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Hans-Peter Wessels: In the middle of the traffic, on the side lines of priorities?

Why should the Swiss Confederation upgrade the transport infrastructure in the Basel region? Is the heart of the Swiss economy not in the Mittelland? Are the motorways and trains not most crowded between Lake Geneva and Lake Constance? Fallacious arguments! The Basel region is growing, and so is the volume of traffic. Yet, in the national perception, the Basel metropolitan region is “the last place in Switzerland” and all too often the last of the priorities too – wrongly, in my view. We have the right to expect the Confederation to recognise the strategic significance of the Basel metropolitan region. We are calling for an active, forward-looking policy rather than merely planning in reaction to today’s pattern of demand and capacity bottlenecks. Basel is Europe’s most important gateway to Switzerland and the other way round too. It is the departure point for TGV and ICE trains to Strasbourg, Paris, Frankfurt and Berlin. Lorries from the whole of Europe run along Switzerland’s busiest section of motorway here. It is only those southbound transit freight trains that secure a path through the Basel bottleneck that get as far as the NEAT tunnels.

Upgrading infrastructure in the Basel region is a matter of urgently catching up on decades of accumulated inaction. There is nowhere else in Switzerland where so many freight trains have to fit onto so few tracks – and share them with regional and long-distance passenger trains too. There is nowhere else in Europe where such important parts of national railway networks converge and are yet inadequately interconnected. The proposed “heart line” for the “Regio-S-Bahn”, for instance, is a future-oriented project precisely because it links Swiss, German and French regional routes attractively with one another and creates many fast through workings. It brings together railway networks that originated in historic isolation to form a connected, tri-national system and gives an efficient backbone to the dynamic economic region. An attractive regional S-Bahn system not only improves the accessibility of the Basel metropolitan region but also brings a high quality of life and the environment. The metropolitan region is currently drawing up a joint mobility and territorial-planning strategy. The programme for the whole Basel conurbation is creating a purposeful foundation for a sustainable housing and transport policy across cantonal and national borders. That fills me with hope.

Sabine Pegoraro: Educational “lighthouse” to be erected in Basel-Landschaft

The important public functions have a stronger vertical presence in the Basel Metropolitan Region than in many other places. Seen from afar, that is also reflected in the townscape, where the highest roofs correspond to the significance of the institutions and place the landmarks in their territorial context. The FHNW is the University of Applied Sciences of North-western Switzerland, and its new building in Canton Basel-Landschaft fits into this pattern too. The cubic structure marks the dominant culmination of the row of bulky industrial buildings along the railway tracks in Muttenz. For anyone coming out of Muttenz railway station, the new square in front of the FHNW building sets the tone for a string of public spaces along Hofackerstrasse. As detailed in the master plan, it forms the foyer to the Polyfeld development in Muttenz and also functions as the central gathering point for the FHNW, as well as offering a well-proportioned pathway into the residential district. The type of building proposed for the FHNW has a high degree of symbolism, combining a striking shape with a central space formed by an atrium. This is the heart of the educational establishment, and a sculptured staircase leads from there to its central functions, such as its assembly hall, canteen, administration, lecture theatres and library. The university departments are organised vertically above the atrium and are illuminated from two light wells. The top floor offers an open zone for studying and a further canteen zone with long-distance views over the town and countryside.

To date, the university departments of architecture, civil engineering and geomatics, life science, teacher training and social work have been spread over 36 sites in Basel-Landschaft and Basel-Stadt, but ought all to be brought under a single roof at the FHNW provisionally by the end of 2017, with 2200 students and 500 employees.

Following on from the adoption of the Polyfeld master plan by the canton of Basel-Landschaft and the commune of Muttenz and the completion of the architectural competition for the new FHNW building, representing a further milestone, 2011 saw the start of detailed work on the winning entry from the Zurich-based “pool architects’ practice along with Perolini Baumangement AG, the general manager for the project’s implementation phase.

We are delighted that this lighthouse is going to make an important contribution to architectural culture in our region.

Sabine Pegoraro, Head of the Basel-Landschaft Building and Environment Directorate
Basler Kantonalbank and metrobasel are jointly committed to developing and promoting an attractive, dynamic and progressive Basel region of economic and cultural importance.
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www.metrobasel.org

Gibt es leuchtendere Farben als die der Natur?
"IBA Basel 2020" is the driving force for a model region

metrobasel report spoke with the mayor of Lörrach, Gudrun Heute-Bluhm, about "IBA Basel 2020" with its motto of "Eine Zukunft à trois - un avenir zu dritt" ("one future for the three of us together"). She began by stating: "we want to grow closer together and jointly develop a model region."

