

# Market Place.

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# AN AUSTRIAN WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY TAKES ON INDIA - ONE 'USED COOKING OIL DROP' AT A TIME!

by Harald Sigl



**“Think Big” does not always mean “Act Big” says Harald Sigl, Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, Münzer Bioindustrie GmbH and Muenzer Bharat Pvt. Ltd.**

One morning, the senior officers at our Austrian waste management company sat down for one of our weekly breakfast brainstorming sessions: how can we, we asked ourselves, solve our biggest common challenges – for example, like climate change? How can we encourage mobility for a growing population, decarbonize the transport sector and ensure energy supply and, at best, even energy security and independency?

**Münzer Bioindustrie GmbH** is a medium sized Austrian owner-managed family company, based in Styria, providing solutions for liquid waste collection, but we like to 'think big'. So out of that morning came a real big breakthrough idea. You see, the main focus for our business in Europe is a national wide collection system for Used Cooking Oil (UCO) from Austrian hotels and restaurants. In fact, in this business segment, our company is already market leader in Central Europe. But UCO is not just a specific kind of liquid waste. It is also, like waste in general, a highly valuable new raw material. In this special case, UCO is a high-quality feedstock for energy production. Münzer is converting this feedstock in its two production facilities into more than 200,000 tons Biodiesel each year, which is mainly blended into fossil diesel by the European OMCs. Why? Because Biofuels are highly CO<sub>2</sub> reducing products. Seen from the point of Austria, Biofuels reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the traffic and transport sector by more than 1.5 million tons just last year alone.

So when Raj and Mike over at **Marwah und Partner GmbH** asked me how and why we planted our flag in the Indian subcontinent, this is how I explained it: while the Indian Biodiesel production is at the same scale as Münzer in Austria, India is facing more than just the issues of providing energy security and independency. India is also facing a tremendous waste problem. And liquid waste demands much more system quality than solid waste, because once it is thrown away uncontrolled, it is directly affecting the environment, the rivers, the drainage systems and, alas, even people's health.

These facts had fortunately already been recognized by the Indian Government, and they had already started to find best practice solutions for their country. In 2015, the Indian Oil and Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan picked up the ball and actually visited Münzer's production facility in Vienna. He acquainted himself carefully with our whole supply and production chain, from waste collection to treatment, and from the production of high-quality waste-based Biodiesel to the final supply to the fossil industry. That day in June 2015 became the hour of birth of the biggest internationalization step (and more than one breakfast brainstorm meeting!) at Münzer Austria. The result? Within a year, in 2016, our company founded its subsidiary Muenzer Bharat Pvt. Ltd. right in India's biggest metropolis, Mumbai.

First, our new Indian company started right from the bottom level and implemented a collection system for UCO. Slowly but steadily, this system started to grow – one restaurant led to another, one hotel recommended another, and so on. And on. And on. Today, more than 600

partners dispose their UCO within the National UCO Collection Mission for India™ by Muenzer Bharat. The next step was made in 2018 when the planning phase for the first 100% UCO-based Biodiesel plant in India started. I am happy to announce that just a few weeks ago, in February 2019, this plant was inaugurated by Indian Cabinet Minister Pradhan!

But what is the main difference between India and Austria? Muenzer Bharat started an operation unit with a production capacity of three thousand tons per year. (Remember, Münzer in Austria is producing two *hundred* thousand tons per year!) Against all warnings and advice, our company made a step in the *other* direction – i.e., yes, by all means, think big as you like – but act according to *local* facts. The traditional business models are often beaten ways. The solution which seems logical can often be the misleading one. So, what would our advice be today to other Marwah und Partner GmbH clients thinking of entering a market like India, or indeed any new markets? Sure, know your strength in your home market and remember your roots. But look at the markets you enter with open minds and open eyes. It is not the size and power you bring nor the old, tired 'business models' which helps you in this huge country – as much as the *confidence* you have in your own fresh and original strategy.

An old India proverb says: "Steadfastly follow your own mission, and success will invariably come". We did. And it has. It is already bearing fruit for India, and for the world....

