

## Hosts, national partners, volunteers, RSO and more: New updates for the Eurovision Song Contest 2026

Since Thursday morning, it has been official: Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski will host the Eurovision Song Contest 2026 in Vienna! On 29 January 2026, ORF also presented other exciting updates during a comprehensive media briefing. After major milestones in recent weeks, including the first production meeting, the handover of the traditional host city gift from the previous to the current host city, the semifinal draw, record ticket sales, the sign performers' casting, and the presentation of the school contest "United by Music," the latest developments were announced. ORF Director-General Roland Weißmann, ORF Program Director Stefanie Groiss-Horowitz, ORF's Commercial Director Eva Schindlauer, and ESC Executive Producer Michael Krön provided information not only about the moderation but also about national partners, new developments in the volunteer selection process, inclusivity and accessibility areas, as well as musical updates from the RSO. The media update was moderated by Alexandra Maritza Wachter and aired live on ORF III and ORF ON, where it is still available on demand. Further information can be found in the press kit at [presse.ORF.at](https://presse.orf.at).

ORF Director-General Roland Weißmann: "The ORF is a longtime expert in major events. That the Eurovision Song Contest is an event of great interest has been shown recently by record ticket sales. This also offers wonderful opportunities to involve people and make the Song Contest tangible and accessible to as many as possible. This applies equally to young fans, whom we involve through the student contest 'United by Music.' I am also pleased that the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra will play a special role, interpreting the music theme and performing at the opening of the grand finale at Vienna's Stadthalle and the opening ceremony at Rathausplatz."

ESC Executive Producer Michael Krön: "We are rapidly approaching Song Contest week in May. Recently, one milestone has followed another, and it is clear – the pace will only increase from now on. From the first production meeting to the casting for sign performers who represent music performances in sign language and contribute significantly to the event's accessibility. The search for volunteers has already reached its next stage. Moreover, the RSO will be part of the program as a world-class orchestra. One thing is certain: the excitement continues!"

## Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski are the hosts of the 70. Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna!

The hosting lineup for the Eurovision Song Contest is set: Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski will be the hosts of the world's largest TV entertainment event. The duo will host the two semifinals from 12 May to 16 May, welcoming millions of viewers with "Good Evening Europe!" from Vienna's Stadthalle. Today, Thursday, 29 January 2026, they share their excitement for the Eurovision Song Contest 2026 at a media update at the ORF media campus in Vienna with attending media representatives.

ORF Program Director Stefanie Groiss-Horowitz: " Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski are two motivated, exciting, and extraordinary personalities who will guide us through the spectacular shows of the Eurovision Song Contest. Our goal is to thrill an international audience from all over the world with a sensational TV experience. We developed a concept and then searched for the right hosts – and we found them! Victoria Swarovski and Michael Ostrowski are an exciting unique pair. Both with great passion for the ESC, two excellent ambassadors for the cause, who will be remembered for a long time with their performance."

### Victoria Swarovski – the jewel from Tyrol

Victoria Swarovski, born 16 August 1993, in Innsbruck, Austria, is a TV presenter, entrepreneur, model, designer and singer. As part of the world-renowned Swarovski family, she consciously decided early on to pursue an independent professional path outside the family business. At 16, she signed her first record deal with Sony Music and released several singles. At 18, she moved to Los Angeles, where she worked with Grammy-winning songwriter Diane Warren, among others. She celebrated her big breakthrough in 2016 with her victory in the TV dance show "Let's Dance." Shortly afterwards, she became the youngest judge in the history of "Das Supertalent." Since 2018, she has been a permanent member of the hosting team for "Let's Dance," one of the most successful shows in the German-speaking region. Other TV highlights include hosting the "100 Years Disney Show", the Glamour Women of the Year Award as well as Bambi, one of Europe's most prestigious entertainment awards.

Alongside her television career, Victoria founded her own beauty brand ORIMEI in 2020. As a model, she appeared on the covers of numerous national and international magazines, including Glamour, ELLE, L'Officiel, Gala Style, and Forbes. As a native of Tyrol, she also designed several dirndl and fashion collections as well as accessories. Victoria Swarovski is regarded as a curious,

versatile personality seeking new challenges. In early 2026, she fulfilled a long-held life dream by participating in the Dakar Rally, the toughest rally in the world.

Victoria Swarovski: "It's impossible to put into words. I've had the opportunity to do so many incredible things, but the Eurovision Song Contest is by far the most spectacular. I'm already so excited – how many people can say they've hosted in front of 170 million people? When the request came, I had to look twice. But I knew immediately that I had to say yes and take on this challenge. The Eurovision Song Contest brings people together to celebrate life and music – and it's precisely this positivity that makes the show so exceptional. I'm also absolutely thrilled to be co-hosting with Michael Ostrowski."