Gudrun Heute-Bluhm, Mayor

The "IBA" can be seen as a tri-national think-tank for large-scale regional development, and the principal sites for implementing it are the territories on the borders of the three countries. To quote: “I see the IBA as a huge opportunity for the region, because representatives of government, administration, business, academia and the general public are all involved in shaping it". The first call for transnational projects has been very successful. The IBA forum in Basel recently held a public discussion on 44 substantive proposals with added value for the border region and capable of completion by 2020. "Of course there are high-profile projects, such as the plans for a tri-national urban district in the port area of Basel, Huningue and Weil am Rhein". The IBA process is, however, just as much about joining up numerous individual projects. Lörrach, for instance, has taken on the subject of transport and, together with Riehen, is now working on the joint planning for a new railway station to be called "Am Zoll Lörrach/Riehen" to provide an interchange between the regional "S-Bahn" trains, trams and buses. That has created the precondition for realigning urban development to form a sustainable district embedded in a cross-border concept for spatial planning.

The second transport project involves integrating the new "Velö" bike facility at Lörrach railway station in a cross-border package for cyclists, including the rental of push bikes and e-bikes, a storage shed and a repair service. It makes cycling into an attractive regional proposition and creates the necessary conditions for tourist offerings, such as a GPS-based navigation system to the popular destinations of the Upper Rhine valley. A network of fast cycle paths is intended to make it easier to leave the car in the garage.

“Both Lörrach projects are contributions to reversing the climate trend. That was particularly important for us, since using less energy and protecting the environment are major regional issues with a high priority in the IBA process. I sincerely hope there are going to be further projects for our region in this field.”

For more information: www.iba-basel.net

Becoming a metrobasel member
As a platform, voice and active player on behalf of the Basel Metropolitan Region, the metrobasel association is open to everyone. Individual inhabitants, businesses, clubs, associations, communes and other local-government bodies are welcome to join and channel their commitment. Please send us an e-mail or give us a call.

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The significance of the Northern Swiss Gateway

The gateway in the north of Switzerland is a very important route for freight and passenger movements to and from the country. metrobasel and the Basel Chamber of Commerce jointly commissioned a study on it from ProgTrans AG.

Switzerland simply could not live without road, rail, water and air transport. Our people and our businesses depend on efficient systems for the transport of both passengers and goods, not only domestically but, more especially, across borders. This report summarises a study whose title translates as “Moving to a holistic gateway strategy for Switzerland”.

The “northern Swiss gateway” is a logical next step and is comprised of several transport infrastructures and transhipment facilities. Geographically, it was decided to define it as the territories of the cantons of Jura, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Solothurn, Aargau, Zurich and Schaffhausen. The region thus delimited is not only important as a transport artery, but also makes a disproportionately high contribution to the national economy as a whole. It accounts for 14% of Switzerland’s national territory, 36% of its population live there (2009 figures), and 40% of the country’s jobs are located there (2008 figures).

Road and rail
A significant proportion of Switzerland’s foreign trade is routed through the north of the country. Of the 44.2 million tonnes imported in 2009, 55% entered Switzerland through the named cantons, the lion’s share of this with destinations in other cantons. The volumes of imports and exports together, the predominant modes of transport were road and rail, with the River Rhine important for certain sectors too. The gateway’s most important infrastructures for foreign trade are the railway network and the extensive facilities for handling trains within the Basel railway complex, as well as the motorway border crossings on the French side (Alsace) and the road crossings into Germany (A5/N2, A98/N3 and A81/N4).

Water and air
It is inconceivable for Switzerland’s economic growth to continue without the ports on the River Rhine and the airports in Zurich and Basel. In addition to the transport of bulk goods, for which the inland waterways are clearly the most environmental mode of transport, the Rhine is also continuing to be a reliable corridor for transporting containers to and from the North Sea ports. The past one and half decades have experienced a steady increase in the total volume of containers handled by Switzerland’s Rhine ports, slackening for cyclical reasons solely in 2008 and 2009.

It should not be forgotten that the airfreight services offered at Basel and Zurich airports provide important links with the whole world. One franc in four of Switzerland’s exports and one franc in ten of its imports rely on air freight – and there is an upward trend. Nearly 90% of all air freight to or from Switzerland is handled through the two named airports.