.... one drop at a time!

# EU-Vote on 26 May: Does it even matter?

by Michael Klinger, MBA,  
Partner at  
Marwah und Partner GmbH



## Yes, it does!

By 26 May 2019 elections to the European Parliament will be held. The European Parliament represents more than 512 million people from 28 member states (yes, the Brits have not left yet and hence have to participate). The race is for a total of 751 seats. Currently, the center-right European People's Party holds a 221 seats majority and its leader Jean-Claude Juncker was elected president of the European Commission.

How important the EU is, needs a quick look back: My fellow countryman who are today over 40 or 50 years old certainly remember the inconvenience of traveling, calling from abroad, or importing goods. How many things did not happen because it was just too complicated?

The European Union is more than the largest peace project. Kids who want to celebrate graduation from high-school with a car-tour to Portugal can hardly imagine that you had to bring five different currencies for this trip 20 years ago. Anyone who celebrates in Croatia today, does not have to worry about enormous cell phone bills, and those who shop for Polish vodka at home do not need to think about customs declarations. Also, a student-semester abroad in Sweden can already be planned.

The EU has also opened so many opportunities for our children to study abroad, introduce the Euro-currency, allowing economic recovery and established a stable financial system.

## History .... and Hiccups!

Most people would praise the EU for securing peace between its members -

unprecedented 74 years straight. That's certainly true, and perhaps its greatest success. But the EU It is based on many achievements that range from the common market and shared fundamental rights and security standards to the Euro and – at least in many cases – a common foreign policy. However, all this was only possible because of the fundamental willingness of the member states to engage in dialogue, i.e., talking instead of fighting. And, dialogue also means getting to know each other better and better every day.

Unfortunately, there are of course always problems, also. The uncoordinated response to the refugee crises is currently just one of the most outstanding, the BREXIT-drama (or comedy?) is another.

## I miss 'subsidiarity'!

Whenever possible, local problems should be resolved locally – that's what subsidiarity means. Especially poorer countries, where there is usually a relatively high level of corruption, are hoping for regulations that will come

from Brussels and then be implemented and, hopefully, financed by the EU. This allows them to avoid conflicts of interest on the national level. For a country like Austria, which has always been adhering to pretty high standards, some superimposed EU-regulations are sometimes difficult to understand.

## Europe, open for Business!

The EU with its 513 million people accounts for more than 22% of Global GDP. So, despite lower growth levels and despite the BREXIT – it remains attractive for business. However, issues might come from further centralization and the EU's strict laws and lack of flexibility: Here are two examples: a) On the tax front, some want to harmonize tax regimes so that individual countries, so they would have less chance, like Ireland, to attract investors and then not tax them. b) In fear of market- dominance the merger of the train business Siemens and Alstom was not allowed. This seems strange and will rather help their Chinese competitor CRRC.

*MUP-Partner  
Michael Klinger (l)  
meeting with  
Dr. Othmar Karas (m),  
MEP since 1999 and  
leader of the  
Delegation  
of the Austrian  
People's Party,  
which won  
EU-elections  
in Austria  
in 2014*



# Vienna: The Icing on the Cake

by **T.P. Sreenivasan, Author**  
**Former roles: Indian Ambassador to Austria and Governor of IAEA**

My long journey in the Indian diplomatic service began in Tokyo in 1969 and ended in Vienna in 2004. Vienna, as the Mecca of diplomacy and the seat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was attractive for my swan song. The architecture, the music, the weather, the museums, the cuisine and the friends we made, both Austrian and Indian, and the professional challenges made our stay in Vienna not only memorable, but also gratifying. Having lived in a variety of countries, including the United States, we found Vienna the most soulful of all. It was the icing on the cake of our international experience.

Of the several hats I wore as the only Indian Ambassador in Vienna (Several countries have two or more Ambassadors in Vienna) and accredited also to Slovenia, the easiest was my role as envoy to Austria, with whom India enjoyed a totally trouble-free relationship.

