CLIMATE ALLIANCE

CLIMATE STAR 2023

Europe's best in municipal climate action

Imprint: Media owner and publisher: Klimabündnis Niederösterreich,
Wiener Straße 35, 3100 St. Pölten, Telephone: +43 2742 26967, e-mail: niederoesterreich@klimabuendnis.at
Editor: Clemens Grossberger, Helena Daum; Translation: Denise Dewey-Muno; Layout: Irene Fuchs;
Print run: 1500; Printer: Janetschek GmbH; Published in St. Pölten

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THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Current crises are presenting us with major challenges. The energy crisis triggered by the Russian attack on Ukraine has led to increased energy costs, mounting inflation and an increase in energy poverty. Ambitious action, also on the local level, is now needed for a comprehensive and fair transformation. The climate crisis is also becoming more severe as the extreme weather events in recent years clearly show. Meanwhile, the destruction of the Amazon rainforest continues, which is one of the world's most important carbon sinks. Recent studies show that in many regions (with the exception of indigenous territories), the Amazon rainforest is becoming a source of carbon. This is largely due to systematic clearing for agricultural purposes, a phenomenon that has been further exacerbated by reckless political measures, for example in Brazil. Hopes are high, however, that the change of political leadership will also herald a new climate policy.

These crises call on all of us to act. We are part of the system and therefore also part of the solution. The winners of the tenth edition of our Climate Star competition demonstrate a variety of successful local approaches. According to the motto of "The future is now", the winning projects prove that the future is in our hands and that we can begin shaping it now. The stories are a source of encouragement and inspire us to be even more committed, ambitious and resourceful in acting for the climate.

We congratulate all of the winners, also on behalf of Climate Alliance's Executive Board, and hope that many more will follow their example, working together to implement local solutions to the global climate crisis.

Andreas Wolter
President
Climate Alliance

Tine Heyse
President
Climate Alliance

SHAPING CHANGE

The current challenges make clear that global crises do not stop at national borders. Solutions can be complex and arduous, but also offer great opportunities to instigate change to resolve energy, climate and biodiversity challenges. Municipalities make especially strong allies and form part of the solution. We are therefore particularly pleased to welcome the Climate Stars to Lower Austria for the tenth time. Thank you and congratulations to all participants!

Together we have already achieved a great deal: the state of Lower Austria has been a member of Climate Alliance since 1993. In 2007, we were the first province in Austria to anchor climate action in our provincial constitution. While the goal of one hundred Climate Alliance municipalities was initially unrealistic, we are all the more pleased that three-quarters of all municipalities in Lower Austria have since committed to sustainable development within Climate Alliance.

With an ambitious climate and energy programme, concrete climate goals, and initiatives for municipalities, we have created the basic structure for a future-oriented coexistence in Lower Austria. We have set ourselves ambitious goals for 2023 in the field of renewable energy. With the expansion of photovoltaics, wind power and biomass, we will ensure our energy independence and take responsibility for protecting our climate.

Johanna Mikl-Leitner
Governor
Lower Austria

Stephan Pernkopf
Deputy Governor
Lower Austria

THE CLIMATE STAR GOES TO …

Every two years, Climate Alliance acknowledges the best municipal climate action projects. All of the almost 2,000 Climate Alliance municipalities in Europe are invited to participate in the competition; the winners are selected by a jury of experts.

CATEGORY 1
up to 10,000 inhabitants

CATEGORY 2
10,000–100,000 inhabitants

CATEGORY 3
more than 100,000 inhabitants

CATEGORY 4
municipal networks

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS.
Climate action needs role models. Role models that people talk about and whose ideas and actions have a far-reaching impact. This year, for the tenth time, the Climate Star is giving these role models a stage and showcasing the best climate action projects carried out by members of the Climate Alliance – a network that has grown steadily since it was established back in 1990 and now counts almost 2,000 towns, cities, and districts in more than 25 European countries. Together with the indigenous peoples in South America, all members are pursuing two goals: reducing greenhouse gases and protecting the rainforests.

THE JURY.
Climate Alliance has selected climate action projects in four categories. The jury comprises the network's Executive Board, along with national coordinators from six European countries. The projects were evaluated according to their future viability, inspirational power, media and public resonance, creativity and level of citizen engagement.

