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JOINT ACADEMY DAY OEAW–RSC

With a view to strengthening the cooperation with foreign partner academies, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW) decided to organize an annual “Joint Academy Day”.

Within this event series, representatives of the OeAW will discuss scientific and science policy issues together with members of her partner academies.

In its third edition, we are pleased to be joined by members of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) and look forward to the multidisciplinary thematic exchange among participants from the two countries.

Due to the pandemic situation, the Joint Academy Day 2021 will be held entirely online.

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021
ZOOM-WEBINARS

PROGRAMME

15:00–15:30
(CET)

Welcome and Introduction

Anton Zeilinger | President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences

Jeremy McNeil | President of the Royal Society of Canada

Paul Young | International Secretary of the Royal Society of Canada

Oliver Jens Schmitt | President of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences

15:30–17:00
(CET)

Panel Discussions

Panel 1

Ideas Crossing the Atlantic: Multicultural Citizenship, Minority Cultures and Religious Diversity as Challenges in Liberal Democracies

Panel 2

Interdisciplinary Responses to Global Challenges

17:00–17:15

BREAK

17:15–18:45
(CET)

Panel Discussions

Panel 3

Coping with the COVID-19 Crisis

Panel 4

Arctic and Alpine Environmental Change

18:45–19:00

BREAK

19:00–20:30
(CET)

Panel Discussions

Panel 5

Freedom of speech and Freedom of research: Challenges and responsibilities for academies and academics in the 21st century

Panel 6

Healthy Societies

For participation please visit www.oeaw.ac.at/events/joint-academy-day-2021, registration is not required.

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TOPIC OUTLINES

► Panel 1 Ideas Crossing the Atlantic: Multicultural Citizenship, Minority Cultures and Religious Diversity as Challenges in Liberal Democracies

Lead: Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW)

Chairperson: Waldemar Zacharasiewicz | OeAW

Panelists:

Rainer Bauböck | OeAW, Maria Löschnigg | OeAW, Gerald Stourzh | OeAW

Isabella Bakker | RSC, Gary Libben | RSC

Since the 1980s, the adoption of concepts such as the “politics of recognition” and a liberal immigration policy has made Canada a model of a liberal society. However, faced with the rapid growth of immigrant communities and ethnic enclaves the optimism of moderate European politicians has been dampened and right-wing parties have been strengthened. Yet one should remember that in the nineteenth century the principle of equal rights for national groups was adopted in the jurisdiction of the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy, and the creation of the Austrian Constitutional Court in the First Republic represented a significant advance towards the establishment of a liberal democracy. European scholars have also developed the discipline of Imagology, which examines the generation and dissemination of dubious notions of the typical character of ethnic and national groups, arguably major obstacles to the full acceptance of diversity in liberal democracies. This discipline has yet achieved full currency in North America, but might become part of the process of cross-fertilization across the Atlantic.

► Panel 2 Interdisciplinary Responses to Global Challenges

Lead: Royal Society of Canada (RSC)

Chairperson: Steven Cooke | RSC

Panelists:

Gerhard Herndl | OeAW, Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz | OeAW,

Verena Winiwarter | OeAW

Lauren Flynn | RSC

Global challenges such as addressing food insecurity, halting environmental change, alleviating poverty and responding appropriately during the recent Covid-19 pandemic abound. These challenges are extremely complex and there is an urgent need both to understand their basis and to generate effective solutions that will be embraced by the masses for the benefit of humanity and our planet. On the surface, one might assume that food insecurity is a problem for agricultural professionals to solve or that medical researchers are the most relevant experts to address a pandemic, yet what is becoming increasingly apparent is that complex problems demand an interdisciplinary perspective

and response. Inherent to global challenges is the complex intersection between economics, governance, science, technology, human behaviour, health and well-being, and social justice. No one discipline or way of thinking will fully address inherently complex global challenges. In this session we will consider the role of interdisciplinarity when developing responses to the global challenges of today and tomorrow.