Given the placid political atmosphere, I proceeded to try and expand trade and investment on both sides. I found that about 30 Austrian companies had been going strong in India for years, but they were neither diversifying nor expanding after the economic liberalization in India. Whereas Japan, Korea and others rushed in, the Austrian angels feared to tread. I set up an "Indian Interests Group", with the heads of the Austrian companies operating in India as the core. The Group held regular meetings, exchanged ideas and facilitated communications and contacts. This early initiative has become more active at the later initiative of our own dynamic leader and dear friend, Raj Marwah. The trade and investment data between India and Austria and the CEE region now speak for themselves. Raj took me out to lunch soon after my arrival in Vienna and that was the beginning of a warm friendship, which flourishes till today. My only regret is that he does not hold

meetings of his company's Advisory Board in Vienna! He compensates for 'loss' by visiting us in Kerala, but not as often as we would like. He also reads all my writings and encourages me even if he does not agree with my political inclinations. He and others can do much to promote trade and commerce between Austria and India and third countries in the new atmosphere of "Make in India" and "Digital India". Austria's faultless technology, combined with the skills of the young Indian labour force and the replacement of red tape with red carpet, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sky is the limit for business in India and the region.

Radha Anjali, the gifted Austrian Bharatanatyam dancer, whose home we called India House II, has done more for Austria- India cultural relations than all the Indian Ambassadors put together. My wife teamed up with her to perform to raise funds for the Gujarat earthquake. Many others contributed greatly to the cause of India in Austria.

Vienna International Centre (VIC) was my second home as I had to deal with not just the IAEA, but the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the Office on Drugs and Crime, including the Anti-Terrorism Unit, the Space Office and several other outfits operating from the VIC. The UN appeared to be fighting all the evils of the world from Vienna: nuclear weapons, transnational crime, corruption, drugs. At the same time, it promoted peaceful uses of nuclear energy, outer space and industrial cooperation. Our vital interests were in the IAEA, given our status as a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but we were equally committed to all the UN activities in Vienna.

The bilateral Ambassadors, not the multilateral ones, had the privilege of free entry to the Musikverein round the year and we had a feast of concerts! Maestro Zubin Mehta, who frequented

Vienna became a close friend during the time. We often remembered that the IAEA came to be in Vienna rather than Geneva because of the passion that Indian nuclear scientist Homi Bhabha had for western music.

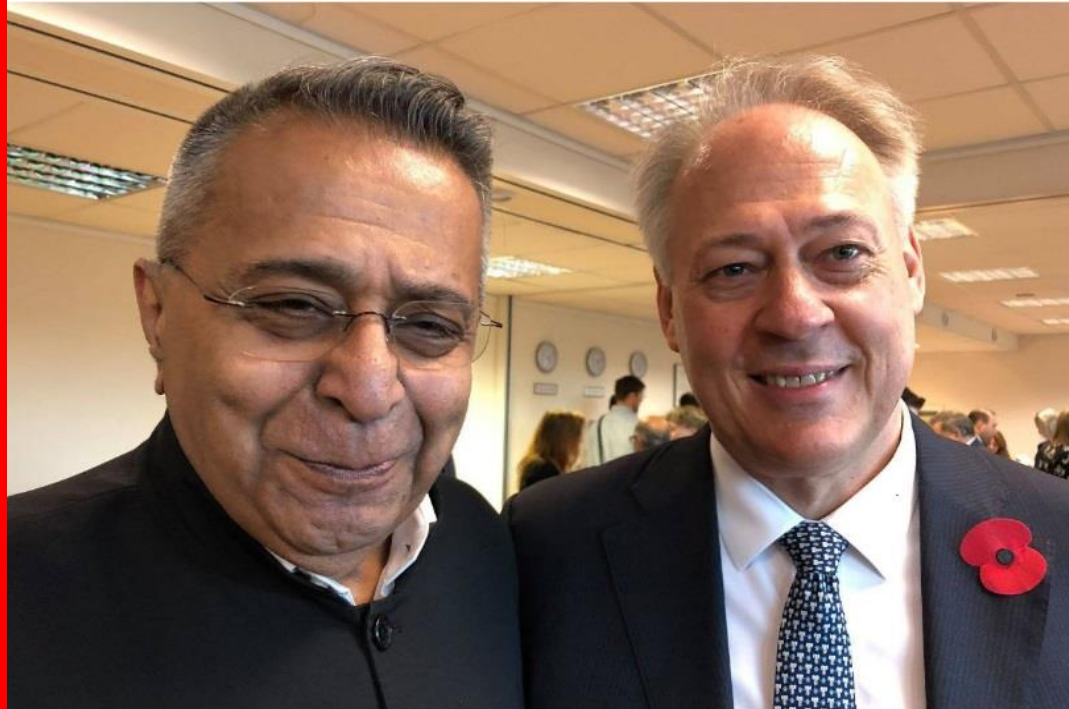
My passion for golf made Austria a heaven. I played in some of the best golf courses and was a member of the Süssenbrunn Club outside Vienna. My regular golf partners included Mohammed El Baradei, the Director General of the IAEA. Apart from work, the opportunity to play golf tournaments and win some of them remains a loving memory of my years in Austria. In the Foreign Service, no one forgets the first and the last postings.

