

Press release

EuroSkills 2020: the Aufsteirern Folk Festival marks the start of the final countdown

One year to go: the countdown to EuroSkills 2020, the European vocational championships for young skilled workers in Graz, has started. The official kick-off took place on Sunday, 15 September at the Aufsteirern Folk Festival 2019. A lively stage show featuring performances by the band Alpin Drums and interviews with EuroSkills 2020 Supervisory Board Chairman Josef Herk, WorldSkills Europe President Dita Traidas and our two heroes, Fabian Gwiggner und Birgit Haberschrack, set the scene for the final year of preparations and the countdown to the event.

Graz, 16 September 2019. What do the Aufsteirern event and EuroSkills 2020 have in common? Next year, these two major events will be rocking Graz over the same weekend. That's why the official countdown to the European vocational skills championships in September 2020 was triggered last weekend on the main stage of the Aufsteirern Folk Festival 2019. The show opened with the band Alpin Drums, which gave an electrifying performance on the theme of crafts and trades before WorldSkills Europe president Dita Traidas – wearing a traditional Latvian costume – introduced the EuroSkills 2020 organisation team. “I'm always very impressed by the hospitality, which is a very important part for each country realising a EuroSkills event – and the Austrian hospitality is really unique. The more I get to know the Austrians, the more I like them, also because of their passion they show for EuroSkills and WorldSkills events,” said Traidas, thrilled with the atmosphere.

EuroSkills 2020 Supervisory Board Chairman Josef Herk presented his project – which has been close to his heart for many years – to the audience, and reminded them once again of the event, which will take place from 16 to 20 September 2020, with a stirring speech: “It is a great honour to host this competition next year in Graz – for Austria and for our dual education system. This event's unique message is as important as ever: that anyone who pursues their career with passion and commitment can become a true hero. It is these young, skilled workers, with their dedication and commitment, who will become more and more significant for our economy in the future,” said Herk. The two heroes present on stage, Birgit Haberschrack (European Floristry Champion 2014) and Fabian Gwiggner (European Graphic Design Champion 2016), could only agree: “Taking part in the EuroSkills competition helped us find out what we're made of and what we're all capable of accomplishing under really exceptional circumstances. What's more, there's nothing quite like the atmosphere at the event. You just need to experience EuroSkills for yourself once in your life to understand how much emotion, excitement and talent goes into it. Come to Graz next year and see for yourselves!”

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For the entire EuroSkills 2020 organisation team, the kick-off also marked the start of the busiest phase of the preparations – because there are some major milestones to be met together as a team before September 2020. The two managing directors of EuroSkills 2020 GmbH, Angelika Ledineg and Harald del Negro, explain: “The excitement will already have reached a peak by the spring, because that’s when delegates and experts from all 30 member countries will be arriving in Graz for the big Competition Preparation Meeting and to gain their first impressions of the competition venue and the City of Graz. Our entire team will be doing all they can to make the event in September 2020 unforgettable. For us, it is important not only to stage the European vocational skills championships, but also to organise projects such as Try-a-Skill. This will enable us to make our young people aware of the great prospects offered by a vocational education and training, and to stage Austria’s largest careers information exhibition right there in the competition arena. We have also planned a varied conference programme focussing on topics such as “Future of Skills”, to be held at the same time as the competitions.”

By September 2020, the legendary skills “bug” will have gone viral all over Graz, throughout Austria, and spread to the rest of Europe, and the Messe Congress Graz conference centre will experience a unique event revolving around skills and trades, education and training.

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Information about EuroSkills 2020



What will happen at EuroSkills 2020?

Over the course of three days, the competitors will demonstrate their skills and knowledge in working scenarios related to their professional domains. Experts will prepare assignments and then evaluate the results. Visitors will have the opportunity to observe the competitors at work, find out about the various occupations and the competitors' companies, and even have a go themselves at Try-a-Skill stations for the different skills and trades. A programme of fascinating seminars, conferences and other side events will be held in addition. On the final day, all assignments will be evaluated and the winners of the individual professional fields, as well as the overall European champion, "Best of Europe", will be announced during the awards ceremony.

A win-win for Europe

EuroSkills 2020 – Austria's contribution to recognising the value of youth, education and training throughout Europe.

