

Press release

Walk21 Vienna: The world's largest expert conference on walking, quality of life and urban development is being held in Vienna for the first time.

Vienna, 20 October 2015: From 20 to 23 October, Vienna will host the world's largest expert conference on walking, quality of life and urban development. 280 experts from the fields of urban planning and development, politics, science, health and architecture will meet at Vienna City Hall for the 16th "International Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities", or Walk21 for short. The conference with the motto "stepping ahead" will see 600 participants from 39 countries participating in over 240 discussions, seminars, workshops and "urban labs". Over 200 creative ideas from 47 countries were submitted for the Walking Visionaries Awards.

Walk21 Vienna: Vienna is stepping ahead

Vienna has established a reputation as one of the world's leading smart cities and is considered a trailblazer in new urban mobility and efficient ecomobility. The promotion of walking plays an important part in securing a high quality of living for everyone who lives in Vienna. As host city of Walk21, the City of Vienna will be able to benefit from international know-how about recent developments in pedestrian matters and the design of public urban spaces. The over 240 discussions, seminars and workshops will focus on the topics of public spaces, quality of life and resilient cities, safety and health, and walking together in the city. "Vienna has one of the highest modal shares of pedestrians internationally. More than one in four Viennese make all their daily trips on foot. With Walk21 Vienna, we are inviting international experts, pioneers and activists to look at the situation in Vienna and think about how conditions for pedestrians can be improved further. It is also a question of increasing traffic safety in the city," says Vienna's Deputy Mayor Maria Vassilakou. The conference will discuss issues such as how to improve quality of life and resilience and the implementation of the traffic and transport policy goals of the City of Vienna as laid down in the urban development plan STEP 2025 or the Smart City Vienna Framework Strategy. Petra Jens, Officer for Pedestrian Matters of the City of Vienna, says: "Promoting walking means promoting inclusion. Accessible public spaces allow everyone to participate in public life. This will also be a focus of Walk21 Vienna. With the Year of Walking 2015 and Walk21 Vienna, the City of Vienna is making a clear statement as to the priority of walking."

Austria as a trailblazer in Europe: Presentation of the first Walking Master Plan for Austria at WALK21 and UNECE WHO THE PEP Workshop “Good Walking in Europe”

The Austrian Ministries of Environmental Affairs and Transport developed a Walking Master Plan for Austria in cooperation with experts from the federal provinces and municipalities. This national strategy for the promotion of walking in Austria will be presented at Walk21. “My goal is a liveable future for Austria in a strong Europe. To achieve that, we have to ensure a high quality of living in our cities and municipalities,” emphasises Andrä Rupprechter, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. “The transport sector is one of the main issues due to its large contribution to exhaust fumes, noise and greenhouse gases. Approximately 20% of car trips in Austria are shorter than 2km. Therefore, the promotion of walking to replace all these short car rides in our municipalities should have a high priority. Where walking is promoted, people are healthier and there is a better feeling of social safety. With our klimaaktiv mobil programme, we are supporting Austrian cities and municipalities in the transition to green mobility.” At the international level, Austria is also an advocate of low-impact mobility: On 22 October 2015, the European workshop “Good Walking in Europe” is being organised at Walk21 jointly with the UNECE WHO Transport Health Environment Pan European Program THE PEP. Experts from the WHO, the UK, Switzerland, Serbia, Norway, Russia and Austria will present initiatives for promoting walking.

Walk21 Vienna conference programme: 600 experts and participants from 39 countries

The conference programme of Walk21 Vienna includes over 240 seminars, workshops and discussions at Vienna City Hall. It will also extend into the public space with “walkshops” and “urban labs”.

“It’s important to me that the Walk21 conference is not only seen as a meeting of experts. We want the people who are affected by these issues in their daily lives to participate and contribute their ideas. Walk21 has the vision to create a world in which organisations, public bodies and individuals have recognised the value of walking and are working together to shape our cities in such a way that we walk frequently and enjoy it – with a positive impact on the environment, the economy and on health,” says Jim Walker, Chair of Walk21.

Walk21 Vienna is an opportunity to learn about best practice examples from all over the world and discuss new strategies for smart pedestrian-centric urban development.

The 230 speakers from 39 countries include **Mick Cornett**, Mayor of Oklahoma City, **Tjaša Ficko**, Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana, accessibility and inclusion consultant and activist **Raúl Krauthausen** from Berlin, experimentalist and author of “Happy City” **Charles Montgomery** from Vancouver, President of the European Cyclists’ Federation and World Cycling Alliance **Manfred Neun**, chief research officer of Civic Exchange Hong Kong **Simon Ng**, Danish architect **Ulrik Nielsen**, Mexican activist and “pedestrian superhero” **Peatónito**, co-founder of the group “space and place” **Eugene Quinn**, the German climate expert **Fritz Reusswig**, and **Geetam Tiwari**, Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology.

Walking Visionaries Awards: Awards for 30 innovative concepts for pedestrian-friendly, liveable cities of the future

The Walking Visionaries Awards of the Walk21 conference are given to the most innovative and creative ideas for urban and traffic development that promote walking and public space. Overall, 208 projects from 47 countries were submitted and over 10,000 votes were given via online public voting. The winners, of whom half were chosen via online voting and half by a jury, have the opportunity to present their projects to an international audience at Walk21 Vienna.

The Walk21 conference series

The Walk21 conference series was initiated by the non-profit organisation Walk21 in London in 2000. The annual conference aims to establish the importance of walking firmly in the public awareness. Walk21 connects people involved in pedestrian matters and promotes the dialogue between science, civil society and administration so that they can jointly increase acceptance for pedestrian matters and incorporate them as an important part of public planning policies. In 2015, the world’s largest conference on walking and public space is being held in Vienna for the first time. Previous host cities include Sydney, Munich, Mexico City, Vancouver, New York, Barcelona, Toronto, Melbourne, Zurich, Copenhagen and London.

Information on Walk21 Vienna and the conference programme <http://walk21vienna.com/>

Walking Visionaries Awards winners: [http://walk21vienna.com/visionaries/
awards-winners/](http://walk21vienna.com/visionaries/awards-winners/)

Press photos: <http://walk21vienna.com/press-kit/>

Press registration: <http://walk21vienna.com/press-kit/press-registration/>

Contact information

Andreas Baur

Press officer of Deputy Mayor Maria Vassilakou
+43 664 831 74 49
andreas.baur@wien.gv.at

Natascha Unger

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
+43 1 711 00 6823
natascha.unger@bmlfuw.gv.at

Kathrin Ivancsits

Mobility Agency / Zu Fuß in Wien
+43 676 8118 49908
kathrin.ivancsits@mobilitaetsagentur.at

Birgit Brandner, Daniela Schildhammer

Walk21 Vienna Press Office
+43 664 922 77 87, +43 664 522 69 25
press@walk21vienna.com



MINISTERIUM
FÜR EIN
LEBENSWEERTES
ÖSTERREICH



<ends>