The magazine of the EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL – Essen 2017

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PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW OF THE YEAR

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GREEN CAPITALS

THE GREEN CAPITAL TEAM

ESSAY

TITEL STORY

JOINT INTERVIEW ...

... with Thomas Kufen and Simone Raskob

MY GREEN ESSEN GREENS UP ITS LIFE

MY PATH MOBILITY OF THE FUTURE

MY RIVERS JOIE DE VIVRE BY THE WATER

MY SHOPPING SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN ESSEN

MY FUTURE ESSEN SHOWS ITS TRANSFORMATION SKILLS

EDITORIAL

FOR AN EXCLUSIVE REPORT ON THIS TOPIC, PLEASE VISIT: www.essengreen.capital

The year of the European Green Capital – Essen 2017 is over, but the idea behind it lives on. In a joint interview, Essen’s Lord Mayor Thomas Kufen and Head of the Environmental and Building Department Simone Raskob explain the targets that have been achieved and the challenges Essen and the region still face.

Mr. Kufen, Ms. Raskob, we have reached the end of the year of the European Green Capital – Essen 2017. What were the green highlights for you personally?

Kufen: Key green highlights were the opportunities to meet with the citizens who were running their own projects. This allowed us to demonstrate that the Green Capital was not an event organised by the municipal authority, or by some scientists and researchers, but backed by the entire region. It were the residents of Essen themselves who initiated the change process, and they still are a major component of it. During the past year they showed their green side, as much with an insect hotel as with the ‘Sponsor a Stream’ initiative, or by getting involved in cleaning up their district.

Raskob: One particularly emotional project was certainly the opening of the Seaside Beach swimming spot in May. I think it was an amazing result that, after more than 40 years, we were once again able to open the river Ruhr to the public for swimming, especially since we had to comply with the extremely strict European Bathing Water Directive. We will continue to enjoy the swimming in the future, and with the citizens who were running their own projects. This is our Achilles’ heel during the application process.

When you look back on the long road from submitting the application until today, have you been able to turn the many projects envisioned in the application into reality? Did you achieve your goals?

Raskob: The Green Capital year was a year of beginnings. We set goals for ourselves that applied not just in 2017, but which will continue to point the way forward over the next ten years, in what we call a Green Decade. I think we managed to call increased attention to these goals, and we raised awareness of mobility issues in particular. That was our Achilles’ heel during the application process.

Mr. Kufen, Ms. Raskob just mentioned the topic: Mobility was the most challenging subject for Essen already in the application phase. Now Essen – just as other German cities is facing a ban on diesel vehicles next spring, following a complaint filed by the environmental organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe. What has the European Green Capital achieved in terms of mobility?

Kufen: Above all, we managed to make clear how diverse the topic of mobility is in our city. We have firm targets that we intend to adhere to. These also include improving the cycling infrastructure and increasing foot traffic, as well as the proportion accounted for by local public transport. We are working on a process, for which a master plan is currently being developed, to further entrunch the subject of air quality and air pollution control more deeply in Essen. When it comes to mobility, it still remains to be seen where we go from here. First steps have already been taken.

What aspects of your city have changed the most as a result of being the Green Capital City?

Kufen: I think we have succeeded in presenting a new image of the region, and of our home town Essen. This image has not just changed in the perception of the residents of Essen. We also managed to project this image of a city in a state of transformation out into the world. The interest in Essen as the European Green Capital is unabated. I honestly could not have imagined that a report on the Emscher conversion project would one day be aired on Italian television. Still, this is only one example of the amazing things we have achieved.

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What will the Ruhr Metropolis take with it into the future that is derived from Essen being the Green Capital City? And what is the title’s significance for the city’s international perception and focus?

Kufen: The selection criteria of the European Commission state that only a city can apply, not a region. Following our success as the European Capital of Culture in 2010, we were happy to assume this function of standard bearer for the region for a second time. But we are not doing it just for ourselves. This is more about how we can change the perception of both the City of Essen and the region as a whole. There are always people from outside North Rhine-Westphalia who still think everything in this region is grey due to coal dust. Now we have been able to surprise the entire world with the region’s green side. Today we are a modern, cosmopolitan, tolerant metropolis with great people, a high quality of life, and above all excellent transformation skills. This is what we take with us into the future. This is what we want to demonstrate, and I believe this is what has been the great success of the Green Capital year.
The Green Capital is not just about green, but also about blue infrastructure. What goals have been achieved in terms of water, and what are the next steps?

Raskob: It has been a fantastic year together with the two German water management associations Emschergenossenschaft and Ruhrverband. The key project of the Em Scher conversion is “ESSEN-New ways to the water”, which has been reflected in over 500 projects since 2005. We have renaturalised 26 streams, and have just a few other measures left between now and 2021. The idea of connecting the Ruhr and Emscher river valleys with a system of green belts and waterways is also shown in the logo of the Green Capital City of Essen. It was brilliantly masterminded during the planning stage and will be sustainably implemented in the coming years.

What does an urban area, a major city like Essen, have to offer in terms of biodiversity?

Raskob: Let us take the ‘GEO Nature Day’ as an example: Explorers of all ages discovered and charted the sensational heritage site Zollverein Park, including new species that explorers of all ages discovered and charted the sensation.

Raskob: What does an urban area, a major city like Essen, have to offer in terms of biodiversity?

Raskob: Particularly when it comes to environmental management, Essen was already able to score points in the application stage. We have almost 13,000 permanent jobs in this cluster. The latest environmental management report from the state government shows that one in four jobs in the environmental management sector is in the Ruhr Region. We hope to be able to offer around 20,000 jobs by 2025. The environmental management industry and its growth potential are thus making a substantial contribution to structural change.

After the European Capital of Culture year, there was a discussion about how sustainable the large-scale RUHR.2010 project was. How sustainable is the European Green Capital – Essen 2017?

