



**CLIMATE
ALLIANCE**

CLIMATE STAR 2025

Europe's best
in municipal
climate
action



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Imprint: Media owner and publisher: Klimabündnis Niederösterreich, Herrngasse 9/2, 3100 St. Pölten, Telephone: +43 2742 26967, e-mail: niederösterreich@klimabuendnis.at; Editor: Bianca Bauer, Helena Daum, Nina Oezelt; Translation: Denise Dewey-Muno; Layout: Irene Fuchs; Print run: 1 000 Stück; Druck: Janetschek GmbH; Published in St. Pölten

Photos: Cover: unsplash, Hannah Busing; page 3: Pernkopf: © Weinfranz; page 5: Brand-Nagelberg: © Trachtenkapelle Brand-Nagelberg, Gallneukirchen: © Stadtgemeinde Gallneukirchen; page 6: Wiener Neudorf: © Fritz Hudribusch, Amstetten: © Stadtgemeinde Amstetten; page 7: Baden: © Ariel Huber Photography, Bettembourg: © Gemeinde Bettembourg; page 8: Gleisdorf: © Stadtmarketing Gleisdorf, Križevci: © Dragutin Andric; page 9: Maintal: © Stadt Maintal, Ratingen: © Stadt Ratingen; page 10: Riedstadt: © Riedstadt, Újpest: © Pont Art Média; page 11: Aachen: © Stadt Aachen, altbau plus e.V., The Hague: © City of The Hague; page 12: Region of Galicia: © Xunta de Galicia; Melk-Scheibbs: © Verein Kreislaufregion Melk-Scheibbs;



IT'S UP TO THE LOCAL LEVEL!

The current global political landscape gives little cause for optimism. We are concerned by the setbacks in climate policies, are observing a growing societal disengagement from climate issues and worry about the increase in political conflicts worldwide. At the same time, the effects of the climate crisis are becoming ever more apparent – as the past year has clearly shown with flooding in Germany and Austria, heavy rainfall in Spain and heat-waves in Italy and Greece. The challenges are mounting and becoming ever more pressing as time passes. In this age of crisis, I continue to place my hope in the local level. With their targeted strategies and practical projects, regions, cities and towns prove their strength time and again. And that is exactly what our climate needs right now!

With more than 2,000 members from all over Europe, Climate Alliance is the largest European city network dedicated to comprehensive and just climate action. Through the 11th Climate Star competition, our members once again demonstrate our network's strength. They share positive stories, encourage citizens to take climate action and inspire other regions, cities and towns with their endeavours. They give us hope and motivate us all to do more and to work together to advance local climate action and adaptation.

On behalf of Climate Alliance Europe's entire Executive Board, I congratulate all of the winners and hope that many more regions and municipalities will feel inspired to do more together for our climate.

Andreas Wolter

President of Climate Alliance
and Mayor of the City of Cologne, Germany



MUNICIPALITIES AS LEADERS OF THE CLIMATE TRANSITION

We aren't waiting for the outcomes of international summits, but are instead working together every single day to show how environmental protection and climate action work in practice. Lower Austria is home to by far the most Climate Alliance municipalities, which is why it makes sense to host the European Climate Stars here.

The Climate Star awards, in particular, clearly demonstrate the innovative approaches and momentum coming from municipalities and regions. Regardless of whether a project is large or small, it is encouraging to see the enthusiasm and optimism put into achieving a bright future for us all. While the CO₂ emissions have decreased in Lower Austria in recent years, the economy has nonetheless continued to grow. This means that something that seemed unthinkable years ago – the all-crucial decoupling – has been achieved. Today, ecology and economy are no longer mutually exclusive. Thanks to innovative companies, cutting-edge technology and committed municipalities and regions.

The Climate Stars serve as examples of best practices and motivate others to implement innovative climate projects, develop sustainable solutions and work together to achieve a climate-friendly future.

Thanks to all participants for their commitment and congratulations to the Climate Stars on their inspiring projects.

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 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 169 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.

