europe and Austria in order to keep up with current digital developments. Countries and regions need ultra-fast internet as a prerequisite for modern applications. In addition, smart applications are already being made available that are bringing about considerable improvements in the areas of education, administration, tourism and transport. The future of successful regions therefore depends on ultra-fast data connections.

In order to provide the best possible support for state subsidies as they are currently planned and rolled out in Europe, regions and the companies in the ICT sectors should put accompanying strategic preconditions in place or take active measures:

## Collaboration between countries and operators/network outfitters

Regions are the experts when it comes to creating a regional focus. In order to continue expanding networks into the future, regional planning and development, such as the creation of new technology centres, must be taken into account. Operators and network outfitters can in particular bring their expertise to bear in cooperation with the federal provinces, especially with regard to the optimisation of fibre optic and mobile telephony technologies.

## Technology neutrality

Regions need a mix of technologies: on the one hand a strong fixed network for business locations (commercial/industrial areas,



tourism regions), on the other mobile telephony, particularly for the rapid connection of remote areas. This ensures a comprehensive supply as well as brisk competition and thus good prices for consumers.

## Strategic public sector planning

Regions need a properly considered roadmap for their broadband initiatives, one that ensures the efficient use of resources. Failing to do this could result in support being given to random broad-

band infrastructure projects that ultimately generate less than sufficient benefit for users. The following three points must be taken into consideration in such a plan:

Avoiding a "funding patchwork". A central, countrywide funding agency at national level is absolutely essential for ensuring the efficient use of resources.

Ensuring the funding delivers tangible benefits is critical: it needs coordinated, integrated infrastructure development and operator concepts. A decoupling of the two components should not be fundable with regard to long-term profitability.

EU states should allow really innovative solutions for their regions: appropriate here would be, for example, operator consortia subject to anti-trust scrutiny in order to increase efficiency and offer a mix of technology.

Only those regions that award public funds for expanding broadband with a well-considered plan will actually obtain the quality of a "digitalisation infrastructure" that makes them competitive in Europe in terms of location policy.

## Vienna: Hub for telecommunications equipment and network solutions

Vienna as the hub for Eastern Europe: Since 2009, the Chinese technology firm ZTE Corporation, a leading developer, manufacturer and provider of state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment and network solutions, has been supporting more than 20 mobile telephony operators in the region from its Austrian regional centre - and the trend is rising. Among its major clients are the domestic mobile phone companies Telekom Austria, T-Mobile Austria and Hutchison Drei Austria. According to Alexander Schuster, CEO of ZTE Austria: "ZTE Austria is one of the most important locations for ZTE Corporation and at the same time the regional hub for the entire Eastern European area."

## Strong numbers: 500 network operators, 160 countries

ZTE Austria GmbH is the Austrian subsidiary of the international ZTE Corporation, a publicly listed global provider of telecommunications equipment and network solutions. Its comprehensive range of products covers practically all segments of the telecommu-

nications market, including mobile telephony, access and bearer networks, value-added services, terminal equipment and professional services. The company supplies innovative, customised products and services to over 500 operators in more than 160 countries and helps them to meet the changing requirements of their customers while achieving lasting growth in sales. ZTE invests ten percent of its annual turnover in research and development and plays a leading role in numerous international committees involved in the development of new telecommunications standards. Because the company places great importance on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), it is a member of the UN Global Compact.

The company is the only Chinese telecommunications supplier listed simultaneously on the Hong Kong and Shenzhen exchanges (H-shares, share code: 0763.HK / A-shares, share code: 000063.SZ).



# European broadband connections – a comparison of three countries

Research Paper by Stefanie Gaisbichler

The European integration is being discussed more and more. A reason for this might be that it affects the daily life of EU inhabitants to a greater extent nowadays than it did only some years ago. Within the EU it has been decided that the European integration should also be supported in the field of broadband internet. Therefore, the 'Digital Agenda for Europe'-strategy was developed in 2010. It is a part of the Europe 2020 goals and has to be realized, as the name already says, by 2020. The three main goals of the 'Digital Agenda for Europe' are the realization of a broadband penetration of 100 percent in all of the EU until 2013, broadband internet of more than 30 megabits per second should be used until 2020 and 50 percent or more households in the EU should use broadband internet of more than 100 megabits per second until 2020.

It is not only of advantage for the EU to have a good broadband connection, but also for the individual countries. It simplifies communication across borders and brings economic advantages. These are for instance a better and more sustainable development and a higher competitiveness. According to the European Commission, a higher broadband penetration rate increases the GDP by 1-1.5 per cent. Furthermore, the EU tries to maintain its leading role in this area with the new strategy. As a good broadband is determined by many aspects it is not easy to realize the plans. Each country must develop a suitable national broadband strategy and then try to realize it. Taking a closer look at this, one discovers that there are many different strategies throughout Europe, as the countries also have different approaches to similar obstacles. With the 'Digital Agenda

Toolbox' the European Commission offers help to the national and regional authorities when they face major difficulties.

For example, the three countries Belgium, Slovakia and Romania have completely different approaches. The European Union has made a ranking of all the countries, which shows the penetration and quality of broadband internet. In this ranking Denmark is the number one while Romania takes last place. Being in the twentieth place, Slovakia is closer to the middle, and Belgium is in the fifth place. In general, it cannot be said with one hundred percent certainty, which achievement of a country is due to a successful realisation of the strategy and which due to the natural development of the digital market. Because of this, one does not know for sure why the less developed countries in this area are still that far behind the EU average. Romania and Slovakia face the problems of huge rural areas and a relatively weak purchasing power. These are two aspects that make it really difficult for those two countries to reach the EU goals. Now their strategies have started to pay off and both countries are making huge steps towards the digital goals.

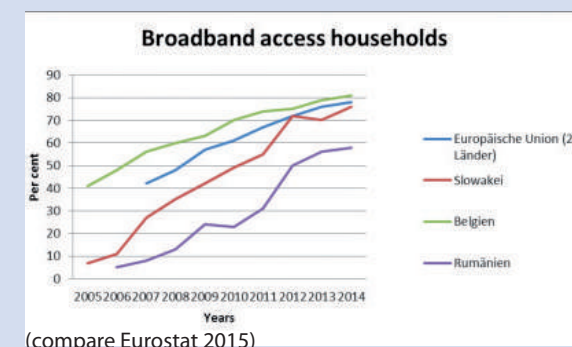
In the IT sector there are big differences between the countries. Belgium does not see a need to increase its number of technicians. This might be the case because Belgium always has had good circumstances. The country's geography and size are favourable for the installation of a broadband internet and its capital is the capital of the EU as well. In order to have a high penetration rate, Belgium has had to do less in comparison to the other two countries. Slovakia and Romania on the other hand understand the importance of

Belgium has a good broadband penetration, but the speed is not comparable to Romania's. Although, Slovakia's starting position is similar to Romania's, its strategy is more comparable to Belgium's.

At the moment, the Belgian authorities are digitalizing their documents in order to make them available online. In Romania this is of no importance and in Slovakia such online documents are used to put pressure on the inhabitants. This way they will be motivated to use these documents in their daily life and to get more familiar with the digital world. While Romania puts the emphasis on public internet, Slovakia and Belgium support the use of private internet. In Romania each village has 'telecentra', for instance in schools, where the Romanians have free access to broadband internet. The acquisition of broadband internet is still quite expensive in the two more eastern countries. For the realization of their strategy the Romanians have founded a new authority, the Belgians consider it to be the responsibility of the already existing authorities and the Slovaks have a more creative approach and see it as a part of the work of their Minister of Finance. Contrary to Belgium, where inhabitants have to inform themselves about changes in the broadband area, the Slovakian authorities publish this data, to keep the inhabitants always up to date. The illustration underneath shows the broadband access of the households in the chosen countries compared to the average access in the European Union.

