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Opening Statement Harald Katzmaier at the Viennese Resilience Talks

Vienna on 28th of May 2010

Ladies and Gentleman, dear Colleagues and Friends, dear Prof. Holling,

I am really pleased to welcome you here in Vienna to our first Viennese talks on Resilience Research and Networks.

It's really awesome to have this diverse and excellent crowd of researchers and practitioners in one and the same room and I am really excited about what's in front of us today. The idea of this gathering emerged exactly 2 years ago.

It was in late May 2008 when I was invited to give a talk at IIASA on Social Network Analysis and how we at FAS research apply science to help clients with real world problems. That's how I met Brian Fath, the co-organizer of our event today.

At this time I started reading literature on thermodynamics and networks and it was Brian who recommended reading H.T. Odum, Buzz Holling, and Robert Ulanowicz.

After 10 years of working in the field of applied social network analysis for a sociologist like me reading the Ecologist's view on Networks was an eye opening experience.

I shared my reading experiences with my dear friend Wolfgang Neurath, a historian and philosopher - now responsible for the promotion of research in Austria - with whom I share a 20 years long ongoing deep conversation on philosophy, sociology, politics and history of science.

It was immediately clear for Wolfgang and me that we should do something to promote and work on those great and unique ideas that seemed for us being the real missing link between the humanities and science.

Since Brian Fath also was interested in social network theory it was a sort of natural to join forces.

At the same time my friend Neal Gorenflo from San Francisco / California and publisher of an online magazine called Sharable.net started to initiate an open space movement called D4R, design for resilience, to bring the ideas and findings of resilience research from science into the cultural mainstream.