

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Making up the balance after almost three years of “Metropolitan Area Zurich”: a waste of time and effort? “... without the voters being asked – an affront unparalleled in direct democratic Switzerland”

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

“Current Concerns” readers will recall that on 3 July 2009 the “Zurich Metropolitan Area Association” was founded. A so-called private association, whose members are the cantons and communes according to article 8 paragraph 1 of the statutes; however, this happened without the voters being asked – an affront unparalleled in direct democratic Switzerland. Since that time, the 8 cantons and the countless communes that have joined the “association” on order of their executives, paying membership fees from their tax revenues. The annual fee depends on the number of seats in the Metropolitan Conference, which are allocated according to the population. So Küsnacht paid 3,500 francs per year, for example. The cantons and communes are represented in the “Metropolitan Conference” by one executive member, whose work on a supra-municipal and supra-cantonal level is also paid out of tax revenues (see “Current Concerns” No. 15, August 2009).

Without regard to the constitutionally established federal organization of Switzerland and without any direct democratic legitimacy three metropolitan areas have emerged out of nowhere in the last three years – one of the many constructs of the EU’s regional policy which are so alien to the Swiss and their government structure – they go together like chalk and cheese. Apart from that there were other constructs such as nature parks, Interreg-programs, agglomeration associations and other kinds of artificial entities. The aim of EU regional policy is to dissolve nation states and the traditionally developed, federal national units through the establishment of cross-border clusters that are not embedded in the population and can therefore be better controlled centrally than small-scale units. A central feature across all EU constructs is the “participatory organization”: If there is a representative of each commune, of each canton and of all sorts of private associations, the construct is supposed to have won “broad support” – a national political nonsense! Either there are democratic institutions that were provided for in the consti-

“Since 3 July 2009 the 8 cantons and the countless communes that have joined the “association” on order of their executives, paying membership fees from their tax revenues. The annual fee depends on the number of seats in the Metropolitan Conference, which are allocated according to the population. [...]

In plain German: The metropolitan areas installed by the EU aim at breaking the existing structures and dissolving the boundaries.”

tution and are legitimized by the sovereign – or they are neither “broadly” not otherwise supported.

For nearly three years, interested citizens have heard little about the Zurich metropolitan area and its activities. By the end of March 2012 some media reported that several communes had cancelled membership in their associations. Headlined “Metropolitan Area: Küsnacht quits”, a report said that the three communes Küsnacht, Wangen-Brüttisellen and Würenlos had given notice of their quitting (“Zürcher Oberländer” of 30 March, see also *Tages-Anzeiger* online of 29 March).

The Zurich metropolitan area suffers from a serious drop in membership

The three communes are not the only ones who turned their backs on the metropolitan area so far. Many of the 236 communes in eight cantons, which the Swiss Federal Statistical Office FSO has packed into this artificial construct, never even joined. Today, there are about 100 members in the Zurich Metropolitan Area Association. Upon request, political scientist Dr Walter Schenkel¹, who runs the association’s office, confirmed that “then and now single communes have resigned, including Opfikon and Affoltern am Albis”, mostly because they were lacking “regional support”; in Germany, because the communes in their neighborhood did not want to join the Metropolitan Association.

Communes and cantons always cooperated

According to CEO Schenkel, there are new developments in economy, transportation, or spatial planning etc., which can

be handled better in an integrated system beyond cantonal and municipal boundaries than just within individual bodies. By the Metropolitan Association’s help, he claimed, members of the respective governing councils would easier be heard on a national level, when new railway or road links would have to be financed.

But it goes without saying that the communes have always united to jointly tackle the tasks that are beyond the powers of the individual communes. The Swiss communes have always done so with the help of the joint boards that worked well. Similarly, the cantons work together where they deem it necessary to perform their constitutional duties. They do so as sovereign public entities when concluding contracts negotiated by the executive (cantonal councils and municipal councils), approved by the legislatures (local assemblies or local parliaments and cantonal parliaments with the voters’ right to hold a referendum). For example, if a road must be built or renovated beyond the canton’s borders, it is the concerned cantons’ responsibility to plan and fund and possibly submit a joint application for federal funding. *This requires no metropolitan area because the cantons can do it themselves.* The federal system in Switzerland works on the principle of subsidiarity: the upper level only interferes in case the lower level cannot solve the task. *The cantons and communes have never been lone fighters, they are fellow players.*

So what is the point of a metropolitan area? “The Metro Conference is characterized by the fact that elected authority members of the cantons, towns and communes directly work together and exercise control on the political level”, says Walter Schenkel. This is the “participatory organization princi-

“Making up the balance ...”

continued from page 1

ple” of EU regional policy mentioned in the introduction: one executive member comes together with other executive members outside the legally established institutions in the Metropolitan Conference, which has never been decided by the sovereign; they should rather comply with established legal procedures. The mayor Hans-Ulrich Reber from Würenlos comments that it “would be better to expand existing platforms, each equipped with a defined mission.” Note: Namely platforms, which are decided by the legislature and have a statutorily defined order.

The “final touch” is given by formulating that the individual municipal councilors and the councilors of states had to “control” something on “the political level”.

Controlling may happen in Brussels, but in Switzerland the executive has nothing to control; they have to perform their duties according to the laws and the constitution or in accordance with the municipal code and this is what they have been elected for by the people. For this single purpose they are allowed to spend the taxpayers’ money.

The Metropolitan Area pursues completely different goals

According to article 2, paragraph 1 of the statutes, the purpose of the Zurich Metropolitan Area Association is the construction of a “common life and economy space” beyond all municipal and cantonal borders. The “common identity” – which does not exist in reality – is to be “strengthened” by “launching, developing and implementing concrete cooperation projects” which are to “enable new forms of cooperation” (Article 3).

In plain German: The metropolitan areas installed by the EU aim at breaking the existing structures and dissolving the boundaries. Nobody shall say that these are fantasies and conspiracy theories. Those who do not believe it, are recommended to watch the short film, produced by three planning offices, of which only one is domiciled in Switzerland, excerpts printed below.² Cracking the Swiss government structure with the help of a German offices?

Where would we make corrections? What would we stir up?

(“What is the Zurich Metropolitan Area?” Excerpts from the film clip of the Metropolitan Conference Zurich on 6 May 2011, http://www.metropolitanraum-zuerich.ch/film_metro.html, only available in German)

continued on page 3



The tentacles of the Brussels octopus

ts. According to Metrex (see page 3) “Metropolitan Governance” means governing “across major urban areas and their areas of influence, regardless of historic administrative boundaries.” It is also the instrument of the USSEU’s Brussels headquarters to outsmart the nation states, to bypass and govern them via urban areas. Almost 120 metropolitan areas, called “Metropolitan European Growth Areas” (MEGA) in the Brussels technocrats’ jargon are to establish the reign of the EU-Commissioners. Our map shows only the metropolitan areas, which are members of Metrex.

The fact that Switzerland has already been colored as an EU vassal bears witness of the same delusions as did the map of the Greater German Reich of 1937, which had also recorded Switzerland as a “Reich District” – but we all know that history developed differently ...

The garrison towns of the Roman Empire send their regards – but just like the latter have disappeared off the map and the Empire has collapsed into dust and ashes, coercive economy, decadence and corruption, the EU will not be able to endure – and as its tentacles are too hollow, too absolutist and dirigistic they won’t be able to attach in the long run – too many people have already noticed that only nation states can guarantee social security and that peaceful coexistence is possible only in a Europe of nations à la de Gaulle, in independence and neighborly friendship, self-determination and social justice.

(Graphic: roho/www.eurometrex.org)

"Making up the balance ..."

continued from page 2

"What was there in the beginning – chaos or structure? [...] 'God did not play dice when he was creating', said Einstein. Do we play dice when shaping the landscape? [...] If we could remake the metropolitan area from scratch, would we build it the same way once more? [...] Where would we make corrections? What would we stir up? Would we replace the Seefeld neighborhood of Zurich in the Canton of Zug or vice versa? *But can we imagine the metropolitan area without the boundaries of communes and cantons at all?* Do we not forget too often that only successful incorporations made Zurich the big city with its living quarters? *How random are old and new boundaries?* And have they ever been functional? Does the metropolitan area clear up the functional elements in the landscape? According to which model should the city grow – polycentric or concentric?" "Must the identity of the metropolitan area be detected yet?"

The incorporation of the water tower Switzerland by nature parks, spatial concepts and biodiversity strategies follows immediately:

"What do the water veins contribute to the metropolitan area? How do we link the small-scale network of plots with its water landscapes and the recreation networks in a landscape dominated by settlements? How do we link it with the character landscapes and regional specialties? If metropolitan lifestyle is about diversity, is this also true for biodiversity? Where will we find recreation? Who owns the water? Who own the river banks? [...] Are playgrounds designed open spaces? And how do we fix the basic rules for spatial development?"

"Our starting point is excellent: we travel together in diversity. On our way to *Zurich Metropolitan Area*."

A lot of paper was produced above all

mw. Hans-Ulrich Reber, communal president of Würenlos: "The membership to the association has no concrete benefit for Würenlos. Far too many organizations are dealing with the economy and the promotion of competition." When asked, what projects the association has been doing, mayor Reber explains, Würenlos didn't participate in any project.

Christian Pleisch, Deputy Communal Secretary of Wangen-Brüttisellen: "The voting right of the individual communities is no good for anything. It would be better, if some communities could be represented together, otherwise the time and effort was too much." To the question about the projects of the association Deputy Municipal Secretary Pleisch can't say anything.

Peter Wettstein, Municipal Secretary of Küssnacht: "As time has shown, the communities achieve too little through their membership. E.g. communities like Zurich and Küssnacht have little

Conclusion

We can only hope that other communes and cantons realize as well that we in Switzerland have always been "united in diversity", completely without any metropolitan area. And we can certainly use our tax revenues for other things than membership fees in a construct that is alien to our understanding of state.