(Compare Eurostat 2015)

Sources:  
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Conference on Industrial Heritage, 15<sup>th</sup> May in Novi Sad, Serbia:

# New creative spaces for cultural and economic development

Industrial built heritage represents a multidisciplinary field of research and practice, which is gaining importance. The entire territory of Serbia keeps the remains of old mines, factories, mills, canals, locks, rail facilities, warehouses and workers' colonies that are constant reminders of life and work throughout the past two centuries. Serbia's industrial heritage reflects a wider European heritage and reminiscence because the buildings and infrastructure were mostly built by engineers from different European countries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the growing interest, a large number of these facilities is neglected, abandoned, left to oblivion and gradual devastation. A large number of these buildings are not yet well understood and appropriately valorized, neither have they enjoyed legal protection.

The Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE) and Suburbium organized this conference focusing firstly, on the Schools of thought, research, preservation and promotion of industrial heritage, and secondly, on the revitalization of industrial heritage buildings in the context of sustainable development and building identity of local communities, cities, regions and nations.

A best-practice example was mentioned by the IRE-Chairman **Franz Schausberger**, who described the successful revitalization of the underground salt mine in Hallein, near Salzburg in Austria. It is the oldest mine in the world open to visitors and it became a museum in 1994. It operates successfully and offers 9 underground floors. With about 260.000 visitors per year it is one of the popular tourist attractions in the Salzburg Region.

The purpose of this conference was to contribute to the process of changing the current trend by influencing perception and sharing awareness of this significant industrial heritage fond that Serbia possesses. Examples of other European countries were presented, especially those where industrial heritage has become an important catalyst for social and economic development through their revitalization and their function in a wider contribution to the development of new creative space, art, tourism, small businesses and particularly identity of the local community. Additionally, the up-to-date results of studies, research and concrete actions in this field were presented by the international speakers from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Belgium, England, Romania, Hungary and Austria. The Conference was held under the patronage of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information of AP Vojvodina, which, for the past ten years, has strongly encouraged all purposeful activities in the field of industrial heritage preservation, especially those focused on recognition of the significance, conservation and efficient management of the industrial heritage resources. Member of the Provincial Government for Culture and Public Information **Slaviša Grujić**, the IRE-Chairman **Franz Schaus-**

**berger** and the Rector of the University of Novi Sad PhD **Radovan Pejanović** inaugurated the conference. More than 130 participants attended this event.

Alongside the conference IRE Chairman **Franz Schausberger** met the Austrian Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management **Andrä Rupprechter**. Together with **Branislav Bugarski**, a member of the Government of Vojvodina responsible for inter-regional cooperation, local government and European Affairs, the economic situation in Serbia and the cooperation with Austria was discussed. The Federal Minister Rupprechter attended the International Agricultural Fair, one of the most important in South-Eastern Europe, which was organized by the Austrian Agricultural Cluster (AAC) in Novi Sad. This year's fair was held under the title „Optimal way to use the agricultural Funds – Experience from Austria and chances for Serbia“ on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.



**Franz Schausberger**  
and **Slaviša Grujić**

The AAC - Austrian Agricultural Cluster - is an innovative association of Austrian companies, which have been successfully active in foreign trade for several years. Through the network of qualified companies in various fields of agriculture and food-processing, the AAC is a competent partner for all-in-solutions through the whole food-chain. Austria and Serbia intensify cooperation regarding cattle breeding. Both Ministers of Agriculture, **Andrä Rupprechter** and **Snezana Bogosavljevic Boskovic**, signed a corresponding memorandum of understanding in the Serbian City of Novi Sad.

## Austrian Cattle exporter Klinger active in Vojvodina

The first project was signed between one of the largest cattle exporters in Austria, the Lower Austrian cattle trading company Klinger, and the city of Zrenjanin in Vojvodina. In a first step, Klinger will provide Zrenjanin with 60 cattles. The animals from Austria will be settled largely to farmers in the region. „We want to revive the export of Austrian breeding cattle,“ says Rupprechter. These have declined lately. A new farm bill in Serbia also allows the purchase of livestock.

## Safe Export

With the new export initiative the Austrian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management aims at broadening the export business and make it crisis-proof. The Western Balkans, in particular EU candidate Serbia, are regarded as future markets for agriculture, forestry and environmental technology. In order to support the EU accession of the country and ensure the transfer of know-how, the Austrian agricultural attaché has relocated its office from Croatia to Serbia. „We want to support Serbia in getting the EU funds“, says **Christian Brawenz**. Serbia gets € 175 million for agricultural purposes as part of the pre-accession aid.



## Professional practice in Istria County within the framework of the Specialised Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds"

Within the framework of the Specialised Lifelong Learning Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds", a professional practice was held in Istria County, Croatia from 29<sup>th</sup> June to 2nd July 2015, on the basis of the signed Protocol of Cooperation between the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Istria County, and given the fact that Istria County proved to be an example of best practice in the use of EU funds. The visit was organised by the European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina with the support of the Istrian Cultural Agency and Mrs. **Aleksandra Vinkerlić**, Director.

In addition to the Fund's representatives, the participants were comprised of the attendees of the first generation of the Programme, representatives of the Provincial Secretariat for Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government, Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information, Assembly of AP Vojvodina and Radio Television of Vojvodina. The purpose of the visit was to familiarise the participants with the work and experience of the county in programmes enhancing rural and regional development, as well as cultural and media development. An important segment of the study visit was acquaintance with the practical application of the gained knowledge and examples of best practice in the use of EU funds.



The study tour started with the visit to the Centre for EU and International Cooperation, in Bale, where the EU funded projects: "Revitas", "Heart of Istria", "Adriamuse", "Parenzana" and "Re.d Hill" were presented by Mrs. **Patrizia Bosich**, Head of the Administrative Department for International Cooperation and European Affairs, and Ms. **Bojana Puljko**, Senior Associate for International Projects. At the Historical and Maritime Museum of Istria, in Pula, the "HERA" project funded under the IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme was presented.

The following day, the study tour continued in Pazin with the visit to cultural institutions and associations in Pula: Alliance of Rojc Associations, Portal Kulturistra, Pula Film Festival, Metamedia Association, where the "Creative EU" project was presented, followed by the visit to the Agency for Rural Development of Istria Region (AZZRI), where the focus was on the Strategic Program of Rural Development for the Istria County, and to the Educational Gastro Centre of Istria, where the "KEY Q – A Key for the Quality in the Development and Responsible Value Build Up of Agro-Food Resources from Both Adriatic Coasts" project was introduced. At the House of Frescoes in Draguč, the host was Mr. **Vladimir Torbica**, Head of the Department of Culture of Istria, who presented the EU funded project "Revitas". In addition, the European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina explored the possibilities of future cooperation with the Istrian Development Agency (IDA) in Pula.

While meeting the study visit participants, **Viviana Benussi**, Deputy Prefect of Istra County and **Marin Grgeta**, Head of the De-

partment for Decentralization, Local and Regional Self-Government, Planning and Construction at Region of Istria, emphasized that the cooperation between Istria County and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina could be enhanced by new activities and joint projects.

The Specialised Lifelong Learning Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds" is being implemented by the European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina, in cooperation with the University of Novi Sad. The objective is information dissemination on EU processes and regional policies, as well as on the importance and opportunities for accessing EU funds, so as to obtain an adequate analysis of regional development in the framework of EU integration, with the aim of making relevant decisions and bringing conclusions in terms of project management and programme and project documentation development in the EU accession process. The Programme is aimed at the employees of local self-government units, provincial administration, development agencies, public utility enterprises, educational and cultural institutions, civil society organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs, universities, research institutes and other institutions that may be beneficiaries of EU funds. The first generation of attendees completed the first semester in June 2015 and the second semester is due in September 2015, whereas the second generation is to start the programme in the autumn 2015.

