

The Green Charta of Zurich

Plants, gardens, parks and green free spaces create more quality of life for the inhabitants and improve the climate of cities. The living environment of cities must be upgraded by green. Green has a positive effect on the human health. Green open spaces support social contacts and decisively contribute to an environment worth living. The European project "The Green City" is an answer to the present social and environmental-political challenges.

The philosophy of the project aims at creating awareness for the value of green and to motivate people for a commitment for green to promote the greening of the cities of Europe. This is done by means informing economy and politics, but also the public on the various positive functions of vegetation and the green areas for the quality of life, well-being and the improvement of social connections, the dynamization of the economy and the maintenance of the environment.

Climate

Discussions on the climate in Europe are based on numerous, very different suggestions, which are mainly of technical nature. However, the positive interaction between vegetation and climate does not get sufficient attention. Especially green areas in cities take over important ecologically balancing functions and effects in the sense of preventive climate protection. These connections must be taken into consideration in Europe.

In Europe we need maintenance of climate by sustainable maintenance of the landscape. Only those who plan and build with ecological awareness have understood the principle of sustainability. The lost of vegetated areas following developments can be compensated by the greening of roofs and walls.

Particulate Matter

The permissible threshold value for particulate matter was exceeded at many places last year again. A programme for keeping the air clean must also include a green concept, which controls the exchange process of air and the temperature drop by means of plants. We need research programmes all over Europe to investigate the biological effect of plants with regard to their potential as filters to remove particulate matter from the air.

Flood attenuation and mitigation

In future climate change will cause climate-related extreme events to an increasing degree; this includes high tides or floods which will affect Europe more and more often. Ecological building projects must be designed with regard to protection against floods and in water management: A network of peripheral detention basins and water management are sustainable means – in comparison with technical flood protection means – that can be realized with considerably lower investment. Furthermore responsibility for planning must be created, which includes all municipal and regional authorities to promote a stronger cooperation. This is the only way catchment scale measures can be implemented for protection against floods.

Biodiversity

The decline of the biodiversity is not only a European phenomenon. Since the world environment summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 the maintenance of the biodiversity plan has been considered a central target of activities of worldwide environmental politics of the 21st century. There are many city areas without sufficient green, which is used by people and serves as habitat for many species. We must increase natural spaces in downtown areas and in the wider landscape in consideration of the different needs of different groups of people. This will above all help to maintain biodiversity.

The creation of permeable surfaces, greening of gardens and buildings, the rebuilding and calming of streets are only some possibilities to improve the direct environment of apartment houses. The esteem of city trees is much too low! Political and public must identify trees as a natural solution to environmental problems.

The research of the past years has time and again shown clearly that a successful greening of urban spaces can only be successful if suitable plants are planted in the right areas and if the soil structure is improved. For sustainable quality management we request the creation and maintenance of urban green spaces.

The potential of the plant biodiversity in the city must be extended. Though we have already achieved some improvement, however the maintenance and the management of living areas in the urban surrounding are decisive measures for a higher plant biodiversity. We will only succeed in achieving this on the basis of the respective planning and – of course – with financial means.

Sustainable urban development

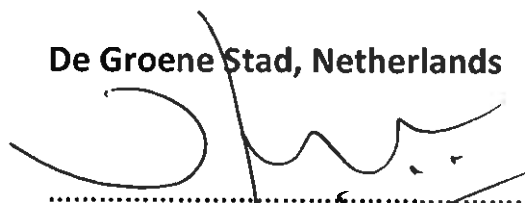
A sustainable urban development also includes sustainable green concepts for high-quality public spaces, but it also includes sustainable building. This includes the complete spectrum of everything regarding buildings, which can be designed in a sustainable way from a complete ecological point of view. This would include for example the appropriate use of land, the creation of permeability within the surrounding surfaces, the use of renewable resources for the building and the design of green areas on the roof, on the inside, at the facade and around buildings.

Only if the afore mentioned demands are fulfilled, a sustainable, worth-living and health promoting development of our settlement areas are possible.

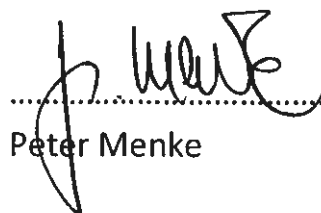
The organisations and persons signing this Charta welcome the founding of a Swiss organisation, which promotes sustainable landscape-planning and urban-building development.

Zurich, June 29th 2011

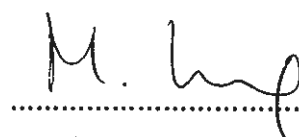
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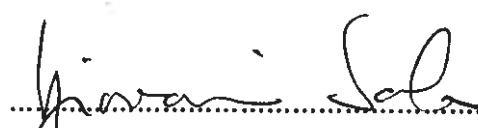
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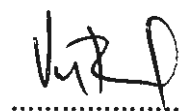
Cité Verte, France

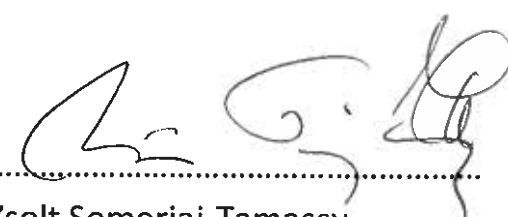

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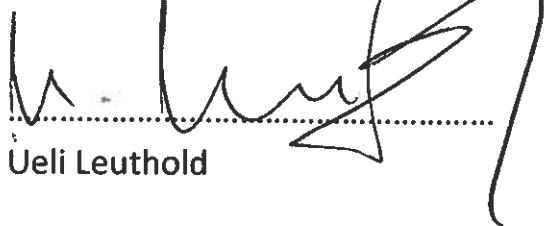

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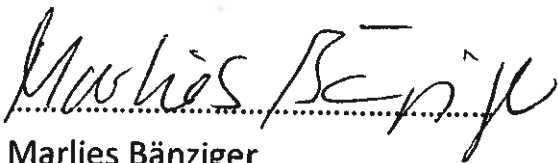
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