



Zero Project

For a world with zero barriers

Zero Project Technology Forum: Shaping the future development of disability innovations

The Zero Project Technology Forum launches February 24th in Vienna, Austria, in cooperation with UniCredit Bank Austria

Vienna, Austria, February 6, 2023: Innovation and inclusion are key parts of competitiveness in the modern global market. The Technology Forum is an **exclusive, global event focusing on elevating the most promising ICT solutions from all around the world**, which have proof of concept and the highest potential to scale, to create impact for large numbers of persons with disabilities.

Growth driver for technology innovations

According to WHO figures, approximately 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability. "If you include the aging population, the number rises sharply to over 25%," states Luk Zelderloo, former Secretary General of EASPD. This proportion represents both important customers and important employees for companies in the race for market share. Digitalization is also revolutionizing the entire economy in this area. Whoever is ahead in innovative solutions for the participation of people with disabilities in public life and professional life will lead this segment both in the job market as well as in customer acquisition.

This process will be greatly accelerated by the EU's **European Accessibility Act**, which will come into force as of 2025 and must be implemented by companies with more than 10 employees or annual sales of two million euros. On the one hand, it obliges companies to issue invitations for inclusive procurement, but also to make online services, websites, self-service terminals, and electronic communication services barrier-free. The European Accessibility Act is a further implementation of the ESG criteria, such as the Green Deal, and a growth driver in this segment. Companies need to prepare for it.

The Technology Forum – an exclusive matchmaking platform

Seeking out breakthrough innovations in digitalization and communication technologies is crucial for a company. This is where the Zero Project Technology Forum comes in. Its aim is to identify the most promising innovations at an **early**

stage, even before they become relevant for Silicon Valley, investors, and companies, in order to create partnerships that provide funding and scale.

The Zero Project Technology Forum is the **first and only event in the world** to bring together all the key players in disability innovation in one room for one day, across all sectors.

Key players from all sectors

Approximately **80 top-level decision makers** will participate. They come from international tech companies, corporations, international organizations, sponsors, and the innovators themselves. Announced participants include Google, Microsoft, Apple, Samsung, OPPO, Cisco, Atos, UniCredit, Nike, and McDonalds. International organizations represented include the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the International Telecom Union.

The Technology Forum draws from a pool of **more than 6,000 experts from over 120 countries and over 800 award-winning innovations** from the Zero Project. These innovations can be used and scaled directly by decision-makers in politics, business, and civil society. “The Zero Project Technology Forum is an innovative laboratory and an important source of inspiration for companies, organizations and politics to get early access to the latest innovations for persons with disabilities. As a pioneer in accessibility and services for people with disabilities in all of Europe, it is very important for us to be a partner of the Zero Project Technology Forum in order to remain as an innovation leader at the forefront of technological developments”, says Robert Zadrazil, CEO of UniCredit Bank Austria, explaining his bank's commitment. The Zero Project is the largest global platform for innovation and its implementation.

For all media and press enquiries, please contact:

Sabine Wachernig, Press Coordinator: press@zeroproject.org

[The Zero Project Technology Forum | Zero Project](#)

- You are cordially invited to join our **tipping point talk with the press** on 24.02.2023 at 9:15 in the UniCredit building at Kaiserwasser, Eiswerkstrasse 20, 1220 Vienna. To gain access, please register with the Press Coordinator, Sabine Wachernig, press@zeroproject.org



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- We provide you with **photographs**.
- Access to **Interview Partners** at the tipping point talk, such as:
 - **Martin Essl**, Founder, Chairman of the Board, The Essl Foundation,
 - **Robert Zadrazil**, CEO, UniCredit Bank Austria
 - **Charlotte V. McClain-Nhlapo**, Global Disability Advisor, World Bank Group
 - **Inmaculada Placencia Porrero**, Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion, Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, European Commission.
 - **Rylin Rodgers**, Disability Policy Advisor, MS Accessibility, Microsoft,
 - **Christopher Patnoe**, Senior Program Manager, Google,
 - **Innovators**: ASAT, Israel, Easy Language, Artificial Intelligence
 - **Tata Consulting India**