

Media Kit

EIT Manufacturing Co-Location Center East

Official Opening | Vienna | 14 March 2022

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Press Release, 14 March 2022

EIT Manufacturing in Vienna links Eastern European countries with the industrialized nations of Europe

On 14th March 2022, the Austrian branch of the Knowledge and Innovation Community EIT Manufacturing, the Co-Location Center (CLC) East, was officially opened. With its offer, the CLC East connects the manufacturing industry in Eastern Europe with the industrialised European countries. Federal Minister Ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martin Polaschek (BMBWF), Federal Minister Leonore Gewessler, BA (BMK), Secretary General & Head of Cabinet Dipl.-Ing. Michael Esterl (BMDW), as well as Martin Kern, Director of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), were among the guests in Seestadt Vienna.

Vienna, 14 March 2022. Global manufacturing innovation is led by Europe – this is the stated goal of EIT Manufacturing, a knowledge and innovation community of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. Created by the EU in 2008, the EIT is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, and aims to strengthen Europe's innovation capacity. With a budget of more than € 3 billion in the current funding period, the EIT contributes to the realisation of the Horizon Europe strategic plan and supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships between leading companies, research institutes and universities. With more than 2,900 partners, the EIT is the largest innovation ecosystem in Europe, connecting innovators and organisations.

Martin Kern, Director European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) says: *“The EIT continues to grow as Europe’s largest innovation ecosystem with the welcomed addition of this newest innovation hub here in Vienna. The doors are open for Europe’s brightest students, entrepreneurs and innovators to come together and co-design the future they wish to see! I also invite new partners and organisations to join, innovate and develop their skills through the activities of EIT Manufacturing. I cannot wait to see how this new hub will facilitate cooperation in Austria’s diverse innovation ecosystem and generate new innovations, tech talents and skills that will directly respond to Europe’s green and digital transition.”* The Co-Location Center (CLC) East of EIT Manufacturing is the first location of the EIT in Austria and was established with the support of the Austrian Federal Ministries BMBWF, BMDW and BMK in Seestadt Vienna. *“Austria is one of the strongest industrial regions in Europe and has always been considered a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe. In this strategically important location for the manufacturing industry, our local team does an excellent job of making EIT Manufacturing’s wide range of services accessible in the region,”* says **Klaus Beetz**, CEO of EIT Manufacturing.

With around 200 guests from Austria and abroad, including representatives of the EIT, EIT Manufacturing and its network, numerous delegates and supporters from industry, business, science, research, education, public authorities and diplomatic missions, the EIT Manufacturing Co-Location Center East in Vienna was officially opened on 14th March 2022.

Austria as strategic location for innovations in the manufacturing industry

CLC East is located in the middle of the industry ecosystem. With its offices in the Technology Center in Seestadt Vienna, the international team consisting of 14 experts is very well connected and operates in the midst of innovative start-ups, established industrial companies and technological infrastructures. With its diverse programmes, EIT Manufacturing strengthens the European manufacturing industry, which is also a key to growth in Austria, contributing 21 % to the gross domestic product. The strength of the Austrian industry is clearly evident in the EIT Manufacturing ecosystem. In the first two years of EIT Manufacturing's operational activity, Austrian organisations were involved in about 20 % of all funded projects. *"Innovation-based manufacturing is a key driver for Austria's prosperity and competitiveness. EIT Manufacturing and its CLCs offer a strong network for innovative companies, start-ups and SMEs and targeted measures to accelerate innovation within the European manufacturing sector,"* says **Dipl.Ing. Michael Esterl**, Secretary General and Head of Cabinet of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs ([BMDW](#)).

In order to accelerate these measures especially in Austria, the BMDW and the BMK have provided additional funding for the EIT Manufacturing CLC East via the FFG as part of the RTI initiative "Production of the Future". The innovation laboratory "[MIT.IC.AT](#)" integrated in the CLC East pursues the goal of more quickly integrating Austrian companies from the manufacturing environment, especially SMEs and start-ups, into the largest European knowledge and innovation community EIT and to bring about a comprehensive and strong anchoring of EIT Manufacturing in Austria.

Research and innovation projects to come up with new solutions for CO₂ reduction are crucial for achieving Austria's climate targets and climate neutrality and for its independence from fossil energies. The manufacturing sector has enormous potential to contribute massively to climate protection through the technological developments of Industry 4.0 by means of transformation processes and new, digital production technologies, while at the same time implementing the goals of the Green Deal.

