



Dr. Arend Oetker: MAYORS OF THE FUTURE don't stash away science in the cultural department

Dr. Arend Oetker is the president of the Benefactor Organisation for German Sciences (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft). At the European Congress of Science Cities (ECSC) taking place from the 7th to the 9th November 2006 in Magdeburg (Germany) he will describe what the science demands of cities of the future. In advance, he revealed in an interview why cities should recognise science as investment.

ECSC: How does the innovative city of the future look like?

Oetker: The innovative city of the future uses creative and rich of ideas its potentials in science, research, technologies, economy and culture. It socialises new contacts and strengthens existing contacts between the different domains with the aim to harmonise the interests of citizens, culture, economy and science and to use it optimal for the economic development and to distinguish the region.

ECSC: How can science push the innovative development of cities?

Oetker: The settling of science opens up positive impulses for a region: Students enriches the cultural living in a city, famous scientists from all over the world create internationality, the alliance of science and companies means economic development and employment creation for a region. A study has shown: every euro having been invested in education and science produces an inquiry twice as high of students, companies and private investors. Science can also prejudice the common living in a city e.g. by events that reach children, parents, media, economy and that show the importance of science to a broad public. Places of interexchange between science and public should be created in the middle of a city in order to make science an essential element of every day life of the citizens.

ECSC: How does the ideal city of the future deals with the resource of science?

Oetker: Presently, science plays an immense role as impulse for a structural change, for innovations and modernisation. Many cities and regions already find themselves amid a structural change. Whole sectors of industry having distinguished a region for a long time disappear now. Science as location factor can offer important future perspectives. The city of the future recognises science as investment, not as expense factor. A very good integration of schools, universities and research institutions in the common live ensures the economic advance and so the sustainability of a city.



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ESCS: How do innovative networks between town councils and scientific institutions as well as other social sectors have to look like?

Oetker: Networks between different sectors contributes a better transparency, a better knowledge upon the other, the appreciation of the different aims and expectations for a cooperation. Thereby, provisos are reduced and it is also build an important basic requirement for a succesful cooperation between economy, science, culture and town councils. The networks should be planned long-ranging, they should define collective aims and should be animated by concrete projects. An accompanying professional marketing ensures that also the public notices the structural change, gets into the science and identifies positive with the city.

ECSC: At this stage, how can a mayor make his city a city of the future?

Oetker: Mayors should understand themselves not only as decision maker but also as moderator to make the dialogue between the often still devided worlds of economy, science and culture usable for a succesful realisation of collective aims. Additionally, the focus on science should be reflected in a professional support of the city council, mayors should not stash away science in the cultural department. The potentials of science will only develop long-ranging. Therefor, the constitution and strengthening of regional networking requires also a long enduringness of the mayors.

Further information:

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Registration for the congress:

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