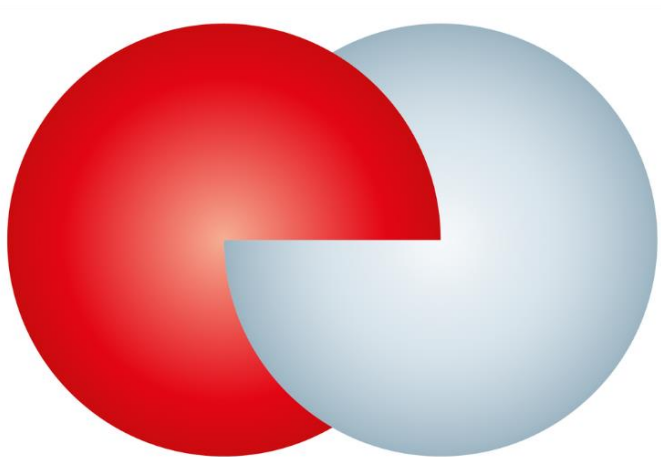


# AUSTRIA CONNECT UK 2023



## STORMY WATERS AND RAYS OF HOPE

21.04.2023 | London

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## WELCOME TO **AUSTRIA CONNECT** UK 2023

When I took over at the Austrian Trade Commission in London at the end of 2015 after 8 “rough” years in New York, the United Kingdom had just recovered from the big financial crisis and hopes were high for some smooth sailing.

The referendum on EU membership dashed such expectations and marked the beginning of Britain’s journey into an uncertain future.



But because uncertainty is easier to master when you make it a common challenge, Brexit was also inspiration and “midwife” for the annual conference of executives of Austrian subsidiaries in the UK: from modest beginnings at the Trade Commission’s own little conference room (we had to borrow chairs from the Austrian Cultural Forum) in 2017 to today’s 7th edition of AUSTRIA CONNECT UK attended by the President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

In the first 3 years these family reunions of the Austrian business community were all about coping with Britain’s departure from the EU. Today Brexit – while still a drag on the UK’s economy – is only a footnote to the global disruption and division that force us to rethink and refocus our growth strategies.

Now we are living in a fragmenting world: War, energy crisis, inflation, resurgent economic nationalism, risks from vulnerable supply chains or decoupling from China to preserve technology superiority threaten to upend a rule-governed trading system that is the foundation of our economic and political success.

But when steering our boats through such stormy waters we must bear in mind that when we look hard enough, when we listen, when we learn and when we exchange notes and share ideas, there is opportunity to be found in crisis.

That's what AUSTRIA CONNECT has always been about and I am certain that also at the end of today's conference this search party looking out for rays of hope over stormy waters will return with a bounty of inspiration and thoughts that will help to master the future.

As I shall complete my "tour of duty" in the UK this summer, this conference is also the last event on my watch. Let me take this opportunity to wish you well and thank you all for your views, insights, your support and companionship over many years.



**Christian Kesberg**

Trade Commissioner & Commercial Counsellor

# AGENDA

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09.30                    **REGISTRATION**

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10.00                    **WELCOME**  
**Christian Kesberg**  
Trade Commissioner and Commercial Counsellor  
  
**Michael Zimmermann**  
Austrian Ambassador to the UK

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10.15                    **OPENING REMARKS**  
**Harald Mahrer**  
President, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

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10.30                    **KEYNOTE**  
**Britain 2023 - EXPLAINING THE UNEXPLAINABLE**  
**Anand Menon**  
Director UK in a Changing Europe & Professor of European  
Politics and Foreign Affairs at King's College London

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11.30                    **COFFEE BREAK**

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12.00                    **MEET THE DELEGATES**  
Status updates by the participants

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13.00                    **LUNCH BREAK**

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14.00                    **INSIDE OF WHAT'S AHEAD**  
**THE UK AND GLOBAL MACRO ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**  
**Daniel Vernazza**  
Chief International Economist, UniCredit

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14.45

**COFFEE BREAK**

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15.00

**PARALLEL WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

Detailed workshop descriptions on the next page | Space for selected workshops is limited, early booking essential | Allocation on a first come, first served basis

**WORKSHOP 1**

**THE “GREAT RETENTION”: EMPLOYER USP AND VALUE PROPOSITION IN TURBULENT TIMES**

Workshop facilitator:

**Margareta Sailer**

Founder, mondaysquares

**WORKSHOP 2**

**DECISION MAKING UNDER UNCERTAINTY AND RISK**

Workshop facilitator:

**Michel-Alexandre Cardin**

Associate Professor, Imperial College London

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16.30

**WRAP UP AND NETWORKING RECEPTION**

## SPEAKERS

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### **Christian Kesberg**

Trade Commissioner &  
Commercial Counsellor



Christian Kesberg is the Austrian Trade Commissioner for the United Kingdom and Commercial Counsellor at the Austrian Embassy in London. He leads the UK operations of ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA, Austria's international organisation for the promotion of trade and investment.

Before his appointment in December 2015, Christian served as ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA's Chief Strategy Officer. He was Austria's Trade Commissioner for the United States from September 2006 to September 2014, having previously served as Deputy Director General and Chief Operating Officer of the entire ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA organisation. Before that, he was the Austrian Trade Commissioner to South Korea.

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### **Michael Zimmermann**

Ambassador



Michael Zimmermann is an Austrian career diplomat. After studies at the University of Vienna and the Diplomatic Academy Vienna he joined the Austrian foreign ministry in 1983. His foreign postings include Abidjan, Tokyo, and Tehran. In Vienna, he has worked in the cabinets of several foreign ministers. From 2009 to 2014 he was Austrian ambassador to Hungary, and afterwards appointed director general for management affairs at the Austrian foreign ministry. On 1 August 2018, he was appointed Austrian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, having served there before from 1999 to 2004.

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## SPEAKERS

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### **Harald Mahrer**

President, Austrian  
Federal Economic  
Chamber



Harald Mahrer is President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and was appointed President of the Austrian National Bank (Österreichische Nationalbank) in September 2018. He was Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Business until December 2017. Prior to that, he was State Secretary in the same department from September 1st, 2014.

As graduate of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, he gained political experience as chairperson of the Austrian National Union of Students and subsequently completed a Doctorate in Social and Economic Science. After several years as a research assistant focusing on information systems and digital businesses he founded Austria's first incubator and his first company, legend consulting. He then took over as managing partner of Austria's leading PR & strategic communications agency, Pleon Publico.

For more than 15 years, he has been an active business angel and promoted startups in different industries. From 2011 to 2015, he was also President of the Julius Raab Foundation – one of Austria's leading think tanks. He founded the Austrian Association of Philanthropic Foundations, worked intensively in the area of disruptive innovation, corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, and individual freedom and establishing new strategic priorities for the development of Austria and Europe.

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## SPEAKERS

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### **Anand Menon**

Professor at King's  
College London



Anand Menon is Director of the UK in a Changing Europe and Professor of European Politics and Foreign Affairs at King's College London. He has written widely on many aspects of EU politics and policy and on UK-EU relations. He is a frequent contributor to the media, having appeared on BBC Question Time, Newsnight and Politics Live, on matters relating to British relations with the European Union.

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### **Daniel Vernazza**

UniCredit



Daniel Vernazza is Chief International Economist at UniCredit Bank, based in London. In this role, Daniel is responsible for UniCredit's coverage of the US, UK and global economy. Prior to joining UniCredit in March 2013, Daniel was a Teaching Fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE), where he taught economics for three years. He previously worked as an economist for Goldman Sachs in London. Daniel holds a PhD in Economics from the LSE.



## SPEAKERS

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**Margareta Sailer**  
mondaysquares



Margareta is the founder of mondaysquares, a consultancy service that focuses on people, culture and efficiency. Meggy works strategically with businesses to ensure that they thrive.

Meggy has successfully built and scaled global high tech startups such as Tesla as Senior Recruitment Manager EMEA and Lilium Aviation as Global Recruitment Director leading these companies from less than 100 people to hundreds and thousands within a short period of time. She brings over a decade of experience with her in the people space, - working with large, multinational corporations, scaling businesses and startups. Born and raised in Vienna, Austria, Meggy resides in Hampshire, UK.