Kufen: At the start of the Green Capital year, I said, “We still have a ways to go, but the key is to start down the path.” On this path we have already achieved so much, transforming from what used to be the largest coal, iron and steel city into a city that earned the award of “European Green Capital.” Naturally – and I consider this just as important – we want an effective team working of the employees who worked in the Project Office with those of the Klimawerkstatt Essen. We want to avoid duplicate structures within the administration, but have an effective team working on the implementation of Green Capital goals in the future. In addition, we want to present a progress report every two years, and ask ourselves the question, “How have we developed?” The vision of a city worth living in is not just a matter for the Environmental Department, but is a task for the government as a whole.

Mr. Kufen, Ms. Raskob just addressed the topic: what has the city’s administration learned from the Green Capital year?

Kufen: I found it truly impressive how every last part of the administration – from the Youth Welfare Office, the Schools Administration Office and the Building Administration Office, as well as the subject areas traditionally organised by the Environmental Office – not only warmed up the idea of the Green Capital, but in fact became deeply involved in it. The first workshops on sustainability have already been held with all the Councillors and all representatives of the political groupings. This is the spirit we take with us. But once again, I would like to emphasise: this is not just the responsibility of the municipal authority. We want to be the driving force, the initiator. It is the citizens, the businesses, scientists, and not least industry that will have to act on these subjects and move them forward. Only then can we successfully carry the spirit of the Green Capital into the future.

Almost 60 conventions and conferences provided important momentum in the Green Capital Year. What do you hope to gain from the ongoing collaboration in the Green Cities network?

Raskob: I think people have recognised that, with our experience from the Capital of Culture, the International Building Exhibition and now the Green Capital, we are a metropolis that is well positioned to share our knowledge throughout Europe. We will be offering an international platform on central topics, and regularly exchange information and ideas. As such, we will remain a valuable partner for the international networks in the future.

At the regional level, the IGA International Horticultural Exhibition will be held in the Ruhr area in 2027. What are some of Essen’s other goals on this journey to next large-scale project?

Raskob: I think the decisive project for us is the Emscher conversion. After a construction period of over 30 years, the ecological renaturalisation of this river and all its tributary stream systems is an enormous gift for the region. Additionally, there will be the KlimaExpo.NRW 2022. Those are the major milestones in this decade.

Kufen: Above all, we have to focus on the fact that we can only achieve more when we work together. Not saying “Essen is the Green Capital and that’s that,” but seeing ourselves as the standard bearer for the region. This is why we are happy to take a step back when it comes to preparing for the International Garden Exhibition (IGA) 2027. I believe that we can make a difference based on our Green Capital status, and above all that we can make clear that the future lies in networking, partnership projects and in particular in working together between different municipal administrations.

The interview was conducted by Guido Schweiß-Gerwin.

Tip: You can find a video of the complete interview at www.heimatgruen.ruhr

“The Green Capital Year was a year of beginnings. We set goals for ourselves that apply not just in 2017, but which will continue to point the way forward over the next ten years, in what we call a Green Decade.”

Simone Raskob, Head of the Environmental and Building Department of the City of Essen

Now that the Green Capital year is over, how will the follow-up processes be organised in the longer term, also in terms of personnel?

Raskob: There are initial considerations and we want an effective team working of the employees who worked in the Project Office with those of the Klimawerkstatt Essen. We want to avoid duplicate structures within the administration, but have an effective team working on the implementation of Green Capital goals in the future. In addition, we want to present a progress report every two years, and ask ourselves the question, “How have we developed?” The vision of a city worth living in is not just a matter for the Environmental Office, but is a task for the government as a whole.

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We remain committed to the rapid implementation of the RS1 plans in the Elting district, and to increasing bicycle traffic in Essen to account for 25% of all traffic.

JÖRG ALTHOFF
Chairman of German Cyclist’s Association Essen

The Green Decade is an acknowledgment, but also a challenge for us as green planners, gardeners and foresters – because what we have created needs to be permanently maintained, while also being carefully developed. A city and its green spaces are therefore ongoing tasks in the true sense of sustainability.

HANS JOACHIM AUGUSTIN
Departmental Manager for Grün & Gruga

“SauberZauber” Record 17,000 people (2016: 13,000) participating in the clean-up campaign

HANS PETER HUCH
Chairman of the Committee for the Environment, Consumer Protection, Grün & Gruga
Enthusiastic response from the citizens: the residents of Essen submitted 400 proposals for projects, of which 210 were implemented.

**TEXT:** Lisa Heinrich und Heike Reinhold

**THE CITY THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD**

Teaching children and adolescents about urban spaces is the goal of the charitable association “Youth, Architecture, City (JAS)”. In the European Green Capital year, the young participants enjoyed a range of special offers. “We organised various workshops that showed children and adolescents Essen’s green side,” explains Britta Grotkamp from JAS. For example, one of the projects examined how children perceive the various routes in the city. For this purpose, schoolchildren from the neighbouring City of Gelsenkirchen took the tram all the way to Essen Rüttenscheid, to then discuss their memories of the journey and find options for a better route design. Britta Grotkamp draws a positive conclusion, saying, “The children had a lot of fun with the projects and were able to gain a new perspective of Essen.”

**IMAGINATIVE CITIZENS’ PROJECTS.** A May beetle photographed by Alexander Krebs for the exhibition “Moments from Urban Nature” (left). Borbeck Schlosspark and a team of amateur actors invited visitors on a journey to the past.

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**JOURNEY INTO THE PAST**

In September, the Borbeck Citizens and Tourist Association (BBV) and the Friends of Schloss Borbeck took 400 visitors on a journey into the past. Under the title “Power and splendour in Borbeck”, amateur actors brought a piece of history to life in the Schlosspark, recreating the renewal of the Hereditary Protection Decree in the 18th century, in authentic costumes and with plenty of humour. A walk through the park and a visit to the exhibition on the historical castle ensemble rounded out the programme on the Day of Open Monuments. Susanne Asche, Chair of the BBVV, explains, “We wanted to stimulate interest in the Schlosspark. Because the event was well-received, we are now thinking about how we can offer events in the future that combine plays, music and a historical background.”