**European Affairs Fund of Autonomous Province of Vojvodine**  
[www.vojvodinahouse.eu](http://www.vojvodinahouse.eu)



## Politics and business celebrate 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IRE

The Institute of the Regions of Europe has celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015 with members and partners of its network as well as high-ranking guests from politics, diplomacy and economics in the Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. The Institute was founded in Salzburg in 2004 by former Salzburg Governor Prof. Dr. **Franz Schausberger**, who has created a forum for regions, municipalities and international companies in Europe.

The main aim was to point out the increasing importance of regions and municipalities for European politics and for economic development. „As a historian I know that ten years is not a very long time, as the Head of the Institute of the Regions of Europe I have learned how much can be done in ten years, how much work is involved in the numerous activities and that it is not self-evident that such an institute has successfully survived for ten years," said Prof. Dr. **Franz Schausberger** in his welcome address. Austria's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Integration **Sebastian Kurz**, Head of the European Commission Representation in Austria Dr. **Johann Solgruber** and former Austrian Chancellor Dr. **Wolfgang Schüssel** congratulated the IRE on its round jubilee.

A keynote speech on „Europe's future – a way out of the crisis" was held by the former German finance minister and „Father of the Euro" Dr. **Theo Waigel**. „It would be bearable for Europe if Greece left the Eurozone, but it would be a disaster for Greece", he said and continued: „The entry of Greece into the euro zone was a mistake, I have always turned it down in my term of office." **Waigel** reported on the history of the Euro. He gave an insight into the former negotiations, which he conducted as former German Minister of Finance. Another speech was delivered by the German television journalist and former Moscow correspondent Prof. Dr. **Gabriele Krone-Schmalz** on the topic „Russia, the Ukraine and the West."

The ceremony was officially closed with the European anthem.

Photos: Franz Neumayr/ MMV



from left: Prof. Dr. Franz Schausberger, Dr. Theo Waigel, Prof. Dr. Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, Federal Minister Sebastian Kurz und Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel





# Oberösterreichische Konjunktur- und Wachstumsinitiative

Als Reaktion auf die hartnäckige Konjunkturdelle in Oberösterreich aufgrund der schwierigen europäischen Situation haben alle vier im Oö. Landtag vertretenen Parteien in der Landtagsitzung am 18. Juni 2015 einstimmig eine Konjunktur- und Wachstumsinitiative beschlossen.

Die Förderungsmittel sind seit 1. Juli 2015 freigegeben und stehen bis Ende 2016 zur Verfügung. Insgesamt wird durch die erwartete Hebelwirkung bei Förderungen von 1:3 ein Investitionsvolumen von 348,65 Millionen Euro durch das Konjunkturpaket und von 156,47 Millionen Euro durch die Wachstumsinitiative erwartet.

## Das Konjunkturpaket

Für das Konjunkturpaket werden 10 Prozent der frei verfügbaren Mittel, die im Budget 2015 gesperrt waren, nun für ausschließlich investive Ausgaben zur Verfügung gestellt. Diese Fördermittel von 32 Mio. Euro sollen in der Hebelwirkung zu einer wirksamen Investitionssumme von 96 Mio. Euro führen.

Weitere gesperrte und bisher nicht freigegebene Übertragungsmittel aus früheren Budgetjahren in Höhe von 20 Mio. Euro werden für Investitionsförderungen bereitgestellt. Die wirksame Investitionssumme beläuft sich auf 60 Mio. Euro.

Durch das Investitionsvorziehpaket werden zudem geplante investive Projekte unterstützt, die bereits zwischen Juli 2015 und Dezember 2016 vorzeitig umgesetzt werden können. Die Fördermittel belaufen sich auf 45 Mio. Euro aus Landesbeiträgen, die eine Investitionssumme von 135 Mio. Euro bewirken sollen. Zusätzlich stehen noch 25 Mio. Euro an Bedarfszuweisungsmitteln als Ergän-



Die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen und die Stärkung des Wirtschaftsstandortes Oberösterreich stehen im Mittelpunkt.



Insgesamt soll die Konjunktur- und Wachstumsinitiative des Landes OÖ ein Investitionsvolumen von über 500 Mio. Euro auslösen. Fotos: Land OÖ

zungsfinanzierung zur Verfügung. Im Rahmen des Investitionsvorziehprojekts werden Investitionen in allen Ressorts des Landes OÖ gefördert.

Die Drittmittelmächtigung der Landesimmobiliengesellschaft wird zur Gänze ausgeschöpft und durch das Konjunkturprogramm um 20 Mio. Euro aufgestockt. Insgesamt stehen für das Bauprogramm damit 32,65 Mio. Euro zur Verfügung, die unter anderem für Investitionen bei Schulen, Museen, Amtsgebäuden und Photovoltaikanlagen herangezogen werden.

Die Mittel aus dem Programm können nur für Investitionsförderungen in Anspruch genommen werden, und die Baumaßnahmen müssen bis Ende 2016 im Wesentlichen gesetzt sein. Bevorzugt gefördert werden Projekte mit vergleichsweise größerer Hebelwirkung, um ein größtmögliches Investitionsvolumen zu erzielen.

## Die Wachstumsstrategie

Mit der Wachstumsstrategie wiederum wird durch vielfältige Maßnahmen, Förderungen und Initiativen aktive Arbeitsmarkt- und Standortpolitik betrieben. Es werden stimulierte Investitionen von rund 157 Mio. Euro und ein generierter Beschäftigungseffekt von bis zu 6.332 Arbeitsplätzen erwartet.

Insgesamt soll die gesamte Konjunktur- und Wachstumsinitiative durchschnittlich rund 11.000 zusätzliche Arbeitsplätze für die Jahre 2015 und 2016 schaffen. Mit diesen starken Impulsen sollen der heimische Arbeitsmarkt spürbar entlastet und Oberösterreichs Wirtschaft merklich gestärkt werden.

Entgeltliche Einschaltung



## CoR adopted opinion on European Union's enlargement strategy:

# Call for further regionalising and decentralising reforms in enlargement countries

The European Committee of the Regions adopted its recommendations for the European Union's enlargement strategy "Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2014-2015" on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The opinion, drafted by Prof. **Franz Schausberger** (AT/EPP), Delegate of the Region of Salzburg to the Committee of the Regions, analyses the situation in each of the candidate and potential candidate countries, aiming to facilitate the task of the local and regional authorities to prepare for their future responsibilities in the European Union, to obtain recognition of their role and to establish and develop contacts and cooperation with their EU counterparts.

The CoR shares the view of the European Commission on the need for a period of consolidation, but stresses that this must not result in a standstill. The period of five years must be understood as a phase of intense preparation and adoption of the policies required to meet the criteria for EU membership. A realistic prospect of EU membership is a key stabilising factor and an important incentive to implement the necessary political and economic reforms. The opinion underlines the fundamental role of local and regional representatives in the enlargement process and encourages enlargement countries in their decentralisation and regionalisation efforts.

„Without effective regional and municipal

administrations, it will be very difficult for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and especially for Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo [under UNSCR 1244] and Turkey to join the EU. It is therefore essential for local and regional representatives to become part of the accession process in good time. If this will not be accomplished, there will be dire consequences and problems regarding the implementation of EU policies and the use of European funds", said the rapporteur **Franz Schausberger**.

The CoR calls for the European Commission to exert more pressure on the subsidiarity principle and points to the need for further regionalising and decentralising reforms in the enlargement countries.

„It is absolutely crucial that the Commission goes into greater detail about local and regional self-government in its future enlargement strategy reports. In most accession countries, democratic institutions such as regional assemblies and governments, municipal councils and mayors and electoral processes must be brought up to European standards", stressed **Schausberger**.

