Climate change is an issue taken quite seriously by the Austrian government. As part of the European Union, Austria realizes just how serious of an issue climate change is and is therefore willing to assist in anyway possible in regards to combating it. Due to the fact that climate change is at an all time high, every country is at serious risk. Austria itself is at risk of losing its Alps due to rising global temperatures. As a result, Austria is a strong believer in developing new technologies and energy forms to ensure a clean, safe, reliable environment for its citizens and assisting other countries in doing so as well.

The main effect that is being seen today is the global rise in temperature. This is due to the large amount of anthropological greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions released into the atmosphere every year. According to the Environment Agency of Austria “the main gas being released into the environment is CO2, making up 84% of the GHG emissions in Austria during the year 2014” (Environment Agency of Austria, 2016). Austria as a whole, though, has noticed a slowly declining GHG emission per capita rate over the years dropping from 9.02 metric tons in the year 2005 to 7.36 metric tons in 2013 (The World Bank, 2016). It has also noticed a drop from a total GHG emissions of 92.8 metric tons in 2005 to a total GHG emissions 76.3 metric tons in 2014 (Environment Agency of Austria, 2016). To show even further how successful Austria has been with regards to decreasing their overall GHG emissions, when comparing their rates from 2014 to the results in 1990, a total decrease of 3.2% was shown (Environment Agency of Austria, 2016). Austria itself is already working quite hard on lowering its contribution to the world's GHG emission as shown by the numbers above. Even though with the large amount of success, Austria still intends on working to help other countries lower their annual GHG rate as well as continue to lower their own.

The main threat that Austria faces, is the loss of a few major industries. Three very large industries with Austria are agriculture, forestry, and tourism. If temperatures continue to climb, Austria will not only lose amazing landmarks, but it’s economy will be affected in a devastating way as well. With the overall increase in the world's global temperature of around 0.85°C since 1880 and an increase of around 2°C in Austria alone within the same time frame, Austria is in serious trouble of losing its winter tourism from the damage done to its Alpine regions (BBC News, 2014). The main reason for such a drastic change in temperature is the fact that Austria itself is a landlocked, continental region, meaning it is more susceptible to temperature increases.These regions are quite sensitive, so with a climate change of around 2°C, lower regions are seeing less snowfall due to the large quantity of warm, sunny days. Additionally, Its forestry is in danger due to the fact that as temperatures increase, plant life may not be able to adapt as fast, resulting in the loss of forests. This is the same concern regarding Austrian agriculture. Plants are quite sensitive to changes in temperature, so if this climate increase is not controlled, the damage will be devastating.

There are many methods, technologies, and energy sources that Austria intends to use to hopefully help decrease their annual amount of GHG emissions even further. The following methods, if shown to be successful, can also be used to assist other countries. One method Austria hopes on implementing is the green roof, or living roof, method. This method means covering roofs with plant life. Trees, along with many other plants, can grow on these roofs and, through the process of photosynthesis, clean the air. This will be very useful in cities where a large amount of CO2 emissions are released, as the CO2 that is released will be converted into oxygen. Another method that could possibly help with CO2 emissions is to make it mandatory for all large buildings to have solar panels built onto the roofs. This will make it easier to lower the dependency on fossil fuels, therefore creating more clean energy. The Austrian government is also very excited to implement Sweden’s waste-to-energy (WTE) plants. What Sweden is currently doing is using the waste produced by its people that is unrecyclable and burnable, and burning it in a plant to create energy. When the waste is burned, steam is generated, which turns turbines and creates energy (Andrew, Elise). By using these methods,Austria will not only be able to help reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, but also reduce the amount of ground pollutants. Using funding from the EU, Austria may even be able to implement these methods in other countries and assist them in reducing their contribution to climate change as well.

In terms of Climate Refugees, Austria is very much so in favour of accepting any displaced person into their country. Considering that so many people are displaced, Austria is also in favour of making the term climate refugee an official title under the Austrian constitution, therefore meaning that all people claiming this status will have easier access into the country. The government would very much like to help any countries in need better protect themselves from any current climate change effects. This would mean helping to develop better housing for the current problems seen within a nation, assisting with funds to help build better protected buildings and even developing cleaner energy sources. By helping other countries build houses and buildings that are better suited for the climate and possibly any predicted climate changes, less people will need to flee due to a lack of a safe environment. An example of better housing would involve looking into developing housing that can be suitable for both extreme heat and possibly extreme cold.

The Austrian government has high hopes in regards to the outcome of this committee. Austria realises just how important it is to not only work with the rest of the EU but also to work with the rest of the world in combating the issue that is climate change. Hopefully, with the funding that the European Union intends on utilizing, not only will Austria drastically decrease its environmental impact, but so will all other countries.

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