**Nichts gegen einen heißen Tee. Aber es gibt bessere Ideen, um es schön warm zu haben.**

By: Alexander Krebs | Christof Beckmann, BBVV | Private


**Mehr Wärmekomfort bei der Speichheizung**


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In the Green Capital year, Essen was able to create new awareness for the green spaces in the city. New overlooks, path connections, planted areas, community gardens and allotment gardens are the cornerstones of a liveable city.

TEXT: Heike Reinhold

Essen is the third-greenest city in Germany and the greenest in North Rhine-Westphalia. Under the motto “Green up your life”, the former iron and coal city successfully utilized parks and gardens as venues for staging Green Capital topics. The largest park in the city, for example, the Grugapark Essen, saw a 9 percent increase in visitors in 2017. There were surprises in terms of biodiversity: over 800 species were identified by 70 experts in the project “GEO Nature Day” at the Zollverein Park in June, increasing the number of known species there by more than 80. The Federal Congress “Green in the City”, which was held in Essen in May as part of the Green Capital, also delivered new impetus. German Minister for the Environment Dr. Barbara Hendricks made it clear that the development of green spaces in the city must continue beyond 2017, and promised corresponding funding.

GREEN PATH NETWORK

Essen applied for the European title with an eye-catching target: by 2020, every citizen should live no more than 500 meters from the closest green area. “Currently we fulfill this target for 70 percent of residents. With a series of measures, we intend to reach the 100 percent mark within three years,” promises Head of the Environmental and Building Department Simone Raskob. This includes the “ESSEN New ways to the water” programme, which is part of the Enscher conversion, and which Essen has utilised as an opportunity for developing urban and open spaces. The objective is to link green areas and parks by a network of green paths. The action plan encompasses more than 500 individual projects and is intended to link the city’s south to the north, making it possible for the people to experience the whole stretch. Within the framework of the Green Capital, the Vogelheim main artery was constructed with state funding. The bicycle path and walkways running parallel to Gladbeckers Straße (B 224) creates a representative entry point to the city and an attractive connection that extends from the River Erne to the intermunicipal green spaces along the Rhine-Erme canal and the Enscher.

THE CITY IS BLOSSOMING

The projects, which would not have existed without the title “European Green Capital”, also include numerous plantings. In 2017, 100,000 flower bulbs and 50,000 shrubs were planted. In spring, vibrant rows of narcissi and tulips delighted the citizens, as did the shrubs during the summer months. Since shrubs are plants that last many years, they will continue to make the city blossom in the coming years as well. Essen demonstrated the courage to temporarily highlight its greenery by creating 39 Green Islands, the Green Track and the Tree Parade in the city centre. The idea originated with landscape architect Andreas Kirpa. Some of his ideas will be used again in 2018. The numerous tree plantings also exceed-ingly sustainable: more than 1,100 trees were planted in 2017 by sponsors such as the Allianzversicherung, the Nationalbank and the Van Essen Foundation. As part of the “One Tree per Child” campaign, the Western Ruhr Area Biological Station planted 750 seedlings in the Hesisingen Watermeadows.

GREEN APPRECIATION

The perception of greenery in the city was promoted in 2017 through a series of projects: the “Views of Essen” opened up 29 overlooks with previously unseen views of the city. The BaldeneySteg is a new 27-kilometre path leading around Lake Baldeney and over the Ruhr hills. And in the year of the Green Capital, Green Capital Day brought enhancements to at least one location in each of the city’s nine districts — thanks to the hands-on participation of district agencies, citizens, and numerous public and voluntary institutions.

GARDEN LOVERS

2017 also saw high levels of interest in gardening. People were eager to get involved in numerous citizens’ projects. Residents of Essen set up snack gardens and herb rockeries, planted clusters of trees and got raised-bed gardens blossoming. Insect hotels emerged in urban gardens, as did insect-city oases featuring benches. The Friends of Dingerkus Garden House once again opened the late-Baroque jewel in Werden for the public. Many kindergartens and schools created adventure gardens and vegetable beds for their own use. To a certain extent, green fingers seem to run in the DNA of Essen’s residents, since allotment gardening has a long tradition in the city. There are over 100 allotment associations and just under 9,000 allotment holders, which include special projects such as school gardens for child daycare facilities and the Inclusion Garden for mentally disabled residents of the

FRANK VINKEN | PRIVATE | JOHANNES KASSENBERG | HENNING MAYER-JANTZEN | BERND SCHALKER

PHOTO

Experience the Views of Essen now on the Heimatgrün TV channel on YouTube.

The map of overlooks in Essen and the BaldeneySteg, the flyer “Attractions of the Green Capital – Essen 2017” and a brochure on community gardening can be obtained from the Essen Tourism Centre or online: www.delegiensauwunder.de

In autumn, the latest edition of “Architecture of Essen’s Squares” was published as part of the series of books on Essen’s architectural scene. The book analyses the history of important public spaces in the city.

Franz Sales House, at the Lunemann-siepen allotments. “The commitment of all these people persuaded the city council to initiate an allotment development concept,” says Simone Raskob. Furthermore, the number of community gardens rose in 2017 from ten to 18. Another three projects are scheduled to be launched in the spring of 2018. The “Future Workshop Edible Essen” ensured better networking of the allotments and community gardens in 2017. The stakeholders now want to capital-ize on the momentum of the Green Capital to ensure that joint projects continue to grow over the long term.
MOBILITY OF THE FUTURE

The European Green Capital – Essen 2017 initiated many measures for sustainable mobility. The key now is to develop these and take another step into the future.

The initiative is known by the name of the future. Now the city must utilize this momentum,” emphasises Jochen Hensel, Project Manager for Mobility at the Green Capital Project Office.