Infrastructure not expanding fast enough
The strong concentration of transport infrastructures and the high volumes of traffic in the gateway cantons distinguish northern Switzerland from the other parts of the country. Ensuring that traffic (especially freight) moves as smoothly as possible needs space, which is then no longer available for other uses. The elimination of capacity bottlenecks in the road and railway networks has a high priority. It appears likely, however, that only some of the sections of the national trunk-road network that are already permanently overloaded today are going to be widened. Despite the large sums being invested in this network, the Federal Roads Office (FEDRO/ASTRA) is forecasting regular congestion on around 18% of the national network between now and 2020.

Considering the railway investment plans for the future too (ZEB, FABI and STEP), these will not suffice to remove all in the bottlenecks and restrictions in the Swiss railway network.

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Further traffic increases

As if this task wasn’t already challenging enough, it is going to be made worse still according to current forecasts, especially for freight traffic, of further increases for Switzerland. International freight transport is expected to grow, especially by rail, with an increase of 74% in volume forecast by 2030. Within the same timeframe, the total freight transported by road is expected to grow by 34% and by considerably more than 60% in places for the other modes.

The most dynamic growth in passenger transport is expected for air with 66%. The Swiss Federal Railways are forecasting a noteworthy 46% growth by 2030 compared with 2009.

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Sources: ProgTrans, based on its own findings (World Transport Reports 2010/2011), Swiss Federal Statistical Office (BfS); Intraplan (2005) and SBB (2009 baseline)

Now’s the time to intensify cooperation

Martin Dätwyler,
Head of economic-policy unit Basel Chamber of Commerce

Transport infrastructure is of fundamental significance – for business, society and us all. Because of this broad range of interests, sometimes almost diametrically opposed, transport policy is very heterogeneous today. The wishes expressed are as endless as they are varied, with each region campaigning for itself. Working out a consensus and agreeing on project priorities is extremely difficult and often emotional. This situation is not rendered any easier by the approach adopted by the Swiss Confederation. In the past, for example, railway programmes were churned out one after the other, but the question of funding them was put off until doomsday. Endless criteria have to be complied with (such as submitting projects in the context of a conurbation programme) and hardly any latitude is left for the cantons.

That makes it important and advisable to begin by assessing the facts and only then to draw conclusions for transport policy. Precisely that has been done in the metrobasel gateway study. The figures presented clearly bring out what strategically relevant functions the gateway of northern Switzerland fulfils for the whole of Switzerland and the metropolitan regions of Basel and Zurich. But what conclusions can be drawn from that for transport policy? What recommendations can be handed to government based on the report’s findings?

A kick start has come with the “Olten consensus” on transport policy (cf. metrobasel study report). Its 14 recommendations are, however, going to be of little use if the governments and administrations do not take them onboard, flesh them out and finally declare them to be a binding strategy for all local-government bodies and political parties to support and turn into reality. The Zurich metropolitan region is a step ahead of us in that respect. Zurich has gone through this opinion-forming process and now closed ranks to implement its projects. So the two metropolitan regions have things to learn from one another. That is, however, not the only reason why cooperation between them makes sense in the context of the gateway discussion. There are functional ties between the two regions: import/export business, terminals, national airports, commuting, and so on. Cooperation would strengthen the bonds between the two and reinforce their position vis-à-vis others with interests in transport policy. Finally, the two metropolitan regions generate the highest added value for Switzerland and need to defend their locations in international competition.

It is to be hoped that the movement that has been launched with the gateway study and the “Olten consensus” on transport policy will be further intensified into a common approach and strategy.
“I’m also very attached to the whole Basel region.”

The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) want to improve services in north-western Switzerland further – until there’s a 15-minute service on all S-Bahn and long-distance routes. The big challenge is to secure the funding needed for such projects.

Interview: Regula Ruetz

RR: Mr Meyer, what is the importance for the SBB of north-western Switzerland and the territories just across the border?

For us, Basel is the place where Switzerland starts and the gateway to Germany and France. It takes three hours from there to Paris, one of the world’s big centres. Basel is also the heart of an efficient S-Bahn (regional-express) system, stretching into Cantons Aargau and Jura. This economically dynamic region is much sought-after as a place to work and live. We as a railway sense continuous growth in demand for mobility. In 2030, we’re going to be transporting up to 40% more passengers in this region. So we are already enhancing the infrastructure and, along with the cantons, we are planning service improvements for the coming decades. We are also a major regional employer with a headcount of more than 3500. I actually grew up in Birsfelden and I’m also very attached to the whole Basel region. I always enjoy being in or near Basel.

What are your most important ongoing projects?

