

# IST Austria feiert sein zehnjähriges Bestehen

Im Juni 2009 nahm das Institute of Science and Technology Austria (IST Austria) mit vier Professoren seinen Betrieb auf. Heuer dürfen 51 Professoren und 700 Mitarbeiter das 10-Jahr-Jubiläum feiern.



IST Austria-Präsident Tom Henzinger, Landeshauptfrau Johanna Mikl-Leitner und ehemaliger Präsident der Österreichischen Nationalbank Claus Raidl schnitten bei der Jubiläumsfeier des IST Austria gemeinsam die Torte an.

Bereits das Forschungsfest am 26. Mai stand ganz im Zeichen des 10. Geburtstages des IST Austria in Maria Gugging. Am Open Campus im Rahmen der Jubiläumswoche lud das Institute of Science and Technology (IST Austria) Kinder und Erwachsene ein,

die Welt der Wissenschaft zu entdecken. Zahlreiche Stationen der Forschungsausstellung sorgten bei freiem Eintritt für Spannung und Unterhaltung.

Mit einem feierlichen Festakt folgte am 04. Juni schließlich der Höhepunkt der Jubiläumsfeierlichkeiten. Mehr als 300 Gäste aus Forschung, Politik und Wirtschaft folgten der Einladung. „Es ist großartig, einen Ort wie das IST Austria, an dem nationale und internationale Forschungsgrößen zusammenkommen, in Österreich zu haben“, sagte Bundespräsident Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen in seiner Ansprache während des Festakts. „Ein österreichisches Wunder“ sei geschehen. Auch Landeshauptfrau Mag. Johanna Mikl-Leitner sowie Präsident und Rektor der „Central European University“, Michael Ignatieff, gratulierten dem IST Austria und seinem Präsidenten, dem Computerwissenschaftler Prof. Thomas A. Henzinger, zu der beeindruckenden Entwicklung. Vorträge zweier Starwissenschaftler, Nobelpreisträger Sir Paul Nurse sowie Prof. Dr. Bernhard Schölkopf, Computerwissenschaftler aus Deutschland, vervollständigten das Programm der Jubiläumswoche.

Rechts finden Sie die Originalrede zum Jubiläum von Präsident Prof. Thomas A. Henzinger. Auf [www.klosterneuburg.at](http://www.klosterneuburg.at) ist auch die deutsche Version der Rede abrufbar.

## IST Austria Celebrates 10 year Anniversary



Ten years after its official opening in 2009, IST Austria has become one of the top research institutes of the world. IST Austria organized a series of events to celebrate its anniversary and huge success over the ten last years. A festive event on June 4 marked the beginning of the series, with high-ranking visitors from politics and research.

More than 300 invited guests from research, politics and economy convened on June 4 in the Raiffeisen Lecture Hall of the IST Austria campus. “It is great to have a place like IST Austria in Austria, where national and international big shots in science come together”, stated Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen in his speech during the festive event. In his view, a research institute like IST Austria has made a miracle happen in Austria. Lower Austrian State Governor Johanna Mikl-Leitner and the President and Rector of the “Central European University” Michael Ignatieff also congratulated IST Austria President Thomas Henzinger on the impressive development of the research institute.

Two Lectures completed the anniversary week. Nobel laureate Sir Paul Nurse gave a fascinating IST Lecture in front of 200 people. In his talk “Science as Revolution” the geneticist and cell biologist argued that science can be considered the longest lasting revolution in human history. In his lecture “Can Europe catch up in artificial intelligence?” Bernhard Schölkopf, one of the leading computer scientists from Germany, talked about the current gold rush mentality around AI, discussing how Europe can partake in these developments by playing an active role in AI research.

# “A strong beacon of light in the world”

**Speech by President Thomas Henzinger on the occasion of the 10-year-anniversary of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria in Maria Gugging on June 4, 2019**



*Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and Lower Austrian State Governor Johanna Mikl-Leitner congratulating IST Austria President Thomas Henzinger*

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to welcome you to tonight's event celebrating 10 years of IST Austria.