THE CLIMATE STARS.
A total of 153 Climate Stars have been awarded over nine previous editions. Award winners include both well-known cities such as Barcelona, Leipzig, Venice and Zurich as well as many small towns such as Hostětín in the Czech Republic with only 210 inhabitants. A total of 16 Climate Stars are being awarded this year.

Bruck an der Leitha, Austria • 8,180 inhabitants

DOUBLE THE YIELD WITH AGRI-PV

Clean energy for more than 1,000 households and agriculture? What sounds utopian is actually already a reality at the EWS Sonnenfeld in Bruck/Leitha. This type of electricity production is possible thanks to the dual use of Austria's largest agricultural photovoltaic plant (Agri-PV). Not only are food crops cultivated, but solar power is also generated at the same time on the agricultural site, which covers 5.5 hectares. The photovoltaic array only uses around 2 % of the total surface area, with crops then grown on 80 % of the space and strips of natural cover in between ensuring biodiversity on the remaining 18 %. The pilot project, financed by the Climate and Energy Fund, explores the use of agri-photovoltaics, which have been developed specifically for the generation of electricity on agricultural land. Here, food cultivation and the production of solar power go hand in hand. The project guarantees energy security, independence and price stability. The knowledge gained will be made available to other municipalities in the future.

SOLAR FIELD • RENEWABLE ENERGY • AGRI-PHOTOVOLTAICS • KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER • EFFICIENT LAND • USAGE

Langau, Austria • 690 inhabitants

SMALL TOWN, BIG COMMITMENT

Langau near Geras on the Czech border demonstrates how even small towns can achieve great things. The village is implementing modern infrastructure projects together with its 690 inhabitants. From the municipal office to the community centre and the sewage treatment plant, a variety of roofs have already been fitted with solar systems with the help of the local population. These now generate electricity for 70 households as well as for the local e-car sharing scheme that the community has supported for more than seven years running. Langau is also on the right track when it comes to its heat supply: the biomass district heating cooperative supplies heat for a growing number of buildings (currently 140). In addition, more than 50 % of local farmers use organic farming methods. Local recreation and preservation of the surrounding forests constitute further important pillars of the climate-friendly community, along with building renovations. There's no end in sight to the commitment of Langau's citizens – though their town is small, they are really (solar) powering their way towards a green future.

HOLISTIC APPROACH • CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT • ENERGY TRANSITION • UNWAVERING COMMITMENT • BIG IMPACT

CATEGORY 1 • up to 10,000 inhabitants

Pápateszér, Hungary • 1,243 inhabitants

TRADITIONAL YET FUTURE-READY

The municipality of Pápateszér combines tradition with future readiness. A total of 25 traditional water mills are now a symbol of progress, enabling a local economy based on renewable energy. Together with partners such as WWF Hungary and Climate Alliance Hungary, the municipality has created an eternal forest at its centre – 1.5 hectares of woodland in total. The community is also devoted to the education of its youth: children and teens learn about environmental protection in the local forest school. That's not all though. Pápateszér also plans to intensify sufficiency measures, for example by installing photovoltaics on municipal buildings, and thus come one step closer to achieving energy and food independence. Pápateszér's success is also due to the active involvement of a great many volunteers: a total of around 1,500 people have helped with the projects so far. Together with its citizens, the Hungarian municipality is boosting sustainability and climate protection.

SUSTAINABILITY • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS • RENEWABLE ENERGIES • EDUCATIONAL WORK

CATEGORY 2 • 10,000–100,000 inhabitants

Krems an der Donau, Austria • 24,920 inhabitants

DETERMINING CLIMATE RELEVANCE

The city of Krems has teamed up with the Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria (eNu) to develop a tool that can determine the climate impact of municipal projects – the first to enable Austrian municipalities to evaluate their plans. The climate relevance of all decisions reached by the Krems municipal council is now evaluated. Among others, road construction projects, flood protection measures and energy aspects have been evaluated with the help of a standardised catalogue of criteria. The findings of each evaluation are presented transparently to the municipal council and a traffic light system indicates which decisions have a positive and which a negative impact on the climate. If a project is deemed negative, it is modified during the planning phase to meet the city's high environmental standards. This makes Krems the first city in Austria to have a tool that can support both local authorities and policymakers in their climate action.

