



UNITE NEWS

01|2019

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LEGAL NOTICE

Editor



Lord Mayor
Mayor's Office
www.oldenburg.de/internationale-beziehungen

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A WORD FROM THE LORD MAYOR

"UN!TE – 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.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jürgen K".

Jürgen Krogmann, 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 trade mission to China. The nine delegates had visited Oldenburg's sister cities Qingdao and Xi'an. Other participants included city council representatives, three councillors, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Lehnhoff from the University of Oldenburg and OFFIS Institute as well as Thorsten Janßen, the Director of the Federal Technology Center for Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (BFE).

"This visit has brought the China activities a big step forward. I am pleased that we were able to make many new contacts and nurture existing relationships. We also signed an agreement for a concrete educational project with a vocational school," the Lord Mayor, Jürgen Krogmann, says excitedly. "Furthermore, we were able to extend the cooperation agreement with the Sino-German Ecopark (SGEP) for another three years." More initiatives were agreed upon in the field of education, science and business development.

SCIENCE AND DUAL EDUCATION

It was probably Prof. Dr. Sebastian Lehnhoff from the University of Oldenburg and OFFIS Institute who returned from the trip with the heaviest workload. "Visiting the Xixian development zone was one of many highlights of this journey. The visit has inspired me in many different ways. In addition to discussing the transfer of IT innovations to the German market, we initiated discussions on exchange programmes for scientists and research collaborations.

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

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Lehnhoff

"After my first visit three years ago and an e-learning sponsoring project arranged for and supervised by the City of Oldenburg, we were now able to sign a concrete agreement with the vocational school of the Qingdao development zone. This would have been impossible without the good contacts to the SGEP. Soon, Chinese vocational students will use our software to learn the basics of electrical engineering," says Thorsten Janßen, the Director of the Federal Technology Center for Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (BFE).

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. I am 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 Hinrichs, Head of the Lord Mayor's Office of 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."



Reception by Prof. Dr. Mingyuan Li, the Mayor of Xi'an. Photo: City of Oldenburg



Reception by Fanli Meng, the Mayor of Qingdao. Photo: City of Oldenburg

TALKING SOCIAL TOPICS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS



A tour of 89th Middle School in Xi'an, a partner school of AGO secondary school. Photo: City of Oldenburg

"We were able to talk about the different political systems," says councillor Bernhard Ellberg. "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.

"I will fondly remember the school for children with hearing impairments. As in the other schools we visited, we experienced some highly emotional moments there."

Councillor Klaus Raschke

The children and teenagers showed their talent in class, during playful robot building, calligraphy or drawing sand pictures. This was a truly rewarding experience," said councillor Klaus Raschke. In councillor Manfred Klöpper, the city archive of Qingdao evoked memories of Wilhelmshaven, his native 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 talks with the educational office of the City of Xi'an were further fleshed out this year. We expect to welcome Chinese teachers in Oldenburg secondary schools and vocational schools already this year," says Yu Wang from the China Office of the City of Oldenburg. The delegation also visited the 89th Middle School in Xi'an which participates in regular student exchanges with the "Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg" secondary school.



Photo: Anja Kückelmann | jana-fotografiert.de

"LOCAL ACTIONS HAVE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS."

Dr. Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann



Dr. Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann (left) and Dr. Stefan Wilhelmy (right) present the certificate of recognition to Frank Hinrichs (left centre) and Ann-Kathrin Bromund (right centre) from the City of Oldenburg. Photo: Martin Magunia

By signing the draft resolution "2030-Agenda for Sustainable Development: Designing Sustainability at the Local Level" of *Deutscher Städtetag* (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 Fairtrade Town Status," Lord Mayor Jürgen Krogmann points out.

During a networking event of the "Club of the Agenda 2030 Communities" in Bonn in May 2019, Dr. Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann 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 / fair 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-Stiepelmann.

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 (Nakopa) by Engagement Global of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

2

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

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 Bretonnais from Cholet in France visited Oldenburg together with their teachers. The young people had come to meet their exchange counterparts from the *Alexanderstraße* and *Ofenerdiek* secondary schools within the scope of the student exchange programme. On 29th March, Mayor Petra Averbek 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 Averbek lined up for a photo shoot 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 tour, the guests got a taste of regional tradition. After a farewell party with parents, the guests boarded their coach back to France on the evening of 4th April.

GRONINGEN SUGAR REFINERY

Following a visit of employees from several departments of the Groningen city government to the Oldenburg air base 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.



Presentation on the future of the sugar refinery. Photo: City of Oldenburg

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 campers, 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



Dirtje Gradtke (City of Oldenburg), Andreas Wylenzek (AWB), Gilles Bourdouleix, Michel Champion, interpreter and Volker Schneider-Kühn (AWB) in front of the entry of the AWB in Wehdestraße. Photo: City of Oldenburg

Sport and innovation were the two central topics during the visit of Mayor Gilles Bourdouleix and his Deputy Michel Champion in Oldenburg on 29th and 30th April 2019. On the first day of their stay, the French guests visited the waste management company (AWB) to learn about the successful "*Oldenburg räumt auf*" (Oldenburg cleans up) programme launched in 1999 with participants increasing from 150 to more than 6,000 today. A "citizenship day" including a clean-up event was organised in Cholet in May, but attendance was much lower compared to Oldenburg.

