

Press Release

Vienna, 20 June 2022

#IDSF22 - AUSTRIA AT THE CENTER OF THE DIGITAL WORLD

The second edition of the International Digital Security Forum (IDSF) invited international players in the digital security landscape to Vienna for dialogue

(Vienna) From May 31 to June 2, 2022, the cultural hotspot Vienna also became an international stage for digital security topics. Organized by the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology in partnership with the ARGE Sicherheit und Wirtschaft (ASW) of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, #IDSF22 offered a three-day program with more than 100 renowned speaker:inside from the international field. With more than 250 participants on site and over 500 online calls from a total of 41 countries, the conference format initiated virtually in 2020 at the beginning of the Corona pandemic took place this year in a hybrid form with a strong physical component under the motto

"Secure Digitization for a Safe, Green and Sustainable Future" continued its success story. A total of 15 sessions and 10 keynotes in the main program and with a parallel "Social Science Track" on the second day of the conference highlighted the enormous bandwidth of research & development in interaction with political shaping of digital security.

In the cultural ambience of Vienna's Museumsquartier, leading scientists met with high-ranking political leaders, senior representatives of international organizations (including the United Nations, the OSCE and the United Nations Security Council). of the United Nations, the OSCE and the IAEA), the European Union (EEAS, EU Commission, EP) and think tanks (GLOBSEC, IPCS, Demos, CNRS), managers from industry as well as committed actors from civil society to discuss opportunities and potentials of digitalization as well as current challenges of a technological and societal nature and to reflect on future cooperations. At the same time, the entire ISDF program was streamed on the Internet, allowing a global community involved in the topic to participate in the Vienna conference.

Helmut Leopold, Head of AIT Center for Digital Safety & Security and initiator of the IDSF: "In addition to the search for innovations and advantages of comprehensive digitization and global networking, we must also absolutely and intensively deal with the increasingly rampant problem areas of digitization. It's about mastering our technologies in a sustainable way. A global sustainable dialog between research, industry and public authorities is a necessary basis for shaping digitization in a way that is also in line with our goals and values.

High-profile opening by Austrian politicians and ambassadors:inside

After a video message by Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Florian Tursky, State Secretary for Digitization at the Federal Ministry of Finance, Ambassadors Faouzia Mebarki (Algeria/UN), Tadeusz Chomicki (Poland/OSCE) and Rasa Ostrauskaite (EU)

Erich Albrechtowitz, Ministerialrat in the Federal Chancellery, and Raffi Gregorian, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Director, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), introduced the visitors to the program, which was conceived from a holistic security perspective and with an international orientation, with current political reflections on the state of digitalization and the status quo in cybersecurity. All speakers unanimously emphasized the important dialogue between research, industry and authorities and thanked the organizers of the IDSF.

Day 1: "Countering Malicious Activities in Cyber-Space."

We know what we don't like about the Internet and its design flaws: Criminality, ideologization and hostility to democracy. Alex Krasodowski-Jones of CSAM/Demos in London opened his keynote address, "What does Good look like?" with these remarks and impressive solutions. Today, hostile activities in cyberspace, in their massiveness and complexity, are among the greatest challenges to democratic societies based on the rule of law. This affects civil society as well as the economy and the institutions of the state. After an introductory video message by Gerhard Karner, Austrian Federal Minister of the Interior, the first day of ISDF22 therefore addressed the main varieties of digital threats in four discussion sessions: countering terrorism through the use of digital technologies, taking into account the ethical challenges; the criminal use of cryptocurrencies in connection with ransomware; law enforcement scenarios in the global digital age; and, in the context of fake news, the role and responsibility of governments in the post-factual age.

Day 2: Protecting Digital National and International Critical Infrastructure

Critical infrastructures are all those (utility) facilities that are indispensable for the functioning of a state or community. All critical infrastructures today exhibit an extremely high degree of digitization and are therefore exposed to an almost industrialized threat from the network. The middle day therefore discussed in 6 further sessions, on the one hand, the energy paradigm, which cannot be overestimated in the context of the energy expenditure caused by digitalization and the therefore necessary secure and sustainable energy management against the background of the global climate crisis; the importance of security research and development as an essential component of a competitive economy; the development and maintenance of a capable workforce to successfully manage digitization in all sectors; supply chain security in terms of addressing cyber vulnerabilities and interdependencies; and, to close the day, the issue of balancing data sharing and data sovereignty.

Day 2 also featured three special keynotes: Franziska Brantner, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection in Berlin, brought up a highly important issue in her keynote, "Digitization: A Driver for Sustainable Economic Development in Europe." The extraction of raw materials for digitization. On the one hand, it is necessary to reduce the existing dependencies on China and, on the other hand, in view of the shortage of raw materials, to find strategies and ways to recycling and a circle economy and to invest in these technologies. After a keynote speech by Lorena Boix Alonso, Director for Digital Society, Trust and Cybersecurity at the European Commission's Directorate General CNECT, who was online, and spoke about the current state of the European Strategy for Digitalization and Cybersecurity, Francesca Musiani from the Centre Internet et Société at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in Paris discussed in her keynote "Can Digital Sovereignty be infrastructured?" the question of whether the state needs to re-empower digital infrastructure as a territorial component, but at the same time highlighted the risks of a possible geopolitical fragmentation of the Internet.

