

 Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Climate Action, Environment,  
Energy, Mobility,  
Innovation and Technology

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**70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe)**  
***High Level Segment – Digital and green transformation for sustainable development in the region of the ECE***

Madame President,  
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to address the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the UNECE today. Due to other commitments, I am unfortunately not able to be present in Geneva, but wish you at the outset a very successful meeting.

The climate crisis, biodiversity loss and pollution are the main challenges of humankind and put the survival and well-being of current and future generations at risk.

Strong and effective multilateralism, I am convinced, is the best approach to dealing with these challenges. We need to work together at the global and the regional level to overcome the multiple crises.

Green transformation is needed in many sectors to tackle the challenges. We cannot continue doing business as usual anymore. We need to change the way in which we produce and consume.

Circular economy is key in this regard. The resources of our planet are limited, but our consumption of natural resources is growing rapidly. Therefore, a linear economy is not acceptable anymore. We urgently need to make our economy circular and we have to ensure a transition towards a fossil-free and resource-efficient economy as soon as possible.

Digital transformation can accelerate the green transition. Just to give you some examples:

- Online meetings and working from home instead of commuting in fossil-fuel powered vehicles
- Reducing our energy consumption and carbon footprint by using smart meters
- Monitoring and tracking environment with satellite technologies, such as Copernicus (the European satellite based Earth observation system)

However, we need to ensure that digital technologies do not consume more energy than they save. And, we need to have the right policy frameworks in place.

Green and digital transformation will support Austria in becoming climate-neutral by 2040 and to achieve our target of 100% electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

That's why also in our Recovery and Resilience Plan, supported by the European Union, we set a clear focus on 'green' and 'digital'. The plan is supported by **3.46 billion Euro in grants**. **59%** of the plan will support **climate objectives** and **53%** of the plan will foster the **digital transition**.

**The plan supports the green transition through inter alia investments in**

- **sustainable mobility with zero-emission transport,**
- **expanding the electrified trans-European rail network,**
- **companies' investment in low-emission buildings and vehicles,**
- **phase-out of oil and gas heating in private homes,**
- **a biodiversity fund and**
- **the recycling of beverage containers.**

Also the UNECE should give more focus on the green and digital transformation in its work. This should include normative work, policy advice and capacity-building. Specific attention should be given to the different approaches in the region, learning from each other and giving attention to close the digital divide.

Austria is looking forward to working with all of you to accelerate the digital and green transformation in the region.

Thank you!