

## **ITB Berlin 2024: Austria presents itself innovatively, sustainably and with new “Lebensgefühl”**

- **Opening press conference at the Austrian stand: focus on sustainability and winter tourism**
- **First summary of winter 2023/24: winter sports continue to be in high demand**
- **FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2025 in Saalbach Hinterglemm: opportunity for a new generation of skiers**

*State Secretary for Tourism Susanne Kraus-Winkler, Managing Director of the Austrian National Tourist Office Astrid Steharnig-Staudinger, Salzburg's Deputy Governor Stefan Schnöll and Managing Director of SalzburgerLand Tourism Leo Bauernberger gave insights into Austria's multifaceted presence at the opening press conference held at the Austria stand of the ITB 2024 in Berlin today. This year it's all about sustainability, innovation and winter tourism, with a special focus on the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2025 in Saalbach.*

### **The Austria stand at the ITB: more exchange and innovation**

"With the new Austria presence, we have successfully joined forces to make an even more powerful appearance. Our cooperation with so many exceptional partners from Austrian tourism has enabled us to show a strong international presence," said Astrid Steharnig-Staudinger at the opening of the Austrian stand. "This year, we set ourselves apart with the innovative and interactive experiences on site in particular, which make it possible to feel the Austrian “Lebensgefühl” from afar with all the senses."

Together with the 64 Austrian partners, the holiday destination will be showing off its wealth of facets in its largest market of origin and on an international stage. There is a conscious focus on interaction at the stand, such as the VR hot air balloon ride or ski simulator, to make holidays in Austria come alive at the world's largest tourism trade fair using innovative tools.

Steharnig-Staudinger also gave a brief account of the Austrian National Tourist Office's new brand identity, which will be presented as part of an evening event later today. At its core is the unique Austrian “Lebensgefühl” or attitude towards life, which can be felt at the stand through various elements.

### **Steharnig-Staudinger: sustainability makes us competitive – Austria offers the full package**

Austria's tourism industry has been working on the integration of sustainable processes within its day-to-day operations for years. This can be seen in specific examples: 55 percent of the energy used in tourism already is already drawn from renewable sources, and when it comes to snowmaking the figure is as high as 90 percent on Austrian slopes. "We have set ourselves the goal of not only supporting the industry in becoming more sustainable, but also shining a spotlight on the operations and destinations that can serve as beacons for the entire industry," says Steharnig-Staudinger. To support this objective, the Austrian National Tourist Office has released the "Sustainability in Austria – Best Practices in Tourism" publication together with globally active Danish consulting firm SUSTAINIA and presented it today at the ITB.

### **Kraus-Winkler: Austria takes the next steps towards a successful sustainable future of tourism**

For Susanne Kraus-Winkler, making best practice examples visible is "another important signal to our guests, who recognise Austria as one of the most sustainable tourism destinations in the world". Studies by the State Secretary show that sustainable tourism is also crucial for the perception and opinions of the local population. "Sustainability is a common concern for all tourism stakeholders – from guests to tourism workers, businesses, destination managers and marketing organisations. The local population benefits from innovative sustainability initiatives in tourist regions too, which increases tourism acceptance and secures it in the long term. In Austrian tourism policy, sustainability is the key when it comes to the future viability of Austrian tourism," says State Secretary for Tourism Kraus-Winkler.

### **Bauernberger: ITB as a grand stage for the World Ski Championships 2025**

As a provincial partner at the Austria stand, SalzburgerLand offers everything from fantastic winter sports to world-class culture. "That's exactly what makes us a truly unique destination in international comparison," says Leo Bauernberger, Managing Director of SalzburgerLand Tourism. The focus is on the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2025 in Saalbach Hinterglemm, with the Salzburg State Theatre presenting first glimpses of musical 'Skiverliebt' which will celebrate its premiere around the World Ski Championships. "SalzburgerLand has a great history and future as a winter sports destination. Hosting the internationally respected World Ski Championships underlines our competence in this area and offers us the opportunity to inspire a new generation and, above all, encourage

children and young people to ski. Together with our regions, we have put together additional offers that make skiing attractive for families, even in economically challenging times."

### **Schnöll: sustainable mobility concepts as the key to destination development**

For Deputy Governor Stefan Schnöll, Salzburg's tourism scores with two strengths: "Salzburg's quality of hospitality is valued internationally. And tailor-made offers are making the most of the trend towards environmentally friendly mobility – from the arrival to the stay." The current winter season is heading towards an excellent result, having already reached the second-best place ever at the end of January. "Salzburg is very much perceived as a snow and skiing destination. This is being reinforced by the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2025 as a major international event highlight," says Schnöll. Another "export" at the ITB in Berlin: Salzburg's tourism schools demonstrating what young professionals can do for tourism.

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