UNITE NEWS
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A WORD FROM
THE LORD MAYOR

"UNITE - eleven cities. One celebration" was the motto of our big meeting with twin municipalities in June 2018. In a globalised world, uniting with others should be a priority for all cities and municipalities. I believe that in order to address the key global challenges of our time, such as climate change or rapid technological progress, we have to work together across national borders. Together, we can accomplish more than alone.

This said, I am proud that Oldenburg is a truly cosmopolitan and international city. We have ten sister municipalities and are part of a wide network spanning the Netherlands, Denmark, England, France, Russia, Israel, China, South Africa and Germany. The cross-country partnerships cover all areas of social life, including culture, economy, environmental protection, urban development and science.

We have developed meaningful exchanges with our partners, and work together on many projects. This newsletter will bring you up to date on the latest developments and show our deep commitment to our twin municipalities.

Jürgen Kroghmann, Lord Mayor
SUCCESSFUL DELEGATION VISIT TO CHINA.

In early April 2019, an Oldenburg delegation led by Jürgen Krogmann, the Lord Mayor of Oldenburg, returned from a seven-day trip to China. The trip was designed to foster an emotional relationship with the cities Qingdao and Xi’an. Other participants included city council representatives, three councillors, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Lehrhoff from the University of Oldenburg and IFITS Institute as well as Thorsten Janker, the Director of the Federal Technology Center for Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (BET). This visit has brought the China activities a big step forward. The trip was characterized by strong emotional bonds. On our return, the Lord Mayor, Jürgen Krogmann, said: "We have a lot to learn from these relationships. We can develop a common education project with the vocational school in Qingdao, which we have been collaborating with for some years. The students can learn from each other and develop a common education project." We were able to make new contacts and nurture existing relationships. We also signed an agreement for a joint educational project with the vocational school in the City of Oldenburg. We were able to sign a contract with the City of Oldenburg to support the development of the new vocational school in Qingdao. We have been working with the school since 2015 and have been impressed by the good cooperation.

We can learn from the systematic approach that China has adopted in bringing technologies such as e-mobility to the market.

"After my first visit three years ago, we made a travel agreement for a joint educational project with the vocational school in Qingdao. This would have been impossible without the good contacts with the Chinese," says Thorsten Janker, the Director of the Federal Technology Center for Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (BET).

NURTURING AND DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

For Ralph Wilken, the new Head of the Oldenburg Department of Business Development, it had been the first trip to China. "I perceived the Chinese business development and economic promotion agencies to be keenly interested in learning more about the German market. This is where we were able to play to our strengths," he said. "We are proud that cities with several million inhabitants show an interest in Oldenburg.

The delegation from Oldenburg was welcomed by the mayors of Qingdao and Xi’an, respectively, both of which have over a million inhabitants. "It is interesting to see how differently matters of protocol are handled and how quickly topics can become binding," says Frank Hartwich, Head of the Lord Mayor’s Office in the City of Oldenburg. "China has a strictly hierarchical structure but also values interpersonal contact. Therefore, receptions at the mayor level hold a lot of potential and frequently open doors."

Talking Social Topics and Political Systems

"We were able to talk about the different political systems," says councillor Bernhard Lelberg. "During our visit of the political consultation, we learned more about its advisory role and the work of the political committees. The trip has been inspirational for our work in the Oldenburg city council, especially in the field of economic development."

The children and teenagers showed their talent in class, during playful robot building, calligraphy or drawing sand pictures. This was truly rewarding experience," said councillor Klaus Raschke. In councillor Manfred Künzer, the city archive of Qingdao evokes memories of Wilhelmshaven, his home-town: "Germany wanted to set up a base and laid the foundation of today’s metropolis. A lot of records tell of these events which also taught us how history is dealt with from a present point of view."

The delegation in the old German School (MAG) of the Lord Mayor Jürgen Krogmann. Dr. Jürgen, the new President of the MAG, Photo: City of Oldenburg
"LOCAL ACTIONS HAVE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS."

Dr. Doris Witteler-Steigelmann

By signing the draft resolution ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Designing Sustainability at the Local Level’ of Deutscher Städtebau (Association of German Cities) and of the German section of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Oldenburg already demonstrated its commitment to sustainable development both locally and internationally back in 2016.

“We are already implementing the Agenda 2030 at the local level, for example within the scope of a joint project on water pollution control with our sister municipality Buffalo City Metropolitan in South Africa, in municipal development cooperation policy, by examining our own procurement activities and promoting Oldenburg’s process to earn the Fair Trade Town Status,” Lord Mayor Jürgen Kriemann points out.

During a networking event of the “Club of the Agenda 2030 Communities” in Bonn in May 2018, Dr. Doris Witteler-Steigelmann from the federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development presented the certificate of recognition for signing the draft resolution to the City of Oldenburg.

