

# **40 days until the Song Contest final: Vienna is ready for the Eurovision Song Contest!**

## **The city of Vienna and ORF present the ESC program and the largest side-event program in Song Contest history**

In just under five weeks, Vienna will once again become Europe's biggest stage as the Austrian capital hosts the Eurovision Song Contest for the third time. While the Wiener Stadthalle is the major international venue for the two semi-finals and the grand final, Vienna's Rathausplatz will become the central hub during ESC week - the prime meeting place for fans from Vienna, Austria, and across Europe.

The Eurovision Song Contest is much more than just TV shows on ORF. It is a multimedia fireworks display across all ORF platforms - a full 360-degree experience stretching from primetime on ORF 1 deep into the digital world.

Mayor Michael Ludwig emphasized: "Vienna will be the global capital of musical entertainment for an entire week. Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest for the third time is an honor. In 2015 we set international standards — and we aim to do so again. It is important to us that not only those with tickets for the Stadthalle enjoy a fantastic show. We want this event to be unforgettable for all residents and visitors, regardless of their financial situation. That is why we have focused strongly on creating a broad program across all parts of society — for children and adults, young and old, and many events free of charge. Vienna is not only the host city — it is a city of peace, unity, and togetherness."

Norbert Kettner, Vienna's ESC Coordinator and Director of Vienna Tourism, explained: "A Eurovision Song Contest has three pillars: the EBU, the national broadcaster, and a host city that delivers. And Vienna delivers. In 2015 we showed what's possible — the most welcoming ESC ever. In 2026 we're taking everything a step further. With 'Vienna OffStage' we turn the entire city into a stage and create the biggest social program in ESC history. With the Vienna Experience Bag we launch the largest fan activation ever. And with the ivie app, Welcome Desks, and a curated experience program, Vienna becomes an open, accessible experience far beyond the Stadthalle."

Interim ORF Director General Ingrid Thurnher said: "We are very happy about the diverse ESC program in Vienna and all over Austria. It is very important to ORF to make the ESC accessible for everyone — not just on screen but also in person at locations throughout the country. I want to thank all our partners who help make this possible."

Executive Producer Michael Krön added: “From the Eurovision Village to the EuroClub, from the ESC Kids Disco to the Eurovision Market Contest at the Naschmarkt and the Eurofan House at the Wien Museum — all of Vienna will be in ESC fever! And with public viewings across Austria, the ESC will be felt throughout the entire country. This broad, diverse program is exactly what we aim for: to reach and excite as many people as possible.”

# Comprehensive ORF programming around the Eurovision Song Contest

The ESC on ORF extends far beyond the three main live shows. It is a comprehensive multimedia experience across all ORF channels.

**At the heart of coverage is the ORF glass studio at Rathausplatz, from which more than 100 hours of live programming will be broadcast.**

Program Director Stefanie Groiss-Horowitz describes it as a “living room for all of Austria,” an architectural symbol of openness, and the first time that all ORF national TV and radio stations will broadcast together from one location.

Viewers can also look forward to three major **primetime shows hosted by Barbara Schöneberger**. Under the title “Wir sind Song Contest”, ORF 1 will dedicate three Fridays — April 24, May 1, and May 8 — to the 70-year history of the ESC, featuring emotional highlights and musical milestones. Andi Knoll will present four editions of “Mr. Song Contest proudly presents” on May 10, 12, 14, and 17. On May 15, Caro Athanasiadis hosts a special Song Contest edition of “Smart 10 Big”.

A joint production by SF, SWR, and ORF will accompany the audience toward the Grand Final on May 16 from the MuseumsQuartier, presented by Barbara Schöneberger and Cesár Sampson. After the final, at around 00:30, ORF 1 will broadcast “ESC – die Aftershow.” On May 17, ORF 1 airs “Promis, Punkte, Parties,” looking back at the celebrity highlights of ESC week. The Eurovision Song Contest Opening Ceremony will be broadcast live on May 10 at 17:00.

From Monday to Saturday, Fanny Stapf will host “Vienna 2026 – Das Song Contest Magazin” daily at 17:55 on ORF 1. On May 12 and 14, the semi-final days, ORF 1 presents “Vienna 2026 – Die Songs” at 18:50, hosted by Tina Ritschl. Philipp Maschl reports directly from the Stadthalle with the “ZIB Magazin Song Contest” at 19:55 from Monday to Saturday.

