Information about the Climate Capital

Muenster was selected as the Federal Climate Protection Capital twice in 1997 and 2006. With the coveted awards, the renowned environmental organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe honoured Muenster's comprehensive climate protection measures: the restoration of old buildings concept, the innovative residential estate planning, a contemporary traffic concept, efficient energy production forms and numerous campaigns which keep climate protection alive in the citizens´ thoughts. The city does not rest on her laurels however. The council adopted the forward projection of the climate protection concept until 2020. On the basis of this, the emission of carbon dioxide should be reduced by at least 40 percent when compared with 1990. "This is a very demanding target", emphasised Heiner Bruns, head of the Office for Green Spaces and Environmental Protection. "The first 20 percent was already hard work but we will have to face an incomparably large effort."

21 percent carbon dioxide saving already achieved.

The city had already achieved a full 21 percent CO_2 reduction until 2005. This is the highest figure in Germany, especially as each percent was achieved through hard work and not simply by deactivating industrial companies which are damaging for the climate. Muenster exploits numerous possibilities on its way to becoming a climate-friendly city – this being explicitly recognised in 2005 with the awarding of the European Energy Award in Gold – stringent, internationally recognised certification proceedings.

Heating energy as an effective lever

A large part is the renovation of old buildings on the basis of the knowledge that around 75 percent of the energy is used for heating. The city council has up to now invested more than five million euros in the promotion of private investments in the heat insulation of facades, windows and roofs. Since 1997, it has also been supporting the energy pass for old buildings which documents the energy-related condition of the house. The Office for Green Spaces and Environmental Protection relies on the multiplicator effect of those involved on site: it cooperates closely with architects, housing societies, handicrafts companies and energy consultants.

When a building principal acquires a piece of land from the city council, the city council being the largest provider of land by far, he has since 1997, obligated himself to adhering to the low-energy house standard. The municipal specifications are even 30 percent lower than legal requirements. Around 5600 flats and 85 commercial objects have been built according to this standard since then.

The administration also does not remain inactive with regard to its own concerns. The city council has invested many millions of euros in the renovation of public administration buildings and schools. The thirteen-floor Stadthaus 2 town hall from 1963 was renovated true to the low –energy house standard. It now only consumes

heating energy of around 40 kilowatt hours per square meter and year. Muenster's most modern day care centre, planned by municipal architects as a passive house, even only consumes 15 kilowatt hours of energy.

Environmentally friendly public transport association

The citizens of Muenster complete more than every third journey by bicycle. This is unique in Germany and cements Muenster's reputation as the cycling capital. Around half a million bikes are in use in Muenster, so that in terms of figures, each inhabitant has two bicycles. This is practical and comfortable for the citizen of Muenster and the climate profits from each car journey which does not take place. This is why the traffic planners have always placed great priority on the bicycle. Those who do not get onto their bicycles can comfortably rely on public transport. The connection between the city suburbs and the city centre has been improved even further with the second public transport plan. Even the newest city suburbs and residential areas are connected so well that nobody needs to walk further then 300 metres to the next stop. The night bus runs at nights and weekends.

Energy supply conventional and regenerative.

The new construction of the combined gas and steam turbine heating and power plant which is owned by the city council's own public utilities company made a great contribution to saving the climate. The modern combined heating and power plant with an 80 percent degree of efficiency went into operation in 2005 and saves Muenster 190,000 tones of CO_2 per annum when compared with the previous coal-fired power plant. The city council has been giving massive publicity to the utilisation of solar energy for many years. This bears fruit: Muenster is the Land Solar Champion in North Rhine-Westphalia for the fourth time since 2005. The forward projection of the climate protection concept now stipulates that regenerative energies should have achieved a share of 20 percent in the municipal energy generation in the year 2020.

Even the smallest learn about climate protection.

In Muenster, the climate idea finds its way into the heads at an early stage. With the "Energy and Waste-saving in Schools and Day Care Centres" the Office for Green Spaces and Environmental Protection has been practising systematic climate protection with the youngest one. 15 facilities participated in the project at the beginning and more than one hundred schools and day care centres with more than 26,000 children are currently taking part. They have saved more than seven million litres of waste and 3.5 million kilowatt hours of heating energy between 2003 and 2007.

Not only the municipal budget profits from this, but obviously also the climate and the young "environment detectives" are having great fun.

Climate protection is a tradition in Muenster.

Climate protection has had its firm placed here since the city council implemented an advisory committee on climate and energy. At that time, the scientific committee made recommendations on how it would be possible to reduce the CO_2 emissions by 25 percent by 2005. One of the first measures to be implemented by the council: it

created a coordination section for climate and energy (Klenko) within the Office for Green Spaces and Environmental Protection in 1995. Since then it has systematically worked at implementing the climate protection targets and at the same time reported on Muenster's activities into the farthest corner of Asia as a response to the increased international interest.

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Additional information is available on the city council webpage: http://www.muenster.de/stadt/umwelt/klima_energie.html