► Panel 3 Coping with the COVID-19 Crisis

Lead: Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW)

Chairperson: Silvia Knapp | OeAW

Panelists:

Astrid Mager | OeAW, Josef Zechner | OeAW

Darren Gilmour | RSC, Tom Marrie | RSC

The societal, scientific, political and economic impacts of the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic are tremendous, with no end in sight, and require substantial adaptations of us – as a society – on multiple levels. The immediate response was centered on medical needs, and resulted in a shutdown to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and prevent the healthcare system’s collapse. While the epidemiologic reasoning of these restrictions of personal freedom seemed justified, the implications this reaction has on the society at large are still unclear. I want to discuss with the panel and the audience questions related to societal, political and economic repercussions, focusing on the following broad topics: How can we find a better balance between citizens’ rights and citizens’ health in pandemics in the future? How can we prevent the marginalization and potential discrimination of certain societal groups, and how can we ensure the involvement of more (diverse) stakeholders (the elderly, women, less privileged citizens)? Do technological advancements and tracking apps fulfill their promise, how should we deal with internet myths? Will COVID-19 become a catalyst for a more resilient economy? And how can we enhance communication, outreach and engagement beyond the academy during such crises?



Panel 4 Arctic and Alpine Environmental Change

Lead: **Royal Society of Canada (RSC)**

Chairperson: **John P. Smol** | RSC

Panelists:

Jakob Abermann | OeAW, **Günter Köck** | OeAW, **Lindsey Nicholson** | OeAW

Derek Muir | RSC

Both Arctic and alpine ecosystems have been referred to as the “miners’ canaries of the planet”, meaning that, due to a variety of positive feedback mechanisms, they are often the first to respond to climatic and other environmental changes, and to the greatest degree. Importantly, changes in polar regions affect ecosystems worldwide (e.g. ocean levels). Moreover, melting alpine glaciers result in striking economic, social, and environmental issues, as alpine regions act as “water towers”, supplying downstream populations with water for agriculture, industry, and drinking purposes. However, once the glaciers melt, the water tap is shut. Multiple anthropogenic stressors are rapidly changing these ecosystems, often outpacing our ability to collect data on baseline conditions. Despite the importance of these ecosystems, few long-term monitoring data are available.

In this session, we will explore the following broad questions: How have these sentinel ecosystems been affected by human-induced climatic and environmental changes? Are these changes reversible?

What does the future hold? What are the ecological and social repercussions of these changes?



Panel 5 Freedom of speech and Freedom of research: Challenges and responsibilities for academics and academics in the 21st century

Lead: **Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW)**

Chairperson: **Alice Vadrot** | OeAW

Panelists:

Simone Gingrich | OeAW, **Christian Sturmbauer** | OeAW

Nathalie Des Rosiers | RSC, **Len Findlay** | RSC

Freedom of speech and freedom of research are two important interrelated principles of vibrant democracies. However, in the past decade, several developments indicate the need to re-think the challenges and responsibilities attached to these two principles. Three important developments indicate that academia and academics face specific threats regarding the combination of the responsibility to produce knowledge and

“facts” and the duty to inform public discourse and policy-making: firstly, the decrease of public trust in science. Secondly, and as became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenge of adequately informing the public and advising policy-makers in light of scientific uncertainty. Thirdly, the tendency to exclude individual voices from public discourse on the basis of scientific or political standpoints. This panel will firstly discuss these developments and identify-related challenges and secondly examine how academics can contribute to vibrant democracies by being more explicit and transparent about the relationship between “freedom of speech” and “freedom of research” in the 21st century.



Panel 6 Healthy Societies

Lead: **Royal Society of Canada (RSC)**

Chairperson: **Candace Nykiforuk** | RSC

Panelists:

Marc Luy | OeAW, **Veronika Sexl** | OeAW, **Judit Simon** | OeAW

Sue Horton | RSC

Over the last four decades, Healthy Cities programs have substantively changed our understanding of population health systems’ interconnections with socio-economic and political systems and devoted attention to the impacts of infrastructure and built form on human health. Collectively, this body of work has turned our attention to the broader issue of healthy societies – transcending the health sector to consider economic viability, ecological sustainability, urban development and renewal, community resiliency, and social vitality as integrated, inseparable forces in a complex system. A healthy societies platform requires continuing and nuanced systems-oriented data to report impacts on the population, including marginalized or vulnerable groups.

In this session, we will consider the following: What makes a society healthy or unhealthy? How do we measure societal health, and more importantly, how should this information be used and by whom? What knowledge, skills, and experiences will be needed by the next generation to foster and sustain healthy societies in the face of the rapid technological, economic, and environmental change occurring globally?