ORF 2 broadcasts cultural perspectives through “kulturMontag” on May 11, and several special editions of “Wien heute” on May 12, 14, and 16, looking at the city’s transformation during the ESC. A cross-channel “Wien heute Spezial” airs on the final day. ORF III will also broadcast its program “Ein Fest für den Song Contest” on May 11 and send “Kultur heute” throughout the week from the glass studio.

**All ORF radio channels** — including Radio Wien and Radio Niederösterreich — **will broadcast special live programming from Rathausplatz**. The Ö3-Wecker morning show airs Monday to Saturday from the studio, with daily ESC features from Andi Knoll and fan voices from across Austria. Ö1 will present an entire day of ESC programming on May 11 from 9:00 to 22:00. FM4 broadcasts “FM4 Sounds like Song Contest” from the Eurovision Village from May 12 to 15, followed by a large

countdown show on May 16. Radio Wien will be live on May 15 and 16 for a total of 14 hours with special activities for Viennese audiences. Radio Niederösterreich will broadcast special shows on both semi-final days.

All **ORF platforms** — ORF ON, ORF SOUND, and ORF's social media channels — will immerse themselves fully in **ESC coverage**. ORF ON will stream all shows live, offer catch-up options for all performances, and provide extensive ESC content including backstage insights, exclusive video formats, and curated recommendations from hosts and artists. TikTok and Instagram will focus on younger audiences with increased content output throughout April and May, including a live stream from the Opening Ceremony, behind-the-scenes impressions, and studio productions created in partnership with the EBU. The website [songcontest.orf.at](https://www.songcontest.orf.at) will intensify its reporting in the coming weeks, offer FAQs (also in English), publish live tickers during the Opening Ceremony and the shows, and feature a social media wall collecting ESC posts from across platforms. ORF Teletext will again enable viewers to see comments on-screen through the special service "TXT meets ESC," accessible via <https://debatte.orf.at/>.

# **Eurovision Village, EuroClub, Fan House and more — how Vienna celebrates ESC**

## **Eurovision Village — the heart of the event**

The Eurovision Village — organized by the City of Vienna in close cooperation with ORF — will again be one of the core elements of ESC week, welcoming up to 15,000 fans. From May 10 to 17, 2026, it opens its doors for eight days with free admission.

Daily opening hours: 14:00 to midnight (or the end of the live shows).

On Ascension Day (Thursday), it opens already at 11:00, and on the Sunday after the final, from 14:00 to 19:00.

As the largest public fan meeting point, the Eurovision Village offers a full week of varied programming with daily live concerts, DJs, and interactive formats. Besides performances by current and former ESC participants and other acts, the three major TV shows on May 12, 14, and 16 will be broadcast live from the Wiener Stadthalle onto 15 screens at Rathausplatz.

Fourteen food stands will offer Viennese and international cuisine — from schnitzel to tapas, knödel to pasta, as well as breweries and wine taverns. Options range from organic döner kebab and Viennese burgers to French crêpes and Italian aperitifs. A special feature is the daily appearance of ESC 2026 contestants performing their songs live.

Additional attractions on and around the main stage include:

- Photo Point “Be a Shootingstar” — Fans walk across a turquoise carpet and pose professionally in front of an ESC backdrop.
- Shootingstar Award, with daily community voting on the best photos.
- AI Karaoke Box, which digitally inserts fans’ faces and voices into original ESC performances. The five best clips are shown and awarded on the main stage daily.
- ESC Quiz, hosted by Robert Steiner, allowing families and fans to compete via smartphone with daily prizes.

The full program and line-up for the Eurovision Village are available at [eurovision.wien.gv.at](http://eurovision.wien.gv.at) and in the ivie app.

## **May 10: The spectacular Turquoise Carpet kicks off ESC week**

The Turquoise Carpet Event on May 10 marks the official start of ESC week in Vienna. It is the only moment when all 35 delegations appear together. They will walk alphabetically from the Burgtheater across the turquoise carpet toward City Hall, with Austria entering last as the host country.

The Woodstock Allstar Band welcomes each delegation with a musical quote representing their country. The ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra adds a ceremonial touch. The event culminates with JJ's winning song "Wasted Love", performed with the RSO Vienna.

