

CLIMATE ACTION MAGAZIN

THE
SCHWARZENEGGER
CLIMATE INITIATIVE

UNITE IN ACTION

EDITION N°06 | JUNE 3RD 2025

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DOMINIC THIEM

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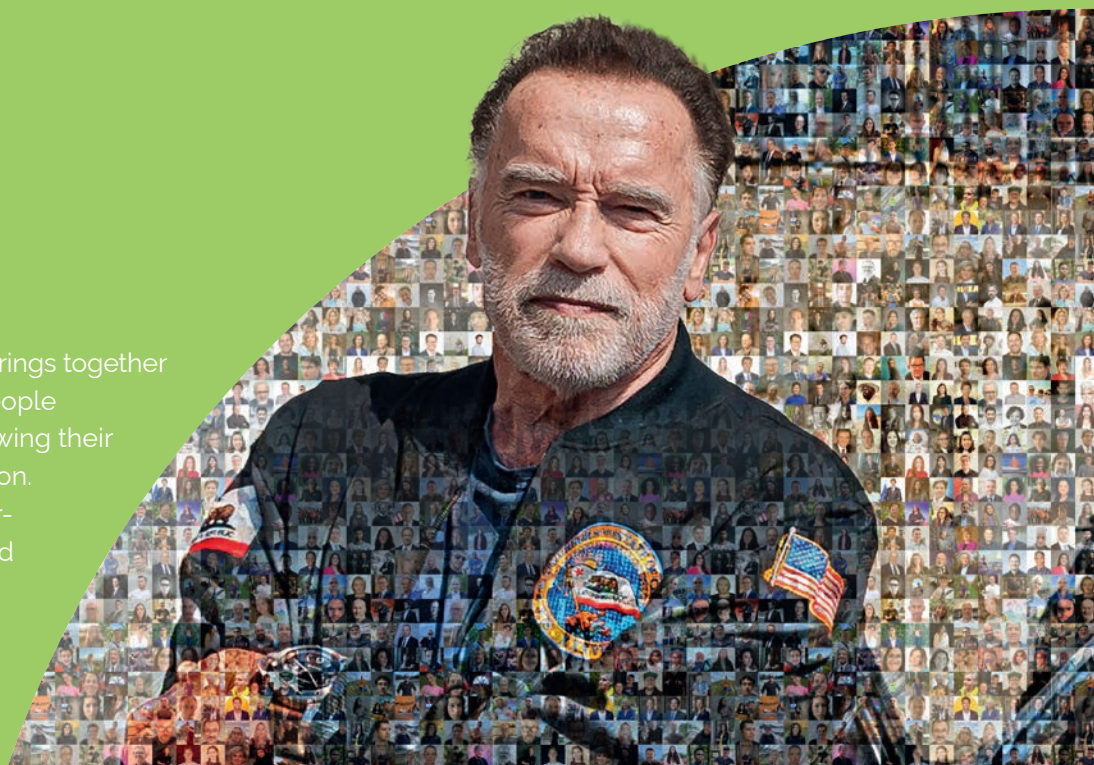
THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS:



UNITY

UNITE IN ACTION MOSAIC

Our Unite in Action mosaic brings together hundreds of photos from people around the world, each showing their commitment to climate action. Together, they form a powerful image of unity and shared purpose.





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STRONG OAKS TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

... AND WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ARNOLD



SCHWARZENEGGER – Oaks are widely seen as symbols of hope. With their deep roots, high drought resistance, and crucial role in biodiversity, they seem unshakable. Yet even these steadfast trees are increasingly under pressure due to global warming.

Young oaks often struggle to survive, and the natural rhythm of seed-rich years is becoming unbalanced. New pests are adding to stress. This raises an important question: Can these “strong guys” keep up with the pace of change? A prominent example proves that strength and adaptability are not contradictions. Arnold Schwarzenegger, known as the “Styrian Oak,” has shown us how it's done. Emigrating from Austria at a young age, he faced the new ‘harsh’ conditions in California. What followed is well known – an incredible career as the most successful bodybuilder of all time, Hollywood action star, Governor of California, and now a committed environmental and climate advocate. Schwarzenegger embodies what a true oak should stand for: being firmly rooted, but open to change. Learning, adapting, and taking new paths, without losing sight of one's identity. This parallel is more than a nice metaphor. Forest ecologists at the “BOKU University” in Vienna tell us that we must adapt our oak populations to the new, harsher climate conditions in order to help them survive. We need more resilient, climate-fit oak varieties capable of withstanding tougher – almost Californian – conditions. And this challenge is not just about the trees. It concerns all of us. We must also learn to adjust to new realities, in how we interact with nature, in our everyday lives, in politics, and in the economy. Arnold Schwarzenegger is seen as a bridge-builder between worlds, and a voice that has recognized the gravity of the crisis while still offering hope and encouragement. That's why our message at the 9th AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT is: **“UNITE IN ACTION – TERMINATE POLLUTION.”** Only together will we create the solutions to the climate crisis that are vital for our survival, so that future generations can continue to grow up in the shade of strong oaks. Together, we can do it!

