



Climate Alliance
Municipality

Climate Star 2021

European Municipalities Compete for Climate Protection





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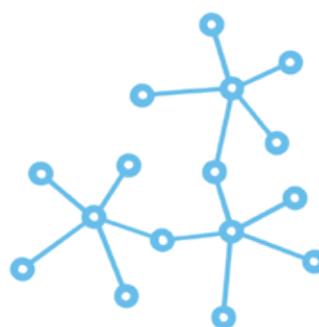
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Strong allies

The ninth award ceremony for the best climate action projects in Europe should have taken place in Lower Austria. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we have organised a virtual award ceremony instead of the planned gala. Despite the pandemic, interest in the Climate Star award and the innovative power driving the change necessary on the local level remains high. A huge thank you and congratulations, therefore, to all of the competition entrants and winners.

Especially municipalities and cities are strong allies in the fight against the climate crisis. We are delighted that Lower Austria is taking a leading role in this. In autumn 2019, the province launched a climate action initiative. Over 70 municipalities have since joined, bringing the total number of communities in the Climate Alliance network to 427 by April 2021. No other region in Europe has as many Climate Alliance municipalities. With the help of innovations, subsidies, sustainable procurement, legal requirements and awareness raising, we are setting new standards. Since 2015, Lower Austria has covered 100 percent of its electricity needs with renewable energy. In 2019, it was the first province in Austria to ban oil heating in new buildings. In the same year, we closed the last coal-fired power plant left in our province. In 2020, we then launched Europe's biggest photovoltaic project with citizen participation.

By 2030, we will increase electricity generation from photovoltaics tenfold and double the output from wind power. Ten thousand "green jobs" are to moreover be created.

Johanna Mikl-Leitner | Governor, Lower Austria

Stephan Pernkopf | Deputy Governor, Lower Austria



Johanna Mikl-Leitner



Stephan Pernkopf

We are change

While the coronavirus pandemic is currently dominating the headlines and appears considerably more acute right now, the climate crisis will continue long after the pandemic has ended. Indeed, the current crisis has made one thing clear, namely that rapid and effective responses to crises are in fact possible.

For this year's Climate Star competition, we set the motto of "We are change – success stories of local climate action". The many submissions as well as the award-winning projects presented in this brochure offer encouragement. A shift has begun on the local level towards policies aligned to the Paris climate goals. It is now a question of inspiring even more communities – both large and small – from inside and outside our Climate Alliance network to join us on this path.

A UN report recently confirmed that the path that Climate Alliance has pursued since its founding more than 30 years ago is indeed the right one. It moreover affirmed that indigenous peoples are the best custodians of the forests, and stated that official recognition of indigenous peoples' land rights is today more important than ever. As such, these findings align with the principles upheld by Climate Alliance and the association's long-standing partnership with indigenous peoples of Amazonia. Strong partnerships on both the local and global levels are key to combat the climate crisis and fight for climate justice.

We congratulate all of the winners, look forward to seeing more and more communities following their example, and wish everyone unwavering perseverance and every success.

Tine Heyse | President, Climate Alliance



Tine Heyse

The Climate Star goes to ...



Every two years, the Climate Alliance honours the best municipal climate protection projects. Each of the 1,800 European Climate Alliance municipalities can take part in the contest; winners are chosen by an expert jury.

CATEGORY 1

Energy & climate

CATEGORY 2

Involving citizens

CATEGORY 3

Saving resources

CATEGORY 4

Everyday sustainability

www.climatealliance.org

Model Projects. Climate protection needs role models that people talk about and ideas and measures that they can spread. The ninth Climate Star once again provides a stage for model projects this year. In an online event the best climate protection projects implemented by members of the Climate Alliance network are to be awarded the Climate Star 2021. The Climate Alliance network has grown continuously ever since it was founded in 1990. It now comprises over 1,800 cities, municipalities and rural districts in Europe. Together with their partners, indigenous people of South America, they are aiming at two goals: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the protection of the rain forests.