### **Michael Ostrowski – the award-winning multi-talent with charm**

Michael Ostrowski, born 3 January 1973, in Leoben, Austria, is an actor and presenter from Styria. Known primarily for his comedic roles, the multi-talent has also written screenplays for several films ("Nacktschnecken," "Contact High," "Die unabsichtliche Entführung der Frau Elfriede Ott") or has directed ("Hotel Rock'n'Roll"). For the 2022 film "Der Onkel" (currently available on ORF ON), Ostrowski not only starred alongside Anke Engelke and Simon Schwarz but also handled the screenplay and direction. The book "Der Onkel," published by Rowohlt Verlag and serving as the basis for the film, was also authored by Ostrowski. Additionally, Ostrowski has appeared in numerous series ("Eberhoferkrimi," "Ein Krimi in Passau," "Vier Frauen und ein Todesfall").

Ostrowski achieved his breakthrough in 2004 with the film "Nacktschnecken," about the somewhat unsuccessful porn career of three former students, which became the second most successful film of the year. Today, he is one of Austria's most in-demand actors. Additionally, Ostrowski regularly works as a presenter ("Nestroy Theater Prize," "Amadeus Awards"). For hosting "100 Years of Radio," he received the Austrian TV award Romy.

Michael Ostrowski: "I'm incredibly excited to host the Eurovision Song Contest. Victoria is a wonderful partner and I'm convinced we'll handle this brilliantly together. When I got the confirmation, I had just come straight from a root canal treatment and thought to myself: 'Well, the timing couldn't be better,'" he says with a smile. "The Eurovision Song Contest is always fun – from the costumes to the acts to the songs. There's no comparable event anywhere in the world. The Eurovision Song Contest stands for tolerance, togetherness, and community – values I'm very happy to represent!"

## Cooperation at the Eurovision Song Contest: Here are ORF's National Partners

Strong Austrian partners for the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna: Ten companies, mostly family businesses, and major players in the domestic economy are supporting the jubilee edition and taking the opportunity to appear in association with the world's largest TV entertainment event.

Eva Schindlauer, Commercial Director of ORF: "At the Eurovision Song Contest 2026, millions of people from Europe and beyond are watching Vienna and Austria. In this unique reach environment, companies have the chance to present themselves as national partners and be perceived in association with the world's largest TV entertainment event. We are very much looking forward to organizing an unforgettable music festival with the support of our partners from the economy."

The national partners at a glance (in alphabetical order):

- A1
- ÖBB
- Omoda Jaecoo
- Österreichische Lotterien, win2day, EuroMillionen, EuroDreams
- Ottakringer
- sehen!wutscher
- Spar Österreich
- Volksbank
- XXXLutz

Österreich Werbung is the official partner of the Eurovision Song Contest 2026.

## Selection process for volunteers enters the next level

Since early December 2025, ORF has been searching for volunteers in areas including Guest & Delegation Services, Audience & Public Interaction, and Sustainability & Support. The application phase has now ended, and video applications submitted with CVs are being reviewed. Meanwhile, over 300 applicants have advanced to the next round. This screening process is expected to last until early February. On 28 February and 1 March, callbacks will be held for those who have made it to the next round.

Many impressive personalities have come forward to volunteer, to support the event's welcoming atmosphere and to experience one of the world's largest music shows up close. In addition to German and English, the candidates speak 44 other foreign languages, covering the majority of the national languages of all participating countries.

Among the applicants are nearly all professional groups – from students to people in executive positions who have taken leave to be part of the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna. What unites them all is their passion for this shared viewing experience. Many report that the Eurovision Song Contest has been a fixture and family event in their lives since childhood, and they now want to dedicate their time to it and give something back.

Four out of five volunteers live in Austria, most of them in Vienna, followed by Lower Austria. One in five lives abroad. In total, applicants from more than 30 nations have applied, including many European countries, as well as the USA, Canada, and Australia.

## **Musical Opening of the Eurovision Song Contest with the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna**

The ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna will perform at three major Eurovision 2026 events: the Opening Ceremony on 10 May at Rathausplatz, the Grand Final Opening on 16 May at Wiener Stadthalle, and throughout the broadcasts with the official musical theme. Composed by Dorothee Freiberger and Martin Gellner, the theme reinterprets selected themes from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute', recorded by the orchestra in autumn 2025.

Another highlight presented by the Radio Symphony Orchestra at ORF RadioKulturhaus is on 24 April – a concert featuring the ESC's greatest hits in collaboration with domestic artists (also shown on TV).

### **About the Radio Symphony Orchestra**

The ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna (RSO Vienna) ranks among Europe's leading orchestras. Since its founding in 1969, the ensemble has championed an exceptional repertoire spanning classical-romantic works, modern compositions, and contemporary music, including multiple world and national premieres each year.