M obility remains the subject area with the greatest need to catch up – at the same time, it is the area with the most ambitious objectives: by 2035, the City of Essen plans to achieve a modal split of 25 percent across all four modes of transport. “This can only succeed if we successfully transition toward ecomobility,” emphasises Head of the Environmental and Building Department Simone Raskob. The focus during the Green Capital year was therefore placed above all on raising awareness about modern mobility concepts, intelligent networking and improvements to structural framework conditions. In September, Essen for the first time participated in the European Mobility Week. With offers ranging from ecomobility promotions and mobility consulting to test rides with cargo bikes and electric cars, over 60 campaigns spotlighted the topics of sharing, intermodal mobility and alternative drive systems. Conferences such as the first “Ruhr Metropolis Mobility Conference” and “Strategies for sustainable mobility for tradesmen in Essen” provided settings for professionals to exchange their ideas. “By participating in the European Mobility Week, the Green Capital set the course for the mobility of the future. Now the city must utilize this momentum,” emphasises Jochen Hensel, Project Manager for Mobility at the Green Capital Project Office.

ECOMOBILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Local public transportation played a special role in 2017. Ruhrbahn was able to open two mobility stations with networked transport options and expanded its fleet to have the lowest exhaust gas emissions in the Ruhr Region. Other elements to boost ecomobility include the “Essen Mobil” app, which amongst other things offers users intermodal navigation, and the GreenTicket, which is a monthly ticket subsidised by the European Green Capital and includes discounts for car and bike sharing. It is currently being reviewed whether this ticket can be continued in 2018.

ENCOURAGING CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

Another objective of the city is to establish the bicycle as an everyday means of transport. Over the past year, the Green Capital has therefore organised thank-you campaigns for cyclists, and actively supported projects such as “Cycling to work” and City Cycling, which achieved record levels of participation in 2017. The city’s efforts will continue after the title year. The project “Cycling without Age Limits”, in which long-term unemployed people take senior citizens to their favourite locations using electric rickshaws, will be continued this year, as will the German Cyclist’s Association lending system for cargo bikes. As a pilot project, two bicycle parking garages will be opening in Holsterhausen and Rüttenscheid in the spring.

To raise the number of pedestrians in the city, walks for senior citizens have been held weekly in 34 city districts since 2012. In 2017 these also led to Green Capital locations. The initiative is known by the name “Let’s take a walk” and is operated by the Senior Citizens’ Advisory Board, the Senior Citizens’ Department and the Health Conference, and will be continued this year.

NEW ELECTROMOBILITY STRATEGY

The Green Capital was also the impetus for a comprehensive programme to promote electromobility in Essen. Together with automotive manufacturer Nissan, the city developed a 12-point plan, which seeks to implement e-mobility laws, expand the charging infrastructure, and promote electric cars and car sharing, just to name a few. There are some initial results already: in September 2017, Essen’s first fast-charging station opened outside the Tourism Centre; the German Post Office uses 37 street scooters for environmentally friendly parcel deliveries and – starting in 2018 – the city administration wants to give preference to electric motors when buying new service vehicles and convert a third of the municipal vehicle fleet to electric vehicles. By closely cooperating with partners, initiatives and associations, the City of Essen has successfully raised awareness among citizens and companies about environmentally friendly mobility and improved their access to sustainable mobility offers.

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Flexible and environmentally friendly transport – right across the Ruhr Metropolis. The inter-city bicycle rental system makes it possible. www.metropolradruhr.de
REVIEW OF THE GREEN CAPITAL YEAR

For the European Green Capital – Essen 2017, the past year was a year full of highlights. Our photographic review includes memories of events, exhibitions, campaigns and projects.

“Of all the many events in the Green Capital year, my highlight was the exhibition ‘Green in the City of Essen. More than Parks and Gardens’ at Zollverein, which clearly illustrated the impressive history of the green areas and their planning in the industrial city of Essen: from green to grey to green again.”

PROFESSOR HEINRICH THEODOR GRÜTTER
Director of the Ruhr Museum and Member of the Board at the Zollverein Foundation

“Webrerplatz. The Webrerplatz Open Space was the central contact point of the Green Capital and the volunteer management headquarters. A wide range of events and workshops offered a varied programme.”

DIETER GROPPE
Managing Director of EMG – Essen Marketing GmbH

“GRÜN AUF ALTENDORF. In mid-September, a section of Altendorf Strasse was closed for the family and garden party.”

“PARADISES & UTOPIAS. At the family and upcycling festival held in the Stadtgarten Park in July, the atmosphere was amazing.”

“ANNI THE ANT. Actress Veronika Maruhn filled young spectators with enthusiasm for environmental protection.”

“Swimming in the Ruhr. On 47 swimming days, visitors to the seaside beach swimming spot enjoyed the cool, welcoming waters. The opening of the bathing area took place in May.”

“GRÜN AUF! ALTENDORF. In mid-September, a section of Altendorf Strasse was closed for the family and garden party.”

“Like! The European Green Capital – Essen 2017 can also be found on the social networks.”

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Heimatgrün TV
RETURN OF THE EMSCHER BULLHEAD. Lord Mayor Thomas Kufen (right) and Uli Paetzal were able to release 150 fish into Borbecker Mühlenbach in August.

JOIE DE VIVRE between the Emscher and Ruhr

In the Green Capital year, Essen (re)discovered the Emscher as its second municipal river in addition to the Ruhr. The expansion of the blue infrastructure and projects that connect the Emscher Valley with the Ruhr Valley ensure quality of life by the water.

TEXT: Heike Reinhold

The renaturalisation of the Emscher is transforming the former sewer in the north of the city into a natural river in the middle of a local recreation area. The Emschergenossenschaft Water Management Association has been working on the conversion of the river system since 1992. Throughout the entire Ruhr area, 400 kilometres of new sewers have been laid underground, 45 kilometres of them within the Essen municipal area. By 2020, the streams above ground will be almost completely free from wastewater, and will have been restructured to be close to their natural condition. A number of important milestones were reached in Essen in 2017. The upper reaches of the Borbecker Mühlenbach have already received a near-natural make-over, as has the Kesselbach in the Nachtigallental valley. Further streams, including the Berne, will follow over the coming years. The expansion of the blue infrastructure is improving the quality of life and strengthening Essen’s ability to cope with change. “The Emscher conversion is an important project for a resilient city. In the spirit of climate adaptation, it equips us for natural events such as storms and heavy rain. The project also has international appeal,” emphasises Head of the Environmental and Building Department Simone Raskob. Moreover, nature lovers were delighted in 2017 to see the return of the so-called Emscher bullhead (Cottus gobio). In August, 150 fish were released into Borbecker Mühlenbach. This protected species is rare and proof of the water quality of the river.