The opinion underlines the necessity of strengthening democratic institutions and respecting fundamental rights and the rule of law, including fair electoral processes and proper functioning of parliaments, re-



Franz Schausberger with the President of the CoR, Markku Markkula (FIN).

gional assemblies and municipal councils, and a constructive and sustainable dialogue across the political spectrum. „Targeted action plans for the reform of regional and local authorities — such as those in Montenegro and Serbia — have resulted positively", **Schausberger** noted.

Source: CoR-press release



from left: Vice-President of the CoR and President of the Government of the German-speaking Community in Belgium Karl-Heinz Lambertz, CoR-rapporteur Franz Schausberger and expert Zuzana Kliska.

Strategic Partner of the IRE

**kapsch** >>>



**A PLACE WHERE  
IDEAS GROW**

**AND TURN INTO  
INNOVATION.**

Regional elections ▶ ▶ ▶

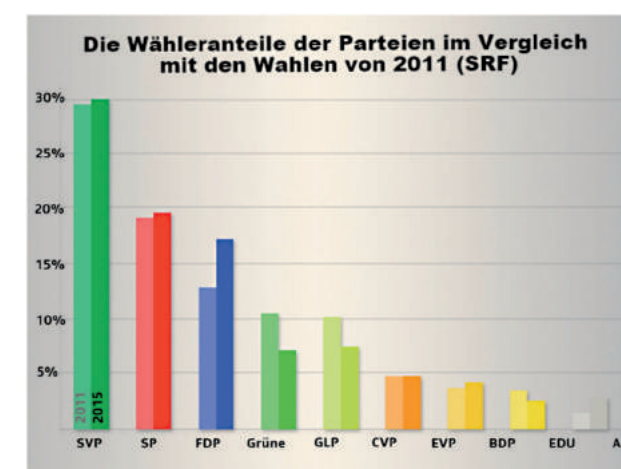
Regional elections ▶ ▶ ▶

Regional elections ▶ ▶ ▶

## Cantonal Elections in Zurich, Switzerland

### The big parties remain stable

For the first time since 1991, the liberal FDP (Free Democratic Party) has won votes and gained eight additional seats in the canton parliament of Zurich. However, there have been losses for the Green Party and the Green Liberals. The Greens have lost six, the Green Liberals five seats. SVP (Swiss People's Party), FDP and CVP (Christian Social Party) form the majority in the new parliament.



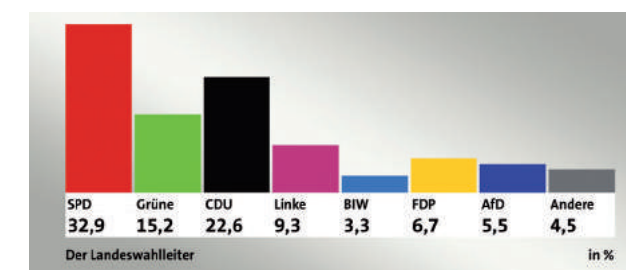
The FDP gained a plus of 4.39 percent at this year's cantonal elections of 12th April 2015 in Zurich. The Liberals already won the cantons of Baselland and Lucerne at the beginning of this year. It is the first election victory since 1991 for the Zurich FDP. With their election success the FDP won eight additional seats in the cantonal parliament. Only four years before, the FDP had lost six seats. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) won slightly more votes (+0.39 percent) and retains 54 seats. The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SP) has also gained 0.36 percent of the votes and gains one additional seat. The Green Liberals, who were the big winners four years ago, received 2.63 percent less votes and therefore lost 5 seats. The winner of the small parties is the party of the Left Alternative. It gained 1.63 percent meaning two additional seats in the Canton parliament. SVP, FDP and CVP will have more than 94 seats in the newly elected parliament and thus are able to form the absolute majority. Together they can implement their fiscal policy measures. The turnout reached a historic low of 32.7 percent. Four years ago it was at 35.5 percent. The cantonal elections in Baselland and Lucerne at the beginning of this year showed similar results. On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Swiss citizens will elect a new Swiss Parliament. The cantonal elections served as a first indicator.

Source: srf.ch, (bau/SDA)

## Elections in Bremen, Germany

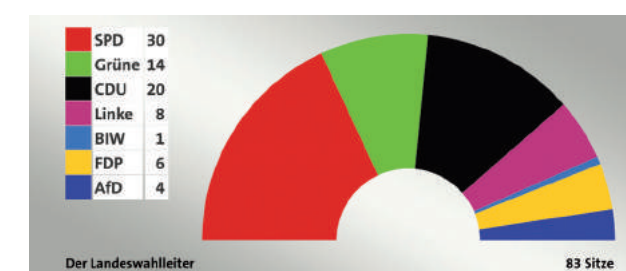
### Losses for Social-Democrats

Local elections were held in the state of Bremen, Germany, on 10th May 2015. Bremen is one of Germany's three city states and has been governed by the social-democratic SPD for more than seventy years. The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen is made up of two geographical separated parts: Bremen and Bremerhaven. In the last few years a coalition of the SPD and the Greens governed the smallest of Germany's states. But both parties registered serious losses at this year's elections. However, they still retain a slight majority. The coalition parties were surprised by the negative results. The SPD started its election campaign very confident and even relabelled its "election programme" into "government programme".



The results of the state elections changed Bremen's parliament (Bremische Bürgerschaft) tremendously. The liberal FDP (6.5 percent) and the Eurosceptic Alternative für Deutschland (5.5 percent) both entered the parliament; the far-left Die Linke even won 9.2 percent of the votes. The centre-right CDU gained 2.2 percent and stands at 22.6 percent, which equals twenty seats in the parliament. The SPD (32.9 percent) and the Greens (15.3 percent) together achieved 44 of the 83 seats. Even though they form a slight majority, this year's results are the worst in the SPD's history in Bremen. Jens Böhnens, the former mayor and SPD candidate drew his conclusion from the negative election result and resigned. Compared to the result in 2011, the SPD lost 5 percent and the Greens lost 7.2 percent of the votes.

The "Citizens in Rage" (BIW) benefit from a special regulation. Although the party only reached 3.3 percent of the votes (-0.4 percent compared to 2011), they remain in the parliament. This is possible





because the five-percent-threshold can be applied to only one part of the city. This means that 5 percent in Bremerhaven is sufficient. The BIW in the end even reached 6.5 percent.

The voter turnout was at about 50 percent. In 2011 still 65.5 percent of the voters had casted their votes.

Source (text): [tagesschau.de/inland/bremen-wahl-109.html](http://tagesschau.de/inland/bremen-wahl-109.html) heute. [reaktionen-nach-der-buergerschaftswahl-bremen-boehrsen-bleibt-buergermeister-mit-rot-gruen-38407548.html](http://reaktionen-nach-der-buergerschaftswahl-bremen-boehrsen-bleibt-buergermeister-mit-rot-gruen-38407548.html) source (Graphics): [wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-05-10-LT-DE-HB/index-content.shtml](http://wahl.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2015-05-10-LT-DE-HB/index-content.shtml)

Elections in Southern Tyrol, Italy

Voters get to decide in run-offs

In Southern Tyrol, Italy, 381060 eligible voters were asked to cast their votes for the mayoral and municipal elections on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015. From a total of 116 Southern Tyrolean municipalities, 109 have elected new mayors and municipal assemblies.

Mayor of Brixen and candidate of the SVP (South Tyrolean People's Party) **Peter Brunner** was the only one to defend his office with a 51.2 percent share of the votes already in the first round.



Peter Brunner: [politikbzit.wordpress.com](http://politikbzit.wordpress.com)

Run-off elections took place two weeks later. While the mayor of Leifers, **Liliana Di Fede** from the Partita Democratica (PD) got 33.5 percent and her challenger **Christian Bianchi** (Uniti per Laives) got 29.5 percent of the votes in the first round, a change in power took place in the second round when **Christian Bianchi** won most votes and became new mayor of Leifers.

