

Record attendance: Startup festival ViennaUP'23 draws 14,000 participants from 96 countries

Peak networking for the startup community, investors, organizations and creative professionals

After nine days of events, the first ViennaUP'23 results are in, with more than 14,000 participants from 96 nations in attendance at this diverse and community-driven startup festival, which is Austria's largest. This means that almost half the world was represented at ViennaUP'23 from 30 May to 7 June.

The startup festival focused on social entrepreneurship, sustainability, creative industries, female business leaders and the responsible development of technology, with most individual events fully booked.

"ViennaUP is Vienna's signature international event for startups. Our city is on the fast track as a technology and innovation hub. A startup festival like ViennaUP is the right format to communicate the economic potential of our city to an international audience," said Executive City Councillor for Economic Affairs Peter Hanke. *"The festival is now firmly established among the largest and most relevant startup festivals in Europe and is gaining ever more traction overseas."*

Investment, cooperation and shared visions

Over 30 ViennaUP'23 programme partners put on more than 50 individual events at 27 different locations in 12 Viennese districts over nine days. Hundreds of investors travelled to Vienna; thousands of networking talks and pitching sessions energised the city and the startup scene.

The Vienna Business Agency organised and curated ViennaUP for the third time this year. *"ViennaUP is special because almost the entire domestic startup community hosts individual events under the same umbrella. This adds both complexity and a unique charm. The thematic diversity of ViennaUP is its strength,"* said Gerhard Hirczi, Managing Director of the Vienna Business Agency.

At ViennaUP'23, impact investors, technologists and health experts, creative professionals and designers, among others, networked and learned from each other. Startups and established organisations worked together on solutions to achieve climate goals and keep cities liveable.

Among other partners, ViennaUP'23 was also supported by the Federation of Austrian Industries. *"It is important for us to show that Vienna is a vibrant technology metropolis with an excellent mix of globally active industrial companies, SMEs and startups, all cooperating with a first-class research community. In this sense, ViennaUP has become a perfect business card for Vienna as an innovative hotspot,"* said the Managing Director of the Federation of Austrian Industries Vienna, Johannes Höhrhan.

The festival central on Karlsplatz, the Homebase, was created as a meeting point for all ViennaUP'23 visitors. Around two thousand visitors visited the Homebase to network while enjoying Viennese delicacies, wine and music.

In addition to the entire Viennese startup scene, Viennese institutions such as Cafe Schwarzenberg, Café Adlerhof, Cafe Prückel and Café Wortner played host to hundreds of ViennaUP'23 guests.

Survey says: Vast majority would recommend further

The evaluation of ViennaUP'23 began during the festival and will continue for several days afterwards. Early results were encouraging: Around 99% of those surveyed so far would recommend ViennaUP'23 to others.

Participating startups came from the USA, New Zealand, Japan, Thailand, several African countries, Australia and Malaysia, with many travelling from Central and Eastern Europe. But local startups and would-be founders, in particular, took advantage of the ViennaUP'23 offer.

Reactions from startups

"I was impressed by the organised programmes when I checked [them] online. That impression brought me to Vienna. After attending several ViennaUP events, I am now considering to venture my business here in Austria, mainly because of the entrepreneurial culture here," says Bernard Eng from Malaysia, founder and CEO of Bernard Business Consulting.

Travelling from South Korea, Hee Yung Ryoo, founder of Croft.ai, attended the Startup Festival: *"Participating in ViennaUP'23 was an incredibly rewarding experience for my startup. The organisers of the event offered me dedicated support. They allowed me to network with industry professionals, receive valuable advice and make new connections. Additionally, I had the opportunity to deepen my understanding of the EU market through engaging discussions with local experts, shaping my business strategy and paving the way for expansion."*

Nate Wyne, CEO and Co-Founder of Floodlight from the USA: *"ViennaUP is beautifully organized and optimized for connecting people who should be connected. I've been blown away by the camaraderie, the swift deal flow adds, and how the backdrop of the city itself makes the whole experience a perfect fit for what we need now."*

Julia Bialecka, co-founder of S.Lab from Ukraine says: *"I really enjoy meeting people at ViennaUP'23. Everyone is so willing to share, discuss things and find solutions to the problems we have currently. ViennaUP is such a great platform for startups to meet investors, to meet partners, to meet potential customers!"*

Just a few larger event highlights at the ViennaUP'23 included the world's largest startup competition, "Startup Worldcup Austria Finale", "Connect Day 2023" as the central matchmaking event of the ViennaUP'23 for startups, corporates/SMEs and investors, and the "Impact Days" as the leading conference for social entrepreneurship. The "Creative Days Vienna" - a two-day focus for startups and companies in the creative industries - was dedicated to the question of how digital technology is changing and reshaping our culture and creative industries. At the "Smart City SuMMit", innovators and political decision-makers came together to achieve climate goals for cities with technological solutions.

ViennaUP is a startup event for a global audience initiated by the Vienna Business Agency and implemented together with dozens of incredible partners from across the Viennese startup scene. A photo review of the festival days is available at: viennaup.com

Next year, ViennaUP'24 will take place from 3 June to 9 June 2024.

Enquiries & contact:

Mag. Roberta "Louis" Kraft
Media Spokesperson City Councillor Peter Hanke
Phone: +43 1 4000 81211
roberta.kraft@wien.gv.at

Uschi Kainz
Communications Vienna Business Agency
Phone: +43 699 1408 6583
kainz@wirtschaftsagentur.at