

## EBSCON 2024: „Curiosity“ as the basis for innovation

„Curiosity“ – the freedom to be curious – forms the basis for innovation. This theme is therefore at the centre of EBSCON 2024, the leading event for the European semiconductor and electronics industry.

*(Graz, 2 October 2024) „Without curiosity, there can be no progress, whether on a corporate or societal level – which is why we are taking a comprehensive look at this topic at EBSCON. At this year's EBSCON, top international speakers and experts from industry, think tanks and start-ups will present and discuss how 'curiosity' enables powerful and highly profitable innovations in companies,” reports Robert Gfrerer, Managing Director of the SILICON ALPS Cluster. In addition to the curiosity-driven innovations in companies, however, the locations and infrastructures must also be developed accordingly.*

Barbara Eibinger-Miedl, Styrian Minister of Economic Affairs, emphasises: *„In Austria, Styria and Carinthia play a pioneering role in the semiconductor industry. Our universities and the microelectronics companies located in the south of Austria, together with our Silicon Alps Cluster and the Silicon Austria Labs research centre, create a perfect environment to be a driver of innovation in the top international field. Thanks to the Koralm Tunnel, our two provinces are growing together to form a common economic area, which will further increase our international visibility and attractiveness for highly qualified specialists. Our two provincial governments are already working together to support this positive development in the best possible way.”*

### From dissertation to world market leader

An example from Infineon shows the importance of curiosity and a spirit of research in a corporate context. *„Almost all of you have vivid examples of the importance of 'curiosity' in corporate culture: silicon microphones from Infineon, which are now installed in almost every smartphone or earbud worldwide. This development began with a dissertation, and today Infineon is the global market leader with a market share of almost 50%,” reports Sabine Herlitschka, CEO of Infineon Austria. This is just one of many examples of how curiosity gives rise to projects at Austria's most research-intensive company, thereby creating sustainable innovation, growth and added value. According to Herlitschka, this requires above all „a culture of innovation“ and „the ability to cooperate in partnerships and research networks“. Another example of strategically promoted innovation is the milestone for the industry presented in mid-September, the world's first 300-millimetre gallium nitride (GaN) power technology from Infineon.*

### Interlinked research and economic strategy

*„The rectors of the universities in Styria and Carinthia worked together before the summer on a strategy to sustainably strengthen the economic and research area of southern Austria, which will be created by the Koralm Railway, and to fully exploit the potential for cooperation and synergies,” reports TU Graz Rector Horst Bischof. The next step is now to realise the interlinking of the research and economic strategy in order to achieve optimum performance for the region. For Bischof, cooperation between business and research is so important because „new research approaches are often generated at these interfaces.“ Horst Bischof cites successful projects with industry and the SILICON ALPS Cluster such as SIMEA and Transform as examples, in which the knowledge and expertise of*

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the participating companies is strengthened in relation to sustainable innovations, thereby increasing their competitiveness.

## **Global impact of Curiosity**

Top international speakers and experts from industry, think tanks and start-ups will present and discuss at EBSCON 2024. For example, Astrid Heide Petersen (Sanofi, DK) will speak in her keynote about „The economic impact of curiosity“ and Jonna **Heliskoski** (SITRA - the Finnish Innovation Fund) about „Curiosity-driven research“. In addition to the keynotes in the morning, Bernhard Petermeier (XISTA science ventures) will shed light on the topic of „Dynamic innovation ecosystems“ in his afternoon keynote. It is particularly important to the organising SILICON APLS Cluster that EBSCON 2024 not only provides impetus in terms of content, but that there is also a dialogue and active participation between the international industry representatives and experts and the participating decision-makers from the audience. Cluster Head Robert Gfrerer concludes: *„At EBSCON, we will also be exploring the potential for cross-industry cooperation using the example of batteries with mobility and greentech. This technological leadership in future-oriented high-tech fields and the accompanying social change would not be possible without the targeted curiosity of companies and organisations and their employees“.*

## **Website and programme:**

<https://ebscon.eu/>

<https://www.silicon-alps.at>

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**The PRESS CONFERENCE for EBSCON 2024 for review:** <https://bit.ly/ebscon2024-livestream-press-conference>

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