City of Münster, Germany

Markus Lewe

Mayor of City of Münster

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After graduating in public administration, Markus Lewe began his career as an advisor to the Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe (LWL). From 1997 to 2009, he served in the General Vicariate of the Bishop of Münster and was elected Deputy Mayor for the southeastern district of Münster in 1999, before taking on the role of First Mayor of Münster as his primary responsibility.

The Bridge for Cities Innovation Compendium - Article from the City of Münster, Mayor Markus Lewe

Münster – Climate neutral by 2030

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Münster has set itself ambitious goals with its strategy for climate neutrality in 2030 and was selected last year as one of the “100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030” in the EU Mission. The motivation of the City of Münster is therefore multi-faceted: First of all the city acts out of economic considerations and for the incentive to shape a liveable city for and with its citizens. Furthermore, Münster strives for social and global responsibility and acts out of conviction. Münster and its citizens are playing a pioneering role and driving climate neutrality forward in positive competition with other cities. At the

same time, Münster seeks for international cooperation with other cities like Monastir, Enschede or Rochester to face this global challenge and learn from each other.
Working on climate neutrality means not only significantly intensifying existing climate protection efforts and making greater use of new technologies, but also initiating a process of thought and action in the urban society in order to implement a sustainable lifestyle even more effectively. Thanks to the comprehensive climate protection efforts of recent years and a good decentralized energy supply, the specific CO2 emissions of 5.7 t/year per inhabitant (2021) are far below the national average. Münster therefore seems to be on the right track. However, Münster is a prospering city with a growing population and positive economic development. This creates particular challenges for achieving climate neutrality by 2030..[i]

Climate protection has a long tradition in Münster, and we have been active on many levels for several years. The efforts in the area of private households continue to focus on the energy-efficient renovation of existing buildings in order to reduce the heat demand from fossil fuels. This will require a rapid increase in the renovation rate from 2% to 8% per year. High priority is given to expanding the share of district heating in private households and expanding the use of decentralised renewable energy systems for heat and power generation. In addition, energy-efficient new buildings play a crucial role in the coming years, as otherwise the planned construction of around 2,000 new residential units per year will lead to a massive increase in final energy consumption. Another important area is general consumer behaviour. Climate-friendly behaviour is initiated and encouraged by measures such as the urban participatory campaign "Our Climate 2030" or projects such as the "Living Lab for Climate-friendly Decisions". Simple recommendations for action lead to changes in behaviour in everyday life, supported by the municipal energy and environmental advisory services for citizens and accompanying specialist events.

Some other specific examples:

- Electrification of the bus fleet of the City of Münster: Since 2018, the municipal utility (Stadtwerke Münster) has been gradually converting its bus fleet to electric buses. Currently (August 2023), the utility has 38 electric buses and by the end of 2023, it will have 78 electric buses. By the end of 2029, the entire fleet of more than 120 buses is supposed to be converted into an electric fleet. In addition, the municipal utility is expanding the corresponding charging infrastructure.

- Low-energy house standard in land purchase contracts and urban development contracts: Since 1997, the City of Münster has been implementing the low-energy house standard in land purchase contracts and urban development contracts for residential and non-residential buildings. The standard has been continuously tightened in the process. Finally, in 2021, the so-called KfW 40 efficiency house standard was defined, including an obligation to install a solar power unit.

- Solar obligation for new residential buildings: For new residential buildings in Münster, the City Council (2021) has decided that the installation of a photovoltaic system is mandatory with a minimum output of 1-kilowatt peak per residential unit. The obligation also applies to existing buildings in the event of fundamental roof renovation. The obligation to install a solar energy system (photovoltaic or solar thermal) has also been made mandatory for new non-residential buildings.

- Municipal buildings to become climate-neutral: The existing building guidelines for municipal buildings have been fundamentally revised and adapted to the goal of climate neutrality by 2030. The guidelines now include binding criteria for all those involved in the construction of municipal buildings, both for new buildings and for conversion and refurbishment measures. This means that new buildings must be built in a climate-neutral way.

- “Bicycle Streets 2.0": Münster is known as the “Bicycle City of Germany”. The City of Münster is continuing to invest in its cycling infrastructure in order to make traffic and mobility more sustainable and compatible in the future and to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. The more attractive and significantly upgraded bicycle infrastructure will provide a consistently comfortable and fast alternative to motorised vehicle use, further enhancing the quality of life in the city. The project sets new standards and qualities for cycling. Nine bicycle lanes with a total length of 5.5 km have already been upgraded to the new quality standards.

- Funding programme “City of Münster climate-friendly residential buildings": Since 1996, the City of Münster funds a wide range of measures to optimise the energy efficiency of residential buildings in the city area. From insulating facades and roofs insulation with ecological materials to replacing heating system and installing photovoltaic systems, there are many ways to make an important contribution to reducing CO2 emissions in Münster. Since 1998, about 13 million Euros have been granted to citizens and more than 3,000 buildings have been renovated. This has been an important step in reducing CO2 emissions in the city (approx. 25,000t).

- Thermographic flight of the city in 2021: The aim of the project is to advise building owners on options for energy savings and to support them in retrofitting their buildings. Using thermographic images (thermal images), it is possible to determine which buildings should be retrofitted to reduce energy consumption and heating costs in the long term. This helps to identify heat losses through uninsulated or poorly insulated building roofs,that would otherwise go undetected. Since January 2022, all building owners have received their personal access to the thermal image of their property with an interpretation aid. The City of Münster also offers a free introductory energy consultation. Additionally Münster is improving its geothermal cadastre from 2-dimensional to a 3d-seismic-model. "Münster's Alliance for Climate Protection - the network of companies" was founded in 2011 in order to counter the increase in electricity and heat demand in the commercial sector and to achieve reductions in energy consumption. By now, more than 100 companies are participating. It is also aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises that

have not yet dealt in depth with the issues of energy consumption and climate protection. They are encouraged and supported in implementing measures to increase energy efficiency in the company within the framework of the "Energy Efficiency Start-up Advice". In addition to urban development projects, Münster also plays an important role in the field of climate-related research. With the research and development facility of the Fraunhofer-Einrichtung Forschungsfertigung Batteriezelle FFB the City of Münster is transforming into an international and nationwide innovation centre for batteries research along the whole value chain. This leads to numerous high-tech cooperations.