Metropolitan areas break nation-states

Much more interesting for the promoters of all structural abolishment than the *Zurich Metropolitan Area* are the other two Swiss metropolitan areas invented by the EU, because they do not stop at the national borders:

"The *Basel Metropolitan Area* extends as far as Delémont (JU), Mulhouse (FR) and Freiburg (Germany), consists of five cantons and three countries, with about 1.3 million inhabitants and about 650,000 jobs in the 2nd and 3rd sector." (<http://www.aussenbeziehungen.bs.ch/kooperationen/raeume-und-gremien/metropolitanregion.htm>)

On 16 January 2012 the *Basel Metropolitan Conference* gathered for its first meeting. It aims at "combining forces in the *Basel area beyond the traditional political cooperation*." Because: "The political structures have not kept pace with the spatial development of the metropolitan area."

"The governments of the cantons of Geneva and Vaud signed an agreement on the development and promotion of the *Métropole lémanique* on 9 November 2011.

common interests. In addition, individual communities could barely voice their concerns, it was more about general issues in the larger area."

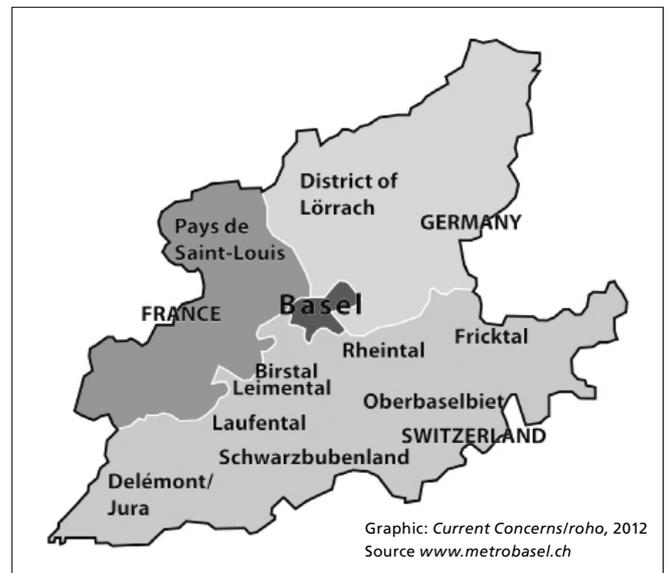
When asked about the projects of the association: "For many communities the metropolitan area may certainly achieve something. But the possibilities for development of the communities on the right bank of Lake Zurich are limited, e.g. in relation to public transport and many other fields. One has met two to three times a year and a lot of paper was produced above all."

One complement: In the Swiss Midlands all communities and cantons have already been well organized, not only the right bank of Lake Zurich. Our community and government councils do not need any occupational therapy only to let the Metropolitan Conference "prove" its right to exist. They have enough work to do with their legally defined tasks and specifications. And our tax money is not there to let the management produce paper and make money.

By the end of 2012, the two cantons will have evaluated different organizational models which will allow third parties such as cities and towns of the region, the cantons, and even the neighboring French authorities and other organizations and industry associations, research centers and civil society organizations to get involved as partners for the development of the *Metropole lémanique*."

Failure of Switzerland's regional transformation due to direct democracy

Mandated by the most important big corporations doing business in Switzerland to get rid of those small-scale political structures, the think tank *Avenir Suisse* has proven to be a relentless fighter for a boundless Switzerland of mega-re-



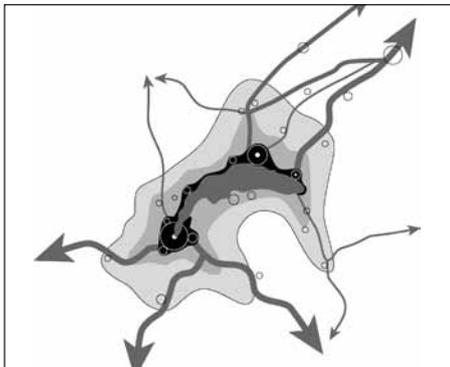
gions and for the "show stoppers" direct democracy and federalism to get marginalized as much as possible. For that reason *Avenir Suisse* has been busy lobbying municipalities and cantons to undergo fusions for 15 years now, in order to reduce the number of political players. However that business turns out to be quite cumbersome – direct democracy remains resistant. Though quite a few smaller municipalities have indeed merged in recent years, no substantial mega-agglomerations could be secured with Lugano as one exception, very much to *Avenir Suisse's* chagrin – villagers are usually unwilling to get swallowed by a city. Canton fusions were a total failure. So in a recently published paper called "Governance with variable geometry. Guidelines for metropolitan regions exemplified by the Lake Geneva area"³ *Avenir Suisse* whines: "The population [i.e. that of the Lake Geneva area, M.W.] was unfortunately unaware of the metropolitan development. Their lack of conscience was shown in a

continued on page 4

"Making up the balance ..."

continued from page 3

plebiscite in 2002, when a cantonal fusion of Waadt and Geneva was turned down with a clear majority." Most re-



Graphic: Current Concerns/roho, 2012

Source: "Gouvernance à géométrie variable. Perspective lémanique". Edited by Xavier Comtesse, avenir-suisse-Verlag: avenir suisse and Éditions du Tricorne, Geneva, 2012. ISBN: 978-2-940450-13-8, © 2012 avenir suisse

cent attempt: Basle-Stadt and Basle-Land should join at last, as *Avenir-Suisse* functionary Daniel Jentsch argues under the title "No taboo for canton fusions" on 13 April 2012. But this was spoiled too by the people's No – the Baselbieter will think twice whether they should hook themselves up to the very city canton they managed to become independent from almost 180 years ago.

"Governance (which sounds suspiciously similar to government with variable geometry", rather: How legitimate governmental actors may be sidelined and political borders dissolved

Hard to know what to do, when those Swiss municipalities and cantons would in no case be willing to plunge into mega-regions like lemmings jumping off the cliff and disappear in dissolution... But die-hard *Avenir Suisse* is not down yet: May they keep their ancestral "administrative and political territories" (municipalities and cantons, that is), they tell those stubborn Swiss, for-instance around Lake Geneva – at least formally, as long as there is "a real metropolitan governance [which] has to overcome traditional borders" (summary p.15). There should be some political steering committee, they argue, concentrating all tasks and distributing them to municipalities and cantons or French departments and cities, respectively. The latter would be allowed to actually implement all directions themselves, or out-source them to third parties, and pay for them as a matter of course.

Here are some tasters taken from the gruesome "vision" of these fellows:

"Common tasks are decided upon at metropolitan level and municipalities and cantons are responsible for their implementation, but they stay accountable to the metropole." (p. 27)

Note: The "steering committee" is by no means accountable to municipalities and cantons, it's the other way round! Or:

"Is it really necessary to maintain so many offices of statistics, water supply and air purity, several departments of road traffic, shipping or winegrowing? With no doubt a detailed analysis of every office or department would lead to meaningful suggestions for a transformation and re-distribution of competencies, without compromising the public service. Just think of the services regarding water or air: It would make sense to concentrate all of them in Nyon or out-source some partial domains to Lausanne or Geneva." (p. 20)

Note: Just how stupid do they think we are? Some "steering committee" doing away with most public offices and dictating amalgamations regardless of all municipal, cantonal or federal borders would amount to the abolishment of autonomous municipalities, sovereign cantons and nation states – we Swiss will know how to foil this plot!

Like some more of this stuff?

"Suppose, Geneva would surrender their Art and History Museum to the Museum of Lausanne, where the enlarged collection could gain Europe-wide reputation. This would yield sufficient resources to build a web-museum in Geneva or a web-city, commemorating the invention of the internet at CERN near Geneva."

Note: Totalitarian economy managed by the think tank *Avenir Suisse*, the alleged spear-head of a totally free global market economy?

"The leading body of 'Métropole lémanique' should be chaired by a personality who had been elected into some political mandate directly by the people. For-instance, a state councilor could be partially exempt from his duties to do this. That way the formation of a technocratic entity facing opposition in the direct-democratic Swiss system could be avoided. [...] It has to be avoided by all means that the citizens become suspicious that they get stripped of their political rights by this structure. Any foreign-imposed structure, organisation or authority may be opposed by the people. Therefore it would be preferable that the leading personnel be recruited from local political boards – a directly elected politician would fulfill this criterion". (p.24/25)

Note: Never attended a "civic education in democracy" lecture? Any state councilor chosen from above (by whom?) represents just the population of his or her canton, as a member of a collective authority

with constitutional obligations, that is. Indeed it would be unavoidable "that the citizens become suspicious they get stripped of their political rights by this structure". Moreover, they wouldn't merely "become suspicious", but citizens would in fact be stripped of all political rights. The "steering committee" *Avenir Suisse* aims are reminiscent of the European commission: A bunch of arbitrarily chosen people without democratic legitimacy whatsoever arrogates to dictate to sovereign EU states or political entities of the *Métropole lémanique* region what they have to do – these citizens being permitted to obey orders and pay with their taxpayers' money. We Swiss will know how to foil this plot!

"Obviously the steering committee's main task would be to co-ordinate the development of the metropolitan region together with the local politicians, to implement an action program, distribute tasks, commission services, to perform controlling and social reporting. The leader's main task would be to represent the metropole at the inter-cantonal and national level." (p. 25)

Conclusion

The sovereign being sidelined by a totalitarian rule of the executive authorities – no way! Switzerland is no string-puppet providing a perfect playground of optimal profit maximization to global big business as her only reason to exist. We won't have some big business think tank destroy our very well-functioning state structure which is rooted in the people and based on direct democracy and federalism. Nor our locally organized economy: Our wealth is produced by us, the citizens and is mainly based on local SME who also support the dual vocational education system, thereby decisively contributing to our very low youth unemployment rate. We may well dispense with both Brussels bureaucracy and big business CEO constructs. •

¹ Walter Schenkel is co-owner of "synergo", counseling and planning business in Zurich. According to its website, synergo was "a major contributor to the Zurich Metropolitan Conference and administers its office today". Synergo does not only do the planning for communal, cantonal and national authorities in Switzerland, but also for European government and research bodies. Among others, it participates in framework programs of the EU and the Interreg-projects.

