



**EMBARGO UNTIL 22.2.2012, 14.00 UHR**

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## **Future of IST Austria secured**

**Agreement between Federal Republic of Austria and Province of Lower Austria for financing 2017-2026 reached • Long-term development of top research institute ensured • Targeted investment in promising fields • Confirmation and impulse for research activities of Lower Austria**

Today, Federal Minister of Finance, Dr. Maria Fekter, Federal Minister of Science and Research, Dr. Karlheinz Töchterle, and the Governor of Lower Austria, Dr. Erwin Pröll, announced the agreement on the further development of the top research institution Institute of Science and Technology (IST) Austria. In the period 2017-2026, the development ensues through an agreement as per Art. 15a Bundesverfassungsgesetz (Federal Constitutional Law) between the Federal Republic of Austria and the Province of Lower Austria. Subsequent to the report's presentation to the federal government, it will be submitted to the federal and state parliaments for approval.

President of IST Austria, **Prof. Thomas A. Henzinger**, summed up the past development and gave a perspective on the future: "Nearly ten years ago, Anton Zeilinger first formulated the idea of a leading research institute. In June 2009 we opened the campus. Today, not even three years later, it is decidedly clear to see that we have mastered the first start-up phase and are at the beginning of the next period of development." At the start of 2012, 20 research groups and 200 employees, 36 of them students, are working at the top institute for basic research in the natural sciences. Eight ERC grants (the most highly endowed research funds of the European Commission), a series of other awards, an excellent evaluation in the past year as well as approx. 37 million Euro in acquired third-party funds from research funding and donors are proof that IST Austria is on the right track. With the agreement announced today between the Federal Republic of Austria and the Province of Lower Austria on the further development beyond 2015, it will be possible to establish further research clusters, besides the current ones in evolutionary biology, cell biology and biophysics, neuroscience and computer science, entering new areas including physics, mathematics or chemistry. A long-term perspective is now available to the top scientists. Until 2027, 90 to 100 research groups with around 1000 scientists are expected to work in Klosterneuburg and establish IST Austria in the world-wide top level of research.

**Federal Minister of Finance, Maria Fekter**, emphasized the importance of the agreement for the research and business location Austria. Central components of the current reform package are the assertive measures for the future, which lead to more research and thereby to an increase in the international competitiveness of the country. Excellent basic research, according to Fekter, forms the basis for future innovations, which have a lasting impact on economic growth: “This is the only way to lay the foundations for future prosperity.” These considerations are also in keeping with the goals set by the federal government in its strategy for research, innovation and technology. In the three years of its activities, IST Austria has impressively proven itself worthy of the trust placed in it so far. Altogether, IST Austria has hitherto acquired more than 20 million Euro in research funds, of which more than 90 percent come from sources outside Austria. In addition, IST Austria has earned 17 million Euro in private donations.

With this agreement, which secures financing of IST Austria until 2026, it is according to Fekter also shown that the federal government engages in long-term planning beyond election cycles. With the coming resolutions in the federal government and parliament the agreement will be brought into effect, Fekter closed.

**Federal Minister of Science and Research, Karlheinz Töchterle**, entered into details of the agreements between the Lower Republic of Austria and the Province of Lower Austria. They are based on the conviction that the framework conditions for pursuing top research by international measures have been put in place at IST Austria. This was expressively noted by the highly renowned evaluation committee in the past year. Its report was unanimously approved by the federal parliament in October 2011. One of the central recommendations concerned the growth to approx. 100 research groups. With financing until 2026 secured, the full development of the institute can be assured, allowing IST Austria to succeed ever more strongly in the international context. Besides its international visibility in the past years IST Austria has shown that it works closely together with other national universities and research institutes, for example with the University Linz, the University Salzburg and the Technical Universities of Vienna and Graz within the framework of a National Research Network (NFN) financed by the FWF. As in the previous agreement, IST Austria is obliged to make remarkably high contributions. As per the agreement with the Province of Lower Austria, the Federal Republic of Austria invests € 65,8 Mio. per year between 2017 and 2026; in addition there is a maximum contribution of € 16,6 Mio. per year dependent on successful acquisition of third-party funds, as well as a max. € 16,6 Mio. per year tied to research-immanent quality criteria. According to Töchterle, “this allows for the further excellent development of IST Austria.” Furthermore, Töchterle explicitly pointed out the support from Lower Austria. The province goes a consistent way in its development towards a top-level science and research location in the heart of Europe.

**Governor Erwin Pröll** placed the agreement in context with the science policy initiatives of Lower Austria. The province attributes an extraordinarily high level of importance to science and research. Accordingly, in its budgetary planning the provincial government has ensured that this trajectory will continue in the coming years. In the period from 2012 to 2026, funds from the province amounting to € 368



Mio. in total for IST Austria are designated for infrastructure, buildings and operations on campus. In four building phases, the Province of Lower Austria will construct 16 buildings for IST Austria, ranging from laboratory buildings to machine shops to parking facilities. To continue the positive development of IST Austria, it is necessary to plan long-term, according to Pröll. For this reason the development plan for the IST campus has been adapted accordingly, securing growth in the period from 2017 to 2026.

At the end of the press conference, Minister Fekter, Minister Töchterle and Governor Pröll signed a “Letter of Intent” symbolizing the end of negotiations, and took a tour of the laboratories of cell biology and biophysics research groups in the Bertalanffy Foundation Building.

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In a first statement, **Prof. Erwin Neher** (Nobel Laureate 1991, Medicine) and **Prof. Manfred Morari** (ETH Zurich) commented on the agreement; both were part of the evaluation committee chaired by **Prof. David Baltimore** (Nobel Laureate 1975, Medicine): “We welcome the agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Province of Lower Austria. With this decision, the long-term planning security is established, which is indispensable for the development of a leading research institute. The federal government of Austria follows a central recommendation of the evaluation committee, which we belonged to. We congratulate the Austrian federal government and the Province of Lower Austria on this far-sighted and future-oriented decision, giving Austria a leading research institute at world-class level.”

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### **IST Austria**

The Institute of Science and Technology (IST Austria) is a PhD granting research institution located in Klosterneuburg, 18 km from the center of Vienna, Austria. Inaugurated in 2009, the Institute is dedicated to basic research in the natural and mathematical sciences. The Institute employs professors on a tenure-track system, postdoctoral fellows, and doctoral students at its international graduate school. While dedicated to the principle of curiosity-driven research, the Institute owns the rights to all scientific discoveries and is committed to promote their use. The first president of IST Austria is Thomas A. Henzinger, a leading computer scientist and former professor of the University of California, Berkeley, and the EPFL in Lausanne, Switzerland. [www.ist.ac.at](http://www.ist.ac.at)