

1,000 science communicators to gather in Graz, Austria

MEDIA ADVISORY, 24 May 2016

Graz, Austria – Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums, will draw up to **1,000 science communicators** from over 45 countries to its Annual Conference held this year in Graz, Austria. It is open to all professionals working in science centres or museums, natural history museums, universities, aquaria, zoos, research institutes and private companies in the field. The conference will be celebrating its **27th edition** and is hosted by three Austrian partners: Frida & freD, the Graz Children Museum; Universalmuseum Joanneum; and the Austrian-wide Association ScienceCentre-Network.

The three-day event will run **9-11 June 2016** and showcase the latest research and developments in **public engagement with science** through dynamic sessions, debates, workshops and a **trade show** called the Business Bistro. Pre-conference meetings and workshops, held two days prior to the main conference (7-8 June 2016), will give in-depth insight into numerous aspects of the science communication field.

The programme offers a diverse mix of more than **90 sessions delivered by over 400 speakers**, ranging from practical advice on how to conceive interactive exhibits to discussions on the sector's contribution in tackling global issues linked to this year's **theme: "Colours of Cooperation"**. Other topics include science and society; strategy and vision; business and fundraising; research, theory and evaluation; operations and finance.

High profile guest speakers will be:

- President of the Republic of Austria **Heinz Fischer**;
- Keynote speaker **Dr. Elizabeth Rasekoala**, the President of African Gong – the Pan-African Network for the Popularisation of Science & Technology, and Science Communication;
- Keynote speaker **Frans de Waal**, Biologist, Primatologist, and Professor at Psychology Department of Emory University.

More than **50 exhibitors** will be showcasing their latest products and services at the buzzing Business Bistro and participants will be able to get hands-on in **two workshop spaces**, the Maker space and the Game Lab. Not to forget the many networking opportunities like the Newcomers' breakfast, the colourful Nocturne or the Gala Ball, held at the Stefaniensaal, known as one of the world's best concert halls.

Quotes

"We are proud to invite you to the 27th Ecsite Annual Conference, co-organised by Ecsite and a trio of local hosts in Graz, Austria, on 9-11 June. The Ecsite conference is open to everyone interested in public engagement with science." **Michiel Buchel, President of Ecsite**

"Join this very special event and its unique balance of large crowds and friendly family atmosphere, broad thematic scope and focussed state of the art sessions, international perspectives and European touch, spotless organisation and room for surprises, peer collaboration and friendly criticism." **Catherine Franche, Ecsite Executive Director**

“This is the first conference to be organised as a cooperation of three partners. We chose the venues and content of the conference and social events in order to give a special flavour of cooperation – the always inspiring interactions of science with arts, design and architecture in all its colourings.” **Margit Fischer, Chairwoman of the Austrian ScienceCenter-Network**

About Ecsite

Ecsite is the European network of science centres and museums, linking science communication professionals in more than 350 institutions in 50 countries. Founded 25 years ago, Ecsite connects member institutions through projects and activities and facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practice on current issues. www.ecsite.eu

About the conference hosts

The **Universalmuseum Joanneum**, the biggest of its kind in Central Europe, has a long tradition of collecting and research. It offers a unique panorama of science, art and culture exhibitions and events, servicing the public, research institutes and universities. You can explore its outstanding collections in twelve locations throughout Styria. www.museum-joanneum.at

FRida & freD Children’s Museum Graz offers younger audiences interactive and immersive experiences, often addressing complex topics, with exhibitions, theatre performances and programmes for children aged 3 to 12. www.fridaundfred.at

The **Association ScienceCentre-Network** initiates exciting projects on hands-on science communication and serves as a hub for capacity building and professional development on science engagement in Austria, fostering cooperation between more than 160 diverse partners from across the country. www.science-center-net.at

Practical Information

- Website: www.ecsite.eu/annual_conference
- Twitter: #Ecsite2016 and follow [@Ecsite](https://twitter.com/Ecsite)
- Pictures uploaded daily on the Ecsite [flickr account](#) during the conference.

Interviews can be arranged and media assistance is available on-site. The event will take place at **FRida & freD, Messe Congress, Kunsthaus Graz, Joanneum Quarter** and **Stefaniensaal**.

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