EXCHANGE ON START-UPS AND FOUNDATION



Michel Champion, Dirtje Gradtke (City of Oldenburg), Gilles Bourdouleix, interpreter, Roland Hentschel (City of Oldenburg), Oliver Benkel (GO! Start-up Center), Kathrin Siemer (City of Oldenburg) in front of a blackboard showing the resident companies of the TGO. Photo: City of Oldenburg

Michel Champion, the Deputy Mayor of Cholet, had participated in UNITE in 2018 (see following page 11), visiting the Technology and Start-up Center Oldenburg (TGO) among others. This year, Gilles Bourdouleix, the Mayor of Cholet, visited the TGO himself to get a picture of the varied portfolio the center provides to prospective entrepreneurs and start-ups. Inside the TGO, the guests learned all about municipal Department of Business Development services for prospective entrepreneurs and start-ups and about the GO! Start-up Center, a project of the TGO. The Founding and Innovation Center (GIZ) of the University of Oldenburg next provided insights into start-up promotion at the university level.

TOP ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE



Michel Champion, Jürgen Krogmann and Gilles Bourdouleix. Champion and Bourdouleix wearing scarves of the EWE Baskets which Jürgen Krogmann had given them. Photo: City of Oldenburg

The French visitors accompanied by Oldenburg's Lord Mayor, Jürgen Krogmann, 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 Oldenburg GmbH & Co. KG. Cholet also has a top-class basketball team, the Cholet Basket, which plays in the first league like Oldenburg. In 2010, the Cholet Basket was the French national champion; the EWE Baskets earned the national title in 2009.

RECEPTION FOR FRIENDS FROM GERMANY AND FRANCE



Jean-Luc Moreau (President of the CFA), Catherine Rüppell (First Chairwoman of the DFG) and Mayor Christine Wolff during the reception in the Old Town Hall. Photo: City of Oldenburg

On 28th February 2019, Mayor Christine Wolff welcomed members of the French-German associations from Cholet and Oldenburg. Ten members of the Cholet-France-Allemagne Association, which promotes French-German relations in Cholet 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 Old 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 Cholet used the trip to discuss the Erasmus+ programme with partner schools in Oldenburg. Following a belated celebration of the anniversary of Cholet-France-Allemagne, which had turned 20 in 2018, the guests returned to Cholet on 3rd March.

2018: IN THE MOOD FOR PREMIERES IN OLDENBURG.



Photos: kaleff/Fotolia.com, _human/istock.com

* CARE FOR SOME KALE? THEN 3RD NOVEMBER 2019 IS THE DATE TO MARK IN YOUR DIARY.
Learn more on the page after the next.



Photo: Janina Rahn

READING MATERIAL

At the request of Lord Mayor Krogmann, the delegations had brought books about their towns which are exhibited in the public library in the PFL. In November 2018, the international corner on Oldenburg's twin municipalities was inaugurated in the public library in the PFL culture centre in the presence of a delegation from South Africa that also presented books from Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality on this occasion. Unfortunately, it had not been possible for the South African sister municipality to participate in "UN!TE".

"UN!TE – 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), Høje-Taastrup (Denmark), Vorpommern-Rügen (Germany), Kingston upon Thames (England), Cholet (France), Makhachkala (Russia), Mateh Asher (Israel), Xi'an (China) and Qingdao (China). From 30th May, the delegates from the twin municipalities arrived in Oldenburg and were welcomed by Lord Mayor, Jürgen Krogmann, 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 TGO and one of its resident companies. Trips to the air base or "Haus des Hörens" centre for hearing research were also met with much interest.



Performance of Chinese musicians. Photo: City of Oldenburg

On 2nd 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 marquee tents such as the University of Oldenburg, the vocational schools, the Regional Environmental Education Center, the Shanty Choir, the Ofenerdiek Leisure Center, the BBK Oldenburg, the French-German Society (DFG), 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 UN!TE, there was so much positive feedback on the new event format that it is set to be repeated in 2020.

"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 Israeli, county commissioner of the Mateh Asher county in Israel.

UNITE PREVIEW

**11 SEP. –
15 SEP.**
2019

OLDENBURG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Action! Each autumn, the Oldenburg International Film Festival creates a sense of Hollywood in the city on the Hunte 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.filmfest-oldenburg.de | different venues

**20 OCT. –
30 NOV.**
2019

UK ENCOUNTERS



Project partners of the "UK Encounters 2019" meet in the PFL 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

3 NOV.
2019

IT'S KALE TIME!

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.kohltourhauptstadt.de | Rathausmarkt, 26122 OL

**5 NOV. –
6 NOV.**
2019

PROMOTIEDAGEN

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.promotiedagen.nl | Martiniplaza Groningen, Leonard Springerlaan 2, 9727 KB Groningen

**9 NOV. –
19 NOV.**
2019

KIBUM

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

**26 NOV. –
22 DEC.**
2019

LAMBERTI MARKET

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