MONIKA LANGTHALER

Director, Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative

IMPRINT

PUBLISHER: Monika Langthaler • **MEDIA OWNER:** The Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, Köllnerhofgasse 6, 1010 Vienna, +43 1 2351423, office@schwarzeneggerclimate.com, www.schwarzeneggerclimateinitiative.com, facebook.com/SchwarzeneggerClimate, x.com/ArnoldSCI, instagram.com/schwarzeneggerclimate, www.tiktok.com/@schwarzeneggerclimate

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GRAPHIC: Fabian Gwiggner Designstudio • Pump for the Planet Visuals: fuggersberger.at • **COVER PHOTO:** Martin Mathes • **PRINTED** according to the guidelines of the Austrian Eco-label: Printed by **Gugler Medien GmbH**, Auf der Schön 2, A-3390 Melk/Donau, AUSTRIA • **UW-NR.** 609



Viktoria Zechmeister is a professional career firefighter with the Vienna Fire Department since 2004. She is an incident commander for Type 3 operations and division chief for buildings and construction. In this interview, she shares her frontline climate experiences and what emergency responders need most today. ▶ By Daniel Böhm

VIKTORIA ZECHMEISTER FIGHTS ON THE FRONT LINES AGAINST THE IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.



FIREFIGHTER **VIKTORIA ZECHMEISTER**

Floods in eastern Austria, wildfires in California: different places, same story: Firefighters and rescue teams risking everything to protect lives. As climate disasters grow more frequent, these first responders are reaching their limits. Trusted and respected, they are true climate heroes – because they act, not just talk.

Q: Is there a particular operation related to extreme weather that has stuck with you? A devastating ice storm in 2014 brought large parts of Slovenia to a standstill. Trees snapped like matchsticks, power poles too. Overhead lines along railway tracks were torn down by the weight of frozen water and fallen trees. People were without power and, in many cases, couldn't heat their homes. At the time, I spent a week in the disaster area with colleagues from the Vienna Professional Fire Department and other regional fire services as part of an international relief mission. We brought power generators from Austria and supported the

work of relief workers and fellow firefighters who had already been on site for a week. The people were deeply grateful, some even attached heartfelt thank-you notes to the generators.

Q: How have operations changed in recent years? Do you see an increase in extreme weather events such as floods, storms, or heatwaves?

It's scientifically proven that the climate has changed over the past decades. While storms and heavy rainfall occurred in the past, they weren't as unpredictable as they are today. For example, last year we had a short but intense downpour that severely flooded a small part of Vienna. Then came heavy rainfall and flooding, particularly in the western parts of the city, pushing the Vienna River to its capacity limit. Some homes were only accessible by boat.

Q: Operations like floods or wildfires often require cooperation between multiple emergency



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services. What does that cooperation look like in practice, and where do you see room for improvement? For cross-regional operations, coordination is mainly handled between the involved fire service associations. If necessary, coordination also includes the military, police, and rescue services. For instance, police helicopters assist in fighting wildfires and grass fires. Outside of actual emergencies, we regularly conduct joint training exercises. The insights gained confirm that we're on the right path. To continue developing, we're working to improve regional coordination and harmonize disaster relief units across the board.

Q: Many people associate the fire department with fires – but today's missions often look very different. What do people underestimate about your work? What don't they see? Last year, Austrian fire departments responded to almost 340,000 incidents – more than 46,000 of them in Vienna alone. While our work is visible during emergency

operations, much happens behind the scenes. What people don't see are the many hours spent on training and continued education. They don't see the planning and preparation, the equipment and materials that have to be ready and functioning in all scenarios. With daily life becoming increasingly technological, strategic planning is required to decide what kind of equipment to invest in for the future. People also tend to underestimate – especially in the volunteer sector – the enormous commitment of those who devote time and energy to the well-being of others, all without pay. I would also appeal to people's sense of responsibility. If someone feels capable, they could, for instance, remove a fallen branch on their own, freeing up emergency resources for more critical situations. Ideally, people could also educate themselves more on self-protection. The better prepared the public is for scenarios like floods or blackouts, the safer they can act and that, in turn, eases the burden on emergency services during major disasters.

Q: You and your colleagues enjoy high levels of public trust. What does that support mean to you – and what would you like to see from society and politics? That trust means a great deal to us. It shows that people appreciate our work – that's definitely the rewarding part of the job. But of course, there are also situations where people would rather take a dramatic photo or video than help out. Sometimes that even interferes with our work. This is a societal trend we need to pay more attention to moving forward.

Q: Do you ever feel like you're fighting windmills? Where do you see the limits of your operational strength? We fight fires – we don't fight windmills! Our system works very well, and we are well-prepared for the future. Of course, it's crucial to ensure we have enough motivated new recruits. We must never reach our limits – because that would mean we failed to plan properly.

Q: Amid all these challenges, what gives you hope? The solidarity within the fire service! I've never experienced such a strong sense of "we" anywhere else. And that applies from the smallest volunteer fire brigade to the largest professional department, all the way up to the Austrian Federal Fire Brigade Association.