In Bolzano the incumbent **Luigi Spagnolli** received 57.7 percent and clearly bet his challenger **Urzi Alessandro**, who was supported by the center-right parties and only reached 42.3 percent in the run-offs.

Even though mayor **Gerhard Gruber** (SVP) received 24 percent and led the first rounds of elections by a narrow margin over **Paul Rösch** from the Greens' list, **Paul Rösch** won the second round of elections with 60.7 percent becoming the first Green mayor of Merano, the second largest municipality in Southern Tyrol.

All in all, the SVP remains the strongest party but has witnessed losses, while the national-conservative South Tyrolean Freedom and several Bürgerlisten (List of Citizens) have won popularity. The municipalities in Southern



Paul Rösch [www.stol.it/](http://www.stol.it/)

Tyrol will have more than 34 new mayors; ten of them will be governed by women. The voter turnout in the first rounds was at 66.9 percent, a decline of 7.7 percentage points compared to the 74.6 percent turnout five years ago. The turnout in the second round of elections was below 50 percent.

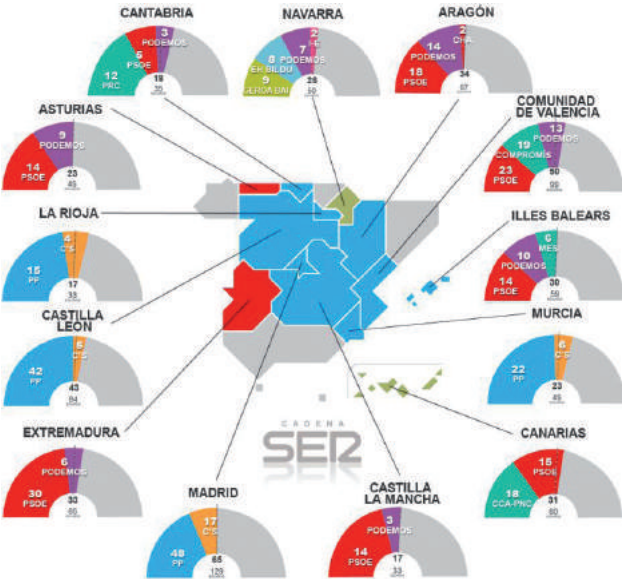
Sources: [orf.at/stories/2277996/](http://orf.at/stories/2277996/) [stol.it/Artikel/Gemeinderatswahlen-2015/Gsies-Kurti-Taschler-Buergermeister-Viele-Protestwaehlern](http://stol.it/Artikel/Gemeinderatswahlen-2015/Gsies-Kurti-Taschler-Buergermeister-Viele-Protestwaehlern) [stol.it/Artikel/Gemeinderatswahlen-2015/Gsies-Kurti-Taschler-Buergermeister-Viele-Protestwaehlern](http://stol.it/Artikel/Gemeinderatswahlen-2015/Gsies-Kurti-Taschler-Buergermeister-Viele-Protestwaehlern) [orf.at/stories/2280046/](http://orf.at/stories/2280046/) [www.blick.ch/news/ausland/italien-spannende-regierungsbildung-nach-stichwahlen-in-suedtirol-id3792490.html](http://www.blick.ch/news/ausland/italien-spannende-regierungsbildung-nach-stichwahlen-in-suedtirol-id3792490.html)

Local elections in Spain

Traditional two-party system is shaken

Regional and local elections were held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in Spain. In 13 of the 17 Spanish regions 35 million eligible voters were asked to cast their vote. These elections brought a defeat for the conservative Partido Popular (PP) and its Prime Minister **Rajoy**. Even though it is the worst election result in 20 years, as the PP received only 26 percent of the votes, the PP still forms the strongest force in eleven regions. However, they did not win an absolute majority in any of the regions. The Socialists (PSOE) lost many votes, especially in the big cities, and reach a total of 25 percent. Two new parties that emerged in recent years have competed for the first time in Spanish elections. The left party Podemos, an alliance of several lists, was overall the third strongest force. The moderate, liberal party Ciudadanos reached 6.5 percent and stands in fourth position.

The new parties result as election winners. The two-party system, which for nearly 40 years has ruled the political landscape in Spain, also seems to have come to an end in the communities. In many ci-



ties the two leading parties PP and PSOE have to look for coalition partners. The parliamentary elections in November 2015 will show whether this trend continues at national level.

Sources: <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/spanien-kommunalwahl-101.html> <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/spanien-analyse-zur-kommunalwahl-a-1035435.html> [www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/spanien-nach-der-kommunalwahl-fuer-podemos-und-ciudadanos-wird-es-nicht-einfach/11823418.html](http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/spanien-nach-der-kommunalwahl-fuer-podemos-und-ciudadanos-wird-es-nicht-einfach/11823418.html) Quelle Grafik: [http://cadenaser.com/ser/2015/05/25/politica/1432564025\\_921664.html](http://cadenaser.com/ser/2015/05/25/politica/1432564025_921664.html)

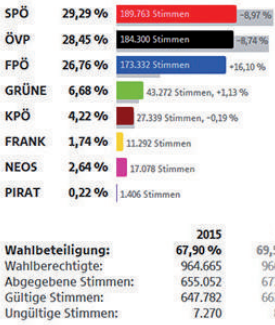
Regional elections in Styria

Voters boost result for right-wing party

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015 Austria's region Styria elected its new regional parliament. The turnout only declined to a small extent and the amount of rejected votes went down. Nevertheless, there were notable changes compared to the last elections in 2010.

The two biggest parties of Austria, the ÖVP (Christian-democrats) and the SPÖ (social-democrats), lost the support of many voters and reached a historic low. The result of 29.29 percent shows a decline of 8.97 percent for the SPÖ. Hence, it is represented with 15 seats in the regional parliament and remains the strongest party. Similarly, the ÖVP lost 8.74 percent and represents now 28.45 percent of the voters. This means that the ÖVP gets 14 seats in the parliament. Contrary to this, the FPÖ (right-wing) won 16.10 percent and therefore accounts for 26.76 percent of the votes. Consequently, they are on equal terms with the ÖVP with 14 seats. Moreover, the Green party gained additional 1.13 percent. As a result they are now at 6.68 percent and have three seats. The KPÖ lost 0.19 percent and only holds 4.22 percent, but is represented by two seats in the regional parliament. Not only the Liste Frank, but also the NEOS and the "Die Piraten" gained additional votes, however not enough for a seat.

Sources: <http://www.verwaltung.steiermark.at/cms/ziel/74837281/DE/> <http://orf.at/wahl/story/2713698.html> <http://derstandard.at/2000016713703/FPOe-bei-pessimistischen-Steirern-amstaerksten?ref=rec> (Quelle Grafik: <http://orf.at/wahl/story/2713698.html>)



Regional elections in Burgenland

First coalition of socialists and right-wing on regional level in Austria

The Austrian region of Burgenland also elected a new regional parliament on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015. The two major parties, the ÖVP and the SPÖ lost votes and the FPÖ gained votes.

The SPÖ lost about 6.4 percent of the votes, leaving it with 41.9 percent. Consequently, it will be represented with 15 seats. An analysis of the elections shows that this is due to non-voters. The results of the ÖVP are similar. It lost 5.5 percent, which leaves the party at 29.1 percent and 11 seats. Just as in Styria the FPÖ was very successful in Burgenland and gained 6 percent. Hence, The FPÖ is represented with 15 percent, which equals 6 seats in the regional parliament. The Green party as well as „Bündnisliste Burgenland“ gained additional votes and one more seat each. As a result, they are both represented with two seats in the regional parliament. The NEOS and the CPÖ also gained new votes, but not enough to be represented in the parliament in the next legislative period.