“Even after the Green Capital year is over, the Emschergenossenschaft plans to free Essen’s Emscher waterways from wastewater and return the streams to nature. Essen’s river landscapes are growing greener!”

DR ULI PAETZEL
Chairman of the Management Board at Emschergenossenschaft


ESSEN CLEARS UP

“Essen clears up – Fewer medications in the wastewater” is a two-year research project started in 2017, which amongst other things sees the Emschergenossenschaft, Ruhrverband and the City of Essen calling for old medicines to be disposed of in domestic waste. Unfortunately almost 15 percent of Essen’s residents dispose of leftover medicines via the toilet or sink. The project is 80 percent funded by the state, and will be continued in 2018. The concept from the pilot project will then be adopted by other cities. In September 2017, 143 pharmacies and almost 1,000 doctor’s offices in Essen were supplied with information material. In cooperation with the University of Duisburg-Essen, initial training courses for teaching staff have been held. Additional courses are scheduled for spring. In 2018, teachers will be able to borrow trace element research boxes for their lessons. Furthermore, starting on 10 March 2018, simultaneously with the Essen “SauberZauber” clean-up campaign, a two-week campaign to collect old medications will be conducted in pharmacies.
wide range of activities and events over the past year identified opportunities for sustainable living and created awareness about the value of local products. The project “12 months – 12 chefs” spotlights regional and seasonal foods. With the event series “sowing, harvest, eating” and the “Day of Good Eating” and the “Day of Good Eating”, the city has made its mark for more conscientious consumerism. Three promotion days held in the spring, summer and autumn, gave local and regional producers an opportunity to showcase themselves. Around 70 farm
ers cultivate a total of 3,000 hectares in Essen. Many products can be bought directly in the farm shops on-site. In addition, with the Burchhardt organic butcher, the eco-certified farmers at Klosterberghof and the eco-certified farmer Maas, the city has three certified organic businesses. Pick-your-own fields, such as those at Oberschuirshof, have been decorated with clever slogans in the local dialect. At the same time, the community clean-up campaign “SauberZauber” achieved a new record turnout in 2017 with 17,000 participants. Cleanliness is an issue everyone needs to get involved with. The EBE turned a slogan about coffee cups into a bright new idea, and joined the Rüttenscheid Interest Group in sponsoring the reusable cup project of the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) in order to avoid waste and save resources. Since October, cafés and bakeries from the south of Essen to the university cafeteria in the north have been using the CUPFORCUP deposit system for reusable cups. A sticker on the entrance door shows which coffee merchants care about sustainability. “For a deposit of 1 euro, you receive a colourful reusable cup made from recyclable plastic. When the cup is empty, you simply turn it in at a partner café of the CUPFORCUP deposit system,” explains Estelle Fritz, Head of the reusable cup project. “The aim is to win over additional cafés and bakeries during the one-year test phase so that we can offer customers these reusable cups throughout the city,” continues Fritz. At the same time, the City of Essen, Essen’s marketing company and the retail association are planning to introduce an Essen Cup based on the reusable cup principle.

A new climate culture
The klimawerk(stad)Essen is the umbrella brand for integrated, sustainable and climate-friendly urban development in Essen, and during the Green Capital year continued to organise numerous projects, in particular the EU-funded “Renaissance of Places with Innovative Citizenship and Technology” (REPlicate) to develop a smart city strategy and “Climate Active Neighbourhoods” (CAN). The basic idea behind CAN is to change the existing energy and consumption structures through active participation on the part of the citizens in select socially disadvantaged districts. Virtually all of Essen’s schools and childcare facilities were actively involved, and since 2017 they have been supported in their climate protection activities by two climate protection managers. These and many other projects related to all of the Green Capital’s thematic clusters have given climate protection new momentum in Essen, and have initiated partnership projects that are planned to be extended, such as the Masterplan for Climate Protection in Trades. Kai Lipsius, Climate Protection Officer of the City, sums up the situation: “The Green Capital has turned the topics of sustainability and climate protection into the talk of the town. And it has shown that climate responsibility is a collective task which the entire urban community needs to tackle.” To achieve the ambitious goal of decarbonisation by 2050, this commitment to municipal climate protection needs to be maintained. “We are creating the structures now so that the impetus from the Green Capital will lead to specific implementation projects.”

Network for sustainability
The mobile application “greenApes” has brought the idea of sustainability to the everyday lives of over 1,500 residents of Essen. “From January to December, the number of subscribers to our newsletter almost tripled, and a total of fifteen rewards partners got involved,” says community spokesperson Teresa Deckert, describing the development of the social media platform, which was originally created in Florence and came to Essen for the Green Capital year. The app is not just for digital communication, but also for local meetings in person: participants can post their sustainable lifestyle articles, thereby collecting “Banko-Nuts” that they can then exchange for attractive rewards at participating rewards partner companies, such as vegan cafés, organic restaurants, natural cosmetics shops or sustainable concept stores.

The Green Capital has raised awareness for the use of ecological, regional and Fairtrade products, as well as the avoidance of waste. The task for the future is now to encourage even more people and companies to get involved.