We’re building a second bridge over the Rhine to be ready by 2012. Renewal and modernisation work on Basel marshalling yard will have been completed by 2013. In 2016, we’re going to reopen the line between Belfort and Delle. What is more important for our customers, however, is that, as of 2012, we are going to have new, comfortable double-deck trains operating regional services to and from Aargau/Olten. Closer to Basel, we prefer to use the popular FLIRT trains. We are going to run more trains comprised of several units to be able to offer our customers enough seats.

But all of that is still not enough to cater for the growing mobility demand, is it?

No, we also have to increase the number of services. The target defined jointly with the cantons is to run a 15-minute service on all the S-Bahn routes and the long-distance routes to Zurich and Berne. Before we can do that, we must upgrade the infrastructure. The most important projects are to improve the eastern approaches to Basel SBB station (through Muttenz and Pratteln), to alleviate the Liestal bottleneck and to upgrade the Laufental line. In Basel SBB station, we need more tracks and improved platform accesses. The big challenge is obtaining the money for all these projects. Only some of the funds have been assured so far.

What about the new fast direct line between Basel’s SBB and “Badischer” stations?

That’s a key project for us. We’ll be able to do without complicated reversing manoeuvres and at the same time create fast connections with the heart of the city. Realistically, however, we’re not going to manage that before 2030. We want to start by implementing those projects we need to run the S-Bahn system with a 15-minute headway.

And what about linking EuroAirport to the railway network?

According to a recent study, a double-track line from St. Louis to the airport and places north of it could be opened in 2018, assuming an optimum scenario. We would then be able to increase the proportion of air passengers from Switzerland using public transport to 45%. Again, funding has not been finalised. The costs are around EUR 200m, of which Switzerland would have to assume roughly 80m – and only part of that has been approved.
SWISS aims to serve the Basel region even better

As the airline of Switzerland, SWISS intends to further develop and enhance its range of services for Basel and the surrounding trinational region. To do so, though, SWISS will continue to count on working within favourable legal and political parameters.

Interview: Regula Ruetz

Mr. Hohmeister, what does EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg mean to SWISS?

Well, as the airline of Switzerland, we feel committed to providing an attractive choice of air services and connections for every part of our home country. And it's on the basis of this core commitment that we continue to develop the range of flights we offer for the Basel area and the surrounding trinational region, in the form of both non-stop services to and from the EAP and flights that connect conveniently in Zurich with our intercontinental network. Needless to say, though, we also have to ensure that all the services we provide make economic sense. In addition to this, SWISS and the Lufthansa Group are major employers at the EuroAirport. We provide jobs for several hundred people at our Basel head office.

So what does SWISS's current programme of flights from the EAP look like?

As well as providing our own range of non-stop services from Basel, we work closely with our sister carriers within the Lufthansa Group and with further partner airlines – with Austrian Airlines on the Vienna route, for instance, and with Lufthansa for services to Frankfurt, Munich and Düsseldorf. And, since our medium- and long-haul flights from Zurich are of particular importance to the major industries in the Basel region, we also work together with the Swiss Federal Railways to provide the "Airtrain" service between Basel Central Station and Zurich Airport. This rail service is not only an added convenience for our Basel-based customers; it makes sound ecological sense, too.

With the recent extension of the night movement ban at Zurich Airport, a lot of people here in the Basel region are worried that they will be exposed to more aircraft noise through flights that are forced to land here instead. Are they right to be concerned?

I don't think so. We haven't had a single flight diverting to Basel since the more restrictive Zurich operating hours were adopted. On a more general note, though, we do feel that the Swiss government should take a long, hard look at the operating hours of our international airports some time, based on the experience accumulated to date and on the comparable operating hours at the airports we regard as Zurich's main competitors.

The issue of what employment law and tax law apply in the Swiss sector of the EuroAirport is still unresolved. What impact is this issue likely to have on SWISS?

It's very important that this issue is resolved as soon as possible – for the future development of the EuroAirport, and in the interests of the economy of the entire Upper Rhine region. For SWISS, too, continuing the practice which has been successfully applied de facto for over 60 years now – that Swiss law applies in the Swiss sector – is a key criterion for maintaining Basel as one of our prime operating locations. So SWISS fully supports the endeavours of the French and the Swiss authorities to find a viable solution here for the years ahead.

Aircraft noise has become a major issue for the population around the EuroAirport following the provision of an instrument landing system for Runway 33. What do you have to say about this?

Any modification to existing approach or departure routes around an airport tends to prompt public reactions. And due regard needs to be paid to all such views and concerns. In fact, massive progress has been made in reducing aircraft noise levels. In Zurich, for example, the size of the "noise footprints" on the ground has been reduced by two thirds over the past 20 years. And SWISS continues to invest in lower-noise aircraft. The new Bombardier CSeries, which will supersede our Avro RJ100 regional jets from 2014 onwards, will be more than twice as quiet to the human ear as the aircraft they replace.

