

## **Staatssekretär Martin Matz**

### **Rede zum Eröffnungstag der International Summer School „Health and Equity“, 24. bis 28. Juni 2019**

**Thema:** Berlin as a partner of the WHO Healthy Cities Network

- The prerequisites for a good and healthy life are manifold. They include living and environmental conditions, such as healthy living space and housing, clean air, healthy food, green areas and areas for exercise and activities. Likewise, the workplace, social recognition and vibrant neighborhoods contribute to a healthy life. To implement this is already a challenge for most cities, but especially for a metropolis like Berlin that is dealing with traffic congestion, increasing density of housing and an overall growing population.
- Therefore, for a healthy city all political departments, administrations at regional and district level, NGOs, initiatives and other organizations as well as citizens have to be invited and included to participate in shaping the quality of life. The conditions have improved over the years of doing so – with the legislation on prevention (Präventionsgesetz) in 2015 also health insurances and other social protection insurers have been obliged to spend part of the member contributions for health promotion in settings, and to coordinate on the regional level with other actors such as our health administration.
- Berlin as part of the healthy city network stresses the importance to make health a primary concern. Therefore, the city of Berlin and many districts of Berlin joined the Healthy Cities Network in 2002. The members form the Berlin regional network in the Healthy Cities Network - the largest association of this kind in Germany. Nationwide, Berlin has also been

involved as a representative body in the spokespersons council of the German network since 2017.

- Our health goals of the “Landesgesundheitskonferenz” / Regional health conference (healthy upbringing/ healthy working /healthy ageing) is providing an orientation in the area of health prevention and promotion.  
In the Healthy Cities Network, various policy areas are addressed and connected in order to create a ground for healthy living and environmental conditions. Different actors already participate on regional and district strategies, and are considered as equal partners (keyword: intersectoral cooperation / health in all policies)
- Together our members, consisting of local representatives and representatives of the initiatives and networks, are advocating an overall policy focusing on health promotion and healthy living. The aim is to improve the health and living conditions of Berlin-based people and thus contribute to reducing health inequalities.
- In 2007, the Berlin Regional Association formulated guidelines for a 'healthy city Berlin', which form the framework for a policy and organization of health promotion in Berlin:
  1. Berlin places equal priority on preventive and resource-oriented health policy as it does on curative and rehabilitative health policy.
  2. Berlin follows in the direction of its health promotion policy the WHO program 'Health for all', which aims to achieve equality of health for all residents.
  3. Health is promoted across departments.
  4. Berlin systematically and consistently promotes the health of citizens.
  5. Berlin decisively integrates civic engagement into the design of health-promoting decisions and measures.

6. Berlin actively promotes cooperation and the exchange of experience on Healthy Cities work with other cities and municipalities.
- The Coalition Agreement for the 2016-2021 legislature formulates that the coalition seeks "that the country and districts expand their engagement in the Healthy Cities Network". In addition, in the sense of the Healthy Cities Network, health policy is designated as a cross-sectional task and it is announced that the coalition wants to check its plans for health effects.
  - In the district council meeting in 2007 it was stressed that it would be desirable if, in addition to the state of Berlin, all districts were also members of the GSN (currently 9 out of 12 are members)
  - Individual memberships allow the districts to locally identify individual health promotion needs as part of their Healthy City membership and set different strategic priorities. Also due to the regional involvement of the initiative representatives (for example: neighborhood houses, self-help initiatives) a separate membership of the districts professional makes sense.
  - At the same time, the membership is not a mandatory requirement for successful health promotion and prevention on local level. The support of municipalities or districts in health promotion and prevention is also provided by other programs, such as the partner process of BzGA. Also, there is other support such as through the coordination point for health equity (Koordinierungsstelle Gesundheitliche Chancengleichheit, KGC) in the development and implementation of integrated community strategies ("prevention chains") which takes place independently of the Healthy City membership.

- Benefits of district Healthy City membership include, in particular, documented political support for inter-sectoral health policy (ideally beyond legislative periods) and (ideally) close cooperation with civil initiatives/NGOs. The membership also promotes exchanges at regional and national levels. Member districts can classify district-planned and aligned projects and structures in the context of their Healthy City Network activities and use the 'brand' in their public relations efforts, thus making citizens recognizable signs of their district's commitment to health promotion and prevention.
- Last year, we successfully organized the regional conference “Lebenswerte.Stadt.Berlin” that was addressing specifically our aim to implement health in all policies and brought together actors from different policy areas, institutions and NGOs.
- Currently, we are working on an inter-sectoral strategy for promoting physical activity (“Berlin bewegt sich”) and are trying to incorporate the guidelines and principles of the Healthy City Network. At the same time, our health department is getting increasingly involved in strategies that are led by other departments such as the regional strategy on nutrition, or the charta for a green city Berlin.