"Climate-friendly innovations and technologies are important allies in the fight against the climate crisis. They play a crucial role in finding and implementing the technologies and solutions for a secure and environmentally friendly energy future, create value and also make a valuable contribution to becoming less dependent on fossil fuels, especially oil and gas. With the EIT location in Austria, we have gained a valuable partner that will enable us to network and cooperate more closely and with whom we can work together on a climate-friendly future for Europe," says **Leonore Gewessler**, Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology ([BMK](#)).

To be able to respond precisely to the needs of the market and to push innovation in particularly important fields, EIT Manufacturing has defined four focus areas for innovation projects with the help of its network in 2021. These are primarily aimed at optimizing the competitiveness and sustainability of the European manufacturing industry, as well as increasing the digitalization of the sector and the collaboration between people and machines. *"Innovative impulses are urgently*

needed for future-proof solutions to current challenges such as more flexible production systems, environmentally friendly production or more collaboration on digital platforms. Close European cooperation in the knowledge triangle of education-research-innovation is essential to create these impulses. I am therefore delighted that the wide range of services offered by EIT Manufacturing will be used through the new Co-Location Center East directly in Vienna," said **Dr. Martin Polaschek**, Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research ([BMBWF](#)). The BMBWF coordinates the Horizon Europe Programme in Austria, and therefore also the activities of the EIT. The Federal Minister emphasizes the added value of the EIT network and encourages organizations in the manufacturing sector to take advantage of the EIT Manufacturing offers.

"The support of the BMBWF, BMDW and BMK is essential for the EIT Manufacturing Co-Location Center East in Vienna. With the help of the three ministries, we were able to establish and position ourselves in the regional innovation ecosystem within a very short time to address the needs of the market with our initiatives," says **Johannes Hunschofsky**, Managing Director of EIT Manufacturing CLC East. *"We are very proud of our excellent cooperation basis with the representatives of the ministries and the City of Vienna and thank them for their trust in our work."*

Numerous activities already implemented

Following the keynote speeches and the panel discussion, the participants were able to get an overview of the current activities, initiatives, and programmes of EIT Manufacturing in the areas of innovation, education, business creation and [RIS \(Regional Innovation Scheme\)](#). For example, a mobile air purification device with integrated disinfection function was demonstrated, which was funded in 2020 in the course of a special project call and developed with the participation of the Institute of Production Technologies and Photonic Technologies at TU Wien. Supported start-ups (SentryNode), the winner of the [LEADERS](#) competition, Angela Ivanova (LAM'ON), and project leaders of funded projects (among others [DeCoTe](#)) were also present to showcase their innovations and achievements. In addition, the CLC East team presented the projects MIT.IC.AT and [EuProGigant](#). EuProGigant, in which CLC East is involved as a project partner, is the Gaia-X lighthouse project in the manufacturing environment for smart and sovereign use of data in production. The team informed interested participants about the next planned activities, for example the Manufacturing Day on 1st June 2022 as part of the ViennaUP'22 and the start-up program "Discover Vienna: Manufacturing Edition", which is already taking place for the second time.

Background Information EIT, EIT Manufacturing, CLC East

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body which is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Institute supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships – EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities – among leading companies, research labs and universities.

EIT Manufacturing is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. It is one of eight innovation communities within EIT. EIT Manufacturing's main goal is to bring European stakeholders focused on manufacturing together in innovation ecosystems that add unique value to European products, processes and services and inspire the creation of globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together more than 70 members (universities, research institutes and business).

EIT Manufacturing East GmbH is one of the five Co-Location Centers (CLC) of EIT Manufacturing, located in the Technology Center Seestadt in Vienna, Austria. CLC East serves twelve countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia, of which eleven are EIT RIS eligible countries, being considered modest and moderate innovators according to the European Innovation Scoreboard. Therefore, the Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) Pillar Leadership and its eight local Hubs in the CLC East Region are strongly involved in the CLC East network and its activities. CLC East works in close cooperation with its ten full members from industry, research and academia: Atos, the Czech Technical University in Prague, Industry Innovation Cluster (IIC), Joanneum Research, Jožef Stefan Institute, LMS – Laboratory for Manufacturing Systems & Automation, Magna, the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, the Technical University Vienna, and voestalpine High Performance Metals, and its network partners AM-Austria, EuroCC Austria, Platform Industry 4.0 Austria, Vestbee and the Vienna Business Agency. EIT Manufacturing CLC East is additionally supported by three Austrian Ministries (Federal Ministry Digital and Economic Affairs; Federal Ministry Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; Federal Ministry Education, Science and Research) as well as the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG).

