

## Press Release

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### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: DIGITAL SECURITY REQUIRES MORE GLOBAL COOPERATION

At the International Digital Security Forum (IDSF) in Vienna, a global dialogue was initiated to increase the security of digital systems

Digital security concerns us all! This is the most important message of this year's "International Digital Security Forum" (IDSF), which took place in Vienna on 2 and 3 December - virtually, due to Corona. The security of our data and digital systems is the absolute prerequisite for being able to use the opportunities of digitalisation sustainably. All our digital infrastructures, such as ubiquitous social media platforms and the video communication systems currently being so important for working from home, but also widely used public authority networks and citizen services, digitally networked factories, data infrastructures in the health sector, energy supply and telecommunications, right up to intelligent home control, must function highly reliably in a global context. And to be able to guarantee this, the experts called for intensive international cooperation between all participants.

The aim of the two-day event under the general theme "Security in times of pandemics and major global events" was to promote the exchange of information and cooperation between research, companies, administration and politics and to form partnerships to combat crises and minimise damage.

#### **Politics, business, research, and users at one table**

The conference, which was organised by the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology and the WKÖ AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA in cooperation with go-international, a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry for Digitalisation and Business Location and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, brought together numerous central organisations and high-ranking personalities. More than 500 people from over 40 countries were welcomed as participants.

This year's IDSF was opened by Federal Chancellor **Sebastian Kurz**, who emphasised the importance of secure solutions in an increasingly digital and networked world, as well as by Federal Minister for Digitalisation and Business Location **Margarete Schramböck** and **Christian Weissenburger**, the head of the "Innovation and Technology" section at the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, representing Federal Minister **Leonore Gewessler**, who highlighted the innovative strength of Austria as a research and industrial location and stressed the high relevance of shaping framework conditions for technological developments. In his keynote **Andreas Reichhardt**, Head of Section for Telecommunications, Security and Defence Research at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, representing Federal Minister **Elisabeth Köstinger**, presented the Austrian security research programme and referred to the high quality and dynamics achieved in the Austrian R&D scene. **Karl Nehammer**, Federal Minister of the Interior, emphasised the high

interest of politicians in the topic at the opening of the second day of the conference: "We want to make the digital world a pleasant and safe place: Our efforts today are vital for a prosperous, secure and democratic digital future," he said.

### **International patronage of the conference**

The high relevance of the key issues discussed at the IDSF was welcomed by international organisations such as the UN. **Vladimir Voronkov**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) in New York, highlighted the evolving threat scenarios that require strong multilateral cooperation to counter effectively in his speech. **Arne Schönbohm**, President of the German Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), emphasised the importance of reaching out to all international partners and strengthening exchanges with all relevant stakeholders in his keynote speech; Europe should be much more assertive in this regard and drive the development of global standards. Finally, **Hon. Vincent Waiswa Baguire**, Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Information Communications Technology and National Guidance of Uganda, explained the importance of digitalisation for the social and economic development of African countries, using the example of Uganda, which aims to transform itself from an agricultural country to a prosperous digital state by 2040; cyber security and international cooperation are a central basis for this.

### **Discussions on cybercrime, virtual currencies, and fake news**

During panel discussions, the following key topics on digital security were discussed: Cyber Security and Cyber Crime, secure Artificial Intelligence, protection against misuse of virtual currencies, effective digital platforms for crisis and disaster management, contactless biometric sensor technologies, fight against international terrorism, as well as resilience of digital infrastructures. A special focus was on the topic area "fight against disinformation", which has become even more explosive due to the Corona crisis: The focus was on the one hand on the significance of fake news for the social and political order and on the other hand on the new role of media.

### **Europe should be a pioneer**

Intensive international cooperation is necessary to fight cybercrime. "No actor in the world can currently cover all the challenges alone. We need to cooperate, and for this we need mechanisms, international standards and agreements as well as a common understanding of the safe use of the internet on our globe," said **Helmut Leopold**, initiator of the IDSF and Head of Center for Digital Safety & Security at AIT.