Results in % (in comparison to 2010)

	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ	GRÜNE	LBL	NEOS	CPÖ
	41.92	29.08	15.04	6.43	4.84	2.31	0.38
	-6.34	-5.54	+6.06	+2.29	+0.84		

	2015	2010
Turnout:	76.04 %	77.30 %
Eligible voters :	250 607	248 694

Source: <http://orf.at/wahl/burgenland15/#ergebnisse/10000> <http://derstandard.at/2000016717498/SPOe-verlor-vor-allem-an-die-Nichtwaehler?ref=rec> Quelle Tabelle: <http://orf.at/wahl/burgenland15/#projection>

Regional elections in Italy

Italian PM struggles with support in the regions

In seven out of 20 Italian regions elections took place on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015. The political trend has changed slightly. Contrary to the expectations before the elections the Italian Prime Minister **Matteo Renzi** lost votes for its Democratic Party (PD). He has not reached the record of 40.1 percent like in the last European elections, yet the Democratic Party (PD) remains the strongest party in five out of seven regions.

**Renzi's** Social Democratic Party won in Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Puglia and Campania. In Veneto, however, the PD lost its power







**Matteo Renzi**  
© <http://www.lindro.it/>

to the right-wing populist politician **Luca Zaia** from the Northern League with a majority of 50.1 percent. The Lega Nord presented itself as an alternative to the PD. Disagreements within the party contributed to the loss of the PD in Liguria. The candidate of Forza Italia **Giovanni Toti** won the elections and the PD only remained in 4th place. Furthermore, the protest party „Movimento Cinque Stelle“ (Five Star Movement) succeeded in gaining importance in the political landscape of Italy.

Sources: <http://orf.at/stories/2281483/> <http://kurier.at/politik/ausland/italien-regionalwahl-match-ging-52-an-renzi-aber-es-bleibt-ein-bitterer-geschmack/133.865.158> <http://derstandard.at/2000016726659/Renzi-moeglicherweise-vor-Rueckschlag-bei-Regionalwahl> Foto: <http://www.lindro.it/>

## Local elections in Saxony, Germany

### FDP candidate wins in Dresden

The liberal FDP politician **Dirk Hilbert** won the mayoral election in Dresden on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The 43-year-old, who has taken over the mayor's office from **Helma Orosz** in February, gained 54.2 percent of the votes. **Helma Orosz** from the Christian Democrats (CDU) gave up her office for health reasons at the beginning of this year.

Even though the CDU (Christian Democrats) won all positions of district administrators at the local elections in Saxony (Germany) on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the CDU was not able to regain votes for the position of Lord Mayor in the state capital Dresden. As a result they lost another large city of more than 500 000 inhabitants. The SPD



**Dirk Hilbert**  
© [hilbert-fuer-dresden.de](http://hilbert-fuer-dresden.de)

gained most votes but no candidate won the absolute majority. Therefore, run-off elections took place on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

After Saxony's Economics Minister **Markus Ulbig** (CDU) decided not to run in the second round, the CDU called its voters to cast their vote for interim Mayor **Hilbert**. **Markus Ulbig**, home secretary of Sachsen, only received 15.4 percent of the votes in the first run. In the months prior to the elections he had been criticized for the state government's asylum policy and his handling of the Pegida conflict (a German far right anti-Islam political organisation founded in Dresden in October 2014). The municipalities claimed that the Home Office has communicated too little regarding the placement of asylum seekers. The opposition on the other hand reproached **Ulbig** for having played down the problem. His cabinet's colleague and minister of Science **Eva-Maria Stange** (SPD) reached about 36 percent. She had been supported by the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Left Party.

The candidate of Pegida, **Tatjana Festerling**, reached almost 10 percent in the first round. This party is known to be critical of the Islam. Hence, it was observed with great public interest in how far the weekly demonstrations by the anti-islamic movement had an impact on the results. But Pegida did not compete in the second round of voting and called its voters to vote for **Hilbert**.



**Pegida** © Reuters

In the second run, Saxony's Minister of Science **Eva-Maria Stange** from the SPD (Social Democratic Party) only gained 44 percent and lost to **Dirk Hilbert**, even though she won most of the votes in the first round. **Hilbert** spoke of a brilliant result. One of his goals is to re-establish the city's image after the emergence of the Islam-critical Pegida-movement. „I want to make Dresden a model city for integration and employment of refugees and immigrants.“ 42.7 percent of the electorate cast its vote - which were less than in the first ballot, but significantly more than in 2008, when only 33.94 percent of the electorate voted in the run-offs.

Another 222 municipalities in Saxony elected their new mayors. In addition, new administrators for ten districts were elected; the CDU was able to maintain all its positions.

Sources: [brk/dpa, welt.de](http://brk/dpa, welt.de)  
Photo: [hilbert-fuer-dresden.de](http://hilbert-fuer-dresden.de)  
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/dresden-stichwahl-noetig-1.2510655>  
<http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-06/dresden-wahl-oberbuergermeister>  
<http://www.mz-web.de/>

## Local elections in Moldova

### Pro-Europe Incumbent declared Winner in Chisinau

In the Republic of Moldova, pro-European forces have won the majority of the votes in local elections on 14<sup>th</sup> June and the run-offs on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Pro-European parties came out ahead of those favouring closer ties with Russia, although many cities had no outright winner and runoffs took place two weeks later. Pro-European parties scored about 51 percent of the votes nationwide, with pro-Russian parties polling at about 36 percent. The rest of the votes went to independent parties.

The pro-Western incumbent mayor of Chisinau **Dorin Chirtoaca** has been declared the winner in a second-round mayoral election in Moldova, securing a third term in office. **Dorin Chirtoaca**, deputy head of the Liberal Party, won 53.46 percent of the votes, while rival **Zinaida Grecean** of the pro-Russia Socialist Party received 46.56 percent. Pro-Russian candidates still secured seats in several key towns in the country, which borders Ukraine and Romania.



**Dorin Chirtoaca**  
© [iuliaalexeev.files.wordpress.com](http://iuliaalexeev.files.wordpress.com)

Renato Usatii, a pro-Russian businessman, won outright in Moldova's second-largest city Balti, taking 73.7 percent of the votes. The city in northern Moldova is traditionally pro-Russian. Pro-Russian businessman **Ilan Shor**, who is being probed over the disappearance of 891 million Euros from three Moldovan banks before the November elections, won out-



right in the eastern town Orhei, polling 62 percent of the votes.

„This is a very important victory that means the continuation of pro-European reforms in Chisinau and moving Moldova along the path of European integration,“ said **Chirtoaca**. Moldova signed an Association Agreement last year, taking it closer to European Union membership. The elections were seen as a test of whether Moldova would remain committed to European integration or choose to move closer to Russia. Pro-European parties won outright in 348 cities, towns and villages, while pro-Russian parties won in 56 and independent candidates in 34 municipalities.

The election encompassed around 900 mayors and 10,000 local councillors in 32 districts, plus the larger cities of Chisinau and Balti. Only 49 percent of the approximately 2.8 million Moldovans entitled to vote have cast their ballot.

Sources: [rferl.org](http://rferl.org), [Agence France-Presse](http://Agence France-Presse), [globalpost.com](http://globalpost.com), [focus-fen.net](http://focus-fen.net) picture: [Courtesy Image-Social Media](http://Courtesy Image-Social Media)  
<http://www.dw.de/moldova-elections-pro-europeans-dominate/a-18519091>  
[http://www.sunherald.com/2015/06/15/6277111\\_pro-european-candidate-ahead-in.html?rh=1](http://www.sunherald.com/2015/06/15/6277111_pro-european-candidate-ahead-in.html?rh=1)

## Municipal elections in Albania

### Success for the government party

The Albanian local elections on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2015 have resulted in a positive outcome for the socialist government of **Edi Rama**. His party has won 46 out of 61 mayoral offices, including offices in important cities such as Durrës, Korça, Vlora and Elbasan. The right-wing coalition won 15 cities. The capital Tirana has also elected a new mayor with more than 53 percent, the former Minister of Social Affairs **Erion Veliaj**. His conservative rival **Halim Kosova** got 39 percent of the votes.

