

AUSTRIA

10/12/2003_{ek, Abt. V/4}

PM

Speaking Notes Minister Joseph Proell, Austria

Roundtable "Climate change, adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development"

Mr. President,

Dear Colleagues,

Recent extreme weather events give a clear indication, how climate change is affecting us all.

Austria is – like many other regions on earth – in particular vulnerable because of the high sensitivity of ecosystems in mountainous regions. In my country for instance we had to learn that the Alpine region will be highly affected by the forthcoming climatological perturbances.

Therefore **urgent and decisive action is necessary.**

Climate change is a serious problem that requires a global response in order to meet the ultimate objective of the Convention.

All Parties must play a full and effective role in tackling climate change.

The majority of industrialised countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol. So did Austria. My country is now busy introducing cost-effective policies and measures in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I strongly appeal to these countries, which have decided not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to act on the same terms as the other industrialized countries.

It is clear to me that the Kyoto Protocol and the Kyoto targets build a good basis. But it is also clear to me that significant further steps beyond Kyoto will be required.

On June 2002 my country has adopted a climate change mitigation programme – **the Austrian Climate Strategy**.

It contains a package of measures from all relevant sectors: energy supply, energy demand in buildings, industry, transport, agriculture, forestry and waste management. As a matter of fact it includes a broad range of regulatory and economic measures, from public subsidies and investments to demonstration projects and information campaigns.

We are now busy in implementing the measures written down in this paper – one by one, step by step.

Urgent action is also necessary regarding our energy systems. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg “energy” was one of the important issues, and as some of you will remember – also one of the most difficult ones.

Furthermore Johannesburg brought important steps forward on renewable energy and energy-efficiency.

Mr. President,

Austria has been engaged in the international energy discourse for a long time and has launched in 1999 the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy – GFSE – which is headquartered in Vienna. This Forum grew out of the outreach efforts of the World Energy Assessment. It is a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on issues which are relevant to energy for sustainable development.

It is a pleasure for me to invite you today to the next global conference of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy, which will take place from 18 – 20 February 2004 in Vienna. The conference will be devoted to the overall theme of “Energy for Sustainable Development: Reconsidering the Role of Incentive Measures”. I am looking forward to welcoming many energy and climate change experts in Vienna.

I would like to use this opportunity again to state that, while respecting national sovereignty and current international law, **Austria does not consider nuclear power as compatible with the concept of sustainable development.**

In the Austrian view, reliance on nuclear power can therefore not be a viable option to combat the greenhouse effect.

The challenge now is to translate all the positive energy generated by Johannesburg into political will and concrete action in order to make a real move towards sustainable development.

As the title of the Johannesburg document already states – implementation is now the priority. **We have to move from words to actions.**

Thank your for your attention.