The Jury. The Climate Alliance has chosen climate protection projects in four categories. The jury consists of the executive board and the national coordinators of six European countries. Projects are assessed on the basis of the following criteria: sustainability, multiplier effect, media coverage, innovation, and citizen participation.

The Climate Star. 137 Climate Stars have already been awarded on the basis of these criteria. Award winners include famous cities such as Barcelona, Leipzig, Venice, and Zurich. Climate Awards have also been given to many small municipalities, including Hostětín in the Czech Republic with 210 inhabitants. This year, 16 Climate Stars are being awarded.

An energy independent town



The municipality of Ascha has set itself the ambitious goal of nothing less than complete energy self-sufficiency by 2030. The Bavarian municipality has developed a concept for an environmentally-friendly energy supply to enable sustainable operation and ensure a natural balance between energy consumption and generation. Citizens are also actively involved in working groups and show just how important public commitment is. It all began with smaller projects, such as the 'Fifty-Fifty' energy-saving initiative. The next step towards decentralised energy production was a 1,400 kW high-performance biomass cogeneration plant. The community worked closely with the local landscape planning office to develop environmental measures for the building sector that would foster the development of a climate-conscious energy settlement. Whether wind turbines on houses, energy prices for thrifty homeowners, energy efficient, class 'A' houses or a local photovoltaic park, Ascha shows how size is irrelevant when it comes to successfully implementing local climate action measures.

CATEGORY 1

Ascha
Germany
1,534 inhabitants

RENEWABLE ENERGY
SELF-SUFFICIENCY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
EXCHANGE
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
FIFTY-FIFTY
ECO PACKAGE



E-bikes for commuters



It's the same story every single day: traffic jams and full car parks. Forty percent of people commute to work, mainly using their own car. Eppan is one of many places facing this problem. The sixth largest community in South Tyrol is countering this issue with an innovative project to offer its commuters sustainable mobility options. It all began in 2017 with a survey of commuters. This was followed by workshops, a cycling-themed late-night shopping evening, further information events and set-up of an info point on sustainable mobility. In this hilly community on the South Tyrolean Wine Road, the focus is on a major e-bike offensive. A total of 100 e-bikes have been distributed among commuters. They are able to use these to travel to the nearest public transport stop or even all the way to work, comfortably and in an environmentally friendly manner. Maintenance and servicing are also included free of charge. Bike boxes have been installed at three public stops, too. A campaign raising awareness about sustainable mobility is being run in parallel to the e-bike initiative.

CATEGORY 1

Eppan
Italy
14,304 inhabitants

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY
SURVEY
E-BIKES
BIKE BOXES
CAMPAIGN
SWITCH TO CYCLING
TRY OUT



Climate innovation city

CATEGORY 1

Graz
Austria
269,211 inhabitants

TANGIBLE CLIMATE CHANGE
CONSISTENT PATH
CULTURAL CHANGE
FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS
COORDINATE
CLIMATE PROTECTION
CLIMATE ACTION FUND

In Graz, climate change is more tangible than the global average: since 2001, the average air temperature has risen by 1.4°C and the retention basin designed to manage record flood levels overflowed twice in 2020. The Styrian capital has pursued a consistent path to mitigate climate change since becoming Austria's first Climate Alliance municipality back in 1990. The district heating network was extended and made more environmentally friendly, for example, and the public transport and cycling networks were expanded. Over the years, however, it has become increasingly clear that a far-reaching cultural change is necessary. The Wegener Center for Climate and Global Change has calculated how the 2°C global temperature target would affect Graz: 5.6 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions per year. The framework conditions for this were created with the climate innovation city project. An advisory board for climate protection, a climate protection officer, a monitoring system and a climate action fund of €60 million were set up. All activities are coordinated by the city's working group for climate action.