CATEGORY 1 • up to 10,000 inhabitants

Brand-Nagelberg, Austria • 1,455 inhabitants

BRASS MUSIC GOES GREEN

Brand-Nagelberg's local brass band, Trachtenkapelle Brand, pursued a comprehensive sustainability concept during retrofitting of its music centre. Thanks to the town's financial support and active involvement, the vision of an energy-independent, climate-resilient cultural centre has since become a reality. An innovative retrofitting concept was developed and implemented drawing on the technical knowledge and expertise of the band members. The replacement of the heating system, thermal retrofitting, installation of a PV system on the renovated roof, green power and external solar shading make the building climate-friendly and reduce its CO₂ emissions to zero. In the future, more than 15 tonnes of CO₂ will be saved every year. Regional procurement was taken into account as was waste avoidance and environmentally-friendly cleaning practices. The operating costs saved can be put towards work with the youth. Culture and climate action now go hand in hand at the music centre where music lessons are also given. Here, both consideration for the next generation and a sense of connection with the region are tangible.



RENEWABLE ENERGY • SELF-SUFFICIENT • FUTURE-FIT RETROFITTING • CULTURE • OVERALL CONCEPT • COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Gallneukirchen, Austria • 6,689 inhabitants

SUSTAINABLE LIVING INITIATIVE

On 1 July 2021, the municipality of Gallneukirchen unanimously adopted its Climate Strategy 2030 for a climate-neutral future. Citizens, interest groups and political leaders were involved in its development. Central elements such as a mobility concept, reduced energy consumption, a larger share of renewable energies and more green spaces offer citizens significant added value. Among the measures already implemented include the establishment of renewable energy communities, the unsealing of public car parks and the first greening measures in the town centre. The local school centre is currently being retrofitted and an ordinance on green spaces has also been adopted that specifies guidelines for the development of public and private spaces, including aspects such as the planting of suitable trees. A repair café, the KostNixWagen exchange initiative, the KleiderTausch clothes swap and campaigns like the Sensen-Mäh-Tage machine-free mowing days allow citizens to experience the climate strategy first-hand and provide opportunities for them to get involved.



CLIMATE STRATEGY • CLIMATE NEUTRALITY • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT • RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Wiener Neudorf, Austria • 9,628 inhabitants

OUR COMMUNITY,
OUR CLIMATE

In Wiener Neudorf, countless small, unconventional projects are bringing climate action directly to the local population. Overheating is being counteracted through a mix of measures and the quality of life has been significantly improved as a consequence. Wide pathways for pedestrians and cyclists with plenty of greenery and playful elements invite residents to take advantage of sustainable mobility. Almost 500 heat-resistant trees have been planted in the town's streets to improve the microclimate. In the town centre, one lane of the B17 federal road has been repurposed as a green stormwater retention area. Car parks have been unsealed and designed to allow rainwater runoff – and 200 parking spaces that had been planned were not even built. In contrast, rising demand at the local primary school led to additional parking spaces for bikes and scooters, bringing the total from 16 to 96. The recipe for success includes comprehensive multi-modal mobility offers, mobility contracts with property developers, a rainwater plan to reduce flooding and close cooperation with the local population.



CLIMATE ADAPTATION • HEAT RESILIENCE • UNSEALING
MOBILITY • QUALITY OF LIFE

Amstetten, Austria • 23,899 inhabitants

A MAIN SQUARE
FOR PEOPLE

Between 2019 and 2024, Amstetten's urban regeneration programme focused intensively on working with the local population to make the town fit for the future. The aim: to create a walkable city featuring a network of green spaces. One outcome was a redesign of the main square, for which more than 10,000 Amstetten residents contributed their ideas. Accessible, and inclusive participatory formats such as town safaris granted new perspectives on the municipality. One result: Austria's largest sponge city, which relieves Amstetten's rainwater drainage system with a water storage capacity of 370,000 litres. In addition, 100 climate-resistant trees provide shade and an innovative surface absorbs water, improves cooling and reduces noise. Covered and greened bicycle parking facilities, seating, two wheelchair-accessible water dispensers and a fountain further enhance quality of life while a pedestrian zone reduces traffic. The new E-CityBus powered by electricity from the town's own hydroelectric plant adds a climate-friendly option to the local mobility mix.



