

Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation officially founded: A milestone for Open Science in Austria

"This is another important step for Austria and shows how advanced we are in the discussion about Open Science", says Stefan Hanslik, BMBWF, one of the driving forces behind the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), a process in which Austria has been involved since the beginning. The commitment to the principles of EOSC was made in Vienna, during the Austrian EU Presidency, in the "Vienna Declaration on the European Open Science Cloud". The Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation is now the next milestone after the launch of the European Open Science Cloud, which took place on 3 November 2018 at the University of Vienna. Paolo Budroni, TU Vienna, coordinator of the initiative, adds: "Now the joint work around building structures has paid off, and the real work can begin."



Figure 1. The first General Assembly of the Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation, Freyung, Vienna on 13 October 2021.

Bart Dumolyn (EOSC building process Belgium) presented the EOSC building process in Flanders as a comparison, with special attention to the preparatory work in the area of Open Access and policies, which can be ground-breaking for the Austrian situation. Other relevant and fundamental settings were presented by Suzanne Dumouchel (EOSC building process France) in relation to developments in France. The spiritual father of the EOSC, Jean-Claude Burgelman, also pointed out in his statement at the first General Assembly that even though a lot has been said and written, there is actually still a lot to be done on an operational level. In addition, more can be achieved with partners – especially since the societal demands have greatly expanded since the first idea of making EU research data public, in order to create a "Schengen area for research data" in Europe, so to speak.

Apart from TU Wien, the pioneers in Austria were the University of Vienna, TU Graz, the Natural History Museum Vienna, JKU Linz and the Climate Change Centre Austria (CCCA). All are already members of the EOSC Association.

Each institution brings specific infrastructures or skills to the table. In addition to research, teaching and related infrastructures, universities will make an important contribution in training a new generation of scientists and technicians, data scientists, data curators, or data stewards. "Universities, with their infrastructures and services, make an important contribution in the exchange with culture, economy and society, for which the EOSC provides a framework to be able to shape it in a coherent, ambitious and prudent way," emphasizes Ronald Maier, Vice Rector of the University of Vienna. "Experience from many projects shows that open research processes bring great added value," confirms Claudia von der Linden, Vice Rector of TU Graz. "In particular, the vision of Open Linked Data inspires us", adds Katrin Vohland, General Director of the Natural History Museum Vienna, "we can then link our collection data with climate data or modelling, functional information or historical findings". Josef Eberhardsteiner, Vice Rector of the Vienna University of Technology, outlines the next operational steps: "After clarifying the required resources, the task now is to set up working groups and ongoing monitoring of the Austrian research landscape and to define success factors, with the purpose of enabling EOSC readiness."

Overview – The 1st General Assembly’s Achievement: Due to the general agreement on the *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)*, the bodies of the General Assembly could be elected within the framework of this meeting. The General Assembly’s bodies include the Management, the Steering Committee, the Synergy Team, Working Groups and the EOSC Café. While the General Assembly is the representative body that also is ultimately responsible for decision-making, the other bodies take up the following essential functions (see *Figure 2*):

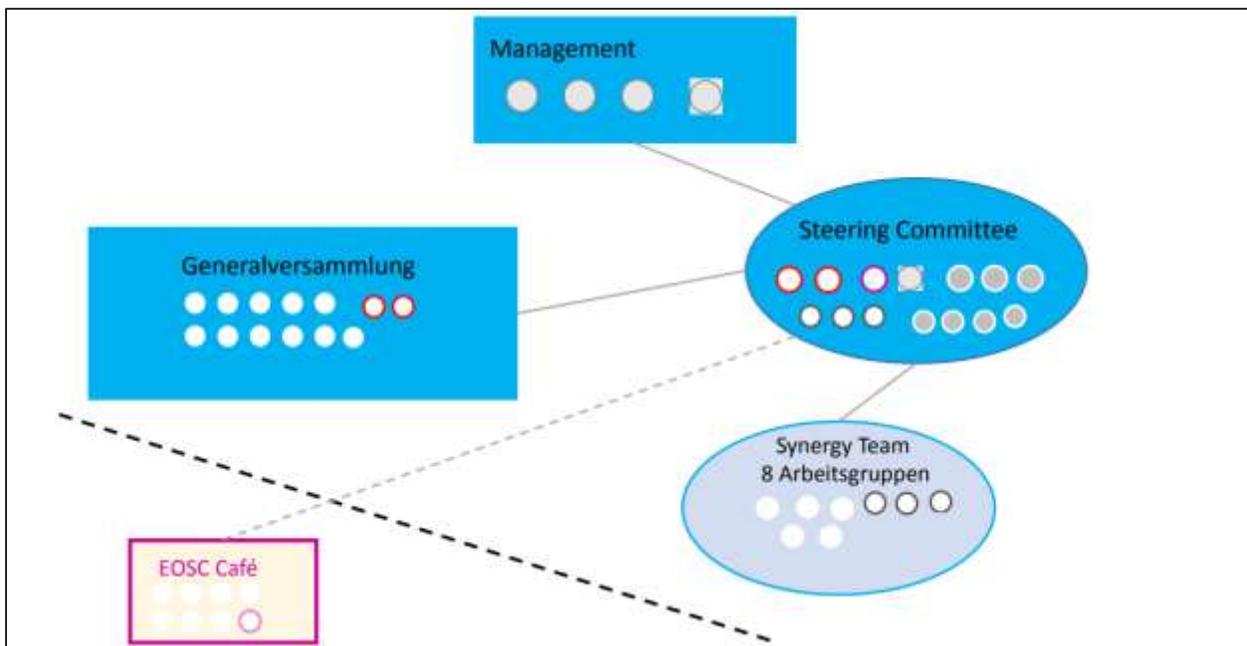


Figure 2. The Management Structure of the Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation.