SERVING FOR THE PLANET

Tennis star Dominic Thiem on green energy, sustainable role models, and his post-career mission: With Thiem Energy, he doesn't just want to supply electricity – he wants to shape the future.

► By Rosa Hauser



Q: What triggered your commitment to climate protection? Climate protection should be a given. Fortunately, I was raised with these values from a young age – especially thanks to my mother, who truly lives this lifestyle. We always had a large garden with a lot of animals. That kind of environment gives you a unique sense of life and naturally nurtures an interest in sustainability and environmental protection. I want to pass that awareness on, especially to people who weren't lucky enough to grow up that way.

Q: Why is it important for well-known personalities to advocate for environmental and climate protection? It's incredibly important for public

figures like athletes or artists to take a stand for environmental and climate issues. We have a wide-reaching platform and can bring meaningful topics like sustainability into public awareness – and we should actively use it. A great example was our visit to Udinese Calcio. The club runs its own photovoltaic system on the stadium, covering 70% of its energy needs and providing the surplus to its members – strengthening the bond with fans. A fantastic idea and a very cool flagship project. I hope initiatives like this continue to spread.

Q: With Thiem Energy, you've launched your own energy community. How did the idea come about, and what's your personal vision for the project? The idea for Thiem Energy came from a desire to create something meaningful beyond my tennis career. It's about supporting projects that benefit both society and the planet – those two go hand in hand. Our energy community is a strong first step: 100% clean energy and direct support for people who can save money through it. The goal is to expand Thiem Energy and allow as many people as possible to benefit. A dedicated energy management system and soon also a sustainable electricity tariff will make the whole thing even more efficient. Everything will be bundled into a user-friendly app to make sustainable energy supply simpler and more accessible.

Q: What message do you want to share with your young fans when it comes to climate and environmental protection? I want to help young people connect with environmental and sustainability topics – especially because they will live on this planet for many decades to come. It's about preserving the Earth as a livable place and showing how beautiful and valuable nature is. With Thiem Energy, it's important to me that energy and electricity become more tangible – and a little cooler – for the younger generation. I hope they'll engage with it more deeply and become part of a positive change.

When passionate rock meets real power, something special happens: the well-known band The BossHoss is taking a stand for climate protection with their new single "I'll Be Back" and they're getting high-profile support from none other than Arnold Schwarzenegger. ▶ By Daniel Böhm

THE BOSSHOSS AND ARNOLD: "I'LL BE BACK" FOR CLIMATE ACTION

THIS POWERFUL TRACK blends The BossHoss's signature country-rock sound with the unmistakable voice of the "Governator." Schwarzenegger personally delivers his iconic line "I'll be back" as a powerful promise for a better and healthier future. The message is clear: protecting our planet requires determination, persistence, and united action.

What makes this project special is that all proceeds from the song go directly to the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative and a selected climate protection project. So it's not just about raising awareness, it's about making a real difference. The Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative supports global solutions to fight the climate crisis, from sustainable energy and forest protection to innovations for the cities of tomorrow.

With this track, The BossHoss once again show that music can be much more than entertainment. They're making a bold statement: environmental and climate protection concerns us all. Together,

we can make an impact. "I'll Be Back" is not only a unique hit, it's also a call to take action.

The song is available now on all major platforms and offers a first taste of their upcoming album "Back to the Boots", set to be released this fall.

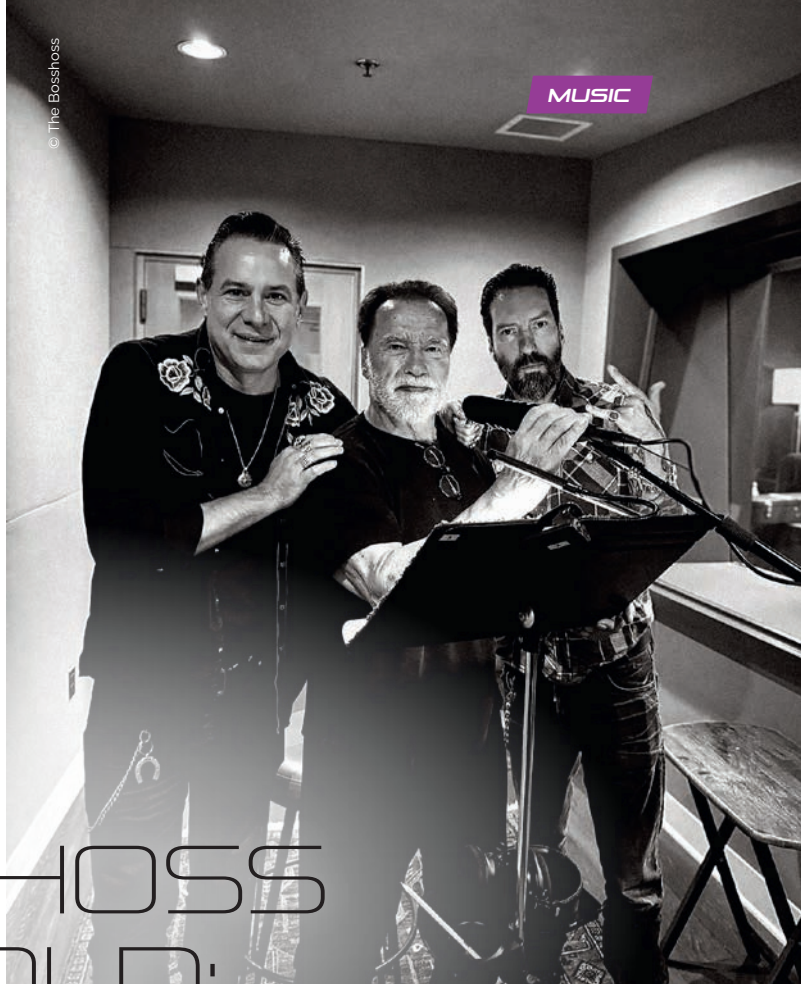
So turn it up, sing along and do something good while you're at it. "I'll Be Back" rocks for the planet!