ORF 1 broadcasts the entire procession live from 17:00. Up to 30,000 fans can experience all delegations up close. Afterwards, the official Opening Ceremony takes place inside City Hall for all delegations.

### **EuroClub 2026 in the PraterDOME**

From May 11 to 16, the PraterDOME will be transformed into the official EuroClub, the central meeting place for fans, artists, delegations, and international guests. Host Eric Papilaya will guide audiences through six themed nights. Numerous Austrian ESC stars, international performers, and ESC DJs will deliver special live moments. Both semi-finals and the final will be broadcast live inside the club.

This year's EuroClub also expands its offerings with two daytime formats. On Friday, May 15, the Golden Years Party addresses older ESC-enthusiastic audiences by celebrating evergreens, classics, and Eurovision favorites, accompanied by performances from Austrian ESC acts. On Saturday, May 16, Europe's largest ESC Kids Disco will take place — designed for children aged 6 to 12, featuring a performance by Auri, the ESC mascot.

### **Eurofan House at the Wien Museum**

From May 11 to 16, the Wien Museum becomes the Eurofan House, serving as a Song Contest hub for fans, performers, and the international ESC community. The program includes exclusive interviews conducted by Wiwibloggs with this year's artists, panel discussions, talks, lectures, and activities organized by OGAE Austria, the official Austrian ESC fan club. Entry is free of charge, and the Eurofan House is open from Monday to Saturday between 10:00 and 19:00. Additional program details will be published via Wiwibloggs and OGAE Austria's social media channels.

### **Cultural institutions and the Eurovision Song Contest**

Vienna's museums have also integrated the ESC into their programming. The House of Austrian History (hdgö) presents "Unstoppable. Eurovision Song Contest Highlights at the Museum," running from March 25 to October 11, 2026. The exhibition showcases iconic objects from Austria's ESC history, including Conchita Wurst's dress, the stage design for JJ's "Wasted Love," and historical images from the 1967 Grand Prix de la Chanson in the Hofburg. An accompanying web exhibition explores the ESC as a cultural, political, and social phenomenon and offers insights behind the scenes of the international production.

The Natural History Museum presents "Voices of Nature," an interactive exhibition path for ESC 2026. Thirty-five objects, each representing one participating country,

link biodiversity with cultural diversity. An audio guide featuring animal sounds leads visitors through the exhibition, which also includes a voting element and various interactive social-media moments.

The Bronski & Grünberg Theater will present a humorous tribute to the Eurovision decades of the 60s, 70s, and 80s on May 13 at 19:30. The performance covers 13 countries, 13 songs, 13 conductors, and includes a multilingual moderator team, live voting, and performances celebrating the decades in which the European idea had particularly strong cultural resonance.

The Volksoper will host three ESC sing-along events in front of the opera building during May, supported by the Volksoper Choir, inviting audiences on a musical journey through seven decades of ESC history. On May 16, the Volksoper's main auditorium will open for a public viewing of the grand final.

The Technical Museum Vienna will offer a special ESC program from May 2 to 17 with interactive stations, a karaoke stage, and musical highlights from 70 years of ESC history, along with guided tours, workshops on music and technology, and a public viewing on the day of the final.

### **The Eurovision Song Contest for families — ESC Kids Disco**

The ESC is also a family-friendly event. On May 7, ORF and WIENXTRA will host the ESC Kids Disco at the Vienna club The Loft. DJs Olibär and Conny Lee will provide music, and children will be able to dance with mascots Holli and Auri. There will also be airbrush tattoos and a photo booth for souvenirs. The disco is open from 15:30 to 18:30, with free entry recommended for children aged five and older.

### **Culinary experiences, music, and international atmosphere: The Eurovision Market Contest at the Naschmarkt**

On Wednesday, May 13, 2026, from 14:00 to 19:00, the Vienna Market Authority will host the Eurovision Market Contest at and around the Naschmarkt. Visitors can enjoy culinary specialties from countries participating in the Song Contest while live music — featuring both recent and classic ESC titles — creates a lively, international atmosphere in the middle of Vienna.