The memories of the first posting fade, but those of the last remain alive forever. When we returned to India, we called our first home in Kerala "Villa Vienna." If that is not nostalgia, what else is?



# MARWAH UND PARTNER ADVISORY BOARD

Raj Marwah, Founder/CEO of Marwah und Partner GmbH (and Indian-born Australian!), at 5.30 am on 25th April, with his friend Hon'ble Dr. Brendon Hammer, and Hon'ble Nicole Robertson (respectively Ambassadors to Austria from Australia and New Zealand) attending a moving ANZAC Day 'Dawn Rememberance' outside the Karlskirche, a charming baroque cathedral in Vienna, Austria. ANZAC Day, worldwide, salutes the Aus/NZ soldiers who died at Gallipoli in 1915, and honours all vets after that. It was attended by Ambassadors from the Allied countries, as well as the Turkish Consul.



**Sir Anthony Ainsworth, Bt**  
Bangkok, Thailand

**H.E. T.P. Sreenivasan,**

Former Ambassador of India  
to Austria and former  
Governor for India of the IAEA,  
Director General, Kerala  
International Centre.

**Prof. Martin Maltais PhD**

Directeur de cabinet adjoint,  
Quebec, Canada

**Dr. Stefan Stoiber,**

Rechtsanwalt,  
Vienna, Austria

**Erkki Toljamo,**

Entrepreneur,  
Helsinki, Finland

**Marwah und Partner GmbH** (MUP) was originally founded in 1999 in Vienna, Austria, as an advisory company to leverage Mr. Marwah's worldwide network, and to provide a vehicle for his private investments. After Mr. Marwah closed some successful and quite large M&A transactions, we have also focused **Marwah und Partner GmbH** on smaller transactions providing M&A advisory services for companies with unique technologies seeking global expansion. At MUP we take an active role in each client or investment, and provide access to world class international marketing and management expertise. **Marwah und Partner GmbH** has several European investments/clients and is also currently exploring opportunities worldwide, seeking key private or state owned companies that are looking for capital and know-how to expand into international markets.

**MUP Chairman/CEO Raj Marwah** also has more than 21 years of worldwide advertising and marketing experience, working globally for multinational accounts in Sydney, Hong Kong, Toronto, Auckland, Dubai, Vienna, Bangkok, and New York. Raj was Chairman/CEO in New Zealand and Canada producing outstanding results. For the last 15 years, Raj has executed major mergers and acquisitions in Europe and Asia on behalf of multinational clients based out of Hong Kong, Germany, and the USA.



**Mag. Michael Klinger, MBA, International Associate**, is an experienced senior manager having served as CFO for several US corporations, most recently was the Financial Officer on the Management Board of a large Gas Distribution Company in Central Europe, and has also been the Regional (Europe) Vice President for Western Union International. Austrian-born Michael brings his hands-on corporate experience towards enhancing our ability to deliver the highest quality M&A services to clients, and to companies in which **Marwah und Partner GmbH** (MUP) occasionally invests.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE

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