Interview 6 Dr. Norbert Dorfinger, Austria

Profile
Name: Norbert Dorfinger
Education: Engineer in energy planning (Ing.); University Master in Environmental System Sciences/Physics (Mag.)
Activity: Product Manager
Lives in Austria
Experience in this sector 10 years
Geographical working area: Austria

The management of thermogeology in an area with high-density installations

Salzburg AG is a public company, providing the people of Salzburg with energy, telecommunication and other services. The territory has a surface of about 7 000 sq km featuring a dense urban area and a mountainous environment as well. We observe strong efforts from the government here in Salzburg to boost renewable energy. Due to the fact that we have a high share of renewables in the electricity sector, heat pumps have become the most suitable technology in the heating sector. In the last years, we have seen a strong and powerful raise of air/water systems. Thermogeology-based systems (brine/water and also water/water) on the opposite have fallen back to a market share of 25% in 2015 (vs. 60% in 2004). The goals for us as energy suppliers are to pursuit well-functioning systems, satisfied public authorities and therefore be able to give a further boost to our renewable electricity field.

Tell us about the development of thermogeology in your territory

I would say that it is very advanced since we have the conviction here in Salzburg, that the craftspeople and all the involved market players secure the quality of installation. In the last years, with this conviction, public awareness has risen. The installations are not concentrated only in the urban area of Salzburg. We try to give additional info's via our new heat pump information system for the federal state of Salzburg, where the near surface thermogeology systems may be the best choice. The official cadaster is hosted by the District of Salzburg.

How has this high advanced status of thermogeology in Salzburg been reached?

Public promotes and supports only the best systems, not the worse 50%. And we have the "Salzburg Quality Network for heat pumps" ("SQWP"), which I have the honour to coordinate. See https://www.energieaktiv.at/information-und-beratung/salzburger-qualitaetsnetzwerk-waermepumpe/

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Do you think that the management of thermogeology in Salzburg could represent an example for others regions?

As far as I know, in Austria there are no similar heat pump information systems, except for Vienna, neither a Quality Network for heat pumps like in Salzburg. Both are success and driving factors, which others can easily copy.

Did problems arise due to the proximity and high density of geothermal installations? How did you manage to solve them?

There is an authorisation process. The public authorities deal with these cases carefully (if they may occur). We have in addition guidelines for the application during the authorisation process.

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