

15 October 2015

Welcome Remarks

HAMBURG – A GREEN EUROPEAN CAPITAL

EXHIBITION OPENING

Prof. H. Werner Hess

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Good evening – and thank you for coming to the opening event of our new round of 'Urban Innovations', with the city of Hamburg as its focus.

'Urban Innovations' is a specialized topical series of the European Union Academic Programme Hong Kong (EUAP) – itself a 'joint venture' between primarily HKBU, HKU and CUHK and the European Commission in Brussels. 'Urban Innovations' tries to bring information about cutting-edge urban development in the EU to HK and, equally important, to provide a platform from which HK knowhow can be made known to Europe. The long-term aim is to support dialogue in matters of great concern for both sides.

We present this exhibition and seminars within the larger framework of the European Union's major development goals, formulated in the so-called 'Strategy 2020'. The strategy streamlines policies to create a 'more resource efficient, greener & more competitive economy' by interlocking economic growth objectives with measures to protect the environment and to stem global climate change. Climate Change, with a forecast four-degree global warming by the 2060s will have dramatic impacts on us all if nothing is done now. The EU is reacting to this with very far-reaching policy initiatives, not

The European Union Academic Programme (EUAP) is a consortium of four universities in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Baptist University, The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Lingnan University), co-financed by the European Union. It is designed to strengthen EU-Hong Kong relations through academic work and enhance the understanding of the EU.



This project is co-funded
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least a special 'EU Cities Adapt' programme. 'EU Cities Adapt' organizes the exchange of knowledge at the urban level so that cities learn from each other.

As EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in his recent State of the Union Address in Strasbourg (9 September 2015), 'The fight against climate change will not be won or lost in diplomatic discussions in Brussels or Paris. It will be won or lost on the ground and in the cities where most Europeans live, work and use about 80% of all the energy produced in Europe'.

He is in good company here – because experts and academic research confirm this. In the analysis of Prof. Benjamin Barber of the City University New York, cities are the places where real direct action can be taken most efficiently, and networks of cities worldwide are now committed to sustainability goals. Prof. Gerhard Stahl, the former Secretary General of the EU's Committee of the Regions, even speaks of the gradual formation of European 'multi-governance', whereby regions and cities take on increasingly important roles. That sounds boringly theoretical. But this multilateral urban cooperation is in fact a largely untold European success story. To understand it we need to look closely at what cities do in very practical terms and how they spread 'best practice' information among themselves. That is the purpose of this exhibition.

Hamburg is Germany's second-largest city and in many ways comparable to Hong Kong. It is in a top group of European metropolitan areas, all of them prime movers on the road towards a 'green' low-carbon economy, while at the same time staying economically competitive and socially equitable. For its consistently high environmental standards and the ambitious 'green' goals of its public administration, the EU has awarded Hamburg the title 'European Green Capital' 2011 – the first German city to be so called (the 2nd will be Essen in 2017).



This award was the initial trigger for us to invite the city to come here and present its urban planning concepts and many practical examples of 'green' projects – including in its enormous harbour. I am grateful that Hamburg city officials graciously accepted this invitation.

The EUAP was therefore able to work out the exhibition and nine conferences and seminars, from now until November. Topics range from air quality in port cities to 'green' building prototypes, from 'clean' modes of urban transport to 'green (urban) zones' and renewable energy mixes – and on to the all-important issue of social fairness and dialogue with citizens. It will even give us a glimpse of Hamburg's possible future as the host of 'green' and 'sustainable' Olympic Games in 2024. The series should also give, of course, a first insight into the expert networks of European cities (of which Hamburg is a part) and in which colleagues from our local partner universities are also involved in various ways.

We are in a special place here. I would like to express our great thanks to City Gallery and the Planning Department of the Hong Kong Government for being our hosts for this dialogue series in this very prominent, public location. I would like to highlight that financial support from the EU and the local universities have enabled us to offer the events for free (including extra guided tours for young students or NGOs) – significant in a city where discussions often take place in settings with high cover charges for entry and therefore all too often for privileged 'members only'.

Let me also thank our other partners the Environment Bureau of the HK Government, the Energizing Kowloon East Office, the Green Building Council and the Business Environment Council, Civic Exchange, Designing Hong Kong and all other civil society organizations for their steadfast support of the EUAP.



Our gratitude also goes to the Department of Urban Planning and Housing of the City of Hamburg, the Hamburg Port Authority, Mrs. Anne Thiesen, representative of the Port of Hamburg in HK, and Her Excellency Consul Mrs. Helga Weber of the German Consulate General for tirelessly working with us to make this exhibition and seminars possible. As they all know, it was not an easy thing to arrange.

A very special 'thank you' has to go to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for their persistent, unwavering support of 'Urban Innovations'. Without the Foundation's Energy and Climate Office here in HK, we would not be here tonight.

I hope you will all enjoy the exhibition and the events to come (and find them useful).

But before I finish, I would like you to join in a final thanks to the greatest EUAP team on earth who curated this exhibition and have made the Hong Kong Hamburg encounter possible with lots of hard, over-time preparation work:

- Doris Lee Pui-ying
- Leung Kin Pong
- Martin Ho

and special contributors

- Oranch Cheung Chi-Chung
- Weronika Cycak
- Lennart Albrecht.
- Jessica Leung

Thank you.