² Berchtoldkrass space&options, Spatial- and city planning, Karlsruhe/Germany; studio uc klaus overmeyer, German planning of European metropolitan areas, Berlin/Germany; Quadra GmbH, Working on park areas, Zurich

³ German summary of the publication "Gouvernance à géométrie variable. Perspective lémanique". Edited by Xavier Comtesse, avenir-suisse-Verlag: avenir suisse and Éditions du Tricorne, Geneva, 2012. ISBN: 978-2-940450-13-8, © 2012 avenir suisse

(Translation Current Concerns)

Megalomania unlimited?

What is “Metrex”? – or: How to dissolve national borders by stealth

thk. The association “Metropolitan Area Zurich” is the copy of the international association “Metrex” that sees its role in dissolving international borders and creating new supranational regions, which are then no longer subject to democratic control. The association is based in Belgium and is therefore organized according to Belgian law. The parallels to the association “Metropolitan Area Zurich” are striking. And it becomes clear what has guided the initiator of the “Metropolitan Area Zurich”, former Councillor *Markus Notter*.

It is evident to everybody who does a little research that the concept of European metropolitan areas was created in some EU back-rooms. Everything aiming at dissolving grown and existing borders, e.g. nature parks, which exceed both the cantonal and national borders, or the various Interreg-programs, are products of the EU strategy planners – of an EU that is bankrupt.

As early as in 1996 the association “Metrex” was created at the Conference of Metropolitan Regions in Glasgow with active support of the EU-Commission in order to press ahead with the dissolution of national borders. The whole purpose was veiled as the euphemistic pretext to ensure closer cooperation of the metropolitan areas across the borders.

“Metrex”, the association itself labels “the eminent European planner, environmentalist and educationalist *Patrick Geddes*” (1854–1932) the father of this idea who designed the city of Tel Aviv (1927–1929) and was principally concerned with planning of metropolises.

“Metrex”, short for Metropolitan Exchange, features itself as “a network of practitioners, that is, officials and their advisers, concerned with the spatial planning and development at the metropolitan level. It is essentially a network through which key European strategic decision makers can share their knowledge, experience and expertise.” According to “Metrex” in Europe there are “some 120 metropolitan regions and areas, which are the larger centres of economic and social life”, each with more than 500,000 inhabitants.

The association’s aim is to achieve the gradual dissolution of the borders by means of close cooperation beyond these national borders, notabene without any democratic legitimation.

Moreover, if one examines the published documents of the association “Metrex”, a list of the hitherto associated cities can be found besides the club rules. Up to now 50 European cities or metropolitan areas have joined the association so far – almost exclusively cities from EU states and their surrounding regions. If you read the list to the

end, you may rub your eyes when you notice *that even the “Metropolitan Area Zurich” is member of this association*, represented by the “Regionalplanung Zürich und Umgebung (RZU)” (umbrella association of the Zurich region and surroundings). The membership costs money, and it would be interesting to know whether the parliaments of the member cantons and cities as well as the inhabitants of the individual communities were asked for their consent to a “Metrex” membership and whether they were informed about the resulting costs.

The association deliberately bypasses state structures and sees itself as a representative of the associated cities and their settlements.

Under the title “Metropolitan Governance”, which can be simply translated as control system of the urban centres, the political aspiration becomes clear. In the view of the association “Metrex” “*metropolitan areas are now the level at which European spatial planning objectives can be realised most effectively*.” Without effective metropolitan governance the populations of metropolitan areas are unable to influence some of the key issues affecting their future and their sustainability.”

A minute elite has created an institution with which they can completely bypass the democratic structures in the EU countries which partly are very weak any way. It presumes to be the representation of the people living in the metropolitan areas, which it has created on its own, and adorns itself with the competence to realize their political concerns. This is absurd. The affected population neither had anything to say in the founding of this association nor is it involved in the decision making in any way.

This means that the whole thing has no democratic legitimation. There is a vast amount of associations and organizations that see themselves as umbrella associations or coordination offices of the so-called metropolitan areas. All the EU’s Interreg-programs are an example of how one wants to raze the national borders and to build up new structures. Private-law associations, such as the association “Metropolitan Area Zurich” are beginning to take on official duties without ever having gotten a democratic mandate for that. Here clarification is essential, the fewest citizens of a so-called metropolitan area have been informed about the existence and the operation of such an international association, which has finally acquired broad powers. Moreover, this entity absorbs their tax money that now lacks everywhere: for the children, for older citizens, for the sick, for the Hartz IV-recipients ... •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Metropolitan Region and Area	Country
Amsterdam	Netherlands
Athens	Greece
Barcelona	Spain
Berlin	Germany
Bilbao	Spain
Bologna	Italy
Brussels	Belgium
Bucharest	Romania
Budapest	Hungary
Copenhagen/Malmo	Denmark
Eurociudad Vasca	France
Frankfurt	Germany
Genoa	Italy
Glasgow	U K
Granada	Spain
Hamburg	Germany
Hanover	Germany
Helsinki	Finland
Istanbul	Turkey
Krakow	Poland
Lisbon	Portugal
London	UK
Madrid	Spain
Marseilles	France
Milan	Italy
Moscow	Russia
Munich	Germany
Naples	Italy
Nuremberg	Germany
Oradea	Romania
Paris	France
Oporto	Portugal
Prague	Czech Republic
Rhine-Neckar	Germany
Riga	Lithuania
Rome	Italy
Rotterdam	Netherlands
Central Germany	Germany
Seville	Spain
Sofia	Bulgaria
South Coast Metropole	U K
Stockholm	Sweden
Stuttgart	Germany
Szczecin	Poland
Thessaloniki	Greece
Turin	Italy
Veneto	Italy
Wroclaw	Poland
Saragossa	Spain
Zurich	Switzerland

About the table

Two metropolitan areas, Marseilles and Istanbul, are in the admission process. That means the association consists of 48 metropolitan areas that are often represented by several organizations. Note that many of these metropolitan areas are situated in bankrupt EU-member countries. Does this mean that dependencies on the richer EU-member countries are created here, in order to root the EU dictatorship, before everything falls apart?

How to go on to make the world safer?

Russia's diplomacy in transition: new world, new challenges

After his inauguration on 7 May *Vladimir Putin* has to appoint the Prime Minister. *Dmitry Medvedev* is to take office. The prime minister will set up a new government – and this includes the appointment of a new (or old) foreign minister. The main directions of foreign policy are determined by the President. He takes the decisions in this area. As to foreign policy, is there a new course to be expected after Putin's taking office in the Kremlin? *RIA Novosti* asked a number of foreign experts about Russia's position in the world community and what changes were to be expected with Putin's return. The foreign policy experts believe that possible changes will not be related to the change of the presidency. They are convinced that Putin continued to pull the strings of foreign policy during Medvedev's presidency. Although there were differences in style between the two presidents, there never was a new political course. Experts say possible changes would be associated with the factual development of international relations in the world.

Russia and EU: biggest challenge for the Kremlin

"The most important feature of Russian policy is its ability to react. Russia is forced to respond to a rapidly changing flow of external events. So changes cannot be avoided", said *Pawel Bajew* from the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo. Bajew believes that Putin is now in a different situation than Medvedev at his inauguration or Putin eight years ago. "Russia must take a decision with regard to Europe's decline and to a significant weakening of the European Union, which had been the largest partner, the biggest landmark, and a model. [...] That is the greatest challenge to Russian policy", said the expert. According to Bajew the EU economy is in a very deep crisis which will take Europe a lot of time to overcome. Yet, the turmoil in Europe creates further opportunities for Russia. At the same time, the economic mechanisms, capital and cultural ties are so closely intertwined that the EU crisis also affects Russia. *Ilan Berman*, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC) in Washington, agrees. Berman also thinks that the economic crisis in the EU and the EU's weakness are a problem for Russia. According to Berman, Putin is already looking for new vectors in international relations with East and Central Asia moving into the centre. For *Stefan Melle*, director of the Berlin "German-Russian Exchange Association", the economic problems of the EU are obvious on the one hand; on the other hand, the EU as a community model continues to be attractive, at least in Russia. For Russian citizens the EU

is still number one among the regions to emigrate to. With regard to the economic and energy policies, relations between Russia and the EU are developing quite smoothly. That is especially true for the Russian-German relations. But in terms of the visa issue the relationship has come to a deadlock. Despite the adoption of a roadmap on visa facilitation there has been no visible progress in this matter, Melle said. The EU's doubts about Russia's political system is seen as an objective obstacle. As long as there are no genuine elections, no real pluralism, and no real anti-corruption campaigns, the EU will slow down the visa process, Melle said. Oxford professor *Peter Oppenheimer* sees the internal political problems as an essential component of foreign policy. Relations with Britain are directly influenced by the state of democracy in Russia, so Oppenheimer. Great Britain is the oldest democracy and sees itself still as a worldwide model of parliamentarism, the expert said. "To increase the status of Russia in other countries, an improved election process and the existence of an actual civilised opposition would be desirable," said the professor. "Britain does not understand why the vote-rigging was necessary because more than half of the Russian population supports Putin anyway," says Oppenheimer. According to the professor, there are no serious problems between London and Moscow except for the case of *Alexander Litvinenko* as whose murderer *Andrei Lugovoi* is the suspect in the UK. But no one could say that this matter was of major strategic importance, the expert said. According to an expert from the *National Security Bureau* of Poland, who wished to remain anonymous, a radical change of the Kremlin towards Poland is not to be expected. In Poland greater confidence and greater transparency between the two countries is expected. The expert referred to Putin as a politician with whom mutually acceptable agreements could be reached. However, the Poles are still looking at issues such as the Katyn massacre and the crash of the aircraft with the delegation of President *Lech Kaczynski* as issues that need to be discussed.

