

Trip to the ESA headquarters in Frascati

## Students from BG/BRG Wels win ESA competition

The winners of the European Space Agency's (ESA) "Climate Detectives" competition were honored yesterday, April 7, at the Ars Electronica Center. Students in Austria were invited to identify a local environmental or climate problem, collect data and develop practical solutions over the course of a school year. Seven dedicated teams from Leibnitz, Leoben and Wels submitted their projects in March 2025. An expert jury – consisting of representatives from the province of Upper Austria, the Upper Austrian Climate Alliance and the FFG – selected the winners.

The four-member team *Planet Protectors* from the BG/BRG Wels won the first prize with a research project on the Traunauen in Wels. From May 12 to 13, the team will travel to the European Earth Observation Center in Frascati/Rome, where all European winners of the competition will meet and get to know the research facility together.

### Planet Protectors score with accuracy

This year's winners, Mauia Mahou Zada, Esra Asar, Siria Neumüller and Hadise Zulajeva, studied the alluvial forests of Wels and asked how they had changed in recent years.

To get to the bottom of the developments, real ESA satellite images and data from the European Earth observation program Copernicus were compared and analyzed for the period 2017-2024. The team was supported by Thomas Geist, an expert in earth observation (FFG). The result: construction, soil sealing and climate change are causing a measurable increase in the city's flood risk. The jury specifically praised the team's competent handling of scientific data and its well thought-out approach to renaturation and awareness raising.

## Placements for Wels and Leibnitz

Second place went to the *Gummistiefel-Gang*, also from BG/BRG Wels, who looked at the development of precipitation over time in the Welser Heide and the consequences for agricultural yield. Third place went to the team *Space Guys* from the HTBLA Kaindorf an der Sulm, which focused on urban planning and environmental protection in the district of Leibnitz. They each receive trips to GeoSphere Austria and Space Research Institute (ÖAW) in Graz.

## About ESERO Austria

On behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA), ESERO (European Space Education Resource Office) supports teachers in using the fascination of space to inspire young people for STEM subjects. Since 2016, ESERO Austria has been active at the Ars Electronica Center Linz on behalf of ESA and the FFG/bmk. In addition to competitions for students and teaching materials, ESERO also offers in-service training for teachers.

## About Climate Detectives

As Climate Detectives, students investigate a local climate problem and exchange ideas with ESA experts, take their own measurements and work with real ESA satellite data. They are supported by the Climate Alliance of Upper Austria (Klimabündnis), a cooperation partner of the program.