

Vienna, 28 June 2021

Biophysicists kick off the summer with a hybrid congress

Thanks to the continued easing of restrictions for events, the European Biophysics Societies' Association (EBSA) is set to become the first organiser to return to the Austria Center Vienna with ambitious plans in place for its biennial congress. Around 450 scientists and researchers are due to attend in person between 24-28 July, with a further 200 joining online. Austria's largest congress and event centre is pulling out all the stops for the first hybrid congress of the year.

“Especially in times like these, scientific exchange is essential for driving the pace of medical progress. Biophysics forms the foundation of our understanding of how viruses – including the coronavirus and its variants – work their way into our cells. This knowledge is vital for the development and continued optimisation of vaccines. And the kind of personal exchange made possible by congresses is an important part of this,” explained Prof. Elena Pohl, President of the 2021 EBSA Congress, Vice President of EBSA and Vice President of Biophysics Austria. She is also head of department at the Institute of Physiology, Pathophysiology and Biophysics at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.

Austria Center Vienna perfectly prepared for hybrid congress

The combined effects of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout, rapid antigen testing and the easing of restrictions for events have made it possible for the biennial congress of the European Biophysical Societies' Association to go ahead as planned, making it the capital's first hybrid congress of the year. At present, indoor events are already possible for 1,500 participants, with the cap on visitor numbers due to be lifted completely on 1 July.

“We responded right at the start of the health crisis and drew up a detailed Covid-19 hygiene plan. We have also significantly expanded our portfolio for hybrid meetings, using the window in September 2020 that allowed us to host in-person events for a pilot project that clearly showed how gatherings in Vienna can take place in full accordance with the strictest safety standards. In the meantime the project has earned us several international awards,” explained Susanne Baumann-Söllner, Managing Director of the Austria Center Vienna. And now this know-how will be put to work on behalf of the EBSA Congress between 24-28 July at the Austria Center Vienna.

Repositioning Vienna as a research hub

“At Biophysics Austria – the local organiser of the EBSA Congress – we are also very optimistic and can't wait for a return towards normality with our hybrid congress. When it came to organising the event, we brought an experienced and reliable Viennese agency on board in the shape of COLUMBUS/RAM Congress + Event. Together, we are expecting to welcome participants from a total of 37 countries, the majority of them from Austria and Germany. This is not just an important step for us as a Society, but also in terms of its significance for the repositioning of Vienna as a research hub and congress location,” noted Prof. Birgit

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Plochberger, President of Biophysics Austria. The importance of congresses for the national economy is borne out by the numbers. In a normal year, international events at the Austria Center Vienna induce an economic impact of EUR 400-500 million. “And the biophysics sector is leading the way. But each and every one of us has a part to play, as we will only be able to overcome this health crisis by working together. This means that each individual is doing their bit to ensure knowledge transfer and scientific exchange can continue in this form – and ultimately that benefits us all,” Pohl concluded.

About EBSA/Biophysics Austria

The European Biophysical Societies' Association (EBSA) was formed to advance and disseminate knowledge of the principles, recent developments in and applications of biophysics, and to foster the exchange of scientific information among European biophysicists and biophysicists in general. Its international congress takes place every two years. This year, the EBSA Congress will take place at the Austria Center Vienna from 24-28 July. The local organiser is Biophysics Austria.

About IAKW-AG

Internationales Amtssitz- und Konferenzzentrum Wien, Aktiengesellschaft (IAKW-AG) is responsible for maintaining the Vienna International Centre (VIC) and operating the Austria Center Vienna. The Austria Center Vienna is Austria's largest conference centre, with 24 halls, 180 meeting rooms, and some 26,000 m² of exhibition space, and is one of the top players on the international conference circuit.

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Related Links

EBSA-Kongress: <https://www.ebsa2021.org/>

EBSA: <http://ebsa.org/portal/>

Biophysics Austria: <https://www.biophysics-austria.at/>