INFOBOX

STREAM IT NOW!



Stream "I'll Be Back" now and support climate action with every play!



© The BossHoss

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AFFECTS US ALL –
AND UNITES MORE THAN IT DIVIDES.

Around 3/4 of people in
Austria and Germany consider
climate protection important
and see it as a **shared**
responsibility.

© Daniel Böhm

CLIMATE ACTION MOVES – AND UNITES

Climate change and environmental pollution remain among the most pressing challenges of our time for the vast majority of people in Austria and Germany. More than three-quarters of respondents consider tackling these issues to be very important – across all age groups, educational levels, and life situations.

► By Daniel Böhm

ONE PARTICULARLY STRIKING finding is that the differences between urban and rural areas are much smaller than often assumed. Awareness of the climate crisis is broadly shared – regardless of place of residence. “Our findings indicate that the climate crisis is perceived by the public as a societal challenge that, contrary to common stereotypes, serves as a unifying issue,” stated Christoph Hofinger, Managing Director of the FORESIGHT Institute and co-author of the study. While certain

INFOBOX

ABOUT THE STUDY

Commissioned by the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, the renowned Austrian FORESIGHT Institute conducted an online survey at the beginning of 2025, questioning 1,000 people in Austria and Germany about their attitudes toward climate change and environmental pollution.

environmental impacts are perceived differently depending on location (e.g., heat is seen more as an urban issue, wildfires more as a rural one), most consequences – such as flooding, drought, or species extinction – affect both urban and rural areas alike.

The study also revealed that empathy and solidarity are more than empty phrases. City dwellers worry about rural areas, and people in the countryside are concerned about urban heat islands. Older generations worry about the future of the young, while young people are mindful of the burdens carried by older generations. This mutual care shows how the climate crisis challenges us as a community – and how it can also unite us.

At the same time, the study confirms that people perceive the climate crisis as real and threatening. Around two-thirds of the population in Germany and Austria expect noticeable declines in their quality of life. Those considered most affected include people with health conditions, children, urban residents, and individuals with low income.

Despite this, efforts to fight environmental pollution and climate change are often seen as insufficient – especially on national and international levels. While local efforts (from municipalities and cities) are viewed more positively, around three-quarters of respondents believe that there is too little action globally. This shows us that local initiatives can inspire hope, but they cannot replace comprehensive, structural action on all levels.

Another key point is that people want more unity. Nearly 80% believe we should focus more on what unites us in the fight against climate change, not what divides us. An equally large share emphasizes the need to consider others' living conditions in climate protection efforts.

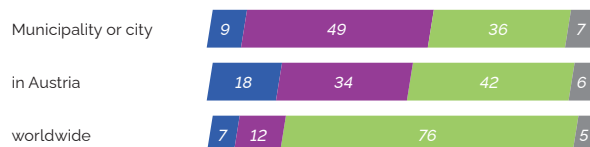
"The study impressively illustrates that climate action is not just a shared concern but a unifying element within our societies," said Monika Langthaler, Director of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative. "If we harness this solidarity, we can effectively act together. This is precisely why we have chosen 'UNITE IN ACTION – Terminate Pollution' as this year's motto for the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT."

Because only by acting together, thinking long-term, and seeing our differences not as obstacles but as strengths, can we create positive change. For a future where all generations can live in a healthy environment.

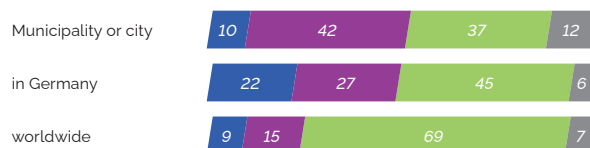
In your opinion, is too much or too little being done to combat climate change and environmental pollution, or is it just about right? What about ... climate change specifically?

Basis: all respondents (1,000 each from Austria and Germany), figures in %.

