

Lower Austria:

In the centre of new opportunities



Dr. Erwin Pröll

With unparalleled dynamism over the last 20 years, Lower Austria has developed into an economic boom location. The provincial governor of Lower Austria, Dr. Erwin Pröll, has mainly attributed this success to two events, namely the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and EU-Enlargement in 2004. According to Pröll, "Lower Austria has unquestionably been a winner in the EU-Enlargement!"

The EU brought a growth impetus to Lower Austria

In fact it is specifically the EU-Enlargement which triggered a growth impetus in Lower Austria which every year since 2002 has experienced growth far above the average for Austria as a whole. Particularly dynamic has been the rise in exports which have increased since 2003 by 30 percent from

almost 12 billion to 18 billion Euro. Close behind Germany, the most important customers for Lower Austrian exports are the countries in Central and Eastern Europe

Unparalleled race to catch-up

Lower Austria has attracted international attention through the excellent progress it has been making. The "Award of Excellence" in 2002 and the European Innovation Award in 2007 are indications of this recognition. Lower Austria has now become one of the most attractive destinations in Austria as a location for foreign investors. However, in the midst of such indications of success it is almost possible to forget that until 1989 Lower Austria was severely disadvantaged and that it was only with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the EU-Enlargement that Lower Austria got the opportunity to move from its marginal location into the centre of a new Europe.

The roughly four billion Euro invested in the Lower Austria Transport System since the EU

Enlargement is one of those trend-setting investments in the most literal sense of the word. As a highly-developed transport infrastructure is an essential criterion for company settlements and location quality, a further 4.5 billion Euro will flow into this sector over the next five years. There has also been much investment in the "intellectual infrastructure." Lower Austria has been successful in developing its own distinctive education structure – both through a dense network of colleges of further education and the Krems-Tulln-Klosterneuburg – Wiener Neustadt axis of science .

Technology Location Lower Austria

Numerous technology-oriented companies are already taking advantage of the benefits of Lower Austria as an innovative high-tech location in Europe and in order to raise its profile for the settlement of sunrise industries still further, Lower Austria has deployed a technopole strategy aligned to international benchmarks.

Technopoles are technological, economic and financial centres which are built specifically around recognised educational and research institutions and where education, research and business are linking up in a innovative way. Internationally



recognised cutting-edge research is being undertaken in the three technopole locations currently recognised in Lower Austria, at the Technopole Krems in the case of biotechnology and regenerative medicine, at the technopole Tulln in the case of agricultural and environmental biotechnology and at the Technopole Wiener Neustadt in the field of surface technology, micro systems engineering and medical system engineering. ecoplus has been commissioned by the State of Lower Austria to manage the Technopole Programme.

Successful Internationalisation

The fact that Lower Austria has been able to take advantage of the opportunities of the fall of the Iron Curtain and EU Enlargement so successfully, is also due to the efforts of ecoplus, the business agency of Lower Austria.

Back in 1987 the EU-Regional Policy Office in the State Government of Lower Austria was commissioned to undertake the management of the regional development programme. Since then more than 1,800 projects have received aid of about 848 million Euros. 2.2 billion Euros have been invested and more than 17,000 jobs have been created in the

regions. With Austria's EU-Accession Lower Austria was able to integrate a significant part of the regional development programme within the existing EU-Structural Funds Programme and thereby acquire additional co-financing resources for Lower Austria. Through its subsidiary, ecoplus International, business agency of Lower Austria was able to closely support companies which wanted to exploit the new market opportunities in Eastern Europe offering them individual support and advice.

According to provincial governor, Dr. Erwin Pröll, "we invest intensively in education, research and knowledge as the pre-condition to assert oneself as a regional leader is to have also an edge in the knowledge infrastructure. The State of Lower Austria has, by every step it has taken beyond the borders over the last few years, also thought about the future generations. And we are also pursuing our way step by step to a social model region. In this very challenging time, it is especially important to look forward with courage and confidence, to grasp opportunities and to be involved in a lively "mutual co-operation" so that this leadership position of Lower Austria will continue into the future."

Eastern Boom in Lower Austrian Tourism

Tourism in Lower Austria is also one of the big winners of EU Enlargement. In 2008 Lower Austria recorded over 6.5 million overnight stays, which means a 3.2% rise compared to 2007. Tourists from within the EEC are becoming more and more important. After domestic and German tourists, Hungary, the Czech republic and Slovakia are the main markets with over 240,000 overnight stays attributable to these tourists last year.

"Lower Austria recognised the potential of this tourist group very early on and accordingly intensively developed the Eastern European market by carrying out numerous marketing campaigns" highlighted Dr. Petra Bohuslav, Minister of economic affairs of Lower Austria.



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