3.3 million Citizens were called to cast their vote for 61 mayors and almost 1,600 community representatives. The opposition complained about „irregularities“ during the elections. Politicians of the right-wing Democratic Party (PD), the main opposition party, spoke of manipulation and threats against voters. The Socialist Prime Minister **Edi Rama**, however, declared it „the best elections in

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## Regional elections ► ► ► Regional elections ► ► ► Regional elections



**Erion Veliaj**  
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Albania, the freest and most righteous." The turnout was around 48 percent.

Since the fall of communism in 1990 the election results in Albania are regularly being questioned. More than 400 foreign and 5,000 domestic observers were in action during the local elections. They stated that the election procedure was „broadly positive“. However, a few cases of „group voting“ and „irregularities in the conduct“ have been registered. The EU congratulated the Albanian citizens on the election success but warned that the recommendations of the monitoring mission should be taken seriously.

The NATO member Albania is one of Europe's poorest countries.

Albania, the freest and most righteous." The turnout was around 48 percent.

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14.3 percent of the population live below the poverty level, unemployment is at 14 percent. Albania carried out reforms at local level just last year and reduced the number of local governments from 373 to 61 to become more efficient. Albania became an official EU candidate country last year. The government in Tirana hopes to begin the accession negotiations with Brussels by the end of this year. These were the first elections since Albania holds the EU candidate status. Therefore, the local elections were an important test for the maturity of Albanian democracy.

Sources: APA/AFP balkaninsight.com derStandard.at (Adelheid Wölfl) Photo: ©: <http://wtop.com/>



## Visit from Brasov, RO

The concept of Smart City became an important topic in the Romanian City of Brasov, reported city councillor **Cristian Macedonschi** during his visit to the IRE-Headquarter in Salzburg on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015.

Brasov has been a member of the IRE-network for three years now and is actively contributing to many events. The event „Brasov's European path to a Smart City“ took place as a part



**Archpriest Dumitru Vezuianu, Franz Schausberger, Cristian Macedonschi**

of this year's Europe Day. It had been organized under the IRE's patronage. **Macedonschi** informed about this successful event and Brasov's efforts to be nominated for the title of European capital of culture in 2021.

More cooperation is planned between Brasov and the IRE in the areas of telecommunication, Green City and energy transition.

Following this conversation a visit was paid to the Romanian-orthodox church in Salzburg. Archpriest **Dumitru Vezuianu** welcomed IRE chairman Prof. Dr. **Franz Schausberger** and his international guests warmly. He told them about the activities in the Romanian-orthodox community. Currently 4,000 believers are part of the church. It is characterized by the strong bonds between the communities from Linz (A) to Rosenheim (D).



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### IRE expands its network

## New Cooperation with University of Business Studies Banja Luka



During a recent visit of Prof. **Jugoslav Jovičić** to the IRE in Salzburg a cooperation agreement between the University of Business Studies in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the IRE was signed. The University is represented by Director Prof. Dr. **Radovan Klinco**. The aim of the cooperation is to contribute to the exchange of publications and information, to organize joint projects and to give young people the opportunity to do an internship abroad at the IRE.

The University of Business Studies (UPS) is a young academic institution established in 2006 with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska (Act no.06-01-232-2/06 30. 1. 2006. ). The University's basic purpose is to introduce modern facilities and programs into the domain of higher education, in the following fields of study: Economics, Information Technology and Design, Ecology, Journalism, Communications and Law. This is accomplished by modern methods of teaching process directly aimed at obtaining high-quality scientific knowledge and skills by providing students with training for work. The IRE welcomes the University of Business Studies in its network and looks forward to a close cooperation.



## Making cooperation projects in the West Balkans a reality

A report by Prof. **Jugoslav Jovičić**



At a conference organized by the IRE in Brčko in 2014, Dr. **Franz Schausberger** started an initiative for project collaboration. The initiative was accepted by the University of Travnik, represented by the Rector (Prof. Dr. **Rasim Dadić**) and the vice-Rector for international relations and development (Prof. Dr. **Jugoslav Jovičić**), as well as the municipality of Šipovo, represented by its mayor (**Milorad Ćirko**).

The University of Travnik prepared the project „The improvement of the tourist attraction in the area of the rivers Pliva and Janj in the municipality of Šipovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina“. The project is tied to the assistance in the development of tourism and preparing the world fly-fishing tournament, held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2015. The municipality of Šipovo finalized the project within the deadline, therefore significantly attributing to the tournament.

The project was financially backed by the Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo and the SDC.

The mayor of Šipovo thanked the IRE and the University of Travnik for the initiative and preparation of the project, and the Swiss Embassy and the SDC for the financial help.

This shows that it is possible to make cooperation projects in the West Balkans a reality, which is the goal of the IRE. A special amount of quality was realized in the cooperation of the two BiH entities (Travnik in the Federation of BiH and the municipality of Šipovo in the Republic of Srpska) and two key sectors: education and economy.





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## Catalonia, Spain



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As from June 2015, the Region of Catalonia in Spain has opened its office in Vienna, Austria. The Government's delegate in Austria Adam Casals wants to develop direct communication with the Austrian government and with international organisations based in Vienna. The new delegation will act as envoy of the Catalan Government to Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary and Croatia. The IRE welcomes the Catalanian delegation in its network and will closely observe the next regional elections on 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015.



For more information see:  
[www.gencat.cat](http://www.gencat.cat)  
[Adam.casals@gencat.cat](mailto:Adam.casals@gencat.cat)

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## UN Special Representative Kandeh K. Yumkella becomes IRE Patron



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Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and CEO of the UN initiative „Sustainable Energy for All“ Dr. **Kandeh K. Yumkella** becomes new IRE patron, supporting the idea of a „Europe of Regions“ and thus the objective of the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE).

Yumkella followed an invitation to the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of European Regions and Cities (CERC) in the Vienna City Hall in 2014 and inspired the audience with his key note speech on renewable energy. As member of the Board of Patrons he supports the work of the IRE, which is a European, supra-regional, non-partisan and independent institution for all European regions and municipalities inside and outside of the EU, with the aim to strengthen the political as well as the economic position of the regions and municipalities within the European framework.

**Yumkella** is a Sierra Leonean Agricultural economist and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All. Yumkella graduated from Njala University and Cornell University and holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural economics from the University of Illinois, USA. He also holds the position of chief executive officer of the „Sustainable Energy for All“ Initiative. He is former Chairman of UN-Energy and a two-term former Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Prior to working for UNIDO, Yumkella was the Minister for Trade and Industry of Sierra Leone. In 2012 Yumkella was appointed Special Representative for the initiative „Sustainable Energy for All“ by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Other prominent personalities of the „IRE Board of Patrons“ include: US-political scientist Prof. **Benjamin Barber**, President of the European Commission **Jean-Claude Juncker**, EU Commissioner **Johannes Hahn**, former Federal Chancellor Dr. **Wolfgang Schäusel**, former EU Commissioner Dr. **Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, the

former Croatian President Dr. **Ivo Josipovic**, former German Chancellor Dr. **Helmut Kohl**, former Foreign Minister **Karel Schwarzenberg**, singer and songwriter **Hubert von Goisern**, former Finance Minister Dr. **Theo Waigel** and former Governor of the Free State of Bavaria Dr. **Edmund Stoiber**.

The IRE is looking forward to further meetings and the future cooperation with Dr. **Yumkella**.