Austria:



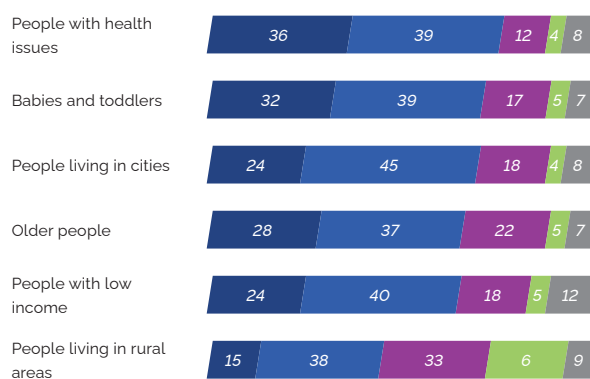
Germany:



■ Too much ■ Just right ■ Too little
■ Don't know / No answer

In your opinion, are the following groups of people very, fairly, slightly, or not at all affected by the impacts of climate change and environmental pollution?

Base: all respondents (1,000 each from Austria and Germany), figures in %.



■ Very affected ■ Fairly affected ■ Slightly affected
■ Not at all affected ■ Don't know / No answer

UNITE IN ACTION

We are living in challenging times. The world feels more divided and uncertain than it has in a long while. A war has been raging in Europe for three years now, the climate crisis is noticeably driving more extreme weather events, and political extremists are fueling insecurity. And yet, around the world, we also see courageous people shining through – volunteers, first responders, scientists, innovators – showing us that with determination, change is possible when we work together.

► By Daniel Böhm

THIS IS PRECISELY the spirit behind this year's motto of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT: "Unite in Action – Terminate Pollution." It's a conscious call to focus on what truly connects us. Arnold Schwarzenegger, founder of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, embodies this spirit. As Governor of California, he was the first to bring both Republicans and Democrats into his cabinet, promoted compromise, and proved that collaboration is stronger than division – a mindset he brought with him from Austria and one that is especially relevant in today's United States.

The AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT aims to do just that – bring people together from all walks of



life – from firefighters to startup founders and EU Commissioners – to find common ground, develop solutions, and take action. We can only overcome the major crises of our time by gathering our strengths and working together.

Instead of being discouraged by negative headlines, we must focus on what is already working – and keep building on it. Every step forward, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction.

There are already many success stories. The global energy transition is gaining momentum; renewable energies are becoming the backbone of our energy supply, innovative technologies are reducing emissions, and sustainable business models are setting new standards for the economy. At the same time, we see initiatives and individuals making a real difference – through climate-conscious consumer choices, protest movements, or the willingness to take local responsibility.

As Arnold Schwarzenegger himself puts it: "I think people should stop worrying about what the U.S. President thinks. Cut the complaining and get to work." The climate crisis will not be solved through despair or endless debate. What we need now is action, determination, and the courage to turn frustration into positive energy.

Every bit of progress matters. Let's stay united, be bold, and work together to secure our future.

Let's get to work!

THE ULTIMATE WORKOUT FOR THE PLANET



The idea behind #PumpForThePlanet is simple: Move your body – move the world. A healthy body and a healthy planet go hand in hand. And the coach behind it all? None other than Arnold Schwarzenegger himself. A man who built his success through hard work – step by step, rep by rep. Arnold knows discipline.

► By Melanie Guadalupe

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER knows what it means to stay committed. He understands that true change starts with collective action, because progress happens when people unite, not when one person takes the stage alone.

At its core, Pump for the Planet is more than just a challenge – it is about building lasting habits and a global community. Over the course of seven weeks, we introduce a new theme with simple, actionable sustainable practices, or “workouts”. The challenge is cumulative, so that the routines built turn into habits that last.

To kick things off, we here at the SCI set ourselves a goal: running the Vienna City Marathon Relay – as a team. We’re not professional athletes, but we wanted to make a point. If we can do it, anyone can. No matter where you start – every step counts. For your body, for the Earth.

Small lifestyle changes – like cycling or taking public transport to work, collecting trash in your community, or switching to a reusable water

bottle – are all real, active contributions to environmental protection. Integrating sustainability into everyday life is often easier than you think. Through the #PumpForThePlanet challenge and the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative’s Instagram account, we aim to inspire many to take visible action – against pollution and for the protection of our natural resources.

Plenty of familiar faces have already joined in: Giovanni Zarrella, The BossHoss, actors Valerie Huber and Barbara Meier, “Bergdoktor” Hans Sigl, “Gladiator” Ralf Moeller, and ski legend Elisabeth Görgl. We’re also working with local initiatives like Bicibus – a “bike bus” for kids – and sustainability projects like Planet Matters, Green Heroes and Die Tafel Österreich.

Because that’s what Pump for the Planet is really about: building a community. One that’s active, aware, and ready to take action. Every squat, every ride, every small decision matters. Because protecting the environment isn’t a sprint. It’s a marathon.

**Let's stay at it. Let's stay active.
Pump for the Planet.
Together, we're stronger.**



Join us on
Social Media:
**Schwarzenegger
Climate**



CLIMATE HEROES

“I think people should stop worrying about what the U.S. president thinks, cut the complaining, and get to work,” said Arnold Schwarzenegger, founder of the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT, summing it up perfectly just recently. The climate crisis won’t be solved by resignation or endless debate. What we need now is action – and the courage to turn frustration into positive energy. These young climate action heroes show us what is possible when we unite. This year, they give us a glimpse into their work. ▶ By Daniel Böhm



© Planet Matters

TURNING CLICKS INTO CLEANUPS

FELIX KRAINER is the founder of Planet Matters, a global cleanup movement that has gained over 3 million followers on TikTok. With creative videos, he inspires young people around the world to take action – under the motto: *environmental protection begins on your doorstep*. The accompanying Planet Matters App rewards every liter of trash collected with “Planet Coins” – a digital currency that can be exchanged for discounts and vouchers. Today, people in over 30 countries are collecting trash through the app, proving that cleaning up is not only meaningful, but also rewarding.