Water/water heat pump

CATEGORY 1

Tulln an der Donau
Austria
13,591 inhabitants

GARDEN CITY
DRINKING WATER
PHOTOVOLTAIC NETWORK
MAIN WATER PIPELINE
COMMUNAL
INDEPENDENT
EXPAND

A new chapter on the path to energy independence is being written in the Komponistenviertel residential quarter of the garden city of Tulln an der Donau. The joint project between TullnEnergie and Tulln-Bau public housing association comprises 80 housing units as well as a 250 kWp photovoltaic system and a water/water heat pump. What was already the largest municipal photovoltaic network in Austria has now been expanded even further with one of the first communal photovoltaic systems in the country. It currently has a power output of 2.3 MW. Operation of the heat pump using drinking water from the main water pipeline is a first in Austria. Expertise was obtained from Germany and Switzerland for the system. A collaboration with the local electricity provider guarantees a continuous power supply. Inhabitants will also benefit financially from the photovoltaic system on their roof: the electricity costs are 20 percent lower than the normal local prices. A 12 m³ buffer tank guarantees optimal load distribution. Excess electricity generated during peak times is used to operate the street lighting.

20 ideas for the climate



The town of Herzogenburg has launched a new citizen participation initiative with the formula of 20 + 17 = 20. Launched in 2020 in the wake of Climate Alliance’s twentieth anniversary, the 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the initiative’s framework. The outcome is 20 ideas for climate action in precisely the areas addressed by the SDGs. The simple idea behind this is to pool Herzogenburg’s many talents, enable citizens to decide what ideas they want to implement, bring people together and support them. Among the initiatives already implemented count green space sponsorships, pocket parks to replace heat islands, expansion of the district heating network, free bike loans, hiking trails through local orchards, insect hotels, community gardens, “he-Mobil” social transport service, MOVE electric car sharing platform, a repair café, “Radeln auf Rezept” cycling campaign, Energy Checker and photovoltaic savings accounts. Citizens are also able to get involved at home or in their own garden and can learn how to build an insect hotel or plant a flower meadow during workshops.

CATEGORY 2

Herzogenburg
Austria
7,738 inhabitants

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
GLOBAL GOALS
EXPLOITING TALENTS
POCKET PARKS
SOCIAL TRANSPORT SERVICE
PV SAVINGS ACCOUNT
CYCLING ON PRESCRIPTION



Klikk aktiv



The Klikk aktiv project of the Energy Agency Rhineland-Palatinate successfully combines climate action with volunteering. The idea behind it: small communities harbour a great deal of potential, however personnel resources are often lacking. This potential is now being tapped into in communities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants through climate action volunteers, who care about their town’s well-being. The pilot projects in Rhineland-Palatinate were a resounding success: more than 40 climate action volunteers got involved in a total of 37 municipalities. Together, they supported funding applications, implemented awareness-raising measures locally or initiated small-scale local concepts. Regional project managers identify and organise the local volunteers, train them, bring them together, and support them in the implementation of projects. Other municipalities and regions have already become aware of the project through media coverage of the climate action volunteers’ work and expressed their interest in the transferability of this approach.

CATEGORY 2

State of Rhineland-Palatinate
Germany
66,060 inhabitants

VOLUNTEERING
SUPPORT
SMALL COMMUNITIES
NETWORKING
EXCHANGE
REPLICATION
PARTICIPATION



Local electricity market

CATEGORY 2

Retzer Land
Austria
11,410 inhabitants

DRIEST REGION
NEW IMPETUS
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
SALE AND LEASE BACK
SOLAR PANELS
VOLUNTEERS
MERGE

One of the driest regions in Central Europe is taking measures to counteract the climate crisis. The six communities of Retz, Retzbach, Zellerndorf, Schrattenthal, Pulkau and Hardegg have joined forces to form the Retzer Land climate and energy model region. It all started with the climate gala, an event that already enjoyed tremendous popularity before the coronavirus pandemic: over 400 visitors meant it was one of the largest in the region. The photovoltaic initiative was also a resounding success: a total of 15 photovoltaic systems with over 500 kWp were set up. These were financed through participation by local citizens in a sale and lease back model. The solar panels rapidly sold out in all communities. In the next step, complete photovoltaic packages will be offered to private households and businesses. This is to all be merged into one of the first local electricity marketplaces in Austria in which the producers and consumers come from the same region. The climate region is supported by a network of young volunteers who provide new impetus.



