

THE HAMBURG SUMMIT

China meets Europe

November 25-26, 2010

Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

**Panel A: Urbanisation: Challenges and Strategies for Smart Growth in
Cities Shaping the Post-Crisis World: China and the EU in Search for
Sustainable Growth**

Thursday, November 25, 2010

Statement of Hannes Androsch

Former Minister for Finance and Vice Chancellor; Expo Shanghai 2010 Commissioner General of Austria (www.androsch.com)

In the hundred years just past, our planet has experienced a dramatic population “explosion”, whereby the population increased from 1.7 billion inhabitants to an estimated 7 billion today. The United Nations projects that this number will increase to about 9 billion by the year 2050. Even today, more than half of the global population lives in urban regions, or metropolitan conglomerations. Before long, this proportion will exceed 70 per cent.

This development, at break-neck speed, can also be observed in China. At present, there are about 400 cities worldwide, each of whose populations exceed the 1 million mark. There are about 20 cities with populations in excess of 10 million inhabitants, and 6 urban conurbations whose populations exceed 20 million each. Of those numbers, some 160 of the cities with more than one million inhabitants can be found in China, as can 4 of the cities with populations exceeding 10 million. The city of Chongqing counts as the largest urban conglomeration in China; over 30 million people live within its administrative boundaries.

The continuing urbanisation of mankind presents us with enormous challenges; at the same time, it provides us with tremendous opportunities for the future.

The growth of the global population, the increase in prosperity which is largely attributable to technical and technological developments, as well as globalisation, have all contributed to the dramatic increase in the carbon footprint of mankind. This concept, which was developed in the mid-1990s, illustrates the productive land and water resources which are being sacrificed, as it were, to support a particular lifestyle or standard of living. This carbon footprint has meanwhile become an important measure of the limitations of our planet to sustain our lifestyle.

If all the people on Earth were to live as we do in Europe today, we would need almost three planets of the same quality as the Earth to sustain us; with the carbon footprint of the United States, we would require more than 5 Earth-type planets.

But, it is precisely the growing urbanisation of mankind which provides us with an opportunity, to curtail the ecological footprint of mankind, while simultaneously improving the quality of life in the conurbations of the world.

It was not for no reason that the motto of the **World Expo 2010** Shanghai, which came to an end barely a month ago, was “**Better City – Better Life**”.

This world exhibition had made one of the greatest challenges facing mankind into its central theme. It amounted to an unmistakable starting gun for a peaceful competition, whose object was to seek creative ideas, for combining the best possible quality of life and a sustainable planet.

Arguably the four most important elements of the ideal city of the future are; an environmentally friendly energy supply, the creation of an environmentally friendly public transport system, the implementation of an environmentally friendly urban technology and a powerful and efficient administrative structure capable of handling these enormous tasks.

In Europe, the urban regions are seen as the key to the continent's future economic, ecological and social development. For this reason, the movement „**Initiative Europa – europäische Städte der Zukunft**“ (**Initiative Europe – European Cities of the Future**) was established by

the Netherlands and Austria; in the meantime, a further 12 countries have decided to participate.

The goal of this movement, or initiative, is to develop and conduct joint research programmes into the “city of the future”. In addition to new modes of mobility, notably electric means of transport, new prospects are opening up for achieving the principal goals of providing a secure, efficient and sustainable energy supply, while simultaneously achieving a dramatic reduction in CO₂ emissions.

In this context, one should also mention the “**Smart Cities Initiative**” which is currently under consideration by the European Union. This initiative has as its goal the safeguarding of the energy supply as well as the development of a major drive to find the best possible means of enhancing the efficient use of energy. The combining of information and communications technologies, with energy technology, provides a key to finding new solutions, for example, in energy planning, or in the management of buildings and their provision with energy.

The innovative impulses, which are essential to overcome the challenges posed by the urban conglomerations, are also the basis for future-oriented economic growth and for ensuring the competitiveness of a particular location.

In full awareness of this need, Austria presented not only attractive landscapes and cultural treasures in its pavilion at the World Expo, but also emphasised its leadership in matters of environmentally friendly community technology, using Vienna as an example. Vienna, with almost two million inhabitants, is regarded as one of the great cities of the world in terms of quality of life. The highly developed, and environmentally friendly, urban technologies which have been implemented in Vienna contribute significantly to this high quality of life. It is a declared goal of the city council to extend this economic advantage still further and, in the process, to seek the co-operation of Chinese partners. This will provide a valuable stimulus to economic growth. However, in the spirit of the Expo motto “Better City – Better Life” it is very likely to provide a win-win situation for all concerned, both economically and environmentally.