CLIMATE TOOL • TRANSPARENCY • CATALOGUE OF CRITERIA • CLIMATE RELEVANT • RETHINK • MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Korschenbroich, Germany • 34,895 inhabitants

CONCRETE CLIMATE ACTION

A welcoming smile, rather than a reprimanding finger: with its 'Klimaschutz konkret' campaign, the town of Korschenbroich raises awareness for successful climate projects and inspires citizens to act. The initiative reaches the public through eye-catching posters throughout the city and ads in local media. In addition, teams of child reporters have created short films on eight climate projects in Korschenbroich, such as solar energy on municipal buildings, an energy-efficient combined heat and power plant for the local indoor swimming pool and the financing of green roofs in the town. Involvement of the younger generations was decisive for Korschenbroich: the town believes that children make great multipliers to motivate people to make the behavioural changes that are so urgently needed. After all, greater commitment to climate action also means that we can leave a more liveable world for our children.

AWARENESS RAISING • SUSTAINABLE ENERGY • CHILDREN AND YOUTH • CLIMATE COMMUNICATION • NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Monheim am Rhein, Germany • 46,072 inhabitants

FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In 2020, Monheim am Rhein introduced the Monheim Pass. The pass for inhabitants in credit card format pools municipal services such as a free library card, use of the local bike sharing scheme and a free ticket for public transport in the entire urban area. This makes the town one of the first in Germany to consistently offer free public transport. The Monheim Pass is also continuously evolving and getting smarter. The accompanying app will soon also include a digital waste collection calendar with a reminder function. Cashless payments, for example for the town's car sharing scheme, cultural events or visits to the local swimming pool, will also soon be possible. The usage figures for the local public transport system speak for themselves: over 38,000 Monheim tickets were activated by the end of 2021. With a population of around 45,000, more than 80 % of citizens have a valid public transport ticket. The town is addressing the challenge of the mobility transition with the Monheim Pass and moving a significant step closer to achieving its goal of becoming climate neutral by 2035.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • AWARENESS RAISING • LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT • MOBILITY TRANSITION

Sanem, Luxembourg • 17,949 inhabitants

A CENTRE FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY

With the “Matgesfeld”, a centre for the circular economy has been created in the Luxembourg municipality of Sanem. The goal? To serve as a role model for citizens and raise awareness for sustainability issues among inhabitants both young and old. The Matgesfeld has a lot to offer in this regard: a renewable heat supply, an energy independent community garden, a chicken coop and beehive, office containers insulated to the passive house standard, a water collection system and much more. The project’s recipe for success is the active involvement of its citizens – whether in construction of the centre itself, with visits by school classes or the annual “Matgesfest” festival. In addition, inhabitants and school classes can lease garden plots and learn more about the sustainable circular economy via courses on nature and the environment. The Matgesfeld is open to the public and can therefore be visited at any time. The municipality of Sanem demonstrates with this project just how much sustainability can lie in such a small space.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY • SUFFICIENCY • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • ENERGY EFFICIENCY • EDUCATION

Schaffhausen, Switzerland • 38,076 inhabitants

NEXT STOP: E-MOBILITY

Schaffhausen has set itself an ambitious goal, namely to convert the city’s entire bus fleet to electric power by 2027. This transition is taking place in three phases. The trolleybuses were already converted to battery power back in 2020. Two years later, 15 diesel buses were converted into electric buses and the required charging infrastructure was built. By 2027, the remaining diesel vehicles will also have been replaced with electric buses. With the first 15 electric buses, up to 500,000 litres of diesel is already being saved annually and in 2027, this figure will increase to 1 million litres per year. This will help to reduce the city’s total energy consumption by approximately 56%. Schaffhausen’s ambitious project has also garnered a great deal of attention internationally. The local public transport operator Verkehrsbetriebe Schaffhausen regularly receives enquiries about the conversion of bus fleets to electric power and also shares its experiences to help support other towns and cities on their path to e-mobility.

E-MOBILITY • SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY • PUBLIC TRANSPORT • EMISSIONS REDUCTION • MOBILITY TRANSITION

Weiz & St. Ruprecht an der Raab, Austria
17,342 inhabitants

A HOLISTIC ENERGY CONCEPT

In the spirit of sustainable and resource-conscious development, the municipalities of Weiz and St. Ruprecht an der Raab have set themselves the goal of reducing their reliance on fossil fuels. The two municipalities’ core teams have been working together on an inter-municipal energy concept since 2019. The region is characterised by a strong population influx due to large companies. The strategy therefore focuses on housing, mobility and the sustainable development of industrial and commercial areas. A holistic concept for upgrading existing infrastructure is one outcome of the cooperation. Rather than developing new areas, areas that have already been developed are to be used instead. The retrofitting of existing buildings and energy-efficient new builds further help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A more efficient settlement structure will moreover enhance local quality of life and ensure shorter distances between highly-frequented locations that can be easily be covered by bike or on foot.

