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## **Vienna Pledge to the European Pillar of Social Rights Commitment to Principle 20: Access to essential services**

Vienna has a long tradition in providing high quality public services at affordable prices for all our citizens. The provision of public services follows specific principles: Security of supply, reliability, continuity, social price policy, health and sustainability are core criteria to be taken into consideration by public authorities. In order to continue this successful path, Vienna advocates that each region and city must have **the freedom to decide as how to manage and deliver public services**. To foster the social dimension of the European Union and account for a fair recovery and transition, Vienna reiterates the joint demand of many cities, regions and public service providers across Europe to **exempt investments for public services from the EU's debt criteria** in order to create the **necessary leeway**. It is also now the time for a **simplification of state aid regulations for public services** and **legal certainty** for local and regional authorities in this context. Vienna commits to continue equal access to all essential services for all its citizens. This is more important than ever with regard to the recession in the aftermath of the pandemic. It is vital to consider the social dimension when tackling challenges as the energy transition and the climate crisis.

### **Water:**

- Vienna was the first federal state in Austria to protect drinking water and its spring protection forests with a constitutional provision (since December 2001). With the "**Vienna Water Charter**", the spring water is secured as the basis of life for future generations. The protection of the public water supply in Austria is incorporated in the Austrian constitution since 2013 and 2019. This constitutional provision guarantees the security of supply for citizens at all times, especially in the event of a crisis or disaster (as the Covid-19 pandemic), at prices that are affordable for all.
- The construction of the **third main water line** ("Water line North" in Vienna's district Währing) leads to an improvement of the local and supra-regional security of water supply in Vienna. Vienna is growing rapidly, taking precautions and continuously developing our water supply is vital.
- We have set up **easy and free access** for all Viennese to fresh Viennese spring water at **1,100 drinking fountains** and additional 25 mobile drinking water fountains in public space, so called "Brunnhilden" in 2020.

### **Waste Water Management (Wien Kanal):**

- The City of Vienna operates a sewer network with a length of 2,500 kilometers for its citizens. Half a billion liters of wastewater from 1.9 million people and 170,000 buildings are transported safely and environmentally friendly to the sewage treatment plant in Vienna's district Simmering every day. More than **700 sewer construction sites** are carried out **every year** to maintain and repair the public sewer network. The **robots from "Wien Kanal"** are also on the move underground. Last year alone, they covered more than 200 kilometers in the wastewater labyrinth and examined the pipes for damage. Each sewer connection leads to a more comfortable infrastructure for the citizens, lower operating costs for the Wien Kanal and, as a result, lower CO2 consumption due to fewer truck journeys.
- In 2021, 99.8 percent of all households in Vienna are connected to the urban sewer in network. The full expansion of the sewer network will be completed in 2023.

**Energy:**

- A future-proof energy policy for Vienna requires the development of a sustainable energy system characterized by a high degree of supply security, reliability, stable and affordable energy prices, a significantly reduced level of environmental impact, and a clear commitment to decarbonisation.
- In order to maintain the security of supply for our citizens, despite the energy transition, the City of Vienna **invests** considerable amounts in **expanding and maintaining generation and distribution infrastructure**.
- Vienna wants to ensure that all parts of the population can meet their energy demand now and in future at affordable prices. **Energy consulting** and the **Vienna energy support scheme for disadvantaged citizens** are part of the energy policy goals of the city. On-site energy consulting and implementation of tailor-made measures for households at risk of poverty have been set up. The implementation takes place in cooperation with the Municipal Department for Social Affairs and Health Law. The initiative was awarded the "ÖGUT" (Austrian Society for Environment and Technology) environmental prize in 2018.

**Access to innovative, sustainable, affordable energy solutions in subsidized housing:**

- Vienna is reacting to climate change and increasingly relying on innovative solutions that guarantee the highest level of comfort all throughout the whole year and all seasons by providing **heating and hot water as well as cooling in summer**. Systems based on **geothermal energy** and heat pumps enable **maximum use of renewables** potential on-site. In addition, they represent a particularly affordable form of energy supply, since only very little energy needs to be purchased from the higher-level infrastructure. In addition to meeting climate and energy goals, this also ensures a high level of security of supply and long-term affordability of energy supply for the Viennese.
- **Promotion of renewable energy communities (REC)**. REC contribute to the increased use of renewable energy sources in Vienna and can couple the energy sectors of heat and electricity. They are an essential building block for the expansion of renewables. In addition, residents can actively participate in shaping the future of energy and invest in it. The City of Vienna is currently preparing a **contact point for renewable energy generation systems** and a **one-stop shop for renewable energy communities** so that in the future all information will be available in a central location and citizens can be well informed.

**Mobility:**

- The **transport sector** consumes most of the energy in the city and is the largest producer of greenhouse gases that are harmful to the climate. Not only the attractive price (365 EUR/year) for the annual pass for the public transport in Vienna, but also the steady expansion and more attractive intervals contribute to the fact that more and more people have easy access to public transport. At the same time, there is constant investment in the infrastructure for cycling and walking. **71 % of all traffic routes are already covered by public transport, bicycles or even on foot**, of which 38 % are by public transport alone. Moreover, the City of Vienna invests in **hydrogen buses and E-buses**. All these measures make a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gases and ensure easy access to sustainable public transport at affordable prices.

Vienna, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021



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