SUSTAINABLE
Living in Essen

Reynolds

The Green Capital year 2017 was declared a public competition. The objective was to find the best humorous slogans to advertise for a clean and tidy city. The response was amazing, and in the spring, 3,000 waste baskets and 27 large trash cans in nine of Essen’s parks were decorated with clever slogans in the local dialect. At the same time, the community clean-up campaign “SauberZauber” achieved a new record turnout in 2017 with 17,000 participants. Cleanliness is an issue everyone needs to get involved with. The EBE turned a slogan about coffee cups into a bright new idea, and joined the Rüttenscheid Interest Group in sponsoring the reusable cup project of the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) in order to avoid waste and save resources. Since October, cafés and bakeries from the south of Essen to the university cafeteria in the north have been using the CUPFORCUP deposit system for reusable cups. A sticker on the entrance door shows which coffee merchants care about sustainability. “For a deposit of 1 euro, you receive a colourful reusable cup made from recyclable plastic. When the cup is empty, you simply turn it in at a partner café of the CUPFORCUP deposit system,” explains Estelle Fritz, Head of the reusable cup project. “The aim is to win over additional cafés and bakeries during the one-year test phase so that we can offer customers these reusable cups throughout the city,” continues Fritz. At the same time, the City of Essen, Essen’s marketing company and the retail association are planning to introduce an Essen Cup based on the reusable cup principle.

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MY SHOPPING

SUSTAINABLE
Living in Essen

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TEXT: Heike Reinhold

A wide range of activities and events over the past year identified opportunities for sustainable living and created awareness about the value of local products. The project “12 months – 12 chefs” spotlights regional and seasonal foods. With the event series “sowing, harvesting, eating” and the “Day of Good Eating”, the city has made its mark for more conscientious consumerism. Three promotion days held in the spring, summer and autumn, gave local and regional producers an opportunity to showcase themselves. Around 70 farmers cultivate a total of 3,000 hectares in Essen. Many products can be bought directly in the farm shops on-site. In addition, with the Burchhardt organic butcher, the eco-certified farmers at Klosterberghof and the eco-certified farmer Maas, the city has three certified organic businesses. Pick-your-own fields, such as those at Oberschuirshof, have been decorated with clever slogans in the local dialect. At the same time, the community clean-up campaign “SauberZauber” achieved a new record turnout in 2017 with 17,000 participants. Cleanliness is an issue everyone needs to get involved with. The EBE turned a slogan about coffee cups into a bright new idea, and joined the Rüttenscheid Interest Group in sponsoring the reusable cup project of the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) in order to avoid waste and save resources. Since October, cafés and bakeries from the south of Essen to the university cafeteria in the north have been using the CUPFORCUP deposit system for reusable cups. A sticker on the entrance door shows which coffee merchants care about sustainability. “For a deposit of 1 euro, you receive a colourful reusable cup made from recyclable plastic. When the cup is empty, you simply turn it in at a partner café of the CUPFORCUP deposit system,” explains Estelle Fritz, Head of the reusable cup project. “The aim is to win over additional cafés and bakeries during the one-year test phase so that we can offer customers these reusable cups throughout the city,” continues Fritz. At the same time, the City of Essen, Essen’s marketing company and the retail association are planning to introduce an Essen Cup based on the reusable cup principle.

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RELAXING IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN. For example in the Siepengarten.
The successful transformation story of a coal and steel city into the greenest city in North Rhine-Westphalia serves as an example for many cities in Europe that are undergoing structural change. Essen is on its way to becoming an even more liveable city.

Many of these gatherings explored urban strategies. Just under 200 climate experts from 22 countries convened at the TWINS Conference Ruhr in November at the Zollverein UNESCO World Heritage Site to exchange ideas about municipal climate protection. The results were then presented at the World Climate Conference COP 23 in Bonn. “From Grey to Green” outlined the story of the city’s transformation from a coal and steel town into Germany’s third greenest city. Another highlight of the World Climate Conference was that the Urban Transition Alliance was jointly founded by Essen and metropolitan cities from other parts of the world. Essen is seeking to exchange views and ideas with expert colleagues from the USA, China and Germany on the sustainable transformation of cities with an industrial heritage, making the city a central research location for adaptability. Additional inspiration came from the congress on “Sustainable architecture in the course of (climate) change”, the Eurocities Environment Forum, the Environmental Management Network Summit and the Congress on Future European Formats.

The Ruhr Metropolis is a laboratory for sustainability development programmes. The International Building Exhibition Enoucher Park was followed in quick succession by the Enoucher Conversion Masterplan, the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010, the Innovation City process and the European Green Capital – Essen 2017. The future is green, too: acting as a think tank and showcase, “Sustainable architecture in the course of (climate) change” was promptly implemented thanks to the support of many partners, notably the Ruhr University Bochum and the Technical University of Dortmund. It also addressed environmental topics. “The Green Capital has acted as a catalyst for sustainability development in the Ruhr Region. This is why the UDE cooperates with the new Accelerator Start-Up Bootcamp Smart City and Living in Essen, and the innovation hub E.ONagile. With the university, we are pooling our activities in the competence Centre for Innovation and Business Start-Ups (IDE) and are currently also looking at “green” ideas. One UDE start-up related to renewable energies is NEMOS GmbH, for example, which is developing a new system for generating electricity from coastal wave power.

The University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) offered a varied Green Capital programme for students and the wider public. The Rector, Professor Dr. Ulrich Radtke, takes stock.

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How many projects did the UDE support the Green Capital with?
Just under 300 events were provided by the UDE as part of the European Green Capital 2017 and the 2nd Essen Summer of Science for its students and employees, but also for a wider audience. A lot of things went really well, particularly the Science Slam “Understanding Science” in the Stadtgarten Park, and our contributions on Excursion Day under the motto “Hands-on Science”.

During projects such as “Zero Waste – a waste-free City of Essen?”, students worked with citizens on concepts for waste management. A fruitful partnership with the Ruhr Metropolitan Research Centre for Social Learning and Responsibility (UNIAKTIV), which coordinates partner organisations, was promptly implemented thanks to the support of many partners, notably in Essen. We want to continue and intensify this very productive exchange. Here we can make use of the experience of our centre for social learning and responsibility (UNIAKTIV), which coordinates partner organisations between the UDE and social stakeholders.

