

CIRCLE-2 and EEA Workshop on "Adaptation Platforms in Europe: Addressing challenges and sharing lessons", November 7.-8.11.2013 at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

My name is Georg Rebernik, I am the Head of the Environment Agency here in Austria, I am happy and honored to welcome you here in Vienna at the Diplomatic Academy at this workshop on "Climate Change Adaptation Platforms".

Umweltbundesamt Österreich is one partner among the organizers and the local host for this meeting and it is a pleasure to have you with us.

Especially I would like to greet the representatives from the European Commission,

Mr. Gemmer from DG Research and Innovation and

Mr. Guitierrez-Teira from DG Clima as well as our

dear colleagues from the European Environment Agency (EEA),

Mr. Jol and

Mr. Isoard.

The Environment Agency Austria is the largest environmental experts' institution in Austria. Thus we are situated in the interface between science, scientific results and research and policy/policy development.

And we do this work at different geographical and political levels: We work at the national and regional level, but we act on the transnational level (Alpine Space Programme – leader of the C3-Alps project) and the European level (European Topic Centers, DG Clima Projects, Framework Programme (CIRCLE and CIRCLE-2)).

Given the recent data on the development of global emissions of GHGs, the need for consistent and forceful action on CC-Adaptation is becoming more and more evident.

And let me stress this point: a lot of effort will be needed to make our society fit for Climate Change. Adaptation is about transforming important parts of our physical infrastructure into resilient structures for Housing, Transport, Power Generation, Industry. It is about large parts of agriculture,

water and forest management. It is about huge costs. It is extremely important, to get this right, also in political terms.

This said, there is a clear need for reliable, comprehensive, well structured, easily and readily available information. And there is a need for communication.

This is where web-based “Adaptation Platforms” come into play. These platforms are crucial in order to distribute the knowledge about climate change, its impacts and adaptation, and to make this knowledge available to a broad public and decision makers.

At the European Level, we do have “Climate-ADAPT”, Austria has its national platform – www.klimawandelanpassung.at. In addition, a regular newsletter informs about recent policy, science and society relevant knowledge and news on the national, transnational and European level.

When looking at the variety of countries, we see that the different European countries are at different stages of developing these portals. Some already operate these portals and this in the national language as well as in English. Others are in the phase of development and others are now thinking about developing an Adaptation Portal.

The workshop of today will focus on the exchange between the developers and maintainers of these adaptation portals at the regional, national, transregional and transnational scale. This information exchange and dialogue shall contribute to the improvement of existing portals. It shall help developers to create adaptation portals based on user needs and interests.

Before I finish, I would like to excuse the absence of Mr. **Hojesky** from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management today, since he needs to be with the Minister for a press conference today, on the upcoming COP in Warszawa.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the organizers of this workshop, especially Roger Street from UKCIP, Andre Jol from the EEA, Markus Leitner from my institution and all the colleagues of the organizing and advisory committee of this workshop.

Thank you very much for coming and for your interest; I wish you a fruitful and interesting meeting and good future collaboration in Europe on this important issue.