- ✓ The *Management* ensures the optimization of processes and acts as an intermediary for coordination between the organs and the partners of the initiative.

- ✓ The *Steering Committee* provides the basic orientation of the initiative. It is composed of one representative from each of the full partners and is convened by the General Assembly. It consists of one delegated representative per full partner. In addition, there are three representatives of the Synergy Team, the Chairperson of the Management as a co-opted member without voting rights, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the General Assembly, as well as the Coordinator of the EOSC Café (advisory function without voting rights).
- ✓ The *Synergy Team* coordinates the work of the Working Groups (WGs). The members of the Synergy Team consist of the coordinators of the WGs and the chairperson of the management. It elects a spokesperson and two deputies and sends these three representatives to the Steering Committee. They act as 1st, 2nd, 3rd spokesperson of the Synergy Team.
- ✓ The *Working Groups* drive forward EOSC-relevant topics. They are convened and confirmed by the General Assembly. Proposals for WGs can come from the entire community. The working groups are limited in time and work on specific topics. Accordingly, they can be very diverse in composition and correspond more to the specific competence profile of the members than to a general representation. They are set up in a comprehensible way. If necessary, external experts can be invited.
- ✓ The *EOSC Café* is an Open Forum and part of the EOSC process. The forum consists of different actors of internal and external experts (from different disciplines of science and research, research policy, society and economy), who provide the organs of the EOSC Support Office Austria in the joint initiative, and subsequently the communication in the joint initiative, with impulses from "outside". The EOSC Café is moderated by an Austrian representative of the EOSC Steering Board (of the European EOSC Partnerships).

The candidates standing for election can be seen in *Figure 3*. All partner institutions were represented by this list of candidates, meaning that they are also represented in all bodies. The open ballot was conducted in several steps, which also allowed all participants to speak if needed. In the first step, participants were asked if they wanted to abstain from voting, in the second if they were against one or more of the candidates and in the last, they were asked for their approval. The candidates were unanimously elected to their positions. Afterwards, all candidates were asked if they were still willing to take on their positions as well as relating responsibilities. This was also answered in the affirmative by all.



Elected members

First Chair of the General Assembly	Paolo Budroni
Second Chair of the General Assembly	Maria Seissl
Members of the Steering Committee	Josef Eberhardsteiner, Claudia von der Linden, Christopher Lindinger, Roland Maier, Chris Schubert, Katrin Vohland
Coordinator of Steering Committee Deputy Coordinator of Steering Committee	Katrin Vohland Claudia von der Linden
Members of Management Board	Ilire Hasani-Mavriqi, Heimo Rainer, Tereza Kalová
First Chair of Management Board (Coordinator)	TU Graz, represented by Ilire Hasani-Mavriqi
Second Chair of Management Board	NHM, represented by Heimo Rainer
Third Chair of Management Board	Universität Wien, represented by Tereza Kalová
Fourth Chair of Management Board	ZAMG, CCCA, represented by Gerhard Wotawa
Coordinator of EOSC Cafés	Stefan Hanslik
Spokespersons of Synergy Team	Barbara Sánchez Solís Susanne Blumesberger Claire Jean-Quartier

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Figure 3. The list of elected members at the 1st General Assembly.

Background: The European Commission in Vienna officially launched the European Open Science Cloud in November 2018 under the Austrian EU Presidency. The *Vienna Declaration on the European Open Science Cloud*¹ is one of the cornerstones of the Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation / EOSC Support Office Austria initiative.

From the Mutual Agreement of Understanding (MoU): *The initiative, the "Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation" and the "EOSC Support Office Austria" are created in the context of the formation of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and the EOSC Association AISBL². The partners are united by their common interest in a coordinated development according to the future Austrian Open Science Policy and EOSC goals. The goal of the "EOSC Support Office Austria" is to establish itself as the operational unit of the "Austrian EOSC Mandated Organisation", which is currently managed purely legally by the ACONET Association.*

The Austrian initiative is committed to the Open Science movement and the Vienna Declaration on the EOSC. The vision of Open Science is to make scientific processes more open and effective and to use both scientific excellence and open innovative and applied research to address current challenges, which are outlined in the policies of the EU Commission and in the framework of the Global Sustainability Goals (UN SDGs).

Participation of other Austrian institutions in the EOSC initiative is encouraged.

For inquiries:

¹ See https://eosc-launch.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/k_eosc_launch/EOSC_Vienna_Declaration_2018.pdf

² See <https://www.eosc.eu/>



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