Understanding the Challenges of Digital Societies

On the second day of the Forum, there was a novelty compared to the first edition in December 2020: parallel to the program on the Main Stage, a Social Science Track was designed and held by the Vienna Centre for Societal Security (VICESSE), led by Reinhard Kreissl. This parallel program focused on the societal and social challenges of the digital society. The track's four discussion sessions reflected on stakeholder diversity in the digital arena, the social dimension of digital societies, the need for risk management, and the confrontation with emergent artificial intelligence.

Two outstanding keynotes - at the beginning of the program as well as at the introduction of the afternoon attracted a lot of interest here. In the morning, Dominika Hajdu, Policy Director at the Centre for Democracy & Resilience at the international think tank GLOBSEC in Bratislava, explained her views on protecting digitized democracies: regulation, limiting the influence of third countries that are hostile to democracy, and targeted action against actors that undermine the rule of law. Prof. Michael Latzer, Professor of Communication and Media Research at the IKMZ of the University of Zurich, presented his innovative model of the digital trinity in the sense of a co-evolutionary interplay of the datafication of all areas of life, the algorithmization of selection processes and the platformization of markets.

Day 3: Security and International Relations

Digital security always has an international dimension and is highly dependent on the cooperation of all stakeholders involved. The third and final day of IDSF22 impressively demonstrated this basic rule both in terms of the choice of topics for the sessions and in terms of the stakeholders from both the civilian and military sectors involved in the discussion.

After the opening of the day by the Austrian Federal Minister of Defense Claudia Tanner via video message, Masood Karimipour, Chief of the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) gave an outlook on further steps of international digital cooperation (multistakeholderism). Afterwards, among others Brigadier-General Friedrich Teichmann of the Austrian Armed Forces emphasized the importance of satellite services as critical infrastructure and stressed our current dependence on them. The other discussion rounds dealt, among other things, with increasing nuclear security against the backdrop of rapid technological advances, while at the same time underscoring the high vulnerability of these facilities (example Ukraine war). Also discussed the question of whether a collective, global cyber security system seems at all possible in view of today's geopolitical world situation, as well as the state of affairs surrounding the development of responsible artificial intelligence based on ethical principles, regulations and laws.

The conclusion of ISDF22 was dedicated to the use of digital technologies for peacekeeping missions and civil conflict prevention in a global context, on the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It began with the topic of "Smart Missions," understood as future process optimization in civilian peace missions in terms of the best possible sustainability through the interaction of trained personnel and the use of digital tools and networking technologies. Subsequently, the medium-term use of PeaceTech (technologies, media, data) was discussed, with the potential to make a decisive contribution to the prevention and positive transformation of violent conflicts and to improve peace-building measures by a quantum leap.

ISDF22 ended with a closing speech by Lukas Mandl, Member of the European Parliament, and Vice-President of the Subcommittee on Security and Defense, who was live from Brussels and underlined the importance of the security theme for the rapidly advancing digitalization: "Strengthening the security of Europeans means investing more to contribute to our autonomy. Security means uniting the free world and contributing to our human dignity and freedom worldwide."

Accompanying exhibition of innovative companies

The ISDF was accompanied on all three days by an exhibition of innovative Austrian SMEs as well as globally active companies from the digital sector. Part of the exhibition were, among others, ARGE Sicherheit und Wirtschaft (ASW) of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, KSÖ Kompetenzzentrum Sicheres Österreich, Verbund, IKARUS Security Software, X-Net Services, K- Businesscom AG (formerly Kapsch BusinessCom AG), Cybertrap, Lieber. Group with ThreatGet, msg Plaut Austria, Softprom, fragmentiX, W&H Dentalwerk, Danube University Krems, SBA Research, DFV Digital Factory Vorarlberg, FH Salzburg, Silkroad 4.0, Vienna Cyber Security and Privacy Research Cluster (VISP), and Vienna Business Agency.

The ISDF was also supported by A1, Huawei, msg Plaut Austria, Verbund, World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS), as well as by the DigitalCity.Wien Initiative, the Vienna Business Agency in cooperation with the ViennaUp Initiative and promoted by the Vienna Convention Bureau as part of the Vienna Meeting Fund.

Broad national and international support

ISDF22 was supported by the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Defense, the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, the Federal Ministry for Digitalization and Business Location and the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism - responsible for the Austrian security research program KIRAS - as well as in cooperation with national partner organizations such as the KSÖ Competence Center Safe Austria and the Cyber Security Platform Austria (CSP). The ISDF22 by the support of global organizations such as the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS).

IDSF is a certified Green Event

In line with the conference motto "Secure digitisation for a safe, green and sustainable future", the entire conference was organized in accordance with the Austrian Eco-label for Green Events and made as sustainable as possible through numerous measures, from the selection of regional suppliers to the conservation of resources at the venue.

On Demand Content

The exciting keynotes and discussions as well as selected presentations will be made available for review on the IDSF website at www.idsf.io for registered users in the coming days. Interesting photographic impressions are already available at the following link: <https://idsf.io/idsf-2022/impressions/>

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