EIT Manufacturing — Making Innovation Happen!

More information: <http://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/>

Background Information BMBWF, BMDW, BMK

BMBWF – Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) creates the best possible environment for schools, universities and research institutions, and represents the interests of Austria as a location for science, research and business on the international stage.

The BMBWF is responsible for the coordination of the EU research and innovation framework program Horizon Europe and thus also for the EIT in Austria. Together with BMDW and BMK, participation in the EIT KIC call "Added Value Manufacturing" was supported in 2018 as part of the European consortium "Made by Europe" with the aim of establishing a Co-Location Center (CLC) in Austria. Since the successful submission, the three ministries have been accompanying the start-up phase of the CLC East with co-financing in accordance with their technical responsibility for the three areas of the knowledge triangle Education-Research-Innovation.

<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/>

BMDW - Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs

The competitiveness and employment potential of Austrian enterprises depend to a large extent on research, technological development and innovation. The BMDW promotes investments in research, development and innovation and the corresponding framework conditions to strengthen Austrian enterprises with a coordinated portfolio of programmes, initiatives and networks.

The BMDW and BMK jointly support the activities of the first EIT Co-location Center in Austria, CLC East, with a funding of € 500,000 each (or a total of € 1 million) as part of the RTI initiative "Production of the Future" via the FFG. The innovation laboratory "MIT.IC.AT" which is integrated in the CLC East shall further facilitate the networking of Austrian companies (especially start-ups and SMEs) in the EIT network and induce a strong anchoring of EIT Manufacturing in Austria.

<https://www.bmdw.gv.at/>

BMK – Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology

Research, development and innovation ensure competitive and sustainable production in Austria and Europe. Societal challenges - first and foremost climate change - require the close cooperation of companies and research institutions. BMK, as the largest public funding body for applied research, development and innovation in Austria, has been supporting this for several decades.

The Co-Location Center East of EIT Manufacturing complements the strong and established ecosystem in Austria and strengthens the bridges to our European neighbours. "MIT.IC.AT", a project jointly supported by BMK and BMDW as part of the BMK initiative "Production of the Future", aims to strengthen the foundation of EIT Manufacturing in Austria through intensive cooperation with Austrian companies and research institutions. Additional participations of EIT Manufacturing in funded projects within the BMK portfolio are promising.

<https://www.bmk.gv.at/en/>

Background Information Speakers

Ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martin Polaschek, Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research



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Martin Polaschek was born in 1965 in Bruck/Mur. After studying law, he habilitated in 2000 in Austrian and European legal developments, contemporary legal history and federalism research and was appointed associate university professor. From 2003, he was Vice Rector for Studies and Teaching and from October 2019 to December 2021 Rector of the University of Graz. In addition, Polaschek was spokesperson for the Austrian Vice Rectors for Teaching. Martin Polaschek conducted research with a focus on the areas of post-war justice, university law and municipal studies. On 6 December 2021, Polaschek was sworn in as Minister for Education, Science and Research.

Leonore Gewessler, BA, Austrian Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology



© BMK/Cajetan Perwein

Since 7 January 2020, Leonore Gewessler has been Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology. After her high school graduation in Graz, Austria and her studies of political science in Vienna, Leonore Gewessler worked from 2006 as office manager in the office of the district head of the 7th district of Vienna. In 2008, she moved to the Green European Foundation in Brussels, where she took over the management of the Europe-wide active NGO. From 2014 on, Leonore Gewessler worked as Political Director of Global 2000 – Friends of the Earth Austria back in Austria. In addition to her professional activities, she was also a member of the board of Friends of the Earth Europe.

Dipl.-Ing. Michael Esterl, Secretary General and Head of Cabinet, Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW)



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Michael Esterl serves as Secretary General and Head of Cabinet of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs. In addition, Mr. Esterl is chairing the Supervisory Board of “The Austrian Federal Computing Center”.

