



**EUROPA FORUM LECH, 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>st</sup> April, 2018**

***DRAFT***

**"Eu@27 - Focus on added value"**

The EU is passing through a challenging period of reflecting on its future, following the unprecedented decision of one of its Member States to withdraw. The firm commitment of the other 27 countries to remain united goes hand in hand with their pledge to work for a stronger Europe, which is safe and secure, prosperous, competitive, and socially responsible. The key is to demonstrate to European citizens the added value of continuing to build a Union that adequately and efficiently responds to their needs and concerns.

Europa Forum Lech 2018 takes place less than a year before the European Summit in Sibiu, where the Heads of States and Governments of the 27 member states will decide how the European Union will develop over the years to come. Making Europe more united, stronger and democratic will require the support of all those willing to contribute to the European project, as well as the mobilisation of various political and economic instruments.

The EU budget plays a significant role in bolstering up economic growth and job creation through targeted investments with a broader European dimension. Representing currently only 1% of the combined GNI of its Member States, the EU budget alone cannot respond to the evolving needs of the European cities and regions. Supporting strategic sectors with high growth potential as energy, transport, automotive and digital industry can add up prosperity while strengthening social cohesion and economic convergence.

While backing traditional industries and services, the EU should not just keep pace with the digital revolution, but also strive to remain a front-runner in this area. Fostering research and innovation, stimulating new ideas and transforming them into increased productivity and competitiveness requires the combined efforts of numerous actors. Innovative enterprises, research organisations and institutions, providing funding opportunities and support work together to ensure the EU remains a global referent. The choices they make today will be critical for the place of tomorrow's Europe in the digital world.

Protecting the safety and security of European citizens must still remain an EU priority. Against the backdrop of global uncertainty, migration pressures and terrorist threats, the EU has to adapt to the new internal security challenges and protect its external borders while preserving its core values, liberties and principles.

European Commission's proposal for the next long-term budget of the EU – the post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, will be made public in May 2018 and will have to distribute limited resources in a result-oriented way, addressing all the economic, social and geo-political challenges.

With the reflection process on the future of Europe already at a cruising speed, the Europa Forum Lech can contribute to the discussion on how to reshape and sustain the European project. At times when the very fundamentals of the EU are being questioned by populists, the European response should be a convincing one, given together by as many key actors as possible.

## Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April

20:00 Early arrivals get together for an informal dinner and exchange of ideas with Commissioner Oettinger. *Hûs Nr. 8, Omesberg 8, Lech am Arlberg*

## Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April

12:30 – 13:30 Light buffet, *Hotel Gasthof Post, Dorf 11, Lech am Arlberg*

### 13:30 – 14:00 Welcome and opening remarks

*Ludwig Muxel, Mayor of Lech*  
*Markus Wallner, State Governor Vorarlberg,*  
*Günther H. Oettinger, Member of the European Commission*

### 14:00 – 16:00 The European Union's priorities for the next decade

In March 2017 President Juncker launched a reflection process on the future of Europe. A series of five reflection papers were subsequently published to open the discussion on the issues that will most affect our future. Consultations continue with a view of Europe having a plan and a vision by the European Parliament elections in June 2019.

The discussion with different high level stakeholders from the public and private sector will focus on the way forward and the lessons learned from this reflection. What is the best scenario for EU@27? What impact will the departure of the UK have on future European priorities? Where can the EU provide the greatest European value added?

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break

### 16:30 – 18:30 Working together to stimulate growth and jobs

The EU budget adds European value supporting growth and jobs oriented investment policy. Addressing key European and global priorities more efficiently would deliver even better results. Future oriented funding for top industries like energy and transport and support for their further modernization are among the measures that already give positive economic and social results.

The debate will be dedicated to the financial and regulatory means which should be deployed so that a connected, competitive and sustainable Europe contributes to reducing social-economic disparities and accelerating the development of all its cities and regions. Representatives of public bodies and of the European institutions and key players from the public and private sector will discuss how to drive strategic sectors forward while providing continuous support for traditional policies and tackling global challenges like climate change.

20:00 Cocktail, *Hotel "Die Krone von Lech", Dorf 13, Lech am Arlberg*

20:30 Dinner *Hotel "Die Krone von Lech"*

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

**10:00 – 12:00 Promoting and funding innovation and digital technology**

Research and innovation are already indispensable driving forces of European economy. A Europe that develops cutting-edge technologies and stays ahead of the digital trends requires addressing key problems together, sharing knowledge and building strong networks. Adding more European value with digital technologies could be possible on the basis on more incentives for this sector.

Researchers, industry representatives and financial experts will discuss the funding and growth opportunities for research, innovations and digitalisation. The future EU support, the digital agenda for the next decade and the digitalisation of public services will be among the topics discussed.

12:00 – 14:00 Lunch, *Hotel Gasthof Post, Dorf 11, Lech am Arlberg*

**14:00 – 16:00 Europe that protects its citizens**

A stable, safer and secure Europe is imperative for the economy to grow and the society to prosper. Far-reaching actions to protect the EU external borders and fight terrorism and organised crime are underway with the EU's Security Union in progress. How can this be done effectively and at the same time – cost-efficiently, adding greatest possible value?

During this discussion experts from national and international organizations will exchange views with representatives of the industry and think tanks. They will assess together the future needs for cooperation and the right balance between the internal and external actions. An overview of the existing and potential EU added value, generated by defence and security will also be made during this discussion.

**16:00 – 16:30 Closing remarks**

16:30 Press conference

18:00 Light dinner, *Hotel Gasthof Post, Dorf 11, Lech am Arlberg*