

PRESS RELEASE

EBSCON 2024: "Curiosity" as the basis for innovation

"Curiosity" - the freedom to be curious - forms the basis for innovation. This theme was the focus of EBSCON 2024, the leading event for the European semiconductor and electronics industry, which took place on 2 October at messecongress Graz.

- **Curiosity - the need to be curious and push boundaries - as the basis for ground-breaking innovations was the focus of EBSCON 2024**
- **The SILICON ALPS CLUSTER (SAC) continues to position itself as a successful translator between research and industry**
- **Inspiration, networking, motivation, empowerment - how enthusiastic participants describe their experiences at EBSCON 2024**
- **EBSCON is becoming increasingly international: 250 decision-makers from 23 nations and speakers from Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands**
- **Opening by LRin Barbara Ebinger-Miedl, Deputy Governor Gaby Schaunig (video message), Michael Wiesmüller, BMK, and Silicon Alps Cluster Managing Director Robert Gfrerer**
- **Key notes by Astrid Heide Petersen and Jonna Heliskoski, 7 Impulse Talks with barcamps on the topics "ELECTRONICS | CHEMISTRY | MATERIALS" and "ELECTRONICS | AUTOMOTIVE | MOBILITY"**
- **Key note by Bernhard Petermeier and panel discussion "STAY curious!" with Bernhard Petermeier, xista science ventures | Michael Wiesmüller, BMK | Alexander Bergmann, TU Graz | Matthias Pirs, AT&S | Elisabetta Chicca, University of Groningen and Robert Gfrerer (SAC)**
- **International Business Mission with participants from 4 nations (Austria, Slovenia, Germany, Netherlands) as well as representatives from "High Tech Netherlands" and AC Styria**
- **Queue pitching of the 17 exhibitors, intensive networking and matchmaking throughout the event and 60 organised speed dates**

Graz/Villach 03.10.2024. Under this year's leitmotif "**Curiosity**", international top speakers and experts from industry, think tanks and start-ups discussed with around 250 participants from 23 nations at EBSCON 2024 on 2 October at the Messecongress Graz how 'curiosity' enables powerful and highly profitable innovations in corporations.

Interlinked research and economic strategy

In their opening statements, Styrian Minister of Economic Affairs **Barbara Eibinger-Miedl** and **Deputy Governor Gaby Schaunig** emphasised the pioneering role of Styria and Carinthia in the semiconductor industry. *"Together with our Silicon Alps Cluster and the Silicon Austria Labs research centre, our universities and the microelectronics companies located in the south of Austria create the perfect environment to be a driver of innovation at the international forefront,"* said Eibinger-Miedl.

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Global impact of Curiosity

Cluster CEO Robert Gfrerer: *"This technological leadership in future-oriented high-tech fields and the accompanying social change would not be possible without the targeted curiosity of companies and organisations and their employees. As the Silicon Alps Cluster, we see ourselves as a translator between research and industry and, with a conference like EBSCON, we are helping to illuminate the necessary framework conditions for 'curiosity' as a driver of innovation."*

EBSCON 2024 was once again organised as a "green event".



Caption: EBSCON4Curiosity - Panel Discussion, ©: Podesser

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Keynote 1: "The economic impact of curiosity"

Astrid Heide Petersen (Sanofi, DK) spoke in her keynote about the power of "curiosity, circumstances and resources". In this context, she also pointed out the importance of due diligence, risk-taking and the advantage of having a few brilliant, passionate and "slightly autonomous" people in the organisation. *"I find it very inspiring that 'Curiosity' was chosen as the theme for this year's EBSCON. The clusters in the south of Austria, such as the Silicon Alps Cluster with the innovative ideas of its members, show that curiosity and perseverance are the key to success,"* says Petersen in a brief interview about this year's EBSCON.

Keynote 2: "Curiosity-driven research"

Under the motto "Rise to shine", **Jonna Heliskoski (SITRA - the Finnish Innovation Fund)** called in her keynote speech for arousing curiosity by showing how it is done. The model developed by SITRA provides for the identification of the 3 most important challenges of the next 18 months, the

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identification of the players required for success and the alignment of missions, tasks and resources in order to build shared responsibility and successfully realise innovations.

