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The Climate Walk – Walking for Change in the World

What does it take to change the world? An open mind, great conviction. And good shoes.

A group of young people are setting out to raise awareness about the impact of climate change in Europe. Their Climate Walk will take them from Norway's North Cape through 16 countries to the coast of Portugal. 12,000 kilometers on foot, for a year and a half.

The *Climate Walk* is an educational project, research and art all in one. To draw attention to the consequences of climate change in Europe, the group of young social scientists will walk all the way across Europe, collecting people's experiences and impressions of the changing climate along the way. What the *Climate Walk* team has in mind seems like the epitome of field research: simply setting off, with eyes, ears and mind wide open. Approaching people, asking questions, listening. Absorbing the landscape with all senses. Walking as a contrast to the fast pace of life. The *Climate Walk* is about deceleration. Because an hour spent walking feels very different from an hour spent in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, says Martina Perzl, who is currently doing her master's degree in social ecology and is part of the *Climate Walk's* core team.

Along the way, the young walkers also want to educate people about the consequences of the climate crisis in public workshops and lectures. They will document their entire journey, and are also planning to write a walking guide. The *wanderers of changing worlds*, as they call themselves, have set their sights high.

At the moment, however, the coronavirus pandemic means standstill for them, too. If everything had went as planned, the *Climate Walk* would start soon. However, due to the still ongoing pandemic, they now have to wait a year for the very first step high up in the north of Norway. The start of the walk for the climate is scheduled for summer 2022.

Climate crisis is not elsewhere

Walking for the climate – but why through Europe of all places? Water shortages and famine in Africa, floods in Southeast Asia, melting permafrost in the tundra: the climate crisis always seems to happen elsewhere. Wrong, says the *Climate Walk* team. They are walking through Europe, rather than Africa, for a reason.

“Poorer countries are particularly affected by weather extremes and natural disasters. Since it's easy to say the climate crisis is elsewhere,” says Martina Perzl, “But we must not forget. The industrialized countries are dependent on those countries. Problems there also have a direct impact on our lives.”

But the direct effects of the climate crisis are also being felt in Europe. “Resources, such as water, will also become scarce in Europe. And when that happens, we won’t be able to live and consume the way we do at the moment anymore,” Martina Perzl emphasizes.

“Our lives are going to change. Either the hard way, when it’s already too late. Or now – in an orderly, sustainable and thoughtful way.”

Martina Perzl

Go, Austria!

The *wanderers of changing worlds* certainly won’t sit around idly for a year because of the pandemic. They will be walking for the climate this summer. Not through Europe though, but through Austria. As kind of a rehearsal, the *Climate Walk – Geh’ ma, Austria* will prepare the team for the big walk next year. In addition, they want to use the minor and more local *Climate Walk* to draw public attention to the consequences of the climate crisis here in Austria.

In Austria, we feel climate changes mainly in the form of weather extremes. As Martina Perzl deals with sustainable agriculture in her studies, she knows that Austrian agriculture is already suffering and will be affected more and more in the future. And that it will cost a lot of money.

“Problems with water availability will increase, heat waves will especially affect people living in cities.”

Martina Perzl

Support for the walkers

The *Climate Walk* is supported by the University of Vienna, Fridays for Future, Global 2000 and many other institutions and companies. The *Climate Walk* team certainly does not lack energy, good publicity and a wealth of ideas – but it does lack money. Around 200,000 Euros are needed for the project. Crowdfunding has not worked out well so far, but the team is confident. The team does not necessarily view the involuntary year of waiting in a negative light, although they would naturally prefer to get going today rather than tomorrow. The delay also means more time for them to win sponsors for their project. Currently, the search is on for organizations and companies that would like to support the *Climate Walk* financially. A sponsor is also still being sought for the equipment that will be needed in climatically challenging latitudes.

Various ways to support the *Climate Walk* you find [here](#).

What else can you do? “Join the walk!” says Martina Perzl. “We are most excited about people who want to walk with us.” On July 3 2021, the [Climate Walk – Geh’ ma, Austria](#) starts in Dornbirn (Vorarlberg) and all fellow walkers are welcome.

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