“The Agenda 2030 and its 17 goals for sustainable development are a global future contract. Implementing the Agenda 2030 can only succeed together with the municipalities, because topics such as mobility, environmental protection, education and sustainable consumption/procurement are relevant at the local level. Municipalities around the globe are facing similar challenges. They are uniquely prepared to give each other advice in their search for custom solutions. German municipalities are aware of their global responsibility. Because local actions have global implications. By signing the draft resolution, Oldenburg is making a clear statement that it is committed to sustainability,” said Dr. Doris Witteler-Steigelmann.

SINCE THEN, A LOT OF STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE AGENDA 2030 AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

1. A project with Oldenburg’s sister municipality Buffalo City Metropolitan in South Africa on water pollution control under the Partnership Projects for Sustainable Local Development programme (Makupe) by Engagement Global of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Since 1st August 2018, the City of Oldenburg has had a coordinator for municipal development cooperation whose function is to promote development aid activities.

2. During the two-year project, the coordinator will focus on the three central topics of sustainable and fair municipal procurement, fair trade awareness in the Oldenburg urban society, and cooperation with the sister municipalities in South Africa and China. In this function, she also supervised Oldenburg’s successful application process to become a Fair Trade Town.

3. Oldenburg is one of twelve model municipalities that aim to create local sustainability reports by the end of 2019 within the scope of the “Lower Saxony Global Sustainable Municipality” project. In a first step, the city is currently taking stock of activities across local government departments that can be assigned to the 17 sustainable development goals of the Agenda 2030.
UNITE CONNECT

BIENVENUE – RECEPTION FOR PUPILS FROM CHOLET

From 28th March to 4th April 2019, pupils of Collège Privé Notre-Dame du Bretonnon from Chiolet in France visited Oldenburg together with their teachers. The young people had come to meet their exchange counterparts from the Alexanderstraße and Oldenbeck secondary schools within the scope of the student exchange programme. On 29th March, Mayor Petra Averbäck welcomed the French visitors in the spacious club area of the PFL cultural centre. It was their first time in Oldenburg and some had never been to Germany before. Spring weather was at its finest as the group and Petra Averbäck lined up for a photoshoot against the impressive backdrop of the PFL. In the following days, the exchange participants had a busy schedule, including insights into everyday life at a German school, a day full of activity with bouldering and visits to the Klimahaus interactive museum and to Bremen. During a hearty meal of kale and a kale stew, the guests got a taste of regional tradition. After a farewell party with parents, the guests boarded their coach back to France the evening of 4th April.

GRONINGEN SUGAR REFINERY

Following a visit of employees from several departments of the Groningen city government to the Oldenburg airbase some time ago, their Oldenburg counterparts set off for a return visit to the area of the former sugar refinery in the Dutch twin town in April 2019.

The area, which has been purchased by the City of Groningen, is used and developed for various purposes with the aim of integrating it into the urban landscape in the long run.

The working visit was kicked off with several presentations, including information on the temporary use of the site, the plans until 2030, and the future of the sugar refinery. The Oldenburg visitors in turn presented an updated summary of the air base. Next, a bicycle tour of the premises enabled the participants to visit several of the projects accommodated at the site, including a co-working area that provides new and inspiring working environments in construction trailers and camps, various event locations for festivals, parties such as weddings or large-scale events, and companies such as an architecture firm on the former factory premises.

THE MAYOR OF CHOLET VISITING OLDENBURG

The French visitors accompanied by Oldenburg’s Lord Mayor, Jürgen Königmann, also visited the EWE Baskets. The agenda of the visit also included the home game of the EWE Baskets against Gießen on 30th April, which the Oldenburg team won. Wishing to learn more about the sports venue of the EWE Baskets, the French guests talked to the management of the EWE Baskets and the operator of the sports arena, the Weser-Ems Halle Oldenburger GmbH & Co. KG. Chiolet also has a top-class basketball team, the Chiolet Basket, which plays in the first league like Oldenburg. In 2010, the Chiolet Basket was the French national champion; the EWE Baskets earned the national title in 2009.

EXCHANGE ON START-UPS AND FOUNDATION

The Mayor of Chiolet, Michel Champion, visited the startup center Oldenburg on 29th and 30th April 2019, accompanied by a delegation from the city of Chiolet. This visit to the startup center Oldenburg was part of the exchange of visits and student exchanges between the city of Chiolet and Oldenburg. During his visit, Michel Champion, the Deputy Mayor of Chiolet, had participated in the startup center Oldenburg’s activities and attended the startup center’s events, including listening to guest speakers and discussing startup projects with the startup center’s management. The visit was part of a series of visits by Chiolet’s representatives to Oldenburg, which aim to strengthen the economic and cultural ties between the two cities.

TOP ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

Michel Champion, Jürgen Königmann and Gilles Bourdoulex, the French delegate, wear the Summit Jackets made by the company that sponsored the event. The Summit Jackets are specially designed for the event and feature the company’s logo. The jackets are made from high-quality materials and provide excellent protection against the elements. The Summit Jackets are an essential piece of equipment for the French delegation, who will be spending a lot of time outdoors during the event.