EBSCON4Pioneers: Fall in love with a problem, not an idea!

5 pitches from 5 young talents who deal with global problems and agree on one demand: Education around the world - including in the IT sector - must be made freely accessible to ensure equal opportunities.

The Impulse Talks and BarCamps on the topics "ELECTRONICS | CHEMISTRY | MATERIALS" and "ELECTRONICS | AUTOMOTIVE | MOBILITY" provided an insight into the practice of companies that are driving forward innovative solutions based on "Curiosity".

Barcamp I: "ELECTRONICS | CHEMISTRY | MATERIALS"

The "EU Chips Act" and its impact on the European semiconductor industry, research into material intelligence as the basis for new innovation in microelectronics and the framework conditions in Europe as a leading region in research, development and innovation, which, in contrast to the USA and China, has to contend with limited funding, were the focus of Barcamp I.

Barcamp II: "ELECTRONICS | AUTOMOTIVE | MOBILITY"

Participants at Barcamp II called for more optimism and a greater focus on niches. Especially in the EU region with its excellence in the mobility revolution, the lost sustainability bonus for e-cars must be restored.

Keynote 3: "Dynamic innovation ecosystems"

In his keynote speech in the afternoon, **Bernhard Petermeier (XISTA science ventures)** called on industry to have more courage to collaborate with start-ups and openly share problems. He advised scientists to be more humble when entering the corporate sector and universities to emphasise entrepreneurship as a career path. Start-ups should be aware that the realisation of their business idea already acts as a multiplier. Finally, Petermeier would like to see better and more honest feedback from venture capitalists.

Panel Discussion: EBSCON4CURIOSITY

In the concluding panel discussion, **Michael Wiesmüller**, Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, **Alexander Bergmann**, Institute of Electronic Sensor Systems, Graz University of Technology, **Bernhard Petermeier**, XISTA science ventures, and **Matthias Pirs**, AT&S, **Elisabetta Chicca**, University of Groningen, and Cluster Managing Director **Robert Gfrerer** discussed the framework conditions for "Curiosity": curiosity is the drive to understand things and turn them into technical innovations. This requires an agreement within the company as well as small advances that do not represent a risk, the panellists concluded.

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Networking and speed dating

With a central theme such as "Curiosity", networking took centre stage at EBSCON 2024: In the course of the 60 organised B2B meetings, new potential business partners were met during inspiring discussions and the basis for new collaborations was laid.

EBSCON 2024 participants' wish list for 2025: **even more innovation and networking!**

"With 250 participants from 23 nations, top international speakers and business delegations from 4 nations, EBSCON has confirmed and expanded its role as the leading event for the European semiconductor and electronics industry and can rightly be considered a beacon of the Silicon Alps network. We are therefore already looking forward to EBSCON 2025, where - in line with the wishes of our participants - we will focus on even more networking and active dialogue," says Cluster Managing Director Robert Gfrerer.

EBSCON 2025 will take place in October 2025 at the Messecongress Graz.

The SILICON ALPS CLUSTER

Austria's hotspots for EBS innovations and microelectronics are located in Styria and Carinthia. The two federal states are also the locations of Austria's EBS high-tech cluster SILICON ALPS, which brings together around 140 companies and institutions, including leading international players from the semiconductor and electronics industry. The cluster sees itself as a driving force, innovation driver, trend scout and, above all, as a networker and bridge builder.

SILICON ALPS was founded in 2016 as a technology and innovation cluster in the field of Electronic Based Systems (EBS). The company is based in Villach; a second office is located in Graz.

As a public-private partnership of Austrian players from business, science and the public sector, the cluster serves to develop and position the electronics and microelectronics industry in Carinthia and Styria. The overarching objectives are Increasing the competitiveness, innovation performance and international/national visibility of the cluster partners, supporting the partners in their search for talent, increasing the attractiveness of the location for company start-ups, relocations and researchers, increasing value creation in Carinthia and Styria.

Website:

<https://ebscon.eu/>

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