© SLab

PACKAGING THE FUTURE – SUSTAINABLY

JULIA BIALETSKA is the CEO and co-founder of S.Lab, a company developing sustainable packaging from natural materials as an alternative to Styrofoam. With a background in biotechnology and more than ten years of experience in product development, she bridges science, business, and innovation. In 2024, she received the European Prize for Women Innovators, and is one of the few winners of the Women TechEU program. Alongside her work for the environment, Julia is also a strong advocate for gender equality in the tech and startup world – working toward a future that is not only sustainable, but inclusive.



© Aqon Pur / Wilk

SOFT WATER, STRONG VISION

MAXIMILIAN WILK is co-founder and CEO of AQON PURE, a salt-free water softening system. The environmentally friendly solution connects easily to household water lines and effectively combats limescale buildup. The idea came to him during his master's thesis in Silicon Valley, when he came across a law passed by Arnold Schwarzenegger banning salt-based softening systems. Back in Germany, he founded AQON PURE in 2017 together with his brother Konstantin. Today, the company is one of Europe's fastest-growing water treatment firms (FT1000) and a finalist for the German Sustainability Award 2025.



© Mol-e

FROM SOUL TO SOIL: REGENERATING LAND AND LIVES

SAARA HANGO, from Namibia with family roots in Angola, is a climate activist, founder, and future educator. After completing her degree in Entrepreneurial Studies at the University of Johannesburg, she is now studying education science. As an EcoChampion of SOS-Kinderdörfer Weltweit, she passionately advocates for climate protection – especially for women and children in her region, who are among the most affected by its consequences. Through her initiative to restore degraded soils via sustainable farming methods like crop rotation and agroforestry, she promotes regeneration over exploitation. Her goal is to improve soil fertility, biodiversity, and water retention – and in doing so, strengthen food security for future generations.



© Saara Hango

FROM TRASH TO TREASURE

MÜGE BALTACI, an environmental engineer from Istanbul, is the founder of Mol-e, an innovative platform for e-waste recycling. Her goal is to treat electronic waste not as garbage, but as a resource. Mol-e connects businesses and individuals looking to dispose of their old devices in an environmentally friendly way – simply, efficiently, digitally, and supported by artificial intelligence. The platform rewards sustainable behavior and promotes a truly circular economy. For Müge, one thing is clear: "We are a community of e-waste heroes – every right decision matters."

THE HIDDEN POWER BENEATH OUR FEET

Picture our planet – vast, diverse, seemingly endless. Now zoom in on just a fraction of it: around ten percent. That's all the fertile land we have – the part that feeds the world.

► By Natascha Unger

WE OFTEN OVERLOOK the ground beneath our feet, yet it is the foundation of all life. Soil is not “dirt” – it is a living ecosystem. It stores carbon, filters water, and provides 95% of our food. But this very foundation is under threat. Erosion, overuse, and the steady sealing of land are robbing us of fertile soil every day. UNESCO warns that by 2050, up to 90% of the Earth's land surface could be

degraded – with dramatic consequences for biodiversity, food security, and life on this planet.

“The protection of soil is a key prerequisite for sustainable development, climate adaptation, and long-term supply security. Healthy soils contribute significantly to water retention, CO₂ storage, and biodiversity. A responsible approach to this finite



SOIL IS NOT JUST DIRT – IT'S OUR MOST
PRECIOUS RESOURCE



HANSI HINTERSEER, AUSTRIAN SINGER AND EX-SKI RACER, JOINS THE CALL FOR SOIL PROTECTION.

resource is essential to balance ecological, economic, and social interests," said Austrian Federal Minister Norbert Totschnig.

Kurt Weinberger, CEO of Österreichische Hagelversicherung, adds: "Economic growth must not come at the expense of nature. What Austria needs now is a smart economy that integrates nature, the environment, and soil into economic thinking."

Soil protection concerns us all – but here's the good news: things are starting to move. Internationally, and here in Austria, more and more companies, policymakers, organizations, and grassroots initiatives are working to protect and regenerate our soils.

A SHOWCASE OF HOW IT CAN WORK: SUN MINIMEAL

An example of how soil protection and future nutrition can go hand in hand is SUN Minimeal, founded by Wolfgang Grabher. Over ten years ago, during a trip to Antarctica, he had the idea to develop compact, plant-based meals that provide all essential nutrients – without artificial additives. The ingredients come from European black earth soils, and their cultivation uses fewer resources than conventional food production.

With his #RaceForSoil campaign, Grabher wants to raise awareness for fertile soil: the more people

support the initiative and buy the products, the more attention is drawn to the value of healthy, productive land. Those who support the project on a regular basis help preserve valuable farmland. "Eating SUN-Minimeal can save up to one square meter of fertile farmland per 100 kcal consumed – providing healthy nutrition and protecting precious soil at the same time," says Grabher.

