

AARIT Convention 2010 TechGate Vienna, 16 November 2010

The Austrian Association for Research in IT (AARIT), the Austrian member of ERCIM, acts as sub-organization under the umbrella of the Austrian Computer Society (OCG), and brings together members whom together account for a significant amount of Austria's expertise in Informatics and Mathematics. In order to increase awareness of and collaboration among the Austrian research community, AARIT organized a well attended and appreciated event, the AARIT Convention, on 16 November 2010 at TechGate, a science and technology park near the UNO-City, Vienna. After a welcome by the OCG president Gerald Futschek, Mag. Lisbeth Mosnik of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT) (which supports the AARIT initiative in Austria, the AARIT Convention, with a statement on its commitment to research and technology), opened the convention and gave an overview of the Austrian initiatives and success stories in context of the European Framework Programme. Andreas Rauber, the president of AARIT, then discussed ERCIM, AARIT and the AARIT activities within ERCIM.

The event was accompanied by an exhibition of about 16 Austrian Research Institutions, AARIT members as well as others, presenting their research work at exhibition booths. ERCIM was also represented with a separate booth (see photo).

Twelve research organizations took the chance to present their activities, plans and expectations concerning the Austrian and European research scenarios in the plenum, discussing chances, challenges, and barriers. This presentation was guided and moderated in interview style by Karl Fröschl, which proved an interesting experience for both presenter and audience!

The key note in the afternoon was held by ERCIM Vice President Prof. Dr. Matthias Jarke from the Fraunhofer-Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT), who discussed the situation of applied research in Europe, from his institute's as well as from the ERCIM point of view.

The Austrian Research Promoting Agency and the Austrian Science Fund (FFG and FWF) presented their funding concepts and support of national and European projects and programmes (initiatives) in a "service block" in the afternoon.

A panel discussion on "The Future of Austrian Research in the European Context" moderated by Erich Prem, with a highly qualified panel of seven experts from research organizations, the Research Council, an Incubator, the Austrian Science Fund and the Federal Ministry BMVIT, and AARIT, concluded the event. The discussion covered strategy (which routes to take: focus on strengths or include niches?), education and training (how to secure the work force for future challenges?), sustainability of research and competence building (long term continuity beyond individual projects?), and innovation (how to achieve market impact?).

There was full agreement at the end that national and international networking - a task facilitated by organizations like AARIT in the European context - is a basic requirement for researchers, especially for a smaller country. Because of the success of the event it was decided to organize the next AARIT Convention in 2011.

All slides are available on <http://aarit-konvent2010.ocg.at/> (but note: the event was held in German).

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