

Rede von Herrn Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Roters anlässlich der GrowSmarter Projektkonferenz am 8. Juni 2015, 9 Uhr, Historisches Rathaus, Ratssaal

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Mr. Landahl,
dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the delegations from Stockholm and Barcelona here at the City hall of Cologne. I hope that this two days meeting will be a great contribution to the success of our common GrowSmarter project. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank all of you for the great effort to make this European project a success. I know that it is already challenging to finalize an ambitious project proposal within one city. Having in mind that three major European cities are working together, including a high number of very different partners, makes the effort and success even more remarkable. I know that all of you are working hard in direction lighthouse or smart City!

The City Hall regards this project as one of the most important city development projects in years. As you might have noticed during your visit, the city is currently experiencing a phase with a high number of construction projects across the city. These projects are mainly driven by three factors: After a phase with economic difficulties during the 90s, Cologne is back to economic prosperity. The growing economy is directly connected to a fast increasing population. Only last month new estimations predict an increase of the population by roughly 20 percent until the year 2040. Cologne might pass the 1.2 Mio mark. A fast increasing economy and population requires of course a functioning infrastructure. The city needs to invest massively in the preservation of the existing infrastructure but also in the expansion of it to serve the needs of the citizens.

Please allow me to give some examples of our ongoing projects in Cologne and how GrowSmarter can directly contribute to the success of these developments: One of

our central projects is the revitalization of two harbor areas in downtown Cologne. The city was always a junction for trade and goods of all types. However, during the last years the two inner harbors of Cologne lost the function as cargo port. It was necessary to find new designations for these vast industrial areas. It is planned to turn these harbor areas into residential areas with new opportunities for business. In order to achieve our climate protection commitments of the Convention of Mayors the city needs to reduce its overall reduction by 20 percent until 2020. This target can only be achieved, if energy efficiency and smart housing technologies becomes standard in our development projects. We strongly hope to gain more experience through our participation in the GrowSmarter project. These experiences could be used not only for the two harbor areas but also for thousands of new apartments which need to be completed during the next years for the fast growing population.

Another main challenge is the development of new mobility concepts. Cologne has mainly the structure of a middle age city. Already today, with a population of just one million inhabitants we reached the limits of individual traffic. Cologne released a strategy to foster public transportation but also cycling and simply walking needs to be promoted. The SmartCity strategy of Cologne is focusing on this issue, when creating a blueprint for a fast bicycle lane between the suburbs of Cologne and the University.

Nevertheless, we need to integrate the different modes of transportation into one integrated concept. A sectoral point of view must be regarded as insufficient and outdated. We believe that the installation of the mobility hubs will satisfy this demand to integrate the different modes of transportation. Here, citizens will have the choice between different modes of transportation which suits best their needs. In the future we hope to transfer the concepts from our GrowSmarter project area to other parts of the city.

Finally, Cologne aims to be an advanced city in the field of the information and telecommunication technologies. There is no doubt that nearly all parts of economy are currently experiencing a revolution with the common availability of new modes of communication, artificial intelligence and information exchange. The cities need to provide at least parts of the necessary infrastructure for this revolution to be also in

the future among the advanced economic nations and to compete for investments with other regions mainly in Asia and North America. There is also no doubt that cities need to understand these technologies more precisely and to know what is really needed for a successful application of these fast changing and cross linked technologies. We will integrate the experience from our GrowSmarter participation into our strategy to make Cologne to a leading internet city in Germany and beyond and plan our investment into the necessary infrastructure accordingly.

It should be mentioned that the three just described areas of work have a very strong influence of citizens' participation. Especially housing and mobility is regarded among citizens of Cologne as the central problems. The integration of the public is therefore an important key stone to make the projects successful. To achieve a high level of acceptance and public participation, the city tries to reach out to the public with different public hearings and workshops. The city hall tries to integrate the wishes and concerns of the public into the daily work.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, besides all the useful project work you will certainly perform during these two or three days I hope you take some time to visit our beautiful city! Take a stroll along the River Rhine and make sure to visit our cathedral and finally have a "Kölsch" – the famous Cologne Beer.

Before I will wish all of you an interesting conference and working sessions let me express my sincere thanks to all the project managers in Stockholm, Barcelona and Cologne who prepared this conference. Special thanks are due to Rheinenergie and Kölner Verkehrs-Betriebe who support this meeting financially regarding the catering and the dinner today.

So I wish all of you a successful day and I'm looking forward to the results!