PROTEIN FROM THE REGION – INSTEAD OF RAINFOREST ON YOUR PLATE

Soy is found in many of our foods today – from tofu to protein bars. But most of the world's soy is used as animal feed and comes from South America, where rainforests are often cleared for cultivation. The organization Donau Soja promotes GMO-free soy grown in Europe – especially along the Danube, including in Austria. This shortens transport routes, cuts CO₂ emissions, and helps protect ecosystems like the Amazon.

Regional cultivation also ensures fair conditions for farmers and strengthens Europe's independence from imported animal feed. Donau Soja shows that regional agriculture and global climate protection can go hand in hand – and that protein doesn't need to travel halfway around the world to end up in animal troughs or on our plates.

INTERNATIONAL SOIL PROTECTION: A GLOBAL EXAMPLE

A remarkable example of international soil protection is the "Great Green Wall" in Africa. This initiative aims to grow a wall of trees across the Sahel to stop desertification and restore soil health. These efforts support biodiversity and create millions of jobs for people in the region. The Great Green Wall demonstrates the power of nature to regenerate – when we respect and actively protect the soil.

As we can see, it is possible to protect soil, operate sustainably, and fight climate change at the same time. The responsibility lies with all of us – because soil is our foundation.



NO ECO-FAIRYTALE: THIS IS ABOUT NUMBERS & FACTS

Who says environmental protection and success are mutually exclusive? In a time of urgent climate challenges, pioneers in industry and business are proving that ecological responsibility and economic success can go hand in hand – and lead to forward-looking innovation.

► By Isabelle Kober

“LESS IS MORE” – a motto you wouldn’t necessarily associate with corporate success. But Holcim, one of the world’s largest cement producers, sees it as a recipe for success, as Haimo Primas, CEO of Holcim Austria, explains: “Land and resources are limited. That’s why we need to learn how to ‘build better with less’ – with lower land use, improved energy efficiency, and reduced raw material consumption.”

HOLCIM: BIG LEVERAGE FOR BIG IMPACT

Holcim knows what it’s talking about – the company committed early on to meeting the Paris climate goals and demonstrates that even a high-emission business can have significant leverage and serve as a role model. “We aim to

produce net-zero cement and concrete at scale within this decade," Primas announces.

To do this, Holcim is decarbonizing its production. In Austria alone, the company moves around one million tons of material annually as substitute raw or fuel materials for cement production. Across the entire value chain, Holcim is focused on both CO₂ reduction and carbon storage.

How "building better with less" works in practice can be seen in Vienna, for example. In the renovated School Reininghaus Graz and the refurbished Wien Museum, resources were saved, circular materials were used, and thermal component activation was implemented for heating and cooling. "Thanks to our many years of experience in the circular economy, Austria is now a global leader," Primas confidently states.

REFURBED: A SECOND LIFE FOR SMARTPHONES

Peter Windischhofer, Kilian Kaminski, and Jürgen Riedl recognized the value in seemingly worthless devices and founded refurbed in Vienna seven years ago. The company specializes in renewing and reselling used electronic devices. This business model conserves valuable resources, reduces electronic waste, and gives smartphones, laptops, and tablets a second life. Compared to the production of new devices, this can save up to 70% CO₂e. The three founders show that sustainability and economic success can also go hand



REFURBED INSTEAD OF ELECTRONIC WASTE: USED DEVICES GET A NEW LEASE OF LIFE.



in hand in the fast-moving electronics industry – having just cracked two billion euros in external sales across eleven countries, they've proven that circular economy can be both ecologically smart and economically viable.

GUGLER: WASTE-FREE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The printing company Gugler DruckSinn is also setting standards in sustainability. The Lower Austrian business, with around 70 employees, has just achieved Cradle to Cradle Certified® GOLD status – not only a sign that "top quality can be combined with the world's strictest environmental standards," as Managing Director Daniel Fürstberger emphasizes. It also demonstrates that "with our team and our suppliers, we are setting a benchmark in the printing industry."

The certification marks a major milestone: Fürstberger, seeing circular processes and climate protection as a promising future strategy, decided to acquire the assets of the predecessor printing company. He is investing in Gugler DruckSinn because the market for sustainable print products is one of the few that still promises growth.

The company is fully committed to production without harmful substances or waste. "Will we save the world this way? No, but our print products are part of a future-proof solution," Fürstberger says with conviction.

WHERE CLIMATE ACTION **TAKES ROOTS**

The AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT Solutions Hub:
A place for ideas, connections
and real solutions ▶ By Julia Eckner

JUST UNDER AN HOUR from Vienna, in the Weinviertel region of Lower Austria, lies a special place: the AWS Solutions Hub, opened by Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2023. It's a unique combination of event venue, think tank, and a living showcase of sustainability. Once a year, the AUSTRIAN WORLD SUMMIT invites a wide range of guests to the Hofburg in Vienna. But throughout the rest of the year, the team of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative works consistently to fulfill its mission: implementing solutions for a healthy planet and actively connecting people.