IRE-Directors with UN Special Representative Yumkella and his wife at the 10<sup>th</sup> CERC, from left: Helmut Falschlehner, Franz Schausberger, Philomena Yumkella, Kandeh Yumkella and Stefan Eder.



newsregion 38 / september 15



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## Topusko Health Resort – Top Terme Topusko

# Geothermal energy, grace and the gift of health



### Location and surroundings

Topusko Health Resort is located approximately 70 km south from the capital city Zagreb, between two towns; Karlovac and Sisak. This wonderful place is surrounded by forests and hills Petrova gora and Zrinska gora. The area had been habited long time ago due to its numerous thermal springs. Mud baths are especially known and well liked. Thanks to the influence of forests, peat and thermal springs, winters are mild and summers are fresh.

### History

History of Topusko began more than 3000 B.C. were the Romans left their mark to therme. In the 13th century King Andrew II built the monastery and the church and gave them to the Cistercians. The park Opatovina today contains the remains of these magnificent buildings - the portal of the church of Blessed Virgin Mary of the Visitation. In 1826 professor Michael Kunnits sent a letter to the Austrian Emperor Francis I in which he described the Topusko Thermal Spa. A year later, he published the book „History and Topography of the Topusko mineral baths“. In the next 100 years Topusko became gathering place for nobles and royalty, where lords, generals, bishops and other wealthy guests from France, Italy, Great Britain and Germany came to enjoy the fresh air and healing water.

### Topusko Health Resort today

Topusko Health Resort is modern spa with thermal waters which contains three major and several minor water sources. Thermal water of Topusko Health Resort was evaluated as one of the best in Europe. Main activity of the Topusko Health Resort is the treatment and rehabilitation of diseases and injuries of locomotive, nervous and muscular systems. The basic natural factor of rehabilitation and therapeutic measure is water which is hyperthermal (68-72°C). Topusko Health Resort applies specifically developed treatments for all age groups, all kinds of injuries and diseases of the musculoskeletal system using combination of traditional medical treatment gymnastics and massage in thermal water and cutting-edge laser therapy, magnetic therapy, ultrasound and other procedures, electrotherapy. Medical use of this hot water is a consequence of the millennial experience, but its influence was discussed only

in recent years. The water acts stimulative on the reorganization of the organism, in the body mobilizes a series of defensive factors, ingredients of mineral water are pharmacologically active. According to the latest findings of world-renowned institutions, thermal waters in Topusko - by qualitative composition - are at the top of the charts in Europe.

### Facilities and offer

Topusko Health Resort has founded a daughter company called Top - Terme Ltd. Top Terme Ltd. is dealing with tourism and is oriented to the health, wellness and congress tourism. Within the company there is a Spa hotel Toplice with 232 beds, 58 single and 88 double rooms. All rooms have shower/toilet, phone, TV/ SAT. The hotel has 2 restaurants, 2 coffee bars, recreation center with indoor/outdoor swimming pool, saunas, gym, fitness center, space for therapy and wellness, table tennis, bowling alley, cycling, mushroom fountain souvenir shop, congress halls, hairdresser salon, manual massage, hydromassage, body treatments (chocolate, honey, ginger), face treatments, manicure, pedicure, foot massage, body wrapping, body peeling, 2 cocktail bars and outdoor terrace. Near the hotel there is a complex of outdoor pools - 5 pools of different sizes, depths and temperatures, 5 cycling routes, golf, beach volleyball, 3 tennis courts, bowling, mini golf, outdoor restaurant. All pools (indoor and outdoor) are filled with thermal water with temperature ranges 27 - 34 °C. Nearby are the significant sights, medieval archaeological site, lapidary, English park, the stone memorials, sundial, park Nikolino hill and Topusko springs. Also nearby is available paintball and rafting is possible on Mrežnica, Korana and Una rivers. Guests can also enjoy biking, hunting and fishing and gathering mushrooms and chestnuts in the autumn. The hotel can organize trips to Plitvice National Park, Lonjsko Polje - Nature Park, Zagreb and Wine roads of Moslavina.



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# 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of European Regions and Cities

## Survival strategies for Regions and Cities in Europe

Economics meets Politics

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2015

Salzburg Congress, Europasaal

Auerspergstraße 6, 5020 Salzburg, Austria

Under the patronage of Univ. Prof. Dr. Heinz Fischer President of the Federal Republic of Austria  
In cooperation with Land Salzburg represented by Dr. Wilfried Haslauer, Governor of Land Salzburg  
In cooperation with the City of Salzburg represented by Dr. Heinz Schaden, Mayor of Salzburg

In its 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence the IRE deals with the question of survival strategies for regions and cities in an increasingly globalized world, which will be examined from various aspects during the upcoming 11th Conference of European Regions and Cities. We will particularly focus on regional research and innovation policies, regional energy strategies, regional tourism policies and regional food production. Apart from the general topic, we will also discuss

the currently burning issue of refugees in Europe that has a direct effect on regions and cities. The conference begins with a discussion on EU enlargement and its impact on the regions and cities. Outstanding speakers and discussants guarantee an exceptional and interesting course of the conference. An extensive program of social activities offers many possibilities for communication and networking.

### Sunday, 27 September 2015

**Venue:** Salzburg Congress, Europasaal, Auerspergstraße 6, 5020 Salzburg, Austria **Conference languages:** German, English (additional languages available upon request)

- 12:00 Registration  
Lunch and Refreshments
- 13:00 **IRE General Assembly 2015** (Only IRE members are entitled to vote, all guests are welcome)
- 14:00 Networking Coffee Break
- 14:30 **Opening Address** of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of European Regions and Cities
- 15:00 **Burning issue "The wave of refugees in Europe"**
- 15:30 **IRE - Forum: EU Enlargement - only possible with regions and cities**
- Johannes Hahn**, Eu Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: „Enlargement strategy of the European Commission“ (Video Message)
- 17:00 End of Expert Forum
- 18:00 **Guided Tour** in the DomQuartier, Cathedral of Salzburg, Residenzplatz 1 / Domplatz 1a, 5020 Salzburg
- 19:30 **Reception** upon the invitation of the Governor of Land Salzburg Dr. Wilfried Haslauer, Residenz Salzburg, Carabinieri Saal

### Monday, 28 September 2015

**Venue:** Salzburg Congress, Europasaal, Auerspergstraße 6, 5020 Salzburg

**Conference Languages:** German, English (additional languages upon request)

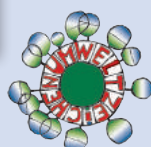
- 08:00 Registration and Exhibition of the IRE Members: The Regional Table
- 08:30 **Opening Address**
- 09:00 **Main Speaker: Tibor Navracsics**, Ph.D., EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport: "The implementation of EU policies on education, science and research on regional and local level"
- 09:30 **Panel discussion I: "Regional research and innovation projects as strategy for intelligent employment"**
- 11:00 **IRE Journalist Award 2015**
- 11:10-11:30 Networking Coffee Break
- 11:30 **Panel discussion II: How will the energy transition succeed? - The importance of cross-border regional cooperation in the energy sector**
- 13:00 Networking Lunch
- 14:00 **Panel discussion III: "Regional Tourism: Right strategy at the right location"**
- 15:30-16:00 Networking Coffee Break
- 16:00 **Panel discussion IV: "How regional food increases regional value"**
- 17:30 **Conclusion** and end of conference
- 19:30 **"Traditional Evening"** upon the invitation of the Mayor of Salzburg Dr. Heinz Schaden Restaurant Stieglkeller, Festungsgasse 10, Salzburg, Austria

### Tuesday, 29 September 2015

10:00 - 12:00 **City Walk** in the historical center of Salzburg



The aim is to host the event according to the criteria of



the Austrian eco-label for Green meetings: