

## UniStem Day 2026

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On March 20, 2026, the Vienna Open Lab, in collaboration with Open Science and the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology (IMBA), hosted the seventh annual Europe-wide UniStem Day. Participants gained fascinating insights into the day-to-day work of stem cell research.

Theresa Sommer kicked off the event with the **hybrid lecture “I’ve got potential! Stem Cells and Their Benefits in Medicine and Research”**, which drew more than 250 attendees. In her talk, the molecular biologist explained the important role stem cells play in research and provided insights into her own research work.

Following this, three selected school classes had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the day-to-day work with stem cells during a guided tour of the **research laboratories at IMBA and the Tissue Culture Support Unit**. In the **bioethics workshop**, participants discussed current and socially relevant issues surrounding the use of stem cells together with **Open Science and IMBA’s Department of Ethics and Biosafety**.

**At the Vienna Open Lab, the students were also able to gain hands-on experience by applying techniques used in stem cell research.** Under supervision, they were allowed to “split” cells. In this process, densely grown cells are distributed onto new plates using an enzyme called trypsin. This method is used to cultivate new stem cells. During the workshop, the students applied this technique to already differentiated cells known as fibroblasts. A final look through the microscope revealed how the morphology of the cells changed as a result of the splitting.