

Future challenges of the Austrian fire service

Almost the entire fire service system in Austria is carried out by volunteer members in their free time. This strong basis historically forms the backbone of society, especially in rural areas, but is also the Achilles heel of the system and represents the greatest challenge for the future of fire service.

Because in addition to lower appreciation, the fire brigades are struggling with a decline in the number of members, the reasons for which are varied and can be influenced little by the fire departments. However, in order to continue to be effective, also with regard to modern dangers, the fire service system has to react and convert the quantitative strength into a qualitative effectiveness.

The old-fashioned and conservative system, which is shaped by the image of old men in their uniforms who have been decorated with medals, must open up and the fire services must present themselves as modern and innovative service providers. In order to be perceived as a professional, future-oriented operational organization, there has to be a rethink in the areas of technology, tactics and training, for example in cooperation with university teaching, but also in marketing.

The fire service has to face these challenges quickly, because it is high time.