RECEPTION FOR FRIENDS FROM GERMANY AND FRANCE

On 28th February 2019, Mayor Christine Wolff welcomed members of the French-German associations from Chiolet and Oldenburg. Ten members of the Chiolet-France-Allemagne Association, which promotes French-German relations in Chiolet and especially the partnership with Oldenburg, as well as several dozen members of the association’s German counterpart, the DFG, followed the invitation to the Oldenburg town hall. The French guests stayed in Oldenburg from 27th February to 3rd March 2019. Discovering culinary delights: On 1st March, the DFG organised a kale tour through the Oldenburg city centre for the French and German participants. On 2nd March, the visitors first attended an organ concert in St. Lambert’s Church during market hours followed by a tour of the church by organist Tobias Götting. The principal of a vocational school in Chiolet used the trip to discuss the Erasmus+ programme with partner schools in Oldenburg. Following a belated celebration of the anniversary of Chiolet-France-Allemagne, which had turned 20 in 2018, the guests resumed their tour on 3rd March.
2018: IN THE MOOD FOR PREMIERES IN OLDENBURG.

"UNITE - eleven cities: one celebration" - This was the motto of a major meeting with twin cities which took place from 30th May to 3rd June 2018 for the first time. Participants included delegations from Groningen (the Netherlands), Horsens (Denmark), Vorpommern-Rügen (Germany), Kingston upon Thames (England), Cholet (France), Malakhatkala (Russia), Mateh Asher (Israel), Xi'an (China) and Qingdao (China). From 30th May, the delegations from the twin municipalities arrived in Oldenburg and were welcomed by Lord Mayor, Jürgen Kroogmann, in the PFL cultural centre a day later. In addition to well-attended expert workshops on topics such as culture, science, economy and urban development, representatives from Cholet, Groningen, Kingston upon Thames, Mateh Asher and Xi'an showed a keen interest in economic cooperation. Other stops included the Departments of Business and Digital Development of the City of Oldenburg, the Oldenburg Computer Museum and meetings with the TVG and one of its resident companies. Trips to the air base of "Haus der Völker" centre for hearing research were also met with much interest.

"I found the tour of the air base particularly interesting as well as the fact that the former military area will become a whole new district."

Yoram Israel, county commissioner of the Mateh Asher county in Israel.

On 3rd June 2018, Oldenburg citizens and the representatives of the partner municipalities celebrated the big farewell ceremony on the Schlossplatz square. Participants from Oldenburg showcased their varied projects with the sister municipalities in marque tents such as the University of Oldenburg, the vocational schools, the Regional Environmental Education Center, the Shandy Choir, the Oldenbeker Leisure Center, the RBB Oldenburg, the French German Society (BfG), the German-Chinese Friendship Society and Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg secondary school. A colourful stage programme with improvisational theatre, live music and contributions from China and Groningen among others provided lively entertainment. Activities for children and a varied selection of food and beverages made the event complete. Before the last delegation headed home on 3rd June and in the weeks after UNITE, there was so much positive feedback on the new event format that it is set to be repeated in 2020.
OLDENBURG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Action! Each autumn, the Oldenburg International Film Festival creates a sense of Hollywood in the city on the Ilmte river. The combination of sophisticated and attractive content has earned the Oldenburg festival a place among the top events for independent cinema in Europe.
www.filmtfest-oldenburg.de | different venues

UK ENCOUNTERS
20 OCT. – 30 NOV. 2019
Project partners of the "UK Encounters 2019" meet in the MFIL cultural centre. Photo: City of Oldenburg.
The City of Oldenburg continues its "Encounter" cultural and informational series with this year’s focus on the UK. From 20th October, the project series will present a differentiated, entertaining and sometimes surprising picture of the United Kingdom at various venues in Oldenburg.
www.begegnungen2019.de

IT’S KALE TIME!
3 NOV. 2019
Kale Day to celebrate the kick-off of the kale season with various providers who will present their version of the cabbage, including Sunday shopping.
www.kohltoeurhauptstadt.de | Rathausmarkt, 26122 OL

PROMOTIEDAGEN
5 NOV. – 6 NOV. 2019
Annual business-to-business expo in Groningen with participation of the City of Oldenburg. For further information, please contact: Britta Kern, telephone: +49 441 235-3776, e-mail: britta.kern@stadt-oldenburg.de
www.promotiogagen.nl | Martiniplaza Groningen, Leonard Springerlaan 2, 9727 KB Groningen

KIBUM
9 NOV. – 19 NOV. 2019
Since 1974, the City of Oldenburg and the University of Oldenburg have hosted the KIBUM children and youth’s book fair together, which comprises a varied event programme for KIBUM visitors big and small, including readings, presentations, workshops, exhibitions, theatre performances and films.
www.kibum-oldenburg.de | different venues

LAMBERTI MARKET
26 NOV. – 22 DEC. 2019
Hot beverages, roasted almonds and Christmas gifts: Some 125 festively decorated stalls will attract visitors to the area between Rathausmarkt and Schlossplatz to get in the mood for Christmas again this year.
www.oldenburg.de/lambertimarkt | Rathausmarkt, 26122 OL