Russia and the United States: Détente in the missile defence controversy in sight

It has become standard practice in the US to concentrate on foreign policy in times of domestic problems. According to Berman, Putin will also take this course because at present there are serious problems in Russia (demographic, ethnic, religious).

But there are problems in foreign policy as well, i.e. the relations with the EU, the US, etc. Berman thinks that Putin has to find a balance between domestic and

Netanyahu partner offers moderate voice on Iran

On Tuesday, as Mr *Netanyahu* stood shoulder to shoulder with *Shaul Mofaz*, a former defense minister and military chief of staff and now the leader of the centrist Kadima Party, and welcomed him into the governing coalition, it was as if the Prime Minister was offering some kind of response, especially for a jittery Israeli public generally averse to a lone Israeli strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.

While Mr *Netanyahu* and Mr *Barak* have presented an aggressive stance against Iran, Mr *Mofaz* is regarded as a more moderate voice who opposes any rush into military action. After becoming head of the opposition in March, he said in a television interview that an early attack on Iran could be "disastrous" and bring "limited results."

Criticizing what he saw as the government's Iran-centric policy to the detriment of the peace process with the Palestinians, Mr *Mofaz*, who is Iranian-born, also said, in an interview in April, that "the greatest threat to the state of Israel is not a nuclear Iran."

Source: "The International Herald Tribune", 10 May 2012

foreign policy tasks. As far as relations between Russia and the United States are concerned, Berman holds that since the new start Washington has acted very one-sidedly. "The *Obama* administration has already done much. For example, it has reduced the number of weapons of mass destruction. However, the tone in the relations has not changed", Berman said. Obama showed that he was seeking qualitative changes in the relations with Moscow and that he was willing to work on them in his second term, if he wins the elections. In his challenger *Mitt Romney* this intention cannot be detected up to now. It would therefore be advantageous for the Kremlin if Obama was re-elected. An administration with a Republican at the top might shift more towards a collision course with Russia. But *Pawel Bajew* does not share this opinion. "For Putin, it would be more convenient if a new person moved into the White House, as Obama has put a great effort and a lot of political capital into the opening of talks with Medvedev," said the political expert. "Even if the president was a person with difficult ideas for Russia it would be easier for Putin to develop the relations from scratch," said the expert. For Bajew the planned US missile defence sys-

"How to go on to make ..."

continued from page 6

tem in Eastern and Central Europe, which is considered to be the stumbling block in the relations between Russia and the US is not the biggest obstacle. The missile defence issue has been artificially inflated and placed in the centre of the Russian-American relations, tensions would subside with time, said the expert from Norway. In technical terms, this issue is no particular danger. The missile defence dispute had been useful at certain times, which are over now. For both sides it would be better to see the true dimension of this crisis. According to Berman, several Russian military officials recently admitted that there was a threat to Russia from North Korea and Iran. "If there is this danger Russia also needs a missile defence system in Europe. But so far there were no such talks. To date, there was only this antagonism in the missile defence negotiations," said the political expert from American.

**Russia and China:
cautious diplomacy**

"The geopolitical interests of Russia are in accordance with those of the United States, especially with regard to China," said Pavel Bajew. All experts interviewed by *Ria Novosti* argue that China has become much more important in the world over the past decade, and that Moscow must take China's interests in its own foreign policy into account. According to Bajew, Russia's position against the rapidly growing economic power of China has become weaker. Therefore, "a cautious diplomacy" was needed. "It's much harder to find a common language with them than with the Europeans.

This is due to cultural differences and political experiences," said Bajew. "You never know what note to strike towards China. The cultural differences are huge. Much of what happens in China is incomprehensible. China lives by its own laws. It is very difficult to adapt to", said the expert. "Establishing permanent relations with China is difficult also for the reason that it takes a different stance in every region and every conflict – depending on their current interests. Most of all China is interested in its internal problems." *Stefan Melle* shares this opinion. "The biggest drive in China's foreign policy is to supply the own country with the necessary resources, both in Asia and in Africa. So far there is no evidence of aggression in this policy. Russia should equally turn to both, Europe and China", says Bajew. According to him, the Obama administration shifted its focus from the Middle East to Asia a few weeks ago: "The US keep a jealous watch over China's military mobilisation, over its relations with the neighbours, including Russia. Berman on the one hand expects a closer cooperation between Russia and China and on the other hand also a competition for resources and influence on the policy stance of the Central Asian states. Although the United States defend their own interests in this region and play an important role, for the development of the situation in the region, however, a balance in relations between Russia and China is more important, especially after the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan drawing nearer."

According to Ilan Berman the Kremlin, wanting to play the role of a superpower in the Middle East, should take a clearer position in relation to Syria and Iran. This policy should not contradict the policy of

the United Nations and the United States. Israel believes no longer in the the sanctions' success against Iran. Israel is currently thinking about further steps. "It is very important that Israel is not isolated and is supported not only by the United States, but also by Russia," said Berman, "because this way Russia will be a diplomatic partner of Israel to a greater degree. Russia should have sympathy for the possible strategies of Israel in relation to Iran," said the expert. According to Bajew currently no solution to the nuclear dispute with Iran is on the horizon. But the expert is of the opinion that with respect to the Iraq issue Russia should be oriented towards China and should not bargain with the United States. "About the Arab-Israeli peace settlement, there is total confusion," said the political expert. "After the Arab Spring, this process is not only connected with the relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Moreover, it is unclear what will be happening in Syria. There is very little manoeuvre room for a breakthrough. I do not think that Russia has the opportunity to enter this game," said Bajew.

**Russia and the states of the
former Soviet Union:
In Ukraine a crisis is imminent**

According to the above-mentioned analyst from the Office of National Security of Poland, there are many issues that need to be disputed between Russia and the former Soviet republics that strive for access to Europe and NATO. This applies especially to Georgia. But before the October elections in Georgia, relations with Russia are not likely to deteriorate. There are many questions concerning Ukraine and the Russian influence on its foreign policy. "We advocate that neighboring countries can decide independently where they want to go," said the Polish expert. According to Bajew Russia will soon participate in the solution of a serious Ukrainian problem. "*Yanukovich* has driven himself into a corner from which there is hardly any exit. Putin must pay more attention to this situation," said Bajew. According to the political analyst, the crisis in Ukraine can turn to a serious political destabilization. Yanukovich has made many mistakes after his tumultuous start. The arrest of *Julia Tymoshenko* was a counter-productive and self-destructive political maneuver, the expert said. A confirmation for this are the increasingly loud voices of the Europeans who call for a boycott of the European Soccer Championship in Ukraine. So far there is no clear response from the Russian side to these calls and the detention of Tymoshenko. •

Lavrov: Arms smuggling to Syria inadmissible

Russian Foreign Minister *Sergei Lavrov* said in a telephone conversation with UN and *Arab League* special envoy *Kofi Annan* that arms smuggling to Syria was inadmissible.

Arms smuggling would destabilize the situation in Syria and the region in general Lavrov said according to the press office of the Foreign Ministry. The Minister emphasized that it was necessary to ensure that the peace plan designed by Annan will be pursued by the Syrian government as well as by the opposition. He ensured Annan of Russia's further backing of his mission.

Annan informed Lavrov of his efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in the Syrian conflict and thanked Russia for the assistance as the Foreign Ministry announced. The telephone call took place on initiative of Annan on Saturday.

In Syria violent protests against President *Baschar al-Assad* have been going on since more than one year. According to the UN more than 9,000 people have

been killed in the fights. The Syrian administration speaks of about 2,500 security forces and about 3,200 dead civilians.

On behalf of the UN and the Arab League former UN General Secretary *Kofi Annan* designed a peace plan for Syria which includes a stop of the violence, withdrawal of the government troops from the towns, the conduct of a dialogue between the government and the opposition as well as to ensure free access to relief supplies.

Both conflicting parties called a truce on 12 April. In spite of that the fights have been going on in some towns and were only stopped when UN observers appeared. The UN Security Council gave the go-ahead to send in total 300 observers to Syria. First observers arrived in Damascus on 15 April. At present their mandate is limited to 90 days.

Source: *Ria Novosti*, 5 May 2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Source: *Ria Novosti*, 05.05.2012

Southern Congress of "Zivile Koalition" on 2 May 2012 in Munich

Ways out of the financial crisis by citizens' participation and more direct democracy

hs. The rush on the "Southern Congress of the Zivile Koalition" at the *Bayrische Hof* in Munich even surprised its organiser Mrs *Beatrix von Storch*. More than 300 audience wanted to discuss about citizen-orientated concepts against the financial crisis and especially against the indebting instrument EMS. Besides Mrs Von Storch, Prof *Hans Herbert von Arnim*, *Hubert Aiwanger*, party chairman of *Freie Wähler* (free voters), member of the Bavarian Parliament, *Thomas Dechant*, FDP, member of the Bavarian Parliament answered the questions of the interviewer *Jürgen Seitz*, *Radio Bavaria* and the questions of the public.

For *Beatrix von Storch*, the "Zivile Koalition", founded by herself in 2004, represents a civilian counter-movement encouraging citizens to put forward their needs, concerns and demands directly to their political representatives. In addition, she has made use of the possibilities of the internet and has created the blogger paper *Freie Welt*. The platform www.abgeordnetencheck.de which she also initiated gives everybody with internet access the possibility of writing prefabricated protest mails or petitions directly to their delegates. This possibility of protesting against the ESM has already been used 750.000 times. The action "Bavaria stops the ESM" has been clicked on 75.000 times within 10 days. The Bavarian governor *Horst Seehofer*, the General Secretary of the CSU, *Alexander Dobrindt* and *Gerda Hasselfeld*, federal CSU party chairmen, are requested by petitions to seriously consider the concerns of the citizens and to vote against the ESM (www.zivilekoalition.de/bayernkampagne). Like this, a basic movement can develop. *Zivile Koalition* also uses the social network *facebook* in order to spread the current political developments in a fast way. These can be likewise passed on to the delegates. Mrs Von Storch formulated a crunchy slogan "Europe needs no rescue parachute, Europe needs more rescue brain". By this slogan she hits the nerve of the time.