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**Michel-Alexandre Cardin**  
Imperial College London



Michel-Alexandre is an Associate Professor in Computational Aided Engineering at the Dyson School of Design Engineering, Imperial College London, and Director of the Strategic Engineering Laboratory. In his research he focuses on Systems Design and Optimization under Uncertainty, covering methodological topics such as concept generation and selection, decision-making under uncertainty, machine learning, stochastic optimization, uncertainty modeling, and virtual/augmented reality. Dr. Cardin holds a PhD in Engineering Systems and a Master of Science in Technology and Policy from MIT, a Master of Applied Science in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Toronto, Honors BSc in Physics from McGill University in Canada, and is a graduate of the Space Science Program at the International Space University.

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### ReFocus Austria

The global business initiative ReFocus Austria was launched in September 2021 as part of the Federal Government's Comeback Plan for economic recovery during and after the pandemic. As part of the campaign, the more than 100 Austrian diplomatic representations of the Foreign Ministry organise tailor-made events and activities abroad as Team Austria together with the Ministry for Labour and Economy and other federal ministries, ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA and the Austrian National Tourist Office to strengthen the domestic export industry. In the first year of ReFocus Austria, more than 300 events and projects were organised in around 85 countries on six continents. Through diplomatic visits, networking meetings, company visits and meetings with local decision-makers, ReFocus Austria presents Austria abroad as an attractive business location and tourist destination and promotes the know-how of top Austrian companies. The focus of activities is on seven future-oriented areas: renewable energies, e-mobility, sustainability, digital transformation, infrastructure, urban technology and tourism. The global marketing of the "Made in Austria" brand, which stands for excellent quality, reliability and high engineering and craftsmanship, is intended to secure jobs and further expand investments in Austria.





# HISTORY OF THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY IN LONDON

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## From Chandos House to Belgrave Square



The history of the Austrian Embassy in London is remarkable in many ways. Since the Congress of Vienna, it has moved its quarters only once, in 1866, from Chandos House to 18 Belgrave Square. It is the only Embassy building of the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Foreign Service still used today by Austrian diplomacy.

After the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna, the Austrian Empire reestablished her diplomatic mission in London. In 1816, Paul Anton III Prince Esterházy de Galantha rented Chandos House, N° 2, Queen Anne Street, London SW, as his residence and as chancery of the embassy. It had been built around 1770 by architect Robert Adam for the Duke of Buckingham and was considered one of the most beautiful townhouses. As the building became old and dilapidated and its owner intended to pull it down, Ambassador Rudolph Count Apponyi in 1866 concluded a sublease for the townhouse at 18, Belgrave Square. The new residence of the Austrian ambassador had been built between 1814 and 1825 by architect George Basevi according to a development plan for Belgrave Square by Thomas Cubitt and Joseph Cundry. After several short-term contracts, Ambassador Count Francis Deym finally in 1892 bought the town house at 18, Belgrave Square on behalf of Austria-Hungary.

When on August 12, 1914, Great Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary, the rupture of diplomatic relations became unavoidable. On August 13, the embassy was entrusted to the protection of the ambassador of the United States. This protection was brought to an end with the severing of diplomatic relations of Austria-Hungary with the United States on April 6, 1917. From April 1917 to August 1920, the Royal Swedish Legation in London looked after the embassy building, the consulates and Austro-Hungarian interests.

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Protection ended when Austria opened her legation in London on August 18, 1920 and George Franckenstein became the first minister plenipotentiary after the war, remaining so until 1938. The long-running dispute between Austria and Hungary over the rights to the Westminster lease was only resolved in 1934, when Hungary finally ceded the rights to the lease.



After Hitler proclaimed the Anschluss of Austria to the German Reich on March 13, 1938, the building N° 18, Belgrave Square was used as consular department of the German embassy. After the outbreak of World War II until July 31, 1945, the Swiss legation took over the protection of German interests in the United Kingdom, which then included the former Austrian legation on Belgrave Square. Swiss protection ended on July 31, 1945. Between August 1, 1945 and September 28, 1948, the severely damaged former legation building was administered by the Ministry of Works.

On September 29, 1948, the legation building was returned to Austria. 2 months later, on November 29, a new lease was concluded for 86 years, until Michaelmas (i.e. 29 September) 2034. On January 30, 1952 Lothar Wimmer presented his credentials as Ambassador of Austria. The historic mansion on 18, Belgrave Square continues to serve as residence to the Austrian ambassador.

Excerpt: Rudolf Agstner, Von Chandos House zum Belgrave Square; Österreichs Botschaft in London 1815-1997; Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs (Sonderdruck)

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