The dual educational system operates in only a few European countries – and particularly in the German-speaking ones (Germany, Switzerland, Italy/South Tyrol, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg). Slovenia and Hungary are in the process of adopting our system. That's why the international competition is always an exciting duel between young people who have followed a primarily academic education on the one hand, and those who have benefited from the dual system on the other.

International comparison of youth unemployment rates (15 – 24 years) offers proof that the Austrian model is successful. The experience gained is shared readily with other member countries, through study trips, conferences, workshops and seminars on subjects such as "Dual education/training", "Skills of the future", "Impacts of trends on industries", "Industry 4.0", "The treasure of youth", etc. Visits to Austrian flagship companies are also on the agenda.

A win-win for Austria

EuroSkills Graz 2020 will be a meeting point for national and international companies and for decision-makers from business, politics and education. It will provide politicians, executive board members, managing directors, experts, conference participants, sponsors and supervisors with the opportunity to meet and exchange information.

EuroSkills is Europe's largest talent market. Besides over 600 competitors, 1,000 specialists from 30 member countries and regions and thousands of visitors will attend the vocational skills championships – thus creating a unique environment for companies and educational institutions.

A great many of the international visitors to the event will also take the opportunity to spend time in Austria as tourists. The event therefore fits perfectly with the Austrian national tourist board's strategy.

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A win-win for companies

Companies will benefit enormously from motivating their skilled workers to achieve peak performance so that they can represent Austria at the competitions in Graz.

They can capitalise on the positive image of this type of event, with proven benefits in the form of increased sales experienced by employers of World or European champions (at least in the short term). The access to a valuable national and international network that such an event provides also opens up very attractive sponsorship opportunities for companies. Austrian companies will have the unique opportunity to present themselves to a Europe-wide audience and showcase their products and services to a professional public.

A win-win for each and every competitor

Young people benefit enormously from the extensive training they undertake in preparation for the competitions. The quality of their education and training is enhanced, the intensive preparations in the run-up to the competitions builds character, and the young people benefit from a unique lifetime experience. For a champion at European level, unique career opportunities open up automatically after this unique experience. And, best of all: the heroes pass on this experience to younger people, and motivate them in turn!

A win-win for visitors

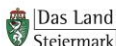
All visitors will have the opportunity to experience various skills and trades at close hand at the venue, and to gain an impression of what it's like to practise a given occupation on a daily basis. What's more, there will be a large number of Try-a-Skill Stations set up directly in the event arena. These will be aimed mainly at young people and are designed to help them discover their own talents and support them with their career choices. It is also worth mentioning the international character of this unique competition event, as a great many competitors, experts, delegations and visitors from all over Europe will be in Graz at this time.

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Short facts about EuroSkills 2020

When/where: 16th – 20th September 2020 at the Messe Congress exhibition centre Graz

Programme

Opening Ceremony

- 16 September 2020
- Estimated starting time: 7:00 pm
- Duration: approx. 2 hours
- Ice arena

Skills Congress

- 17.-19.09.2020
- "Future of Skills"
- Messe Congress Graz

European Day

- 17.09.2020
- European and Austrian trade events
- International conference: "Future of Skills"
- Public conference, fee-based; ticket sales

National & Sponsor Day

- 18.09.2020
- National and regional trade events
- Public and closed events and presentations (depending on the host/event partner)

Public Day

- 19.09.2020
- Events with a focus on private individuals (families, parents, young people), educators and other people involved in education and training
- Public events and presentations

Closing Ceremony

- 20.09.2020
- Estimated starting time: 7:00 pm
- Duration: ca. 2.5 hours
- Stadthalle Graz (civic centre)

Objectives

- To throw the spotlight on highly trained and skilled workforces
- To provide an international showcase for companies
- To allow comparison of education systems

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Facts:

- Approx. 650 Competitors
- 30 member countries
- 43 skills from the industrial, craft and service sectors + 8 presentation skills
- Approx. 1,000 coaches
- Several tens of thousands of visitors

Six vocational categories:

- Construction and Building Technology
- Manufacturing and Engineering Technology
- Information and Communication Technology
- Creative Arts and Fashion
- Social and Personal Services
- Transportation and Logistics

More information:

Angelika Ledineg
Managing Director

EuroSkills 2020 GmbH
Körblergasse 111 – 113
A-8010 GRAZ
T +43/316/601-660
Mobile +43/664 81 79 387
angelika.ledineg@euroskills2020.at
www.euroskills2020.at

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