BENU eco-village

CATEGORY 3

Esch-sur-Alzette
Luxembourg
35,382 inhabitants

ZERO WASTE
UPCYCLING
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
FOOTPRINT
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
LOCAL PRODUCTION
TRANSPARENT

Zero waste, upcycling, re-use, social responsibility, local production, transparency – all in one place. Is there an example of a socio-ecological circular economy like this? Yes, exactly this should be achieved by the end of 2021. BENU Village will pursue these principles to become the first eco-village in the greater Luxembourg area. Around 1,100 m² of usable interior space is being created in Esch-sur-Alzette with an environmental and social footprint of close to zero. Care is being taken during construction to ensure that all components can be recovered separately and reused in case of future modifications or dismantling. Electricity is produced locally with used solar panels and heat recovery turbines. A 20 m³ rainwater system reduces water consumption. Space is being made available in the building for service providers who adhere to the BENU Charter. BENU designs and produces upcycled fashion and furniture here. A workshop for people with disabilities takes care of the processing of surplus food and service in the restaurant offering organic food.



How can we make the daily lives of refugees and social welfare recipients easier, foster integration and at the same time offer employment? In the municipality of Junglinster in Luxembourg, these aspects are combined and achieved through the equiVélo project. Volunteers have been collecting bicycles donated by private individuals and recycling centres since 2018. They repair these bikes together with refugees, then distribute them to those who need them most. Over 580 bicycles have already been handed over to new owners in just two years. Safety is also an important issue: the volunteers install lights, reflectors and bells, and provide a helmet and lock for each bike. Through regular maintenance, the team ensures that people can enjoy their bikes for a long time to come. The project also created paid employment for two people: an assistant originating from Venezuela has been hired for administrative work and a Syrian man has been employed as a bike mechanic.

CATEGORY 3

Junglinster
Luxembourg
6,524 inhabitants

INTEGRATION
DAILY MOBILITY
COLLECT
REPAIR
TRANSFER
NEW JOBS
VOLUNTEERS



Trees for all



With its project, For Climate Action, the municipality of Kájárpéc in north-west Hungary has set a clear focus: to protect old trees, plant new native ones and educate citizens on their importance. A total of 200 trees have already been planted – fruit trees at the local heritage museum and kindergarten and deciduous trees in parks and along pathways. These not only beautify the townscape, but also provide protection against the summer heat. They moreover help to raise awareness for nature and climate protection among citizens by linking them to traditional values. This effect is enhanced with the “Six Oak Tour”. Once a year, when the fruit trees blossom, interested citizens and visitors are guided past the oldest trees in the town along a route covering around 7 kilometres. Particularly old and well-known trees receive the “hero tree” title and are given a name tag. The local theatre group ‘Kájárpéci Vízirevű’ is also drawing attention to these issues with three plays focusing on the environment and climate protection.