According to Prof von Arnim the financial crisis resulted from the many constitutional violations. When the euro was introduced, a debt brake of 3 % was decided on. This debt-brake has been injured 60 times by now. National debts were also a problem for representative democracy, as this system is purposefully and short-term orientated towards the voters. However, the citizens were able to act as a counter-

weight, he said. This is, as a matter of fact, embodied in the German constitution, the "Grundgesetz". Article 146 GG prescribes a popular vote in case the country hands over its sovereignty rights – as was the case with the ESM treaty. Also, Art. 20 GG, paragraph 4, grants the citizens a right to resistance if the democratic order of the Federal Republic is endangered. Democracy may not become limited by treaties like the fiscal union and the ESM, but must on the contrary be strengthened by more democracy. To this end, Professor von Arnim suggests the introduction of a financial referendum according to the Swiss model, since the citizens are likely to think farther and on a more long-term basis than our politicians.

According to Mr *Hubert Aiwanger*, party chairman of the "Freie Wähler" (free voters) in the Bavarian regional parliament, the ESM is a political error. The attempt to solve the debt problems generating always new debts was like putting out a fire with gasoline, he said. For him, bank guarantees are out of question. The actors in politics were too cowardly to draw a final line.

According to the Bavarian FDP member of parliament *Thomas Dechant* the ESM only serves to buy time. This was no solution for the insolvent states. Since the beginning of the financial crisis, the banks had been furthermore pressing the states and taking the peoples into regress. Presenting this policy as being without any alternative was a poor certificate for politics. According to *Thomas Dechant*, quitting the euro could also be a possibility for Germany.

What is to do?

Mrs von Storch wants to bring a broad basic movement on the way assembling the population with the aim to force the political parties to behave in a self-responsible way in the sense of the *bonum commune*. Pressure has to be built up against politics, arguments alone do not generate any effect. Treaties are violated and new treaties like the fiscal pact are only unbinding regulations. Again only promises, no legal rules. The problem in Germany was that people did not take to the streets.

Why is Europe not disputable?

For many participants the euro was disputable, but not Europe. This phenomenon is strongly spread especially in Germany. According to Professor von Arnim

a transfer union has resulted from the deal between *Mitterand* and *Kohl*, i.e. the re-union of Germany in exchange against the D-Mark. Always generating higher debts, including the target 2 debts, a situation has been created which could uniquely be qualified as "terror without end".

The peoples of Europe will have to bear the effects of the financial crisis for many years to come. Therefore, the citizens are called today to go in for more right of speech, also in the sense of more responsibility. Mrs von Storch has proven that there are ways for more participation in our democratic system. In this sense, the congress was very encouraging for the citizens. There will be no fast successes, but also in Germany the way to a genuine direct democracy has been initiated. •

You can order a DVD including all contributions of the "South Congress" at www.zivilekoalition.de.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-
for all other countries.

Account: Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

© 2011. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

Baden-Wuerttemberg – echo in the media after one year green-red government: “school policy unconvincing”

km. One year after the green-red government in neighboring Baden-Wuerttemberg took office the balance of Prime-Minister *Winfried Kretschmann* is judged differently by the country's media. There is much criticism for the government's school policy. On 11 May the “Schwäbische Zeitung” titled “Green-red gallop through school policy” and complained the haste with which the school system of the country was being turned upside down. The Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs *Warminski-Leitheusser* – responsible for school policy – seems, according to the newspaper, to have been a bold politician once, the personification of the green-red awakening. But now she supposedly does not make a good figure in the parliament, speaks with little substance and comes up with few new ideas. Even in her own ministry, the newspaper goes on, the minister seems to be “quite luckless”. Already before Christmas the head of her department had written her a letter in which he complained that the management was secluding itself and acting full of mistrust towards its own ministry.

Criticism of “Gemeinschaftsschule”

The green-red project of the so-called “Gemeinschaftsschule” (see CC No.19) received particular criticism. In spite of the attempts of the minister and her head of staff to discipline skeptical headmasters – the case of a headmaster from the capital Stuttgart has been published two weeks ago – skeptical headmasters raise their voice once and again as can be learned from the media as well. An intermediate school headmaster from Tuttlingen is cited by the “Schwäbische Zeitung” from

8 May saying about the green-red school models they “think too little of the reality”. For this headmaster the “model school” of the Swiss private school entrepreneur *Peter Fratton* in Romanshorn, to whom headmasters and teachers from Baden-Wuerttemberg are regularly taken for training, has little persuasive power: “Teachers are also educators. They do not want to step into the background, but want to play an active role.” He as a headmaster could not endorse a “pure moderator role” for teachers, he said. He is afraid that with the model a la Fratton “a fully new role model of pedagogues” is going to be created.

Green model Peter Fratton's prayer: “Do not teach me anything, do not explain anything to me, do not educate me, do not motivate me.”

In 2008 Peter Fratton had explained to the parliament faction of the *Greens* in Baden-Wuerttemberg that his employees would no longer be teachers, but only “learn companions”. He expected them to accept the following alleged pupil's requests – Fratton called them “basic requests” – as guideline for their work before taking up office: “Do not teach me anything, do not explain anything to me, do not educate me, do not motivate me.” The same Peter Fratton is to be member of a new ministerial expert commission for a “new” teacher training in Baden-Wuerttemberg and shall re-train 56 present teachers at the new founded “Gemeinschaftsschulen” to become exactly those “learning companions”, according to two press releases from the Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs of Baden-Wuerttemberg from 27 April and 4 May.

Majority in Baden-Wuerttemberg rejects “Gemeinschaftsschulen”

On 10 May the “Stuttgarter Zeitung”, one of the important daily newspapers in Baden-Wuerttemberg, titled in its internet edition: “School policy does not convince”. The newspaper conducted a survey on the school policy of the green-red government and concluded that “more than the half (54 percent) of the persons questioned are less or not at all satisfied with school and educational policy”. Of the persons questioned with school-age children even 47 percent are less and 22 percent not at all taken in by the work of the Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs. The criticism also applies to the project of the so called “Gemeinschaftsschule”. 51 percent of the parents with school-age children of those questioned have a negative attitude. And the rejection is even sharper with those, whose school-days have not been over so long ago: it is near 61 percent.

These numbers are the more remarkable as they do not correspond with the published opinion. In spite of all the propaganda the green-red government of the country did not succeed in influencing the citizens' skeptical sense.

The impression that also the green prime minister seems to have taken some distance to his school project that he had advocated in the past, is indeed remarkable. Such turn of mind was reported by parliamentarians and in the country's media as well. As we learned, however, it is not the factual arguments that persuaded Kretschmann, but he seems afraid to lose his power. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Are we actually crazy?

“Will our technical colleges soon have to recruit their students in Africa?”

ds. Have you ever had the opportunity to observe children during class in an African village school, on film or even on site? – Then you have experienced the alert and expectant eyes of children crowded together on simple wooden benches or sitting on the ground listening attentively to what the teacher is telling them – eager to learn. Then you might also have admired when the teacher drew the diagram of a plant or human organs – for example, the digestive tract – with a few strokes of chalk on a blackboard, simple, clear and understandable. The children get up when the teacher calls them or when they want to ask a question. They sing, dance and laugh and above all they learn! Our children are also eager to learn when they enter school. Maybe they are a little more fidgety and more concerned with their own ego than the African children. They have just not learned to listen to adults; they are accustomed to guiding mum and dad, and are initially a bit confused when they aren't the center of attention any longer – but they also want to learn.

Instead of teaching the children according to the rules of pedagogy and conveying to them the knowledge and experience of previous generations so that they may profit from them and maybe later go on building on what they learnt, self-proclaimed “educational experts” make every effort to prevent that they learn: children should not be burdened with unnecessary knowledge to ensure that their creativity can flourish. Each generation is to reinvent itself and is supposed to be able to float freely, without prejudice of experience of the past and with no sense of history, through “Räume, Zeiten und Gesellschaft” (spaces, times and societies) as the new realm of studies is called. Legions of highly paid “experts” are constantly developing new learning prevention strategies, and an armada of “professional school assessors” supervises their implementation. Teachers who still want their children to learn something can be called up for re-education, so-called further education; they are threatened with dismissal. Students are supposed to learn self-determined, self-discovering and self-controlled. One of the professional learning preventers is *Peter Fratton*, an internationally active “education provider”, an enterprising business man, well connected and supported by the Bertelsmann Foundation, the leading listed provider and re-designer of the education market. Presently Fratton is advising the red-green government of Baden-Wuerttemberg in how to the dis-

solve well-proven education structures. In a lecture to the green parliamentary group of the State Parliament of Baden-Wuerttemberg in 2008, Fratton boldly claimed that up to then school had not considered children, and demanded that we must come to what he called a paradigm shift, namely just put aside our usual ways of thinking and whatever we had done with enthusiasm, and pretend that we would invent everything once more. “Maybe in a first step renew and later replace; if that succeeds, even re-invent. And if that succeeds it means that somehow I must have the courage to implement something. Not only the will, but really have the courage and say, even if you don't have any idea what will come of it, but even if it turns out pretty wrong it is good.” Fratton tells stories about the teacher as facilitator and students as learning partners, of autonomous learning, and designed learning environment – important for the reconstruction of entire school buildings – to cap all the nonsense off with his 4 pedagogical “pleadings”: These are: “Don't teach me anything. Don't explain anything. Don't educate me. Don't motivate me.”

Beg your pardon? – Will our engineering schools soon have to recruit their students in Africa? •

Invitation

to an
information and discussion evening

“What do euro-rescue package,
fiscal union and EU economic
government mean
for the individual?”

