

## WiFi4EU stories: an interview with Mayor of Wiesfleck, Austria

Located in the district of Oberwart, near the Hungarian border, the Austrian town of Wiesfleck is the first municipality to receive the payment for a WiFi4EU network. Daniel Kitscha, Deputy Head of Unit of B.5 Investments in High Capacity networks in DG CONNECT, met with Christoph Krutzler, Mayor of Wiesfleck, to learn more about their plans to leverage the newly-installed WiFi4EU hotspots to become a more digital community.



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Immersed in the Austrian countryside, the municipality's wireless connectivity is currently underserved by market operators and was therefore looking for an opportunity to boost connectivity and digital services available in the territory. "The good thing about [WiFi4EU] is that this project directly impacted the people, especially in our community, where we never thought we could get such positive support from the European Union. It is incredibly enriching for our community", revealed Mayor Krutzler, who is very satisfied with the positive feedback received from the users so far.

After due checks, INEA - the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency - confirmed that the WiFi4EU network deployed by Wiesfleck is compliant with the technical requirements and therefore triggered the payment. The WiFi4EU hotspots are spread across the four districts of the municipality, located in public areas such as sport and recreational centres, the fire station and the youth centre, to benefit citizens of all ages. From application to payment, the process has been easy for Wiesfleck, who has received offers from four different installation companies and has chosen the one that best fit the needs of the municipality.

Wiesfleck, home to about 1100 people, is taking the first steps to become a digital community. In 2018, Wiesfleck was connected to fiber and started developing digital services such as the *Digitale Amtstafel* (digital notice board), a portal that allows citizens to download documents and forms. Thanks to the WiFi4EU network, the municipality can now increase and improve its digital offer: "We

should continue step by step in this direction”, said the Mayor.

The municipality has now its eyes set on ensuring maintenance and operation of the equipment to provide high-quality connectivity to its citizens. “I would definitely recommend it to every community in Austria and in the European Union. It is a very good project by the European Union because the implementation works problem-free, it works perfect to 100%”, concluded Mayor Krutzler, highlighting how the WiFi4EU initiative not only benefits the community but also the region and country can profit from it.

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