CATEGORY 3

Kájárpéc
Hungary
1,346 inhabitants

PLANTING TREES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
COMMUNICATING VALUES
RAISING AWARENESS
TREE CONSERVATION
SIX OAK TOUR
FRUIT TREE BLOSSOM



Re-Use network

CATEGORY 3

Villach
Austria
57,497 inhabitants

CONSERVE RESOURCES
USE PRODUCTS LONGER
PASS ON
NEW LIFE
AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVES
SOCIAL
RESELL

“Reuse not refuse” has long been a popular slogan in Villach. The private and non-profit association ARGE Sozial, which supports people with psychosocial and financial problems, introduced a used furniture collection service back in 2000. In 2017, the city in Carinthia also launched a campaign called Re-Use in cooperation with ARGE Sozial to recycle and reuse old electrical devices. In 2020, the campaign was expanded to include Re-Use bags and boxes. Available at various locations throughout the city, local citizens can take these home and fill them with books, crockery or small electrical appliances. They can then hand them in quickly and easily at one of the participating network partners, such as Caritas or the ReVillach Re-Use store. Minor repairs are completed as required and the goods then resold in Re-Use shops for affordable prices. A total of 300 boxes and 600 bags have been handed out within just a short time. Expansion of the project to other municipalities in Carinthia is already planned.



A simpler life – shaping the future

CATEGORY 4

Baden
Switzerland
19,175 inhabitants

CHANGE BEHAVIOUR
REFLECT
KEEP A DIARY
DAILY ROUTINES
ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT
PRACTICAL TIPS
ADAPT OFFERS

In Switzerland, private households are responsible for one third of environmental pollution. How can families change this? Ideally through fun activities rather than making sacrifices. The city of Baden in Aargau wanted a more precise answer to this question and sought families to take on the challenge. All communication channels were used to select the families. Due to the huge amount of interest in the project, a total of nine families from different parts of the city were selected instead of the five originally planned. They documented their consumption in a diary and reflected on aspects of their daily routine, including their diet, mobility, and water and energy consumption. Services offered by the city included individual introductory talks, calculation of the families’ environmental footprint and tips for everyday life. Creative workshops were organised to familiarise the families with the city’s offers and help to break established behavioural patterns. The experiences have now been integrated into recommendations for communication between the city and its citizens. Offers and initiatives are being adapted or expanded. The nine families moreover share practical tips.

Nachhaltigkeit (ba)rockt!



Ten households, eight months and five disciplines – who has the smallest environmental footprint? The competition in the baroque city of Ludwigsburg in Baden-Württemberg is a recipe for success and ran for the second time in 2019/20. Private households compete against each other in the categories of waste, mobility, water and electricity as well as heating, ventilation and consumption. Coaching and advice from experts as well as technical aids help them to gradually reduce their consumption. The households' stats are measured and evaluated every month. The energy heroes of the competition do not keep their tips a secret, though. Rather, the participants strive to motivate each other during face-to-face encounters and networking events. Extensive coverage by the local media also ensures a snowball effect. Personal stories from the neighbourhood make climate protection accessible. The competition outcomes and data are anonymised, then shared. This in turn inspires other citizens to participate and helps to boost awareness of sustainability issues.

CATEGORY 4

Ludwigsburg
Germany
93,536 inhabitants

COMPETITION
ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT
COACHING
ELECTRICITY SAVINGS
ENERGY HEROES
INSPIRATION
AWARENESS RAISING



Perchtoldsdorf 4 Future



The municipality of Perchtoldsdorf near Vienna responded to the climate crisis early on: a communal photovoltaic system was set up back in 1998. There are now over 200 systems in addition to six public charging stations, an electric car sharing service and rental bikes. A climate manifesto was adopted in 2019 and the “Perchtoldsdorf 4 Future” initiative was launched one year later. A decarbonisation strategy is being developed together with local citizens. All processes are being adapted so that they are carbon neutral. The groundwork for this is being prepared in ten working groups addressing issues ranging from mobility and a circular economy to finances and social affairs. In addition to professional support, experts also provide technical input through regular webinars. The sense of togetherness was further strengthened through participation in the Climate Alliance initiative “Change the Future”. Another milestone is the biodiversity concept adopted at the end of March 2021. It comprises six fields of action and a detailed list of what needs to be done to safeguard biodiversity.