What is the situation with “green jobs”?
Does the UDE have any business development plans? Many topics of the European Green Capital are closely tied to the UDE’s research priorities and will continue to be pursued intensively in the future, for example in the “Urban Systems” research area, or in the competence field of “Metropolitan Research”. We developed these together with our partners from the Ruhr Universities Alliance, the Ruhr University Bochum and the Technical University of Dortmund. It also addresses environmental protection and quality of life in metropolitan cities.

What will the significance of green topics be in the future?
The promotion of education for sustainable development (BNE) in teaching is an established, central task in UDE’s university development plan. For example, students from all courses of study can obtain the certificate in education for sustainable development.

The interview was conducted by Heike Reinhold.
Thanks to all the volunteers!

Voluntary assistants significantly helped make the European Green Capital – Essen 2017 a success.

They were always ready to listen to the questions of visitors and provided vigorous support when it came to doing their bit for nature and environmental protection. "A total of 158 volunteers aged between 19 and 80 volunteered for the Green Capital in 2017," sums up Martina David. During the European Capital of Culture year 2018, she herself had been one of the volunteers. In 2017 she coordinated the volunteers, and in the process met many great people and learned about new green subjects.

Learned a lot...

Birgit Güttig is one of the many volunteers. She comes from the city district Frohnhausen and can look back on more than 100 volunteering assignments. "I was often available to answer questions as a contact person at the Open Space in Weiherplatz, the central point of contact for the Green Capital of Essen. That was virtually my second home. There she not only met interesting people, but also learned a lot about her city. In addition, she says the Green Capital year 2017 was particularly impressed by the contact with different cultures. This young environmental engineer comes from Iran and has been living in the Ruhr area for four years. She joined the volunteers in August and quickly made friends. "I was able to improve my language skills, make contacts, and to top it off I learned something about good food."

The communication with citizens was often very warm. Elmar Brückner from the city of Hamm also learned a lot in 2017. "I came away with great ideas on how to design my home garden. In the spring I will create some raised beds at home."

... and meet some great people

Virtually all the volunteers praise the friendly relationship they shared. Many volunteers want to stay in touch after the end of the Green Capital year. Zohreh Valizadeh was particularly impressed by the contact with different cultures. This young environmental engineer comes from Iran and has been living in the Ruhr area for four years. She joined the volunteers in August and quickly made friends. "I was able to improve my language skills, make contacts, and to top it off I learned something about good food."

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Incidentally, the dedication of the volunteers did not end with the Green Capital year. The network of volunteers will continue to be available to all of Essen’s residents in the future. "We are working together with the volunteer agency to develop a concept so that this can continue. In the future, the associations and institutions will then be able to make use of the volunteers," promises Ralph Kindel, Head of the Project Office for the European Green Capital – Essen 2017.

The footage of the volunteers is now available on the YouTube channel Heimatgrün TV.

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BAHNFAHREN IST GELEBTER KLIMASCHUTZ

E U R O P E A N  G R E E N  C A P I T A L S

ESSEN WILL BE FOLLOWED BY NIJMEGEN

Nijmegen in the Netherlands will bear the title in 2018. This cycling city has exciting and innovative local transportation concepts and a new city island with extensive recreational areas.

TEXT: Heike Reinhold

The EU Commission has been awarding the title of “European Green Capital” since 2010. The award is given to cities with populations of over 100,000 that consistently demonstrate high environmental standards and continuously set ambitious targets for themselves for further improvements in environmental conditions and sustainable development. After Stockholms, Hamburg; Vitoria-Gasteiz, Nantes, Copenhagen, Bristol and Libljana, Essen received the title of “European Green Capital” in 2017.

PRAISE FOR ESSEN FROM BRUSSELS

“Essen is a prime example of how the shift to go green can improve the quality of life in the form of better water quality, expansive green areas and a more efficient infrastructure for transportation and waste management,” the EU Commission commented the city at the end of the year. When selecting the topics, Essen fully supported the city’s application for the title.” said Brussels. Moreover, the city did an excellent job in its role as ambassador, from the stunning opening ceremony in January and organising a series of international conferences on environmental topics, to the closing ceremony in December. After the end of the Green Year, Essen will remain involved in the European Green Capital Network – the network of all award winners and finalists.

NIJMEGEN TAKES OVER BATON

In 2018, Nijmegen will now bear the title of “European Green Capital”. Nijmegen was voted the best cycling city in the Netherlands in 2016 and 2017, and convinced the judges in the application process with its innovative waste management concepts and its clean local public transport system. “The Waal runs right through our city and is one of the busiest waterways in Europe. To reduce the danger of flooding and create more space for water and nature, a new tributary has been built, creating a large city island with new nature and recreation areas,” reports Harriët Tiemens, responsible research institutions, as well as companies. Highlights in 2018 will include outstanding meetings of experts such as the CleanMed conference or the Eco Procura, which aim to reach tangible international agreements for a sustainable Europe. Traditional events in the city are increasingly being organised with the environment in mind, and large-scale planting projects are being planned with the participation from scores of citizens. Visitors should also plan an excursion to the new city island. Harriët Tiemens emphasises that “I’m certain that Essen and Nijmegen will inspire and motivate one another. As a border city, we are always happy to work with our German neighbours, because we have many shared interests and can learn a lot from one another.”

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

A total of around 30 sponsors in the main sponsors, premium sponsors, co-sponsors, patrons and project sponsors categories supported the European Green Capital – Essen 2017 with funding and benefits in-kind.

For me, the launching of our innovative and climate-friendly MS innogy was the highlight of the Green Capital year. We are demonstrating that “green fuels” are also suitable for marine engines.

RAINER HELLMANN
Head of the Rhine-Ruhr Region, Municipal Partner Management, innogy SE

“Energy efficiency should be an integral component of the school curriculum. We will continue to pursue this objective with our schools project – here in Essen, but also throughout Germany.”

THOMAS ZINNÖCKER
CEO of ista International GmbH

For Messe Essen, the highlights of Essen 2017 was the opportunity to share our Green Capital knowledge in Essen, and it will permanently change how we live together.”

