

COP 26 / World Leaders Summit Glasgow



Statement by

H.E. Mr. Alexander SCHALLENBERG
Federal Chancellor

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Dear Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished group here today. And thank you, Prime Minister Johnson, for convening all of us at this critical point in time for this critical purpose.

Our world is still in a state of emergency.

And if the past 18 months of the COVID pandemic have reminded us of one thing, then it is that in order to manage a global crisis effectively, we all have to act fast and we have to act together.

The same goes for our fight against climate change. And I can assure you that Austria is determined to play its part together with our partners in Europe and worldwide.

Domestically, in Austria, we are aiming at reaching Net Zero by 2040.

With this ambitious aim in mind, we strongly focus on the use of renewables.

Currently, we cover over 70% of our national electricity needs from renewable energy sources. Our goal is to bring this to a 100% by 2030. And we intend to achieve this milestone without using nuclear energy. In our eyes, nuclear energy is neither safe nor sustainable.

Another priority is carbon pricing. We have just agreed a large-scale ecological turnaround as part of an eco-social tax reform.

This eco-social tax reform lays the foundation for a certificate-based carbon pricing scheme in Austria, while also reducing the tax burden on low- and mid-income families.

And, finally, we are investing more in public transportation and energy efficiency than ever before in our history.

These domestic activities go hand in hand with our cooperation at EU and at international level.

We whole-heartedly support the European Union's ambitious climate goals and the EU's updated NDC of a net domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55 % by 2030 as compared to 1990. With this, Europe is setting an example and it is on track to becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050.

We also fully support the EU's role as one of the world's leading contributors of climate finance.

As Austria, we have recently increased our contribution to the Green Climate Fund by 100 Million Euros bringing our total share up to 130 Million Euros.

However, we have to be aware of one fact:

Despite all our efforts across all government sectors, be it at national, regional or local level, we will fall short of our targets if we do not ensure the closest cooperation possible with the private sector.

Cooperation with the private sector is and will be critical to protect our climate.

Because radical reductions in carbon emissions can only succeed through cooperation and innovation.

Of course, each and every one of us, as individuals, as families, as societies, have a role to play to reduce our own carbon footprint.

But unless we change everything we do, we will have to rely on new ways of doing.

Only new, sustainable forms of industrial production, of transport technology, of consumption, of housing and also of forest management will enable us to become fully climate-neutral.

These necessary innovations, I am convinced, can only come from close cooperation with the private sector – from scientists and entrepreneurs alike.

And it is our task as political leaders to enable it and to support it wherever we can.

This is critical. Because if we failed to do so, we would risk a situation in which we had to choose between the economic health of our nations and the environmental health of our planet.

And I am sure that you all will agree with me that neither is an option.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The protection of our climate and our planet is one of our generation's most important challenges.

A challenge that we need to live up to with determination, innovation and global cooperation.

We as Austria stand ready to work alongside all of you in the years to come to live up to this task, which history has placed before us.

Thank you.