Milestone for a&o Hostels as they become the first hostel chain worldwide to receive prestigious rating from Sustainable Fitch





- a&o achieves second-highest possible ranking in sustainability
- International rating agency Fitch comprehensively analyzes ESG components
- Oliver Winter: "This is a significant step in our Net Zero path for 2025"

Almost 29,000 beds at 40 locations in 25 cities and nine countries in Europe: in 2025, a&o wants to be the first zero-emission hostel chain in Europe - with the result of the rating agency Fitch, the Berlin-based company comes a significant step closer to its goal – founder Oliver Winter and Director HR/ESG Anne Spanjersberg are happy: a&o receives an ESG rating of 2 from Sustainable Fitch.

The Berlin-based budget group a&o is the first hostel chain worldwide to receive an ESG rating of 2 from the renowned rating agency Sustainable Fitch. With this, a&o achieves the second-best possible rating. For founder and CEO Oliver Winter, the "top result in sustainability" is motivation for the next 12 months: "This rating from Sustainable Fitch is a significant step on our Net Zero path." As early as 2025, a&o wants to be Europe's first emission-free hostel chain. Three kilograms of CO2 per overnight stay is the target from its own efforts, with the remaining offset. With currently around 5.8 kilograms, a&o is already setting standards today.

According to Winter, the result of the analysis by Sustainable Fitch recognises the "considerable, sustained and effective efforts of the entire company to contribute together as a team to responsible travel in a liveable future." In addition to environmental criteria, Sustainable Fitch also takes into account the social and governance segments in its rating.

Footprint reduced by around one third

In 2015, a&o started measuring its carbon footprint and was around 8.5 kilograms of CO2 per guest/overnight stay. Since then, emissions have been reduced by more than three kilograms, primarily through the switch to green electricity (electricity and gas), with the help of numerous water-saving measures and the conversion of all lights to LED, plus one-stop deliveries and the transition of the vehicle fleet to hybrid.

Commitment from the very beginning

Since the company was founded almost 23 years ago, a&o has been committed to the responsible use of resources. Many ideas and suggestions from employees for reducing energy consumption have been implemented since then. In addition to ecological aspects, the Sustainable Fitch rating also evaluates the social and corporate governance fields of action. The analysis comes to the following conclusions, among others:

1. Environment: the goal of reducing the CO2 footprint to 3 kilograms under its own steam by 2025 puts a&o "in a leading position in terms of climate protection in the real estate sector"; among other things, the a&o growth strategy through the acquisition of existing properties is highlighted;
2. Social: diversity as a corporate value is a priority: 800 employees from 59 nations are part of the a&o team; more than 52% of those based in the Berlin headquarters are women;
3. Governance: agreements with employees at management level include, among others, 25% "green KPIs";

"We want more: the further we go, the more urgent our needs and expectations for protecting the environment become", says Anne Spanjersberg, Director HR and ESG at a&o, "The biggest challenge currently is in the supply chain: We want more green laundry and local food."

- ENDS -

About a&o Hostels

a&o was founded in 2000 by Oliver Winter and now operates 40 hostels in 25 cities and nine European countries. The a&o guest mix is diverse: backpackers are part of the a&o target group, as are solo travelers, families, school groups and clubs. The number of business travelers and senior citizens is also increasing. The first location in the UK to open was a&o Edinburgh City in July 2021. Three new locations were added in 2020: premieres took place in Poland, a&o Warsaw, and Hungary, a&o Budapest; the second property opened in Copenhagen. With around 28,000 beds and around 3 million overnight stays in the second Corona year 2021 (2020: 2.5 million overnight stays), a&o recorded sales of around 70 million euros (2021: 64 million euros; 2019: over 165 million euros). The goal of a&o is to be Europe's "zero-emissions hostel chain" by 2025. Since 2017, the American investor TPG Real Estate has owned a&o. The company is still managed by the founder.

For further information about A&O Hostels, visit: https://www.aohostels.com/en/