COOPERATION • INTER-MUNICIPAL CONCEPT • TRANSFORMATION • INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT • HOUSING • MOBILITY

Nadace Partnerství in Brno, Czech Republic
379,526 inhabitants

A GREEN URBAN OASIS SETS NEW STANDARDS

The Open Garden building complex in Brno operated by the Partnership Foundation is one of the most energy-efficient office buildings in Europe. The centre includes a teaching garden, an urban farm and two office buildings constructed to the passive house standard. Water and energy are saved, materials are recycled and environmental pollution is reduced here. At the same time, a total of 70 measuring devices and hundreds of sensors have been installed to record and monitor all relevant data. Green roofs retain the rainwater, a constructed wetland purifies greywater and a solar power plant produces electricity. A system of eight wells and four heat pumps ensure pleasant temperatures in both summer and winter. With its Open Garden site, the Partnership Foundation demonstrates responsible urban design and strives to inspire and motivate other municipalities to also design buildings that are more environmentally friendly.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY • RENEWABLE ENERGIES • CLIMATE ADAPTATION • NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS • EDUCATIONAL WORK

Brunswick, Germany • 250,890 inhabitants

TACKLING THE ENERGY TRANSITION TOGETHER

Seven partners have joined forces as a powerful stakeholder for the energy transition with the aim of furthering the expansion of renewable energies in the Brunswick region. The focus here is above all on the use of solar energy from photovoltaics. In Brunswick, less than 2% of the photovoltaic potential has been exploited so far. The energy cooperative initiates, plans, finances and operates renewable energy plants. The founding members form a unique network that includes the city, the BS|ENERGY local energy supplier, the Nibelungen Wohnbau GmbH housing association and the Wiederaufbau eG building cooperative as well as regional banks and environmental organisation representatives. The concept enables building owners to lease roof space and directly use the electricity generated via photovoltaics. In the future, citizens will not only be able to become members and purchase shares, but also participate directly in the renewable energy projects and thus actively support and shape the local energy transition.

RENEWABLE ENERGIES • **SOLAR ENERGY** • **PUBLIC PROCUREMENT** • **ENERGY TRANSITION** • **ENERGY COOPERATIVE**

Rems-Murr-Kreis, Germany • 422,698 inhabitants

COMMUTERS BIKE TO WORK

The Rems-Murr district wants to establish cycling as a climate-friendly transport alternative and is counting on the support of local businesses: company sites are being made more bicycle friendly and employees encouraged to cycle. The district has been running its Bike & Work project since 2013. The first step is an onsite visit by an external mobility consultant and a survey to identify employees' needs. An individual action plan is then prepared for a bicycle-friendly design for the site. Bike & Work is accompanied by two workshops to brainstorm ideas and present successful practical examples. Both the exchange among participants but also with the local authorities is essential. Funding from the district means companies are able to participate for free. A survey has confirmed the project's success: almost 65% of respondents stated that their employees now cycle to work more often. Bike & Work has already supported 60 companies, including market leaders such as Kärcher and Stihl.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY • **AWARENESS RAISING** • **BUSINESS COOPERATION** • **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY** • **MOBILITY TRANSITION**

Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil, Germany
130 member municipalities

SPACE FOR THE CLIMATE

Climate-friendly parking management is often still an untapped area of climate action. With its 'Platzgewinn fürs Klima' campaign, the Klima Mobil network offers municipalities in Baden-Württemberg an initiative to raise awareness of precisely this issue among citizens. The campaign has introduced parking fees that cover the real associated costs of parking spaces and has reduced public roadside parking. During a series of seminars, the network informed local authorities about citizen participation, public relations and social media, providing resources to raise awareness locally including diagrams, explanatory videos and ideas for activities as well as digital poster and social media templates. A total of 160 municipal representatives took part in the seminars. The goals: to reduce car traffic in the municipalities in the long term through awareness raising and communication, to contribute to climate action in transport and to sustainably upgrade public space.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY • **AWARENESS RAISING** • **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION** • **EDUCATION** • **SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING**

Dachverband für Natur und Umweltschutz Südtirol, Italy
23 member associations and 5 local groups