Speaker:

**University Professor Dr iur.
Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider**

**on Wednesday 23 May 2012,
at 7.00 p.m.**

in Vienna in Kolpinghaus
Vienna-Alsergrund
in 9th district, Liechtensteinstr. 100

Admission: free donation

Organizer:
Nonpartisan platform
for an EU Opt-out

Invitation to

Conference by
Prof Dr iur. DI.

Heinrich Wohlmeyer

Heinrich Wohlmeyer is the author of the bestseller “Globales Schafe Scheren” (2006). He has held important positions, as for example General Director of the Austrian Agrarian Industry or honorary professor at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences at Vienna. In *Current Concerns* on 2 October 2011 you could read the open letter addressed to the President of the Federal Republic of Austria, Dr *Heinz Fischer*, which Mr Wohlmeyer had signed among others, a letter which expressed his reserves against the ESM (European Stability Mechanism). Now there will be the opportunity of meeting and listening to him in person in Vorarlberg.

He gives his talk on the subject of

**“Slaves of Finance for ever? Appeal
to start a soft revolt – We are not
powerless.”**

The money that the States had been forced to accept in order to allow the interests being increased by a corresponding rating, was created out of nowhere (Fiat Money). Now there is the necessity of re-paying it in an orderly way – back into nowhere – , to avoid extreme social upheavals which might have unpredictable effects. The finance bubble which has been built up amounts to the triple of the World Gross product – that is to say the value of all merchandises and services of the world. To make them implode by debt waivers in an ordered way, is a dictate of the moment and the only alternative to social eradication, greatest suffering and distress, chaos and civil war.

So we are watching our fellow human beings and whole communities starving in front of the brimful dish, resp. we see the social scissors opening more and more because we do not dare take the “appropriate spoons” in our hands. Therefore we are called upon worldwide to demand a new order. If the movement is strong enough, it will break the resistance of the self-proclaimed “elites”. It so happened all through History when the mark was overstepped. The measures taken at present are counterproductive on one part (To save ourselves to death and to socialize the risks of the banks) and on the other hand insufficient (turning the old tax screws at the expense of the mass incomes and with too small revenues).

Location:

Bildungszentrum Hard, Landstraße 36,
A-6971 Hard am Bodensee
Tel./Fax: +43-(0)5574-731 34

Homepage:

wirmeinen.at/bildungszentrum-hard
E-Mail: *bildungszentrum-hard@gmx.at*
Date: Friday, 1 Juni 2012, 7.30 p.m.

Admission: euro 8.–

“The current development threatens the foundations of a democratic society and a lively culture of reflection”

Cologne Declaration “On the self-perception of the university”

by teachers of the University of Cologne, 24 November 2009

The influence of economization in all spheres of life does not stop at the university doors. By carrying out the current reforms the idea and the social task of the university are seriously threatened: The distinction between university, college and study programs from discounters (Aldi) or electric markets (Saturn) has been leveled. A comparison possibly turns out even to the disadvantage of the university, since the other providers can actually fulfill the promise of professional qualifications. This is reason enough to remember the original self-perception of the university: It is based on the principles of universality, autonomy and the incorruptible will to truth. Although, in its history there have always been drawbacks and shortfalls to this claim, it was just by its independence that the university was able to assume cultural and social responsibility in an essential sense. It is shocking that nowadays the university seems to be willing to abandon this claim without resistance and even to further its removal.

The current development threatens the foundations of a democratic society and a lively culture of reflection. With the presented catalog of demands teachers at the University of Cologne want to express their solidarity with the current protests of the students in the course of education strikes and to call for a public debate on the (concept of) the university and its apparent sell-out.

§ 1 We demand to put an end to epistemological university purges!

In the course of the Bologna process, the university is experiencing a progressive de-legitimization of reflective thinking in favor of functional-operational knowledge. The structure of the curriculum is currently following the logic of professional orientation and acquisition of skills while subject classification and research orientation are pushed into the background or have already entirely been replaced. This also shows in the tendency to marginalize or eradicate small subjects and disciplines. All in all this means an undue reduction of the concept of the university while students are deprived of the possibility to obtain an academic education. The claim to a universal and literal university education must not be abandoned. Reflexive, pure and fundamental – theoretical research is the foundation of modern civilization, it is not contrary to a legitimate claim to utilization, but opens the space for functional and responsible application.

§ 2 We demand the abolishment of modularized BA/MA courses!

The modularization has resulted in a school-like system of higher education, which hardly leaves room for studies guided by students' interest in the subject. The BA/MA degree programs demand too much in terms of quantity and too little in terms of quality by aiming above all at skills and by obstructing necessary reflection. Education cannot be modularized, but takes place as a meaningful process that has to be developed individually. The promise to provide for job qualification is de facto not fulfilled, neither does an academic education according to the standards of subject classification take place.

Thus the focus of our demands is not on optimizing the BA/MA study courses but on abolishing them. We demand that students shall be immediately transferred to the former diploma, respectively Master and state examination (“Staatsexamen”) programs – in non-bureaucratic validation procedures. The formal and content-related transformation of the courses of study will not be revoked hereby. However, such a transformation has to take place in a democratic way and with the participation of students, teachers and other personal in charge.

§ 3 We demand the re-democratization of the university!

With the creation of accreditation agencies and the Accreditation Council accrediting them, largely anonymous representatives from the field of professional practice – next to a few teachers and students – have taken on the decision-making authority over the study courses of approximately two million students in Germany.

By setting up a University Council, mostly constituted of non-university persons, the University Senate is de facto deprived of its legislative power. Also, University Council meetings are conducted in closed sessions. Deans' offices are increasingly establishing top-down structures. The academic actors are curtailed in their sovereignty. More and more research and qualification work is created on behalf of politics and business in order to precede possible interventions with alleged scientific justifications and thus to legitimize decisions. De facto research results are already determined before commencement of research. Topics and methods are thus deprived of the sovereignty of the re-

searcher. In order not to pervert free scientific research by external particular interests, only scientists are to be allowed to legitimize, to achieve and to take responsibility for designs within scientific institutions. Therefore, decision-making processes within the university are to be made accessible to university public scrutiny in such a way that they can be questioned concerning their sense and purpose. Such reflection and communication culture is in principle based on participation, dialogue and argumentation, and also takes into account minority positions. Police violence is not acceptable against those who seek a dialogue with good arguments! Democracy allows the participation of everyone in design processes concerning the common weal. The university constitutes a fundament of such a democratic society. The accreditation machinery, the institution of the University Council and the top-down structures in the faculties are de-democratizing the university. Therefore, they have to be abolished.

§ 4 We demand abolition of tuition fees

Tuition fees are socially unfair. Students who have to generate the fees through jobs, are studying less effectively. Students who, due to their social position, have to raise a credit, have to pay more in the end than those who are better off. Furthermore, tuition fees enforce the precarity of teachers and reduce the quality of studies, because they cannot be used for structure formation (permanent positions). Therefore tuition fees have to be abolished and to be replaced by state resources in the same amount.

§ 5 We demand to put an end to the de-skilling and precarisation of the teaching staff!

The situation of teachers has deteriorated in the wake of the Bologna process. High teaching loads and temporary jobs make it difficult to qualify and thus create a precarious situation for young scientists. This deficiency is not balanced by junior professors and the increased tendency to cumulative habilitation thesis, but is even deteriorating through these instruments.

On the one hand this situation pushes the divergence of research and teaching, on the other hand, it contributes to the “patchwork character” of the studies because teachers in temporary jobs, who

Switzerland needs a productive economy

Mountain areas and remote regions offer opportunities

Interview with Toni Niederberger, member of the cantonal parliament and entrepreneur



Toni Niederberger (picture thk)

thk. Since the financial and economic crisis at the latest, an intensified reflection and rethinking have become necessary also in Switzerland. 60 billion francs in support funds for UBS have shown that Switzerland – being a service economy with a large banking sector – runs a high risk and puts the nation's freedom and stability at risk. In addition to our service industries, we need a manufacturing economy, with good products, just like the products Switzerland developed in the past, in order to survive on the market. In the field of technology, Switzerland has so far been a successful country and it should necessarily expand this field. Experts say that Switzerland still has a lot of potential which however is too little used. In the following interview the businessman and member of the cantonal parliament Toni Niederberger outlines

his views; in the field of high technology he works with great success and develops new models for a successful economy.

Current Concerns: What can we do so that our country does not only provide services in the future, but returns to developing and manufacturing goods more than today?

Toni Niederberger: Basically, our country needs new products. In order to maintain and create jobs for everyone in our country, we need to produce and export more goods. Switzerland is known worldwide as an exporting country, and we must be careful not to abandon that position. In order to strengthen this field of our economy, we need to advance innovation which leads to new products. We need to develop products in the high-tech sector, because they are the only ones we can export. Simpler products can be produced in newly industrialized countries or in countries that are already industrialized. We need to make special high-tech products. Switzerland has a good reputation for them in many countries.

We are already at a very high level in research and development. We spend a lot of money per capita in relation to other countries; that is good, but we lack to translate research findings into jobs. We must set up companies, and therefore we need entrepreneurs, but also investors who support the company with the appropriate sums. It is necessary that we change our

thinking, as many investors are already investing their money abroad. We need people, who have the money, love their country and invest in their own country.

We therefore need people with a healthy national consciousness?

That's it, exactly. Banks do no longer make the money available for "start-ups". For the banks, this is all venture capital. But in fact it is capital that includes lots of chances. I appeal to the wealthy people in our country to invest in such projects and start-ups. They would thus establish something which preserves values beyond a man's life. A pioneer can put a monument for himself by having helped to start a business and to develop a product. If this develops into a medium-sized or large company, everyone is grateful, perhaps far beyond the next 100 years.

You mentioned that research results are fed too little in new and existing products and we therefore have too little production successes in our country. You have established companies yourself. Where did you get your inspiration from?