Gerhard Hirczi, CEO Vienna Business Agency



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Since 2009, Gerhard Hirczi is CEO of the Vienna Business Agency, supporting local and international companies in all phases of their business development. In addition, he serves on the supervisory board of various organizations. Earlier in his career, Gerhard Hirczi served in the Austrian Federal Chancellery as consultant in the department of economic coordination and as an economic advisor to the federal chancellor of Austria before he joined Siemens in 1997. At Siemens, he held various positions, including Secretary General and Spokesman, Head of Personnel Development and Vice President of HR for Austria and Central & Eastern Europe.

Martin Kern, Director European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)



Martin Kern is Director at the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) since 2019. Prior to his appointment, he was EIT's Interim Director and Chief Operating Officer since 2014. Previously, he worked at the European Commission for 15 years in a variety of areas, including enlargement policy (notably as Head of Operations at the EU Delegation to Serbia and Acting Head of the EU Representation in Tallinn), and economic and social development programmes implemented in Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. He holds Master's degrees in Economics and English from the University of Heidelberg and in European Studies from the University of Reading.

Klaus Beetz, CEO EIT Manufacturing



Klaus Beetz looks back on more than three decades of industry experience in software and system engineering, including five years of international delegation to Eastern Europe. From 2002, he was heading the Global Technology Field "Software and System Engineering" at Siemens and was responsible for the worldwide research and technology transfer of innovative engineering technologies for software intensive systems and digital technologies. From 2011 to 2015 he was Director for Business Creation & Entrepreneurship at EIT Digital, and since 1 January 2020, he is the CEO of EIT Manufacturing.

Johannes Hunschofsky, Director EIT Manufacturing CLC East



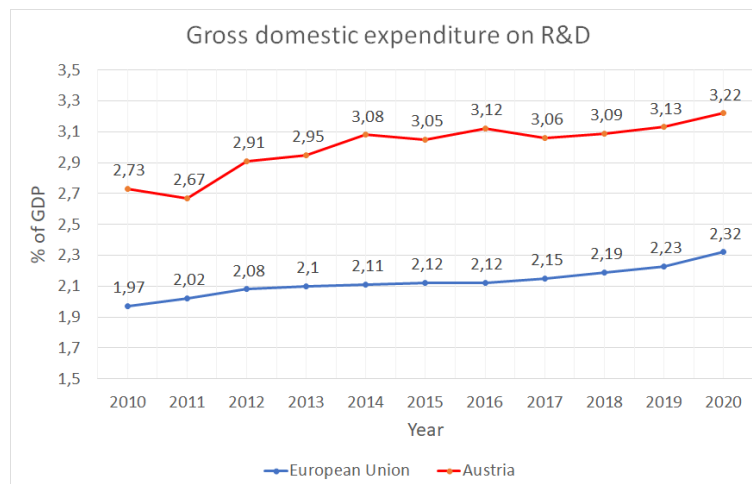
Johannes Hunschofsky is a visionary transformation leader and experienced board member, successfully implementing strategies involving business turnarounds, improvements and growth, start-ups, acquisition integrations and reorganizations and has over 40 years of experience as top executive in multinational manufacturing companies in North America, Europe, and Asia. Since 2020, he is the Managing Director of the Austrian location of EIT Manufacturing, the Co-Location Center East in Vienna. Johannes Hunschofsky was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria.

The Manufacturing Industry in Europe

- **Share of the producing industry on Gross Value Added¹ (in %) 2021** [Source: [WKO](#)]
 - EU 19,5 %
 - Euro Zone 19,2 %
 - Austria 21,4 %

- **Number of employees in the manufacturing industry in Q3/2021** [Source: [Eurostat](#)] (seasonally and calendar adjusted data)
 - Austria:
 - 659 830 (14,32 %)
 - 29,000 companies
 - European Union:
 - 29 539 380 (14,06 %)
 - 2.000.000 companies
 - The manufacturing sector employed 29.9 million persons in 2018 and generated EUR 1 944 billion of value added. By these measures, manufacturing was the second largest of the NACE sections within the EU's non-financial business economy in terms of its contribution to employment (23.1 %). The share of manufacturing employees in Austria who work for an SME is around 44,8%. In the EU, this share is at around 52,4%. [Quelle: [Eurostat Manufacturing](#)]

- **Gross domestic expenditure on R&D 2020** [Source: [EUROSTAT - GERD](#)] (Third place following Belgium with 3.52% and Sweden with 3.22%)



¹ Mining, manufacturing, energy supply