### **SingAlong with Monika Ballwein — the ESC in senior living homes**

To ensure that the ESC truly becomes an inclusive event, ORF and "Häuser zum Leben," Austria's largest senior care provider, will host several special music events. Vocal coach, singer, and songwriter Monika Ballwein will visit three senior homes, performing selected ESC classics and other well-known songs together with residents, accompanied by a pianist. House choirs and club singers will also participate. ORF presenter Eva Pölzl will moderate the events, which take place at various facilities throughout April.

## **The Danube becomes Vienna's ESC dance floor**

During ESC week, the MS Vienna will host daily Disco Cruises from May 9 to 17. International ESC-associated DJs — including DJ Douze Points, Sasha Balkan, DJ Linus, and DJ FirstRANK — will ensure energetic beats onboard. Guests can expect a relaxed atmosphere on the sun deck, Eurovision soundtracks, and impressive views of Vienna's skyline.

## **Discovering ESC in the world capital of music: guided tours and silent sidewalk disco**

During the Eurovision Song Contest, Vienna will turn into a stage for unique city experiences. The program includes "Guerilla Walks" led by Oliver Hangl on April 16 and 23, featuring guest appearances by Tex Rubinowitz. A special ESC-themed walk through Vienna's Central Cemetery on May 4 will lead visitors to notable musicians' graves. On May 5, a silent sidewalk disco will turn a city pavement into an open-air dance floor using wireless headphones.

## **Tram Line 49 becomes the "WL x ESC Bim"**

A special highlight is the transformation of Tram Line 49 into the "WL x ESC Bim," fully branded with the "Vienna 12 Points" design. Running between Volkstheater and the Stadthalle, the tram will bring live ESC atmosphere into the streets. On days without shows, it will become a venue for sing-alongs and jam sessions, allowing passengers to actively participate. Afterward, the tram will be displayed at Karlsplatz next to the Eurofan House.

## **An event for everyone: Friends of Eurovision and tickets for social organizations**

Businesses, shops, and local districts can take part in the Eurovision atmosphere through the Friends of Eurovision initiative, which allows them to create their own ESC-themed spaces irrespective of sponsorship status. Participating businesses may decorate their locations, offer merchandise, and create interaction opportunities for staff and customers.

ORF is also supporting social inclusion by donating 500 tickets for the Afternoon Preview Show on May 15 to the Vienna Social Fund, which will distribute them to social organizations, enabling people from challenging social backgrounds to participate in the ESC experience.

## **Vienna's Würstelstände welcome Europe**

Vienna's Würstelstände are deeply rooted in the city's cultural fabric. As places of meeting and social interaction, they will serve as symbolic spaces of Vienna's warmth and hospitality during the 70th ESC. Visitors from around the world will be able to experience authentic Viennese culture at these late-night gathering points.

## **Public Viewings throughout Austria**

Public viewings have long been a central part of the ESC experience. This year, numerous official partner events will carry the title “Official Eurovision Song Contest Public Viewing.” In Vienna alone, 26 public viewings are planned. Across Austria, 19 other events will take place — one of the largest being hosted at the Messe Dornbirn in Vorarlberg.

A list of all public viewings can be found at [songcontest.ORF.at](http://songcontest.ORF.at), and hosts may apply for official status until April 17 to access official branding and materials.

Across Austria, public viewings include Cinema Paradiso in St. Pölten and Wiener Neustadt and the Stadttheater Wiener Neustadt in Lower Austria; “Die Bank” in Oberwart in Burgenland; the Schubertkino in Graz and Dieselkino in Lieboch in Styria; Café Stern, Café Glück, the Carinthian State Museum, and the Klagenfurt Event Center in Carinthia; several Starmovie cinemas and the Design Center Linz in Upper Austria; the Mozartkino in Salzburg; the Metropolkino in Innsbruck; and the Messe Dornbirn in Vorarlberg.

## **111 events in Vienna: Vienna Tourism offers a wide-ranging side-event program**

From May 4 to 15, 2026, Vienna itself becomes the stage. A total of 78 curated experiences and 33 participating institutions will offer events free of charge. Building on the successful 2015 concept, Vienna Tourism has elevated the idea into its largest form yet with Vienna OffStage — the most extensive social program ever realized in ESC history.