INVOLVEMENT • SPONGE CITY • GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
PUBLIC SPACE • TRAFFIC CALMING

Baden, Switzerland • 23,891 inhabitants

A CITY ON A RETRO-
FITTING MISSION



Halved heat consumption, reduced electricity demand, greened roofs and a photovoltaic system owned by the city's residents – these are the outcomes of Baden's Pfaffechappe school retrofit. Built in 1974, the building underwent extensive renovation between 2021 and 2024. What's special about this project is that the building was not rebuilt from scratch but instead stripped back to its core. This allowed for both value to be retained and up to 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ to be saved. In 2026, the building will also be connected to the district heating network, allowing it to switch entirely to renewable energy. And that's not all: most of the old furniture is still being used today, having been donated to further schools in the area, other local retrofitting projects and three schools in Romania. The renovation of the Pfaffechappe school centre was a pilot project for the town. The principles and experiences gained will now form the basis for future retrofitting projects and a future-proof building stock in Baden.

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY RETROFITTING • RENEWABLE ENERGIES
ENERGY EFFICIENCY • RESOURCE CONSERVATION • RECYCLING

Bettembourg, Luxembourg • 11,613 inhabitants

SUSTAINABLE INNO-
VATION LEADS THE WAY



Sustainability, environmental friendliness and resource conservation – the municipality of Bettembourg draws these aspects together in its flagship project, the construction of a resource-saving workshop complex with main and ancillary buildings. The achievements so far are impressive: a minimum of 90% renewable energy for heating through geothermal energy, around 300,000 kWh of solar power from PV systems, 100% reusable façades and the use of biodegradable materials. A modular structure means that the building can be adapted for other uses in the future and the removable structural elements are both durable and easy to repair. The building can also be extended and therefore adapted to the future growth of the municipality and its services. The workshop complex thus demonstrates how environmentally-friendly construction and the circular economy can look in practice. The local administration has now decided that the planning, construction method and system technology should serve as a minimum standard for future new builds – truly a precedent-setting project!

CIRCULAR ECONOMY • RECYCLING • ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY
RENEWABLE ENERGIES • CONSTRUCTION • RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Gleisdorf, Austria • 11,525 inhabitants

GLEISDORF'S
TRAFFIC LIFELINE



The town's ring road is to be extensively redesigned by 2026 in order to create sustainable and safe mobility conditions for all road users. A mobility concept that encourages walking, cycling and the use public transport while reducing motorised private transport forms the basis. The six-year construction period has not only included the expansion of the infrastructure for e-mobility, but also new district heating pipes, fibre optics for fast internet and the modernisation of the water and sewage systems. One hundred kilometres of new cycling paths will connect the heart of Gleisdorf with neighbouring communities. Everyone stands to benefit from the new transport concept, which facilitates active mobility, improves the quality of life for residents and makes the town more attractive to businesses. Here, the climate crisis is being tackled by promoting renewable energies and sustainable transport solutions. And the space usage in the town centre is being renegotiated fairly in consultation with local citizens.

MOBILITY TRANSITION • SPACE FOR ALL • CYCLING NETWORK
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Križevci, Croatia • 18,949 inhabitants

A CENTRE FOR THE
ENERGY TRANSITION



One central point of contact for citizens and their concerns regarding the energy transition and climate action – that's the idea behind the climate and energy centre in Križevci. Specifically, the centre features a space to showcase green technologies and services as well as meeting rooms and an educational room. Since its founding in 2021, the centre has evolved into the first one-stop shop in the whole of Croatia and has actively advanced the energy transition: from planning to payment, the centre advises on all aspects related to the installation of PV systems. A total of 300 kW of photovoltaic power has been installed in municipal households so far. This will allow the city to save up to 20 tonnes of CO₂ annually. Advice on solar energy is just the beginning though. Križevci is continuously expanding the one-stop shop's expertise – in 2022 with the topic of energy poverty and in 2024 with that of energy-efficient retrofitting. A real success story!

ENERGY TRANSITION • ONE-STOP SHOP • RENEWABLE ENERGIES
ENERGY-EFFICIENT RETROFITTING • ENERGY POVERTY

Maintal, Germany • 41,940 inhabitants

MORE SPACE
FOR TREES

For the local council, a sustainable Maintal is only possible with a resilient tree population that ensures a good microclimate and enhances local biodiversity. The Hessian city at the heart of the Rhine-Main metropolitan region has developed a creative concept for the sustainable care of existing trees and the planting of new ones. An incentive programme encourages citizens to plant new trees on their private properties. To this end, the municipality subsidises the sale of trees for just 30 euros a piece. Citizens actively help maintain the health of the tree population by sponsoring trees and serving as tree fitness coaches, with the latter involving taking measurements during the summer months to gain an awareness of the condition of trees during hot periods. The concept has proven hugely popular. Around 1,000 trees have been planted so far and countless volunteers are out and about as tree fitness coaches, doing their bit to care for the urban tree population. Together with its citizens, Maintal is creating more space for trees in the city!



NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS • CLIMATE ADAPTATION
BIODIVERSITY • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • INVOLVEMENT

Ratingen, Germany • 92,893 inhabitants

WORKING TOGETHER TO
EXPAND RENEWABLES

Ratingen is tackling the energy transition in cooperation with local stakeholders. In 2022, 15 volunteers came together to establish a solar consulting service. The city is now offering low-threshold services for citizens via the solar consulting service in cooperation with the consumer advice centre's energy consultation service. In this way, they are raising awareness for renewable energies and motivating citizens to take advantage of them. The project is proving popular: the municipality facilitates informal exchanges in a private atmosphere during solar parties. Interested citizens can learn from each other, experience renewable energy systems first hand, ask questions, make suggestions and dispel any concerns and reservations they may have. For the city council, the close cooperation with local stakeholders has been a clear success, as technical expertise and local specialist knowledge come together and complement each other in the best possible way. The collaboration will thus be continued in the future to improve existing advisory services on renewable energies and further advance the energy transition in Ratingen.



RENEWABLE ENERGIES • COOPERATION • SOLAR ENERGY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • INVOLVEMENT

Riedstadt, Germany • 25,060 inhabitants

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY RETROFITTING



Encouraging citizens to undertake climate-friendly retrofitting is key for Riedstadt on its path to achieving its municipal climate targets. The local administration is tackling this task with a whole host of measures that above all focus on raising awareness, providing advice and offering financial incentives. A specially designed website forms the central point of contact, bringing all of the information and offers together. Through workshops, the city provides opportunities for citizens and experts to engage directly with one another, trains citizens to become solar advisers and arranges individual retrofitting consultations for Riedstadt's residents. The town is also using the German tax laws to its benefit: officially designating redevelopment areas results in financial incentives for building owners, who receive tax credits for energy-efficient renovation measures. The city has understood the importance of social engagement in climate action and is showing how practical citizen participation can take shape.

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY RETROFITTING • ENERGY EFFICIENCY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • RENEWABLE ENERGIES
AWARENESS-RAISING • INVOLVEMENT

Újpest (IV. District of Budapest), Hungary • 94,824 inhabitants

FOSTERING RESILIENCE FOR A DISTRICT WORTH LIVING IN



Creating a community worth living in in times of climate crisis – that is the basic idea behind the wildflower programme in Újpest. Since its launch, the project has focused on boosting biodiversity in the district. And what Újpest sets out to do, it also achieves. The district's green spaces were thus expanded significantly, with 10,000 m² of concrete removed. Wildflower meadows and biodiverse flowerbeds featuring over 30,000 plants have been created and a total of four community gardens have been opened where citizens can grow fruit, vegetables and herbs. The programme not only contributes to Újpest's resilience, but also raises awareness among citizens about climate protection, adaptation and sustainability. That's not all though: the new green spaces also ensure a cooler climate on hot days, the increase in runoff areas means fewer issues with heavy rainfall, natural meadows mean less maintenance work for the council and the nature-based solutions help to reduce urban noise – a win-win situation for all involved!

CLIMATE ADAPTATION • RESILIENCE, BIODIVERSITY
AWARENESS-RAISING • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION • INVOLVEMENT

Aachen, Germany • 261,472 inhabitants

FUNDING PROGRAMME INTO PEOPLE'S LIVING ROOMS



Aachen is not shying away from any challenge on its way to climate neutrality by 2030. With its municipal retrofitting funding programme, the local council aims to make the building stock sustainable, particularly in the private sector. But how can these offers reach citizens? Effective communication is key. With its Energy Caravan consultation campaign, the city of Aachen is implementing its plan and pursuing an approach that is as simple as it is effective: instead of getting people to come to the city administration, the Energy Caravan brings the offers directly to citizens. And that with success! Around 200 additional onsite consultations were offered during the campaign period, with a total of 1,186 funding applications submitted by October 2024 and a total of 6 million euros in measures funded. Aachen is proving in this way just how important needs-based offers and a target group-oriented approach are for success in municipal climate protection!

