

Civil Resistance against the Destruction of the Green Mur River in the City of Graz, Austria

By [Daniel Vidic](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

Two weeks ago heavy machines began to clear the banks of the Mur in the south of Graz, which was for long time one of the most important recreational zones in our city. Because of the wide ranging civil resistance against the project the construction firms have great fear that sabotage in any possible way may happen. Fortunately all protests until now remained peaceful.

Dozens of police buses are parked in the vicinity of the excavators. Police and private security services build a human shield to protect the workers from being harassed by angry citizens.

What is a sad example how security forces are abused to protect the interests of a little, influential group against the sake of the people while it is supposed to be the other way around.

I ask myself how it must be for a good, dutiful policeman who feels with us and would therefore prefer to stand on the other side of the fence.

High fences and many security guards are needed to shield the building site from upset people. Sadly even the biggest rally with more than 4.000 protesters could not prevent the things that happen now.

Different environmental groups joined the protests. The banks of the Mur are an important habitat for some protectec animals like certain kinds of bats, the dice snake and the Huchen. which will most likely disappear when the Mur-barrage in the south of Graz is completed.

Although there is already a lot of destruction, activists still hope to stop the project and prevent at least the remainining natural part of the Mur in the inner city from being destroyed.

Despite the icy temperatures a brave group of people are determined to resist. They have therefore set up a protest camp near the bank of the green river. Men and women spend nearly all of their spare time, eating, and sleeping under the open sky even the in the harsh weather conditions which typically prevail in Graz in February.

A fire bowl stands in the middle. People sit in a circle around the fire and warm their legs at the sound of a guitar. Protest songs and poems are written and rehearsed together for the next big rally.

One touching thing is to see how local residents support the protesters by hanging out flags with the Lettering „Rettet die Mur“ (Save the Mur). Supporters from the surrounding residential blocks bring warm clothings, wood for the firebowl, food and – the most important thing – good Words of encouragement and assist the group physically and morally in every possible way.

Despite rumors that the camp may be violently cleared by security forces in the near future the majority of the people in the camp keep a positive attitude and believe in their ability to change the course of things

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Notes:

Website “Save the Mur”

www.rettetdiemur.at

Supporters:

WWF

<http://wwf.at/de/murkraftwerk-graz-protest-gerechtfertigt-wenn-recht-missachtet-wird/>

River Watch

<http://riverwatch.eu/mur/verbund-beteiligt-sich-an-grazer-denkmal-der-zerstörung>

Environmental society Styria

<http://www.naturschutzbundsteiermark.at/murkraftwerk.html>

Green party <https://graz.gruene.at/murkraftwerk>

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