Under the motto “United by Music,” Vienna OffStage provides a variety of unique experiences with strong local flavor, including Eurovision-themed Zumba and yoga classes, exclusive access to major cultural institutions like the entire KHM Museum Association, schnitzel workshops, and even the chance to design your own ESC sausage at a Viennese Würstelstand.

### **10,000 limited Vienna Experience Bags**

The Vienna Experience Bags make the city tangible from the moment visitors arrive. Each bag includes a curated booklet with 35 special offers, a complimentary Vienna City Card “Discounts Only” edition, and exclusive ESC merchandise. Through a competition, 9,000 bags will go to ticket holders, while another 800 will be distributed to volunteers as a gesture of thanks. This marks the largest fan activation in ESC history.

### **Host City App „ivie“ as a central guide for residents and visitors**

With more than two million downloads, Vienna’s official city app “ivie” becomes the central hub for all ESC-related sites and services. Starting April, ivie will guide users through all relevant ESC locations. From April 20, the “Eurovision Song Contest Challenge” — a digital rally — allows participants to win 400 limited fan packages and a weekend stay in Vienna, including accommodation at the Hotel Jaz in the City.

### **Six ESC Welcome Desks for personal support**

From May 2 to 17, visitors will find Welcome Desks and Tourist Information Points at Albertinaplatz, Vienna Airport, the Main Train Station, two locations at the Stadthalle, and at the Fan House in the Wien Museum. Vienna also launched a dedicated landing page — [eurovision.wien.info](http://eurovision.wien.info) — offering information in five languages: German, English, Italian, French, and Spanish.

### **Vienna fully immersed in the ESC spirit**

The entire city will visibly embrace ESC excitement. Bridges along the Danube Canal will be illuminated in ESC colors and decorated with banners carrying messages such as “Sing you soon!” Urban elements like utility boxes and bike

stands will be wrapped in ESC designs, and the cycle path at Urban-Loritz-Platz will shine in ESC colors. The Copa Steg on the Danube Island will be decorated with the flags of all participating countries. Vienna's 1,800 public drinking fountains, affectionately called "Brunnhilde," will also appear in ESC branding.

### **The former APA Tower becomes part of the ESC with Austria's largest mural**

After resting unused for more than two decades, the APA Tower will be brought back to life with a vast art project. Through a collaboration between the City of Vienna, property owner BUWOG, and the street art organization Calle Libre, the western façade of the 52-meter building will receive Austria's largest mural — a spectacular 1,100 square meters in size. During the ESC, the tower will be included in guided tours for international delegations.

### **U-Bahn-Stars bring live music to the public transport network**

Vienna's U-Bahn-Stars program, inspired by London's underground musicians, has been part of the city for nearly a decade. Throughout ESC week, selected subway stations will become temporary stages featuring both local and international performers. Highlights include the pop-up stage at Urban-Loritz-Platz near the Stadthalle and the ESC Open Stage at Karlsplatz, offering performance opportunities for musicians from the ESC community.

### **"Schmeiß like a Phoenix": MA48 gets Vienna in the mood with iconic slogans**

Vienna's waste management service, MA48, contributes its well-known humor to the ESC celebrations. Trash bins, garbage trucks, and staff shirts will feature ESC-themed slogans such as "Schmeiß like a Phoenix," "Merci kehr i," and "Waste and Love," bringing smiles to residents and visitors alike.

### **Wiener Linien complete the ESC experience across Vienna Wiener Linien runden das ESC-Gesamtbild in Wien ab**

Vienna's public transport system will play a key role in supporting ESC visitors. Additional signage will provide clear orientation, especially for international guests. Major hub stations will feature special announcements such as "Rathaus – Eurovision Village," "Praterstern – Eurovision Club," and "Urban-Loritz-Platz – Eurovision Main Venue." Welcome announcements will be given in the top five languages — German, English, Spanish, Italian, and French. Staff in special ESC vests will be clearly visible and available for assistance. Train and tram intervals will be increased during the event.

At the same time, the Eurovision theme will be visible across the entire network. Around 550 trams will be decorated with ESC banners. The U2 metro line becomes the official "Song Contest Line," directly connecting key locations such as Rathaus, Praterstern, and Karlsplatz.

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**Press Contact:**

Roman Horacek

Head of Communications

(01) 87878 – DW 13869

[roman.horacek@orf.at](mailto:roman.horacek@orf.at)

<https://presse.ORF.at>