**Mariana Kühnel**, Deputy Secretary General of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and co-organiser of the IDSF emphasised: "It is undisputed that the coronavirus has triggered one of the biggest global economic crises and will have further unforeseeable consequences. However, this crisis has also increased digitalisation. This brings new opportunities for companies, but also challenges, for example in the form of cyber attacks or data leaks. And digital security is not just about the technologies, but about each and every one of us. The human factor is still the most vulnerable, and everyone must be aware of that in our new world. An interdisciplinary and

international exchange on these topics is very important. The International Digital Security Forum has provided a platform for this."

Europe has a special role to play here, emphasised **Arne Schönbohm**, President of the German Federal Office for Information Security (BSI): "We have a lot of expertise and experience in the EU states. It is important that we support each other with these resources and that we learn from each other," he said. EU initiatives, such as the Cyber Security Act of 2019, would also influence partners in Asia and in North America, he said. "We should be more confident in advocating for global standardisation in this area," the expert said.

The fact that many IT systems are not well protected against cyber attacks in practice was confirmed by **Rafal Jaczynski**, CSO at Huawei CEE & Nordics. "Many companies started into the digitalisation ocean with cyber security canoes," he said. He stressed that while there is enough knowledge and technology for secure systems, many companies and organisations do not pay enough attention to security. In addition to the application of existing technologies, research must be intensified and the transfer of research results into practice accelerated, **demanding Kai Rannenberg**, professor at the University of Frankfurt and coordinator of the Europe-wide competence network CyberSec4Europe. "We have to constantly acquire new competences, because a lot of knowledge is also in the hands of cyber criminals," he said.

### **Global relevance of IDSF topics**

The high relevance of the global topic was demonstrated by the broad participation of international authorities such as the United Nations, representatives of states and global industrial groups such as SAS and Huawei, as well as international universities and research institutions.

### **AIT as a global provider**

AIT conducted specialised cybersecurity training for the secure operation of nuclear power plants at the Nuclear Security Training Centre (NSTC) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 16 to 20 November 2020 on behalf of the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and URS Federal Services International. Due to the current Covid situation, AIT conducted the entire training virtually. The aim was to raise both awareness and skills to develop, implement and maintain an information and cyber security programme in a critical facility.

### **Women in Cyber Security**

Special attention was also given to the topic of women in cyber security during a breakout session that discussed barriers to entry, opportunities, and experiences of women in the sector. The webinar was hosted by the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS).

### **New partnerships on a global basis**

The IDSF was accompanied by a virtual exhibition of Austrian and international organisations and companies, including ARGE Safety and Economy of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, ARES - Cyber Intelligence, Attingo data recovery, CYBERTRAP Software, Digital Factory of the FH Vorarlberg, Huemer-IT, Ikarus Security Software, KIVU Technologies, Kuratorium Sicheres Österreich (KSÖ), Lieber Lieber Software, msg Plaut, SBA Research, Softprom Distribution, Sparx

Systems Central Europe, T3K-Forensics, World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) and X-Net Services. The event was supported by Huawei, SAS Institute and T3K-Forensics.

### **On Demand Content**

The exciting panel discussions will be available for review on the IDSF website [www.idsf.io](http://www.idsf.io) in January 2021 for registered users. Interesting photographic impressions are already available via the following link: <https://idsf.io/impressions/>

#### **Press contact:**

Mag. (FH) Michael W. Mürling  
Marketing and Communications  
AIT Austrian Institute of Technology  
Center for Digital Safety & Security  
T +43 (0)50550-4126  
[michael.muerling@ait.ac.at](mailto:michael.muerling@ait.ac.at) | [www.ait.ac.at](http://www.ait.ac.at)

Daniel Pepl, MAS MBA  
Corporate and Marketing Communications  
AIT Austrian Institute of Technology  
T +43 (0)50550-4040  
[daniel.pepl@ait.ac.at](mailto:daniel.pepl@ait.ac.at) | [www.ait.ac.at](http://www.ait.ac.at)

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The IDSF organising team (FLTR): Donald Dudenhoeffer (AIT), Matthias Grabner (AWO), Verena Serini (AIT), Helmut Leopold (AIT), Michael Mürling (AIT); not in the picture: Wolfgang Grabuschnig (AIT), Philippe Reinisch (AIT)



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