Therefore, the Solutions Hub was established, a space inaugurated by Arnold Schwarzenegger himself. Sustainability isn't just a talking point here, it's embedded in every detail: reclaimed attic floorboards turned into a large roundtable for dialogue and collaboration, while second-hand furniture in the fireside room invites visitors to relax, every piece is telling its own story. The Solutions Hub brings people together: international climate pio-

neers, regional changemakers, and engaged citizens. Seminars, educational programs, and events demonstrate how global challenges can inspire practical, local solutions, with a positive impact that extends far beyond the region.

FIRST PROJECTS REALIZED

Renewable Energy – Locally Produced, Shared, and Independent – In 2024, the focus turned to renewable energy sources. In collaboration with Raiffeisen Holding, a modern energy system was installed: 297 photovoltaic panels now supply electricity for 40 households across the region. A smart battery storage unit ensures a reliable supply, even on cloudy days. The launch of a renewable energy cooperative marked another step toward energy independence. With around 100 regional trading partners already on board, the initiative strengthens local energy security, ensures fair pricing, and shows how collective effort can quickly deliver real change. *Learn more: meine-eeg.auri.at/registration*

Boosting Biodiversity, Safeguarding Habitats, and Strengthening Climate Resilience – A unique project in Austria, the Wild Solutions Park, showcases how practical biodiversity conservation and habitat protection can succeed. In close cooperation with the Leiserberge Nature Park, protected zones are being developed to enhance ecological diversity.

The Regional "Klimastammtisch" – Driving Change Together – A passion project for Monika Langthaler, Director of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, is the regional climate roundtable – known as the Klimastammtisch at the Solutions Hub. It has quickly become a meeting place for engaged citizens, local businesses, and organizations. "The roundtable is a platform for sharing ideas, building partnerships, and launching projects," Langthaler explains. "Our aim is to foster a vibrant community that shapes a sustainable future for Lower Austria and hopefully inspires many more."

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WILD ARCHITECTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Natural habitats are vanishing – also in Austria – due to soil sealing, deforestation, climate change, and invasive species. But can biodiversity be saved? And how could it work?

► By Julia Eckner

IN THE GENTLY ROLLING HILLS of the Leiserberge Nature Park, right next to Asparn an der Zaya, the Wild Solutions Park is taking shape, an extraordinary model project where conservation, climate action, and regional revitalization come together. It's more than a nature reserve, it's a dynamic landscape of opportunity for species, climate, and local development. A place where animals shape the land, ecosystems flourish, and climate protection becomes visible.

Wild horses and robust cattle breeds are reclaiming the terrain. Through their natural behaviors, they are creating diverse habitats ranging from open dry grasslands to wet lowlands, forming safe havens for species long driven out elsewhere. And the vision goes further: European bison, water buffalo, and other species that once roamed Central Europe could soon return to these lands. The Wild Solutions Park offers space for a careful rewilding. "This project brings more biodiversity to the landscape and new opportunities for the region, especially in agriculture," says Monika Langthaler. "It proves that conservation can be innovative, bold, and practical. And we want to do an even better job explaining why biodiversity is essential for human survival."

CLIMATE PROTECTION ON FOUR LEGS

The grazing animals do more than create habitats – they help suppress invasive species like black

locust and tree of heaven, which threaten native biodiversity. At the same time, their grazing promotes the formation of humus, a natural CO₂ sink that actively supports climate regulation. A Win-Win for nature and agriculture.

Species-rich meadows improve soil health, attract pollinators like wild bees, and support ecological balance. It's a living example of symbiosis between humans, animals, and nature. In addition, better water retention in the soil helps protect local communities against flooding.

The Wild Solutions Park is not only a model project, it's a place to explore, learn, and participate. Schools, universities, companies, and curious visitors are invited to see for themselves how sustainable land use can work. Research, education, and personal engagement go hand in hand here.

Currently, the project covers around 85 hectares, including 20 hectares next to the AWS Solutions Hub. But this is just the beginning. More land is already planned. The long-term vision: a landscape where nature, climate, and regional development no longer stand in conflict, but strengthen one another.

"We're thrilled that just one year after our renewable energy project, we've already launched our second flagship project here at the AWS Solutions Hub with our partners," says Monika Langthaler. "Our environmental Hub is designed to inspire many regions and people to follow our lead – real, local climate action that works."





Zukunft statt Klimakrise

Die Weltmeere heizen sich auf wie nie zuvor – mit verheerenden Folgen: Wirbelstürme und Taifune wüten heute mit einer zerstörerischen Kraft, die früher einmal pro Jahrhundert auftrat. Jetzt sind sie bittere Realität – Jahr für Jahr. Auch Österreich wurde nicht verschont: Die Jahrhundertflut im vergangenen Herbst hinterließ Milliarden Schäden und tiefe Narben im kollektiven Gedächtnis. Und der nächste Schlag steht bevor – mit Hitzewellen, wie wir sie noch nie erlebt haben. Dürre, vertrocknete Felder, Ernteaufschläge – der Klimawandel zeigt keine Gnade.

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