REDUCING PLASTIC WITH TAP WATER

With its 'Refill Südtirol / Alto Adige' project, the South Tyrolean umbrella organisation for nature and environmental protection is working to raise awareness on quality drinking water in the region and reduce the use of disposable plastic bottles. Citizens and tourists can find the nearest water stations on www.refill.bz.it throughout South Tyrol, where they can refill their water bottles for free. The map includes both outdoor drinking fountains and taps in publicly accessible buildings such as cafés, restaurants, libraries and shops. Interested citizens are also able to add water stations to the map for themselves via OpenStreetMap. More than 1,750 water stations have been added so far. In order to further increase awareness for Refill Südtirol / Alto Adige and attract even more users, the umbrella organisation is also running a media campaign. Whether on buses and trains or in the local newspaper – the public is informed and prompted to do its bit to reduce plastic waste.

SUSTAINABILITY • **RECYCLING** • **AWARENESS RAISING** • **ZERO WASTE** • **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM** • **HEALTH**

KLAR! Region Südliches Weinviertel, Austria
25,100 inhabitants

ORDERLY WILDERNESS

Ever-longer periods of drought pose a challenge for the Weinviertel region and climate change is affecting the region's soils. For municipal employees, the maintenance and design of public green spaces is becoming increasingly difficult. As part of the 'Ordentlich! Schlampert' campaign, the 13 municipalities in the South Weinviertel climate adaptation model region received training on water leaching, the avoidance of heat islands and erosion control. Mayors and heads of municipal departments participated in the training courses alongside members of the municipal maintenance teams to help improve the communication between employees, local authorities and policymakers as well as to facilitate the long-term modernisation of green space management. An active approach was taken: municipal green spaces were assessed and analysed, and steps were discussed to lead the region towards a climate-friendly future. A lot has happened since then: bee-friendly green spaces and flower strips have been cultivated, areas are now mown in stages and trees are being planted more efficiently.

DRY PERIODS • GREEN SPACE • SOIL PROTECTION • TRAINING • TRANSFORMATION • CLIMATE ADAPTATION • EXCHANGE

KEM Stubaital, Austria
13,855 inhabitants

THE CLIMATE ALLIANCE VALLEY

The Stubai Valley located to the south of Innsbruck is aiming to become a climate change adaptation model region. The five neighbouring Climate Alliance municipalities have teamed up to tackle climate and energy issues, organising all projects collectively for the entire valley. Together they coordinate applications for individual measures, invitations to events and municipal communications, ensuring that all 14,000 inhabitants are kept well informed. The population can contribute to five working groups and discuss future-oriented ideas for the valley's further development. Successes to date include the expansion of the public transport network, the introduction of a car-sharing exchange, e-car sharing and a variety of energy projects. Cooperation with Climate Alliance schools and businesses is also encouraged to further strengthen the region. The consortium of municipalities has since become a climate and energy model region and is working towards obtaining accreditation as a climate change adaptation model region.

PIONEER • NETWORKING • BUNDLING ACTION • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT • WORKING GROUPS • SENSE OF COMMUNITY

THANK YOU!

We would like to thank all participants for their commitment to climate action and congratulate the winners!

TAKE PART IN THE 2023 GREEN FOOTPRINTS CAMPAIGN!

Climate Alliance's Green Footprints campaign is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Since 2003, every year tens of thousands of young children from all over Europe have been collecting green footprints for the global climate.

During the campaign weeks, they make a special effort to travel in a climate-friendly way and thus collect green footprints. Children also receive footprints for other environmentally friendly behaviors such as eating locally or saving energy.
In the process, they learn a lot about sustainable living. The footprints and wishes of all campaign participants are presented to the UN Climate Change Secretariat at the end of every year during the United Nations Climate Change Conference as a call to action for the politicians there.

Join us and register your municipality or educational institution for the 2023 Green Footprints campaign!

Visit zoom-kidsforclimate.eu for more information.

Climate Stars 2023

Climate Stars 2002–2021

Braunschweig

Korschenbroich

Monheim am Rhein

Langau

Sanem

Krems

KLAR!
Region Südliches
Weinviertel

Rems-Murr-Kreis

Brünn
Nadace Partnerství

Kompetenznetz
Klima Mobil

Bruck an
der Leitha

Schaffhausen

Pàpàteszer

Bozen
Dachverband für
Umweltschutz Südtirol

Weiz & St. Ruprecht an der Raab

KEM Stubaital