When I was approached in 2008 about the opportunity to become the institute's first president, I was immediately intrigued by the idea, which originated with Anton Zeilinger, of building in Austria a world-class research institution from scratch. The vision written by Haim Harari, Olaf Kübler, and Hubert Markl laid out the principles of autonomy, internationality, and multidisciplinary as its cornerstones. In addition to performing basic research, another core mission of the institute would be to educate the next generation of scientists by conferring PhD degrees. Although I had lived and worked abroad for several decades at that time, this opportunity, which ultimately brought me back to my native Austria, was too fascinating to pass up.

When I first came to campus, one large construction site covered the entire area. On June 1, 2009, exactly 10 years ago, the IST Austria campus was officially inaugurated in this lecture hall, with 5 professors, 37 employees, and grand ambitions. Only theoretical science was possible for the first couple of years; the first experimental building, the Bertalanffy Foundation Building, opened in 2011. I was always convinced that the institute would succeed only if we stick to its basic principles: hire the best and provide them with an environment that permits them to do the best possible research. Nonetheless, nobody at that time could be sure that the project would succeed – and there were some sleepless nights. Today we are far from being done, but we can already say one thing with certainty: the model works; we are heading in the right direction. After 10 years, we have a vibrant and lively campus where scientists from 60 nations perform world-class, curiosity-driven research.

Allow me to illustrate my point with some facts and figures: In the past 10 years, we have appointed 55 professors selected from over 11'500 applicants. Our faculty has collectively acquired more than 40 grants from the European Research Council. With an ERC success rate of close to 50 percent, we are number one in Europe, well ahead of established institutions such as ETH Zurich, Max Planck, Oxford, Cambridge, and yes, also the institute's role model, the Weizmann Institute of Science. The journal

"Nature" listed IST Austria among its Top 10 "Rising Stars", along with nine other institutions that were founded in the past 30 years - and the only such institution that is not located in Asia.

One of the key factors behind our success has been the bold and visionary support by our main stakeholders – the Federal Republic of Austria and the province of Lower Austria. They founded IST Austria as a fully independent institution within the Austrian science system, which allows us to offer scientific career models according to international standards, from the graduate school for students to the tenure track for professors. We are completely free to select our scientists and fields of research with excellence and scientific promise as the only criteria, always in search of the best and brightest minds, never bound by predetermined strategic directions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are given a long-term budget, currently until 2026, that can be spent with great flexibility and permits long-range thinking and planning, which is so important in basic science. We have passed many milestones in the past 10 years – in construction, recruitment, research, awards, and fund raising - but our development is still incomplete. In order to permanently establish IST Austria as one of the players in the global top league, we need to reach a critical mass for sustainable success and global visibility in science. To achieve this goal, comparisons with similar institutions show that IST Austria would need to triple in size and continue its current growth trajectory to approximately 150 groups by 2036. I trust that the government of Lower Austria and the next government of Austria will continue to support this vision of IST Austria as a global player – with all the benefits this will bring to the country's reputation and prosperity – and that they will continue to provide us with the necessary long-term, flexible financing and institutional independence. Such a pledge of support is required sooner rather than later. IST Austria is living proof of what purposeful and courageous science policy can achieve. Let's keep this momentum going.

Let me end by extending my sincere gratitude to all those involved in this project over the past 10 years. Of course a research institute like IST Austria needs adequate buildings and technical infrastructure, carefully designed regulations and processes, and unwavering political commitment. But what fills it with life are the hundreds of dedicated people — from the scientists and scientific support staff to the administrative staff. Each and every one of you has shaped the institute over the past decade in a myriad ways with your ideas and hard work. I would like to thank everybody who contributed to making IST Austria the success it is today. The initial vision turned into reality, and though we are not done yet in reaching our lofty goals, I look forward to a bright future and working towards it with all of our supporters and employees. Let us keep our drive and commitment going forward, contributing to the local community, to Lower Austrian, national, and European competitiveness, and to global society through basic research, graduate education, technology transfer, and scientific outreach.

Let us continue to be a strong beacon of light in the world.