CATEGORY 4

Perchtoldsdorf
Austria
13,998 inhabitants

DECARBONISATION
WORKING GROUPS
FINANCES
SOCIAL AFFAIRS
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS
WORKING TOGETHER



#energieland2050digital

CATEGORY 4

District of Steinfurt
Germany
447,823 inhabitants

CORONAVIRUS
NETWORKING
CITIZEN DIALOGUE
SOCIAL MEDIA
ADVICE
NETWORKING
SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION

How can the dialogue between citizens work during a pandemic? With its digital communication campaign, the district of Steinfurt and its energieland2050 association successfully addressed precisely this problem. The association informed on climate and sustainability issues during ten themed weeks. The #energieland2050digital campaign included interactive posts, live Q&A sessions, telephone discussions, competitions and interviews, all of which were publicised via social platforms and local media. From advice on the use of solar energy through information on regional produce to tips and ideas for everyday life – there was something for everyone. One highlight was the activity week on sustainable nutrition during which the production and consumption of food and handling of food waste were discussed with experts. The close interaction between institutions, citizens and regional stakeholders was also a resounding success. The district of Steinfurt in North Rhine-Westphalia is setting an example: practical climate action is an ongoing process and must be adaptable to be a success.



The June challenge

CATEGORY 4

Târgu Mureş
Romania
145,806 inhabitants

COMPETITION
SUSTAINABILITY
AWARENESS
COLLABORATION
TRANSFORMATION
MOTIVATE
CHANGER POINTS

Advocating greater sustainability together while contributing to a major transformation through individual actions. The competition that took place in Romania's Târgu Mureş in June 2020 as part of the Change the Future Challenge made this possible. Change the Future is an online tool offered by Climate Alliance to integrate sustainability into everyday life in a fun way – whether in the field of energy, nutrition, consumption or mobility. The competition in this Transylvanian city was initiated by the NGO Focus Eco Center. During presentations, exhibitions and other events, citizens, schoolchildren and students were invited to form teams and to participate in the competition. A total of 34 groups competed against each other and together collected more than 35,000 Changer Points. The Future Changers sent a powerful message in this way and made clear that cooperation is the key to a better future. Târgu Mureş is continuing with its endeavours and still leads the international Change the Future ranking.

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



“Climate & I” exhibition to go on tour

The exhibition will be displayed at the Museum Niederösterreich in St. Pölten until 29 August 2021. After this, it will go on tour – both within Lower Austria and to Austria’s traditional partner countries. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and all countries in the Danube region are the target destinations for the exhibition.