From 2019 to 2025, Marin Alsop shaped the orchestra's profile as chief conductor; in May 2025, she was named honorary conductor. Beginning with the 2026/27 season, Markus Poschner will take on the role of chief conductor.

The RSO Vienna regularly performs at Vienna's major concert venues and international festivals, tours worldwide, and has established itself as a distinguished opera and film orchestra. Its numerous award-winning recordings, a 2025 Grammy nomination, and strong commitment to music education and emerging talent development underscore its artistic excellence."

Based in ORF RadioKulturhaus, the RSO reaches its audience through live-concerts, radio broadcasts, TV, and ORF's digital platforms.

## Making Eurovision Accessible: Vienna Selects Sign Performers for 2026

The 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna will be an event for everyone! The ORF is committed to ensuring full inclusivity and accessibility across all Eurovision-related events. For the May spectacle, ORF will provide comprehensive services: from song performances in International Sign, vibration vests, and the Accessify app to complete accessibility services (subtitling, audio description, and sign language interpretation). ORF aims to send a powerful message of inclusion for people with disabilities – in its programming, at Vienna's Stadthalle, and at public viewing events.

### These are the Sign Performers for the 70th Eurovision Song Contest

On Friday, 16 January 2026, ORF held auditions for Sign Performers from the international Deaf community at its media campus. 13 participants showcased their artistic skills, with the goal of performing songs by Eurovision 2026 acts in International Sign. Nine Sign Performers were selected after the multi-hour casting for the next months' work with participating ESC acts: Anja Burghardt (Linz), Alice Hu (Shanghai), Amanda Jovanovic (Vienna), Carina Kilinc (Vienna), David Obermaier (Graz), Inna Shparber (Berlin), Julia Kulda-Hroch (Berlin), Kateryna Radek (Bielefeld/Regensburg) and Rafel-Evitan Grombelka (Hamburg/Cologne).

The audition jury comprised five members, including three Deaf community experts (Ilona Seifert from Witaf, Sabine Klein from Equalizent, Helene Jarmer, President of ÖGLB) and two ORF experts (Sabine Weber from the TV Film Department and Judith Weissenböck from ORF Vienna Studio).

The Sign Performers begin their work on 31 January. They will then participate in monthly training sessions and workshops, guided by Delil Yilmaz and Lena Schramek. At the end of April, production week led by Judith Weissenböck will take place, during which all Sign Performances will be pre-recorded. The performances will be broadcast during the semi-finals and Grand Final on ORF 2 Europe and ORF ON. Sign Performances will be made available to all participating broadcasters for use on their accessible platforms.

Sign Performance has been part of Eurovision's accessibility program since 2015. As the first public broadcaster to provide Sign Performance for Eurovision entries, ORF played a key role in establishing this service.

### **Further accessible offers**

All Eurovision Song Contest broadcasts in May will be subtitled and available on ORF Teletext page 777. Additionally, audio description will be available via the secondary audio channel and ORF ON, and Austrian Sign Language interpretation will be available on ORF 2 Europe and ORF ON.

Accessibility will also be prioritized at all event venues, with comprehensive services provided on-site. The AI-powered Plug & Play platform "Accessify" will be available for Deaf and blind attendees, accessible via smartphone. Services include audio description, sign language interpretation, speech-to-text conversion, and sound amplification via Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids. To make music physically accessible to hearing-impaired attendees, vibration vests will be provided during the shows. These special vests allow users to feel sound through vibrations on their skin. Additional on-site services for people with disabilities will be provided through a partnership with FullAccess, including information service points, staff training on disability awareness and support, and online resources. People with disabilities were also encouraged to apply for the volunteer program.



## "United by Music" – Austrian School Music Competition for the Eurovision Song Contest 2026

Under the motto "United by Music," the Austrian Ministry of Education and ORF are searching for young talents ready to bring their passion, creativity, and European spirit to the stage. Upper secondary school groups from across Austria are invited to participate – as a class, small group, or cross-class team.

The creative possibilities are diverse: Students can write and compose original songs, create cover versions of well-known hits, choreograph dance performances to music, or develop poetry with musical accompaniment. All genres and forms of expression are welcome – from pop and rap to traditional music, choral singing, and band projects! Participants submit two-to-five-minute video or audio recordings made with smartphones or other recording devices. Submissions open on the 9 February at [www.bmb.gv.at/united-by-music](http://www.bmb.gv.at/united-by-music), with a deadline of 27 March 2026.

To ensure all of Austria is represented, a jury will select one musical group from each federal state. Winners will travel to Vienna with their class or fans, courtesy of ÖBB, to participate in the "Afternoon Preview Show." Approximately 300 students will experience the Song Contest world firsthand and become part of Europe's biggest music celebration.

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<https://presse.ORF.at/Moderations-Duo>, National Partners, Volunteers, RSO u. v. m.: Neues zum Eurovision Song Contest 2026