I have worked in Zurich for 10 years; I always commuted and was thinking about places to build something in my area. I established a single company and developed my own products. First I made services for third parties and parallel to that I

continued on page 13

"The current development ..."

continued from page 11

do not work full-time, had frequently disappeared when students wanted to be examined on a topic they worked on in their courses. Thus full-time auditors must examine material they have not even taught.

Instead of further deskilling and precarising the teaching staff provisions are required to promote the unity of research and teaching as well as the revival of the idea of a community in thinking and researching consisting of students and teachers.

§ 6 We demand that the decision-makers in presidencies and in deaneries accept their responsibility by seeking dialogue with critics and persons concerned and by making appropriate corrections!

The intervention in the academic culture, which was made on behalf of the so-called "reforms" is unprecedented in its radical-

ism and its effects are problematic for current and future generations of teachers and students. The transformation of the university puts into effect nothing less than the disintegration of the enlightened emancipatory culture of education with an incalculable scientific, cultural and economic loss for society as a whole. A shift of responsibility with reference to functional responsibilities (rector/principal, federal state, state, EU) is not acceptable.

Those who have to do with the university have the right and duty to contribute to its renewal in a responsible way – that is: guided by objective interests and not by particular interests.

§ 7 Finally, we demand the written confirmation of real academic freedom of research, teaching and studying and the commitment of the university to its educational mandate!

The economic reduction of studying tailored on alleged requirements of the

labor market only serves special interests. Education, however, always serves the common good of society. The university can accomplish this task only in freedom: Universities must not be interpreted as service companies, neither by administrators nor by teachers and students. Free research without third-party fund raising and usability doctrine is a prerequisite for growth in knowledge and innovation! Thoroughly educated students will be successful in any profession and will be responsible co-creators of culture and society. •

www.bildungsstreik-koeln.de/koelner-erklaerung
(Translation Current Concerns)

"Switzerland needs a ..."

continued from page 12

developed my own product. It was clear to me that I needed a separate product; otherwise the dependency on the economy would be too big. Eight years later a corporation has been created, in which we developed our own robot. I realized a market opportunity for the entire globe. For me there is only one global market. For me it is not the EU, NAFTA, the ASEAN market, but only one market. Our watch industry or our "Victorinox" (Swiss pocket knife industry) follow exactly this guideline, they successfully sell Swiss products worldwide. This is an opportunity I realized for our robot and so I founded a new company, in which the whole robot technology is developed and manufactured. I am convinced that we should continue to proceed in the same way. I do not say so to put me in the spotlight, but it is simply necessary, especially in the border regions and the underdeveloped areas, and far into the mountain areas. When producing a high-tech product, the site plays only a minor role. Thanks to modern telecommunications I can be connected to all places in the world.

A wider array of high-tech products is characterized by many advantages, because they are usually not particularly heavy in terms of weight, geometrically small, and they can thus be easily transported. Such a company does not have to be located next to an airport.

"A healthy tree provides healthy wood"

Apart from the ability to produce good products in our country, new jobs are created by such companies. What about this process in your company?

The first company, the development company employs approximately 10 people. The second company, manufacturing the robots, has 13 employees. And then there's another company that maintains all rights, trade marks (labels), naming rights, logos as well as the patent and know-how rights, and this company cares for and works on the intellectual property.

I would like to add one more thing about the development environment for so-called high-tech products. Here you can see the link between an intact nature and a healthy population. They are the precondition for high-tech products. A meaningful and useful high-tech product can be developed in peace, in a clean environment without any distraction and inspired by nature.

You have emphasized that one should reflect, seek, develop and produce in a decentralized manner and in a healthy sur-

rounding. One often hears the argument that this can be done more cost-effective in urban centers.

No, that's not true. Innovation cannot be controlled. A composer does not sit on a garbage dump to compose, but he draws inspiration from the beautiful nature around him. And if we do so in different places, there is a good chance for something meaningful to occur in several places. Cultural diversity matters and produces positive results, not simplicity and concentration. Healthy, creative, highly motivated and capable people originate in our mountain areas. They are well trained; everyone has a job and the toughness and persistence to undergo further training to become engineers, or graduate from a technical college elsewhere. A healthy tree provides healthy wood. I currently have to realize considerable differences. There are enormous differences between an apprentice from the city or from a mountain valley.

Therefore we must take care of our valleys, so that we will continue to have a healthy offspring there. The boys coming from the mountain valleys have a greater stamina, more decency and are particularly good at natural sciences such as physics and mathematics.

The academic path should also more frequently be pursued by talented people who study at both FITs and then work in development and research. But the other way is just as important. First learning a profession and alongside doing the professional degree or taking it after having completed the apprenticeship and finally being trained to become an engineer at the college of higher education. This is a very successful way that I can recommend from my personal experience. The success in my business is due to such members of staff. These are people with a lot of practical experience. We need to develop high-tech products, which is an extremely demanding and very complex task. One cannot handle it as easily as 40 or 50 years ago, since the state of today's technology has taken a great complexity (due to various, inter-related technologies). Pragmatists can often solve difficult problems rather than academic people.

"Healthy and proactive people very often come from the mountain areas"

In which areas do you see chances for Switzerland to promote the development? They are in the field of micro-, medical- and biotechnology, mechanical engineering, automation and robotics. We should really take advantage of our opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry as well as in nano-technology and software products (own source code) of the fourth generation. Realizing how many projects in the field of CTI (Communication, Tech-

nology and Innovation) are funded for research and development and finally the findings, results cannot be translated into new products and jobs I would say that tax money has been used badly. This efficiency should be absolutely improved so that companies with new products can emerge. The mountain communes could offer such companies tax exemption for several years, so that they set up their business there. In those areas where the "small world" is generally in order, yet provided with a large existing creative potential, it would be interesting to connect the nature with high-tech-future prospects.

Let us come back again to the point as how the mountain regions can be integrated better in such projects and developments. Could you please define this a little more precise?

Let us look at the Vaud Jura, in the Vallée de Joux, the 'Watch-valley'. Here we are in an absolutely remote region, which is a long way from the next airport. It is impressive to see the unusual products that have originated there; they are used worldwide, from the heart pacemaker up to measuring instruments and not to forget many premium brands of watches. This happens far away from big towns, right there in a rural area, with a rich diversity, with different French-speaking cultures. I am persuaded that we should be taking precisely the same path in the Alpine and Pre-alpine area.

If we look at the development of the watch industry in the Jura, we see the result of the cultural diversity. Hayek has lived the idea in practice and demonstrated with his Swatch Group: Merging French, Italian and Swiss German culture in a development department (engineering), so that especially good products are the outcome. One can easily imagine this diversity in certain regions, in every valley there is a particular mentality and culture to a certain extent which one does not even have to mix with French-speaking and Italian-speaking cultures. We must take care that we bring innovation on a high level, and the higher we raise the level, the more difficult it will be to achieve an even higher level. Therefore, our young people must be trained very well. To accomplish this, we need healthy and proactive people and these people very often come from the mountain areas, as I said.

"We need innovative people who try something and create something practical"

Are there any models how to integrate the rural population into such projects? Let us say something like a mixture of agri-

continued on page 14

"Switzerland needs a ..."

continued from page 13

culture on the one hand and high tech production on the other?

We all believe that a healthy and cultivated countryside is important. We must take care of the fact that it still remains in this way. In addition the population urgently needs a financial grant. In winter, one could create an opportunity for farmers to earn money, while they could assemble something at home after work in the stable and before they have to return to their work in the stable. One could also move a small company into a village, so that the population can find jobs. Not all regions where the population then could find jobs are developed for tourism with mountain railways and ski lifts. Innovation is needed, so that companies that produce suitable products could be attracted to these regions. It is not the money lying on the street, and I only have to pick it up. No, there are the problems lying on the

street, and while we solve them, for example, with the manufacturing of a product, which solves one of those problems, we could earn money. Thus a company would develop in a market niche. However, this requires innovative people who try and produce something useful. I appeal to all prospective engineers of FIT Zurich, Lausanne or in our universities of applied science that they commit themselves, become entrepreneurs and initiate something useful. However, I also appeal to solvent people to support such initiatives, so that big trees can develop from small plants. People who love their country should do so as a matter of routine, and I hope, there are many people who love our country.

Do you have a project in a commune in the mountain area?

I plan to make a new product be mounted in Gurtellen. This is a micromechanical device with many functions. One can assemble this from the already produced

components on a table, for example. Theoretically it could be assembled at home in a room; but we are talking about a high tech product. This could be an example for the future. The parts are produced in my company and then these parts are assembled somewhere decentralized. You do not need a big factory and a smoking chimney. There is no impact on nature. Nevertheless, it is not acceptable that we outsource this good work to Asia; we must keep it here in Switzerland. The opportunity has not yet gone, as some pessimists want to persuade us. 30, 40 years ago we still supported the Asian countries, today they are our competitors. This is the challenge we have to meet and we have to exploit our full potential. We must grab our chance. In the future doers will be needed and no administrators.

Mr Niederberger, thank you very much for the interview.

(Translation Current Concerns)

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Subscribe to Current Concerns – The journal of an independent cooperative

The cooperative *Zeit-Fragen* is a politically and financially independent organisation. All of its members work on a voluntary and honorary basis. The journal does not accept commercial advertisements of any kind and receives no financial support from business organisations. The journal Current Concerns is financed exclusively by its subscribers.

We warmly recommend our model of free and independent press coverage to other journals.

Annual subscription rate of
CHF 40,-; Euro 30,-; USD 40,-; GBP 25,-
for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
CHF 20,-; Euro 15,-; USD 20,-; GBP 12,50
for all other countries.