A desire to act

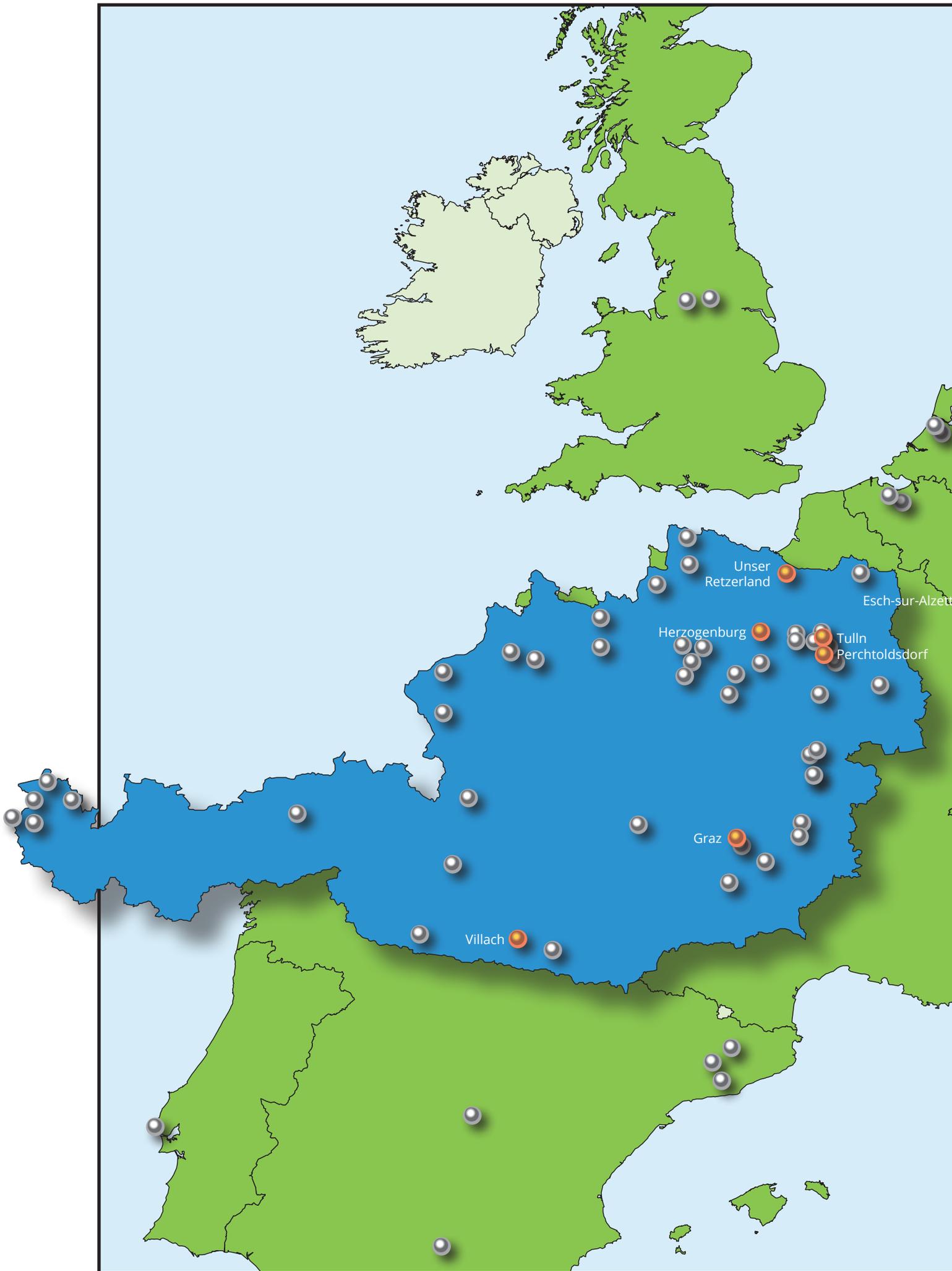
With their concept, the curators seek to encourage people to get involved in climate action, show how small steps can have a major impact, and share tips and incentives for action. The modular exhibition addresses the six most important areas of life, namely travel and mobility, electricity and energy, construction and housing, waste and recycling, food and drink, and consumption and lifestyle. After all, it is through our ways of life that we influence the climate.

Carbon dioxide is ...?

The exhibition also renders carbon dioxide “tangible”. How much do we currently consume? And how much should we consume to achieve the climate goal of limiting global warming to less than 2°C? The “Climate & I” exhibition provides answers and suggestions.

www.museumnoe.at

A poster for the exhibition 'Klima & Ich' (Climate & I). The title is in large white letters on a black background. Below it, 'Ausstellung 29.8.2021' is written in white. The logo of the Museum Niederösterreich (NN) is in the top right, with the text 'MUSEUM NIEDERÖSTERREICH HAUS FÜR NATUR' and the website 'museumnoe.at'. The central illustration shows a hand holding a black machete, poised to cut a globe of the Earth. A red flame is at the bottom, and black dots representing carbon dioxide are rising from the globe. At the bottom left, there is a small logo for 'Klimatic and Energieprogramm' and a note 'in Kooperation mit'. At the bottom right, there is a logo for 'KULTUR NIEDERÖSTERREICH'.





Climate Stars in Europe