

Welcome to the Hanse-Office, the joint representation of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the Land Schleswig-Holstein to the EU. As the director of the Hanse-Office I am delighted to welcome you today to “Metropolises on the move”, our conference on cycling policy.

I am pleased to see how many of you came today to learn more about the challenges as well as the strategies for a lasting shift to cycling.

And I would like to extend a warm welcome to our speakers and panelists today.

Please allow me to say a few words about my hometown: Hamburg is a city of 1.8 million inhabitants with a busy economic life. With many trade links to the world, over the centuries our city has served as a transport hub and it will continue to do so. Commerce and industry thrive because of the well-connected position of Hamburg. No less than three core network corridors of the Trans European Network Transport are passing through our city.

As a growing city that creates jobs and wealth, Hamburg becomes ever more attractive for newcomers. It is therefore no wonder that the population has been steadily growing for a number of years, thereby also increasing the need for transport solutions. Hence, Hamburg is facing a number of complex transport challenges.

Maybe cycling is not what you automatically associate with Hamburg; and this is probably not much different when it comes to Brussels or, at least until recently, London.

Nonetheless, cycling has a long tradition in Hamburg: As early as 1908 the Senate of Hamburg adopted a “Hamburger Radverkehrsordnung”. This fine piece of legislation, however, did not aim at improving infrastructure or making

more people cycle, though. It was more about control and safety issues (“don’t frighten the horses”) so possibly a bit outdated...

So why are we so keen on cycling these days that I wear a tie in Hamburg red with bicycles on it and we even appointed a cycling coordinator (Kirsten Pfaue), who very kindly came today for the event to Brussels? Well, like almost all bigger – and also many smaller - European cities, Hamburg is confronted with dangerous levels of air pollution and has joined the battle against climate change early on. These challenges need to be tackled on the European level as much as locally, be it in Brussels, London or in Hamburg.

We all want our cities to be healthy and offering a high quality of life. Since cycling can definitely help achieve both objectives, we are currently looking for new ways to make using bicycles more attractive.

A shift to cycling requires good ideas. It also needs reliable governance and innovative project management structures to ensure success. The way forward is not going to be easy. And yet we are convinced: Cycling will be part of the solution, especially regarding clean air.

In Hamburg as elsewhere we are currently striving to improve air quality considerably, not least to comply with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive emission limits.

Though we do not have problems with particulate matter, we have to cope with too high a level of NO<sub>2</sub> – just like 28 other cities and urban areas in Germany. In Hamburg, the annual average limit of NO<sub>2</sub> has been exceeded on certain roads. This is something we are working on hard to change.

With the revised clean air action plan (Luftreinhalteplan Hamburg) adopted on 30 June this year, we have stepped up our measures to improve air quality. The

plan contains ten packages of measures, the second of which deals with cycling and provides measures to make more people cycle more. As we are expecting significant emission reductions to be achieved by implementing these measures, it is not surprising that cycling features so prominently in the clean air action plan.

But we don't stop there - cycling policy in Hamburg has recently been taken to a new level: On 23 June 2016, the Governing Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Olaf Scholz, along with other representatives of the Senate and the seven Hamburg boroughs, signed an agreement launching the so-called "Alliance for Cycling". The goal is to make Hamburg a cycle-friendly city and to increase the cycling rate within the modal split from now 12 % to 25% by the 2020s. This will require a well-developed cycling infrastructure which can safely be used all year round, alongside a comprehensive range of information and services.

My colleague from Hamburg, cycling coordinator Kirsten Pfaue, will later provide you with an overview about what exactly has been put in place and what still needs to be done. I am very happy that she is here today because she is perfectly placed to tell you all about this very concrete and hands-on-approach. Moreover, I am especially looking forward to learning more about the high-tech device downstairs which will be presented during the lunch break.

I am also really delighted that – in true European fashion – we will be able to hear about the challenges and solutions elsewhere because representatives from Brussels and London kindly will share their experiences with us. We very much appreciate that Pascal Smet, Minister for Transport and Public Works of the Brussels capital region, and Andrew Summers, Transport for London, are here with us today – thank you for coming!

In the good Hanse-Office tradition of facilitating a fruitful exchange of ideas and learning from each other we will discuss in depth which measures should be taken on a local and regional level. I hope that we will also talk openly about ideas and initiatives that have *not* worked because this is usually what brings us forward the most. I always tell my children that mistakes are a great opportunity to learn (and sometimes they even believe me).

There is, however, only as much we can do as cities to achieve the shift to cycling; which is why we need the support of the EU. Therefore, the second part of today's conference is dedicated to the role of cycling in European policies and their impact on European cities. It features a panel of representatives from the EU institutions as well as stakeholders and experts.

I am very glad that we have such excellent speakers for the second part and I would like to thank all of them for having agreed to share their views with us today. They are

Bas Eickhout MEP,

Maja Bakran Marcich (Deputy Director-General of DG MOVE),

Counsellor Kevin Peel (Member of the Committee of Regions),

Adam Bodor for the European Cyclists' Federation and

Philine Gaffron for Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg.

Finally, I should like to thank my two colleagues Judith Reuter and Sicco Rah for having organised this conference so well and will now hand over to them to run the show.