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY RETROFITTING • CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
SENSITISATION • ENERGY CONSULTING • FINANCING

The Hague, Netherlands • 549,163 inhabitants

BANNING FOSSIL FUEL ADS



Good communication supports goals – it doesn't contradict them. As part of its path to climate neutrality by 2030, The Hague has become the first city in the world to ban advertising for carbon-intensive products and services such as air travel and cruises. Advertising in the public sphere has a significant impact on consumer behaviour. With its new legislation, The Hague is shaping the direction of this impact. The city council adopted the legally binding ban in September 2024 after a two-year debate over its implementation and was able to bring the regulation into force in January 2025. The ban extends to the advertising of fossil-fuel intensive products and services in all outdoor spaces. The move is already inspiring other cities around the world to take similar steps towards more climate-positive communication by effectively limiting the visibility of carbon-intensive products and services at a local level.

CLIMATE STRATEGY • CLIMATE COMMUNICATION • LEGISLATION
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Kreislaufregion Melk-Scheibbs, Austria
121,419 inhabitants

PACKAGING-FREE
INITIATIVE



With its “Unverpackt Kreislaufpartner” (Unpacked Circular Partner) project, the Melk-Scheibbs regional initiative is offering catering businesses and canteens more sustainable packaging solutions. The aim is to supply dry goods in reusable metal containers instead of disposable packaging. Pilot customers including Lebenshilfe Lower Austria and various care centres have already implemented the new logistics solution, which has saved over 500 tonnes of packaging waste every year, also reducing CO₂ emissions and microplastics. An Austria-wide roll-out is now in the pipeline. The initiative serves as a regional hub for circular economy and bioeconomy. Measures are being developed in a total of seven action areas, ranging from strengthening the market gardening concept with small-scale, sustainable vegetable cultivation and a focus on manual labour as well as direct marketing to a highly efficient biogas plant and agrivoltaic systems. Here, resource-savings and regional development go hand in hand.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY • ZERO WASTE • RESOURCE CONSERVATION
REGIONAL VALUE CREATION • MUNICIPAL ENERGY SUPPLY

Region of Galicia, Spain
2,705,833 inhabitants

AN ENTIRE REGION IS
TAKING CLIMATE ACTION



How does a region with over 2.5 million inhabitants manage to achieve its ambitious climate targets? The autonomous community of Galicia in northwestern Spain has built upon its role as regional coordinator of the European Covenant of Mayors with a dedicated strategy to support the over 300 municipalities throughout the region. With its Municipalities Assistance Centre, Galicia has set up a one-stop shop for cities and towns signing on to the Covenant of Mayors, helping them develop sustainable climate action and energy plans as well as to identify suitable funding to make these plans a reality. The administration has also set its sights on funding, approving its own grants for municipal climate action and channelling EU regional development funds directly to the municipal level. The region’s strategic alliance on climate, which brings Galician public administrations together with businesses, professional associations and civil society players for a climate-neutral Galicia, further strengthens ambitious climate action on the local level.

CLIMATE STRATEGY • ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS
ONE-STOP SHOP • COLLABORATION • FINANCING

THANK YOU!



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

WINNING CITIZENS OVER FOR THE CLIMATE
WITH THE EU CLIMATE PACT!

How can we get as many people as possible engaged in climate action, even outside the typical climate bubble?
Our answer: building networks and identifying local multipliers. With the EU Climate Pact, Climate Alliance is showing just how this can work.

Together with Climate Alliance’s national offices and further stakeholders from across the continent, Climate Alliance has built a network of 27 country coordinators – all pulling in the same direction. This structure is being supplemented by around 1,150 local Climate Pact ambassadors – an extensive movement resulting in a plethora of activities with and for citizens throughout Europe, such as joint events in Germany and Belgium, climate action photo competitions with a winner from Slovenia, climate bingo games in Poland, interactive climate walks in Greece and Italy, street food tastings in Austria, peer parliaments in Spain and local climate action groups in Luxembourg.



Discover the possibilities in your country and join in!
https://climate-pact.europa.eu/index_en





★ Climate Stars 2025

● Climate Stars 2002–2023

