

SUMMARY

R20AWS Breakout Session

BIOECONOMY:

Sustainable Action to Fight Climate Change

The Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism (BMNT) organised the Breakout Session on May 29th discussing sustainable bio-based solutions for Austria and Europe with national and international stakeholders.

Background

Bioeconomy stands for an economic concept that aims to replace fossil resources (raw materials and energy sources) with renewable raw materials in as many areas and applications as possible. It covers all industrial and economic sectors that produce, process, handle or use biological resources. The bioeconomy thus offers a great opportunity to tackle global challenges, such as increasing climate change, food and water scarcity or growing environmental pollution, while at the same time strengthening economic development.

Director-General Jürgen Schneider explained about the perils of climate-change and the necessary fight for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This requires a coordinated climate and energy strategy – the Austrian #mission2030 – that ensures the balance between environmental sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply in the future as well. In order to make the step towards the implementation of the hitherto knowledge-based bioeconomy – involving the relevant stakeholders and using all political instruments – the Austrian Government adopted a strategy for bioeconomy in Austria. This Austrian Bioeconomy Strategy is intended to be an essential cornerstone of the Climate and Energy Strategy and to support the decarbonisation of the economic system. To further boost the implementation of bio-based ideas in Austria the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism cooperates with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology are working on a bio economy action plan.

Outcomes

The Breakout Session "Bioeconomy" presented several examples of the ongoing cooperation in this field and showed specific best-practice projects like:

- The Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU), which is a € 3.7 billion Public-Private Partnership between the EU and the Bio-based Industries Consortium. Operating under Horizon 2020, this EU body is driven by the Vision and Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda (SIRA) developed by the industry. Executive Director Philippe Mengal explained the expected impact of these activities for Europe by 2030, which comprises
 - a replacement by 25% of oil-based chemicals and 10 times more bio-based materials
 - an increase by 25% mobilisation of unused sources and develop potential of agro-food "waste" & forestry residues
 - the creation of 700,000 jobs (with 80% in rural areas)
 - the reduction of EU's dependency on import of strategic raw material
 - an average 50% GHG emission reduction

- BioBase4SME supports SMEs and start-ups across North-West Europe to overcome technological and non-technological barriers to bring their biobased innovation to the market. It is subsidized by the Interreg North-West Europe Programme. Tanja Meyer, the BioBase4SME Project Coordinator, highlighted aspects such as identifying the demand for bio-based solutions, placing products in the appropriate markets (e.g. bioplastics), covering capital requirements and creating public awareness for the products, based on the experience with 78 investigations in European SMEs receiving "Innovation Coupons".
- Dana Peškovičová, from BIOEAST, the Central and Eastern European initiative for knowledge-based agriculture, aquaculture and forestry in the bioeconomy, gave an insight into the collaboration between involved countries and how to overcome existing misconceptions concerning agriculture and food sector and use bioeconomy solutions to increase competitiveness of the sector.
- Christian Gorsche from the Austrian Cubicure GmbH demonstrated the chances of Lithography-based 3D-printing with bio-regenerative feedstocks (for example: lignin). He made clear about the benefits such as a reduction of waste and emissions, the possibility of localized and flexible production and the advantages of a liberated creativity.
- Martin Greimel from the Vienna-based University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, reported about the Austrian Bioeconomy Center, which deals with the education and research for renewable resources. It has a strong focus on strengthening the network with national and international actors in the Bioeconomy scene.
- Finally, Nicole Kocher explained how ALPLA GmbH from Vorarlberg created home compostable coffee capsules made from sunflower seed husk to achieve shelf life properties matched to its plastic alternative.