HEINZ-GEORG ANSCHUTT
Chairman of the Board at GENO BANK

“‘Our highlight was the KNAPPMANN lecture series on the subject of the ‘Green City’ at Zollverein Colliery, and it will be an integral component of the school curriculum. We will continue to pursue this objective with our schools project – here in Essen, but also throughout Germany.”

JÖRG MELLIS
Owner of Schloss-Quelle GmbH

“As a sponsor, we want to live up to the excitement about electric mobility in the European Green Capital – Essen 2017. The city acted on many of our ideas. Essen is well on its way to becoming electrically mobile, and we are delighted.”

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As a sponsor, we wanted the opportunity to share our Green Capital experiences in Essen, and it will permanently change how we live together.”

OLIVER FRANZ
Director of Communication, Nissan Center Europe

“For Essen, the highlights of the Green Capital were the opening event in the Grugapark and the closing event, which we had the privilege of hosting with our new foyer.”

OLIVER P. KURTH, CEO of Messe Essen


Thanks to our sponsors.

“As a sponsor, we were offering a great many opportunities. We enjoyed bringing people together and getting them moving.”

DR. DIET ALBRECHT
Director of Contilia GmbH (spokesman)
TOGETHER FOR ESSEN

After winning the title in June 2015, a growing team spent many months behind the scenes of the Green Capital, planning, organising, preparing, assisting, communicating, monitoring, managing and rolling up their sleeves.

INTERVIEW: Heike Reinhold

With technical knowledge and passion, the total of 45 women and men, including municipal employees and freelancers, made the green topics of the city accessible to the general public. On behalf of all the members of their teams, Alice Pawlikowski (Marketing/Communications), Sven Haimhof (Event and Project Management), Paulina Bethaus (Project Management) and Markus Pfließnig (SPOKespension) look back on a year full of highlights.

What inspired your enthusiasm for a green Essen and green issues? Why were you interested in the project?

Paulina Bethaus: I am a nature lover, and environmental and climate protection is the top story of this century. The task appealed to me. Now that the year is over, I can say for sure, it was amazing to become involved in all the green issues. I hope I can continue to work in this field in the future.

Sven Haimhof: I wanted to make a difference in this city that is my new home. Looking back, I’m happy to say I think we succeeded.

Markus Pfließnig: Essen is my home town. I have seen for myself the changes that have taken place here since the 1980s. I wanted to be actively involved in the further development of the city, and to communicate the process. Essen used to have the image of being a coal-dusty grey place. I think we managed to change this image over the last year.

What was your personal highlight in the Green Capital year?

Sven Haimhof: I was centrally involved in the opening event, and it was an incredible kick-off. Everything was perfect: the Grugapark, the lighting, the families and upcycling festival. Another highlight for me was the “Swimming in the Ruhr” project. Like I said, I grew up here, with a river you weren’t allowed to swim in. So it was even greater now for me to take my kids and jump into the lake.

Alice Pawlikowski: The Green Capital was the city’s reward for many years of hard work. Now the Green Capital got the ball rolling in many respects – now green thinking needs to be applied.

Paulina Bethaus: Essen is a trailblazer for the region. The title of “European Green Capital” was the city’s reward for its many years of hard work. Now the challenge for the future is to carry on this work, and make sure that Essen continues in this development. Follow-up projects, such as the completion of the Emscher conversion by 2022, the KlimaExpo and IGA 2027, are already within the foreseeable future.

Has the Green Capital changed anything about your own conduct?

Alice Pawlikowski: I have always done my best to live as sustainably as possible, and I cycle a lot, including when I go to work. The Green Capital has now reinforced my belief in my lifestyle.

Sven Haimhof: Thanks to the Green Capital, I walk through the streets with my eyes wide open. I am now truly aware of how much greenery we have here. And of course I have also increasingly taken the green issues of the year to heart. I walk more often, leave the car at home, and am increasingly enthusiastic about buying regional and seasonal products at the market. The Green Capital got the ball rolling in many respects – now green thinking needs to be applied.

You can find additional staff impressions and statements at www.green.hauptstadt.essen
The year 2017 in Essen was all about the European Green Capital – Essen 2017. As the baton is passed to the Green Capital 2018, the Dutch city of Nijmegen, it is time to take stock. In 2017, Essen was the focus of a wide range of activities, and with its variety of formats and initiatives, it drew a great deal of interest not only at the city itself, but at the entire Ruhr area.

Essen’s positioning during the Green Capital year has fulfilled the criteria of the selection commission. Many at the European level asked why it was Essen that won. European Capital of Culture, OK, but European Green Capital? Particularly for a city in the heart of the Ruhr area? At the time, the judging panel explained its decision, amongst other things, by stating that Essen was being recognised as an example of the transformative power and will of a region in a state of continuous change. The region has experience in the planning and implementation of transformation processes, driven in no small part by great visions such as the “blue sky over the Ruhr” of former Chancellor Willy Brandt in the early 1960s, or the renaturalisation of the Emscher as part of the IBA.

These transformative forces could be felt throughout the city in 2017. The idea behind the European Green Capital is based on an integrated approach. The concept provides for a multi-dimensional target corridor along no fewer than twelve indicators, ranging from climate protection and adaptation, to noise control and prevention of waterway pollution, and even “green” innovations. The key here is not to have already achieved perfection in all twelve areas; on the contrary, it is also respected if you own up to your deficiencies, while making clear how you intend to work on them. This basic attitude was part of the Green Capital year 2017, and was omnipresent in Essen. More than any of its predecessors, the city additionally pursued the networking idea of the European Union, which the EU associated with the competition, and was very active in seeking communication with other European cities.

A year 2017 full of activities and initiatives: what remains, and what is still to come? One of the central challenges now will be to maintain the dynamism and awareness of environmental activities that were created on various levels as a result of the Green Capital year, and to maintain the city’s own enthusiasm. The foundation was laid in 2017.
112 paths to green.

We are a pioneer in environmental protection. Discover more projects, such as those for cleaner air, a better climate and more noise control, at deutschebahn.com/green.

This is green.