

# Goodbye oil, hello renewables!

## How Upper Austria is eliminating oil heating

Upper Austria is a leading region for the energy transition and climate protection. Energy efficiency and renewables have long been a top priority and significant progress has already been made. Greenhouse gas emissions in the buildings sector were reduced by 32 % in the past 10 years and more than 60 % of all space heating already comes from renewables.

Only 18 % of dwellings are still heated with oil. Although this might not sound like much, these oil heating systems – around 110,000 – are responsible for a staggering 45 % of the remaining building CO<sub>2</sub>! Similar oil heating percentages can be seen in many parts of Europe. With a choice of affordable and highly efficient renewable options available (heat pumps, automatic biomass boilers, district heating from renewables, solar), moving away from oil heating is the next logical step. This is being achieved through a range of dedicated measures. By 2035, there will be no more oil heating in Upper Austria!



### Upper Austria's actions for eliminating oil heating

- **Attractive financial incentives:** a regional subsidy of up to 3,900 Euro for the replacement of a fossil-fuel heating system, periodically supplemented with national funding
- **A clear policy framework for banning oil heating:**
  - since 2019, no oil heating in new buildings
  - no replacement of broken boilers as of 2021
  - all boilers over 25 years-old must be replaced as of 2025
  - no more oil heating by 2035!
- **Stringent emissions and efficiency requirements** for new heating systems as criteria in the funding programmes
- **Free on-site energy advice** for homeowners by the ESV to guide investment decisions
- **"AdieuÖl" information campaign** (Goodbye oil)

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### Sticks, carrots and tambourines for the energy transition

Well-established policy structures to tackle the energy transition are already in place. The region's multi-faceted approach is based on a combination of regulatory measures ("sticks"), financial incentives ("carrots") and information and training activities ("tambourines"). In addition to banning oil heating in new buildings – brought into force in Upper Austria in 2019 – and attractive financial incentives to replace oil heating, further measures are needed to speed up the replacement of oil heating.

In 2019, the OÖ Energiesparverband (ESV), the regional energy agency, developed and launched "AdieuÖl", a large-scale information and stakeholder campaign supported by the Regional Minister of Energy.

### Knowing your target group

The ESV carried out a market analysis to identify and better understand the target group. Among others, it revealed that communication would need to focus on other elements than climate protection and energy cost savings, which had not motivated these oil-heaters so far. Efforts were put into finding arguments and a language they could relate to.



## Key message: it's as easy as 1-2-3

It's simply time to say goodbye to oil heating. This is the core message of the campaign. Emphasis is put on using friendly language without criticism or reproach. Communication revolves around 3 main arguments:

1. **Oil heating is not modern anymore, it is dying out:** ever fewer people heat with oil and soon it will be completely banned; old oil systems need increasing amounts of repairs; no more oil smell in your home
2. **Switching is simpler than you think:** you can choose from a range of systems; free tailored energy advice by the ESV is available; the switch requires just a few easy steps
3. **The investment pays off:** for you (lower energy costs); for the economy (less energy imports); for the environment (oil harms the climate)

The refurbishment of a heating system is not a small investment. This is a significant barrier, especially for low-income families. However, this simply stresses even more the need to act. It is crucial to reach socially vulnerable oil heaters now since subsidies cannot be given once legislation banning oil heating is in place.

## AdieuÖl – an elaborate stakeholder campaign

In 2019, the ESV launched a large-scale information and public awareness campaign supported by the Regional Minister of Energy. Its strategy is to activate stakeholder groups that can identify oil heaters and directly contact them. The campaign reaches out to people in their social environment and uses the power of civil society and community.

Municipalities – key partners for their ability to directly interact with oil-heating homeowners – were invited to become "AdieuÖl municipalities" (already 44 have joined!). By participating, these municipalities can increase their own visibility as leaders in the energy transition. They receive ready-to-use material and support the campaign through targeted reach-out to oil heaters (i.e. by contacting and motivating them, organising info talks and events etc.)

Many installers and equipment manufacturers have also joined the campaign through actions such as offering "AdieuÖl" rebates, contacting existing clients with oil heating, communicating via their own channels, and organising activities with local communities and schools. Last but not least, schools, associations and clubs (i.e. Fridays for Future, voluntary fire brigades, scouts, church groups) got involved with a wide range of activities, action days, social media etc.

In addition, the ESV led several campaign actions such as a big AdieuÖl competition with several thousand Euro in prize money, information stands at energy and building tradeshow, weekly AdieuÖl-News, TV advertisements, a website, information folders, and communication through the agency's own channels.

Upper Austria and the ESV are giving a clear sign of their commitment to leaving oil behind – and it is working! More than 7,000 old oil boilers were replaced in 2019 and 2020 alone. The time has come to say "Adieu" to oil!



### Facts and figures

#### Upper Austria's achievements in eliminating oil heating

- 60 % of the space heating comes from renewable energy/district heating
- 32 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector in the last 10 years
- Decrease in the consumption of heating oil from 300 to around 200 million litres in the last 12 years
- More than 7,000 old oil boilers replaced in 2019 and 2020 alone

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