

Rede von Herrn Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Roters anlässlich des Kick-off Meetings zu Grow Smarter am 10. Februar 2015, 14 Uhr, Stockholm

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Mrs. Wanngård,
mayors, presidents and CEOs of enterprises, institutes and universities,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express, that it is a great pleasure and honour for the city of Cologne to participate in the “Grow Smarter” project and to contribute to its success. I know it’s a great challenge to lead such a project. Before sharing with you some thoughts about city development and the “Grow Smarter” project, I would like to thank the city of Stockholm for its efforts to lead our project and congratulate on the successful project proposal.

As the UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-Moon said during the Conference of the Parties in Warsaw only two years ago. Please allow me to quote: “Cities are engines of dynamism and creativity. In many respects, cities are the proving ground for our efforts to combat climate change, build resilience and achieve faster, more equitable development progress.”

Having also in mind that since 2007 the majority of the world population lives in cities. That the majority of the European carbon emission are emitted in cities, urban agglomerations must be the front runner for a sustainable development.

Cologne feels strongly committed to the idea that cities must take a lead in the global aim to secure a sustainable economic and social development. Therefore, Cologne developed during the last years a number of new concepts and projects which will have a significant impact on the future of our city. It is the general aim of the city hall to create an economic, social and not least environmental successful city also with the help of new technologies. To achieve such an ambitious goal, we are constantly looking out to collaborate with partners in Europe and beyond. It may sound like a

platitude: But an exchange of innovative ideas and best practice methods across borders is in our eyes a key stone for success.

The “Grow Smarter Project” together with our “Smart City Initiative” is for us of major importance. The integration of new technologies into the city development may open the door to brand new solutions for challenging fields in an urban environment, such as mobility and other parts of the infrastructure. We hope in Cologne, that with the “Grow Smarter Project”, we will be able to find more as just one solution for a single problem. We would like to develop blue prints for the sustainable development of complete neighbourhoods. These blueprints shall integrate the sectors mobility, information and telecommunication technology and energy into one integrated concept. These just mentioned sectors shall have the ability to communicate with each other. Based on the communication, we hope to find solutions for important questions such as energy efficiency or new modes of mobility. If we succeed to develop a blueprint in our target neighbourhood, we will use our experience in all parts of our fast growing city.

The “Grow Smarter Project” and the “Smart City initiative” stand in a framework of a very long list of smaller and bigger projects which will also advance the local economy in Cologne. During the 90s Cologne suffered under a very fast change of the economic structure. Traditional factories were closed down, leaving some areas of the city in a poor shape. Today, we are proud to say that Cologne has a significant experience to handle a changing economic structure in a successful way and to develop new concepts for those areas.

Only last month, the city launched a new project to change a former cargo-harbour in the heart of the city into a new residential area with space for local industry. It is expected that about 5000 people will find a new home in this harbour-neighbourhood. During the development phase of this project, it is already intended to consider the experience of the “Grow Smarter Project” and of our “Smart City Initiative”. This guarantees the flow of new concepts from an experimental stage to our day-to-day work.

Finally, I would like to thank the cities of Stockholm, Barcelona and all our private and public partners for their effort to make our project proposal to the EU a success. I wish all of us a fruitful implementation phase.