

Vienna Stock Exchange celebrates its 250th anniversary in 2021

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- Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen opens anniversary year
- Future Forum: New discussion platform in 2021
- Quarter of a millennium: Trust and transparency is the central mission

2021 is a year of celebration for Austria's financial market: it is the Vienna Stock Exchange's 250th anniversary. Founded in 1771 by Empress Maria Theresa, it is one of the oldest national stock exchanges in the world. But upholding tradition is only one facet, its cutting-edge technology and constant awareness of future trends are key features of the Austrian stock exchange. To mark this special occasion, the Vienna Stock Exchange is launching a [future forum](#) this year, that will host domestic and international experts on a regular basis to discuss innovation, change, and the economy of the future.

The anniversary year will be opened with a congratulatory message from Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen: "The Vienna Stock Exchange has made an exciting journey. Maria Theresa attracted progressive entrepreneurs to Vienna, stimulated the economy while at the same time also laying the foundation for today's stock exchange. It continues to play a crucial role to this very day. In dealing with the pandemic, companies need courage, confidence, trust and, of course, a strong equity base. This will help accelerate economic recovery." His full video message can be viewed [online](#).

"Beethoven, whose 250th anniversary of his birth was last year, was one of the first shareholders in Austria. And he also knew: if you want to create wealth, the stock market calls the tune. This has not changed in 250 years. It becomes especially clear in times of crisis like the current pandemic that economies with developed capital markets are more resilient. We will be discussing this topic and many others at our future forum this year," explained Christoph Boschan, CEO of Wiener Börse AG.

Quarter of a millennium: From a state-run marketplace to a modern provider of information technology and services

The first efforts to establish a stock exchange in Austria were made in 1761. Ten years later, the plans were put into practice. On 1 August 1771, Maria Theresa issued the charter establishing the state-run stock exchange with the aim of strengthening confidence in the state finances of the Habsburg monarchy. The first day of trading took place on 2 September 1771. Initially, only bonds, bills of exchange and foreign currencies were traded. Stockbrokers, called 'Sensale' on the Vienna Stock Exchange, ensured smooth trading and received a commission. The first stock exchange was located at Kohlmarkt 12 (now Kohlmarkt 16). It moved several times in the course of the next 250 years and today it resides – not far from its first location – in Palais Caprara-Geymüller on Wallnerstrasse 8.

The shares of the Austrian central bank were the first to be listed in Vienna in 1818. Since 1869, investors have been able to trade in the shares of Porr AG and Wienerberger AG, the two longest listed companies on the Vienna Stock Exchange. In 1991, the Austrian benchmark index, ATX, was launched and trading became increasingly automated. With the introduction of the Xetra® system in 1999, trading became fully automated.

The internationalization of the market advanced rapidly with the connection of foreign banks to the exchange. With cooperation agreements in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the mid-2000s also through equity investments, Wiener Börse acquired partners in the region. Today, its focus as a regional player is on providing stock market infrastructure and IT services. Hardly any other European stock exchange of similar size has a comparable degree of diversification and efficiency as the Vienna Stock Exchange.

"Throughout our 250-year-long history and despite technological modernization, our fundamental mission has not changed. We are the central marketplace for the pricing of securities. Our offerings and our reliability create trust and ensure transparency. We prove this every day operating in a highly regulated environment with fierce competition," says Christoph Boschan, CEO of Wiener Börse AG.

Appendix: Infographic Role of the Stock Exchange Then and Now, Timeline 250 Years of the Vienna Stock Exchange, First Stock Exchange Charter from 1761, First Price List from September 2, 1771.

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