Please choose one of the following ways of payment:

- send a cheque to *Current Concerns*, P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich, or
- send us your credit card details (only *Visa*), or
- pay into one of the following accounts:

CH:	Postscheck-Konto (CHF):	87-644472-4	IBAN CH91 0900 0000 8764 4472 4	BIC POFICHBEXXX
CH:	Postscheck-Konto (Euro):	91-738798-6	IBAN CH83 0900 0000 9173 8798 6	BIC POFICHBEXXX
D:	Volksbank Tübingen, Kto. 67 517 005, BLZ 64190110		IBAN DE12 6419 0110 0067 5170 05	BIC GENODES1TUE
A:	Raiffeisen Landesbank, Kto. 1-05.713.599, BLZ 37000		IBAN AT55 3700 0001 0571 3599	BIC RVVGAT2B

For our bees' sake ...

“Fit bee”: New large-scale research project against depletion of bee population

Loss of bee populations of 25% like in this winter mean a loss of nearly 250 000 populations of bees for the whole of Germany! Even if *varroa mite* is considered to be the main polluter of increased winter losses, many questions about the effects of environment, climate, food availability and bee diseases on bee health still remain open. We know almost nothing especially not about the interactions between multiple factors.

Therefore, the first aim of our cooperation project “fit bee” is to understand these complex interactions better. Our research approach is new, because we examine these effects in single bees as well as at the level of the bee population. On the basis of these results we develop practical solutions for the different “problem areas” which reach from pesticides (PSM) over bee diseases to microclimate and pollen supply at the apiaries (bee yards) together with industrial partners. Ultimately this is to result in a “check list” for the beekeeper defining the optimal conditions for a location suitable for the bees.

Network of 14 partners

Seven institutes and commercial enterprises formed a network. The Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection supports the project with 2,3 million euro over three years. The industrial partners pay 25% of the expenses. The main project has been split into seven subprojects, so-called modules. Responsible for the coordination is the university of Hohenheim.

1. Immune factors and threshold level of damage

Up to now there were neither methods nor standards with a practical orientation for assessing the health of a single bee. Here we explore methods to measure such parameters in the field, too and to define threshold levels of damage for crop protection products (CPP).

2. Damage through crop protection products

The influence of environment parameters (for example CPP of different combinations and dosage) on the behaviour of the bees was explored. Thereby practical field methods for the assessment of behaviour changes are searched, for example how the worker bees find their way home, in order to get an early warning for a possible damage of bee populations.

3. Reduction of the incorporation of crop protection products

It is recorded systematically how many active ingredients in what concentration actually get from the field into the hive. Simultaneously research about new techniques is performed (new spray application techniques and bee-repelling additives) which diminish the entry of pesticides into the population from the outset.

4. Spread of bee diseases

The occurring stray flights to strange apiaries are decisive as well as robbery between the populations of a location or rather between populations of neighbouring locations. By molecular genetic methods “foreign bees” in a population are determined and diagnostic methods are quickly discovering the spread of specific bee diseases searched for.

5. Multifactorial influences

What must the landscape be structured like in a flight area and how many pollen have to be available for the development of vital bee populations? Therefore the development of populations and the disease situation are determined under different conditions regarding location. A central database with bee-relevant location data is the aim.

6. Influence of weather and climate

Basic issues have to be clarified: e.g. what are the bee-relevant weather data and how can I acquire weather data as close as possible to the apiary? That would be the precondition to determine if populations are more susceptible to diseases during specific weather fluctuations and which locations (microclimate) are favourable.

7. Biological varroa mite control

The basic idea is to use pheromones of the varroa mites, which could be identified in Hohenheim, for confusing the male mites and thereby possibly slow down the rise of the varroa population during the season. The mating of the varroa mites takes place only within the brood cells which poses a great challenge in applying these substances so that they have an effect within the closed brood cells.

New standards and threshold levels

All results shall define the ideal location for a healthy bee colony as exactly as possible. For the beekeepers a set of tools and

information shall be made available with which the vitality of the bee colonies and so the health of the bees can be improved in the long run.

Further information: <http://fitbee.net>

Bee institutes involved: Kirchhain, Oberursel, Halle-Wittenberg, Veitshöchheim, Hohenheim
Industrial partners: BayerCrop ScienceAG, Bio-Solutions Halle GmbH;

IP SYSCON GmbH; Interactive Networki Communications GmbH;

Lechler GmbH; Syngenta Agro GmbH; IS Insect services GmbH.

Dr Anette Schroeder, LAB-Hohenheim in the name of the network partners

Source: ADIZ/db/IF 5/2012, S. 16

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Beekeeping – as well for beginners

Geert Staemmler is working and living with honeybees for over 40 years. He served among other things as head of the department of the Beekeeping Research Institute at the University of Tübingen and as beekeeping advisor at the oldest beekeeping school in Germany in Bad Segeberg.

Geert Staemmler accompanies beekeepers with monthly work schedules and helpful hints throughout the bee year. Repair work in January, the growing bee stock in April, swarming season and honey harvest in June and varroa treatment in August. Beginners can adapt their operations according to the seasons and rhythm of a bee's life. Experienced beekeepers profit from valuable tips from a long-life beekeeping experience.

Source: Geert Staemmler, *Beekeeping around the year*

ISBN-Nr 9-783440-112304s



Project Nectar-Sunflower: Join our research

A sufficient and high-quality food supply during the summer months guarantees both the health and preparation of the bees' colonies for the winter on one part; on the other part it offers the opportunity of another honey harvest. Sunflower fields, however, scarcely yield any more nectar, as beekeeper Günter Friedmann (Demeter) reports in the April issue. Holger Loritz is now introducing you to a project that is doing research in these problems.

The climatic and local conditions are important factors for the production of honey from sunflowers. Of course, however, it was not the nutrition of the pollinators but above all the yield of oil that was focused on in the breeding of sunflower species. Unfortunately the knowledge about species producing honey has been conserved neither in the seeds' branch nor by the beekeepers. For this reason the project group "Nectar-sunflower" (see box) initiated by Mellifera e.V. together with the network of "Blühende Landschaften" (Green Pastures), is coordinating a trial to find out which sunflowers allow the improvement of the honey yield.

Fellow campaigners wanted

We invite you warmly to take part in this important analysis as a voluntary project partner – no matter if you are a home gardener, a beekeeper or a breeder of seeds. Intellectual curiosity, carefulness and a bit of time are the only prerequisites for your cooperation. For formal reasons we do not sell the necessary seeds. If you would like to join in, we will ask you to support the costs of the project by paying an amount of 22 euros. We have detected some interesting species. Among others there is the Eastern European species by *Günter Friedmann*, as well as one of the fash-

ionable species which are chosen to allow establishing a comparison. We are planning to examine the bee friendliness in a blind test for everyone, just in order not to fall victim of any unconscious preference or discrimination of any species. We are going to publicize the results thereof.

Now it is seed time

If you are a home gardener or a beekeeper and if you want to participate in the project, we will send you three different sunflower species in neutral bags. In each bag there are 70 seed corns which are enough for 10 square meters per bag. It is from this size up that you may join the project. What is more telling, however, is the threefold repetition of the test set-up which demands an area of around 90 to 100 square meters (3x3 species). It will be your task to observe and to take notes about the insects' stay during three months of blossom. Apart from that, some questions on the weather and on the location will be asked. If you are a breeder, 5 species will be put at your disposal. Depending on your individual possibilities, you will be confronted with larger tasks (e.g. nectar pipetting, examination of the honey bladder of the bees in order to make a more precise judgment of the qualities of the yield of the respective species. Depending on the weather and the location, the best time for seeding is between 20 April and 15 May. All species are undressed and can be used in organic farming as well; however a special authorization is required.

Participation without a garden

You can support the project even if you do not have an area of your own. We are looking for volunteers, who are familiar with bees and other insects and who, several times a day, are performing observa-

tions locally on a breeder's farm and collect additional data. If you are interested in this task, please contact Mellifera e.V. You can order the seeds there, too. Up to date information can be found at www.mellifera.de or at "Projekte – Nektar-Sonnenblume" at www.bluehendelandschaft.de. You will automatically be provided with the latest information if you send a short note to sonnenblume@mellifera.de or to the following postal address:

Mellifera e.V. und Netzwerk Blühende Landschaften, Fischermühle 7, D-72348 Rosenfeld

Fax 0049-7428-9452499,
Telephone 0049-7428-9452490
Source: ADIZ/IF 5/2012, p. 26

(Translation Current Concerns)

Stakeholders are:

- Mellifera e.V., sonnenblume@mellifera.de, Tel. +49(0)74 28 94 52 49-10
- Netzwerk Blühende Landschaft, info@bluehende-landschaft.de
- Sativa Rheinau AG, sativa@sativa-rheinau.ch (Individual dispatch to anyone interested in Switzerland)
- Bingenheimer Saatgut AG, info@bingenheimersaatgut.de
- Rieger-Hofmann GmbH, info@riegerhofmann.de
- Bantam, an initiative of "Save our Seeds", info@bantam-mais.de, Tel. +49(0)30 24 04 71 46
- Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz, office@gzpk.ch, Tel. +41(0)55 264 17 89
- Demeter-Imkerei Günther Friedmann, imkerei-friedmann@t-online.de

City bees

"If we have a balcony, we can sow wildflower meadows in miniature instead of annuals such as geraniums and impatiens. Window boxes with herbs are a good alternative, from which both bees and humans benefit, always allowing us to add something fresh to our home-cooked food.

Who has a garden and wants to do something deliberately good for the bees, can create multi-year flower filled meadows that attract pollinators such as butterflies or bumblebees. Such seed mixtures can fill gaps in the annual variety of flowers. They are available depending on the purpose in all sizes and colours." (p.222)

"The fact that you can keep bees in the city, has been demonstrated generations before me. Even in the countryside there are constantly offered beekeeper training sessions and new strategies are developed. Because many of the currently active beekeepers are already relatively old, it is important that younger people dare to start beekeeping. Who wants to work on these useful little animals and harvest his own honey, apply for a beekeeping club in his vicinity – I'm sure he will be received with pleasure!" (p.224)

out of: Erika Mayr, *Die Stadtbienen*.
ISBN-Nr.: 978-3-426-78514-0