Zurich has been involved in a simmering dispute with Germany over aircraft noise levels for several years now. The EuroAirport, by contrast, seems to have no such problems with Germany or France. How do you explain this?

In the Basel region, ensuring that everyone has a fair and equal say under the Trinational Environmental Committee has really paid off for the EuroAirport. And the positive experiences here in balancing national interests around the airport could also be a big help in solving Zurich's aircraft noise conflict.
Competitive port infrastructure for Switzerland

More and more freight is being moved by water worldwide. SRH is reacting by planning a new container terminal and by improving the locational attractiveness of the southern parts of Basel port.

Hans-Peter Hadorn, Director of the Swiss Rhine Ports (SRH)

The excellent logistics of the transport connections to the Birsfelden and Mutenz port basins offer development potential for the Basel region as a logistics cluster. Birsfelden port is of particular importance as Switzerland’s steel centre. The fact that ABB is building an assembly hall confirms the location’s excellent competitiveness. SRH would like to consolidate this still further and is examining the possibility of constructing a new railway link to the Rhine ports from the south and of permitting longer vessels.

The most relevant factor for the City of Basel’s port is the forecast growth in container traffic. It is reckoned there will be a two-to-threefold increase within 20 years on account of the development and model-shift strategy pursued by the seaports of Antwerp and Rotterdam.

The transhipment capacities of all the Swiss container terminals are already close to their limits today. A new terminal for rail/barge transhipment would be able to assimilate the expected additional freight movements and play an important part in positioning the Basel region as a logistics centre in future. The location of the site in the north of Basel is ideal for this purpose. It is right next to the number-2 port basin and lies directly on EU railway corridor 24 (Rotterdam-Basel-Genoa), the most important freight axis in Europe.

SRH, in cooperation with the cargo division of the Swiss Federal Railways, has commissioned a study to clarify the potential of such a project. The initial conclusions on feasibility, funding and layout are expected in the first quarter of 2012.
The Rhine as the centre of transport linking Switzerland and Germany

Town and transport planning in Rheinfelden

For a long time, the inhabitants of Rheinfelden felt plagued by the huge volume of road traffic affecting their small town. Now Rheinfelden is planning traffic optimisation, with the River Rhine between Switzerland and Germany as a central element. Many innovative ideas have already been successfully put into practice.

Franco Mazzi, Mayor, Rheinfelden municipal administration

Two opinion surveys in 2006 and 2010 show extremely clearly how important people feel it is for traffic to be properly organised. On both occasions, the inhabitants of Rheinfelden stated that road traffic was their number-one concern. The situation did, however, improve perceptibly between 2006 and 2010.

Rheinfelden’s town and traffic planning presupposes a properly functioning network of major roads along with other inputs. The latter were worked out in the framework of a project by the Basel Tri-national Conurbation (“TAB”), considering town and transport planning for both Rheinfelden/Switzerland and Rheinfelden/Baden in Germany. The Rhine was no longer treated as an international border but as the central feature of the two towns taken together. This new perspective was particularly important for transport planning. Today, “United Rheinfelden” is served by four motorway junctions, two railway lines, three railway stations and a joint bus route linking the two principal stations.

Meaningful public-transport network

Completion of the planned electrification of the German railway line (Hochrheinstrecke) will create an even better starting situation. If the potential created by this investment is to be exploited to the full, it is going to be essential to interlink the two public-transport systems in a single network. The new cross-border town bus, serving the two town centres, the two principal stations and the two hospitals, has already demonstrated how successfully that can be done, as is borne out by the continuously increasing passenger numbers.

Quite apart from this planning input, it was the construction of the new Rhine Bridge that was the real trigger for improving the traffic situation inside the town. The closure of the old Rhine Bridge made it possible to upgrade previously heavily trafficked parts of town for the benefit of inhabitants and visitors. It also became possible to implement a special development project for a whole central zone, right next to the historic town centre, from the Rhine Bridge past the boat jetty (Schiffländi) and on to the grounds of the former Salmen Brewery. The development master plan was drawn up under the responsibility of Oliver Tschudin, a member of the town council in charge of the planning and transport unit and an associate of the Zurich-based company of “Planar AG für Raumentwicklung”.

The planning details have now been undergoing implementation for four years by municipal and private investors. The outcome of this dynamic development and the coordinated planning of the various projects is that the zone in the west of the historic town centre is being transformed in only a few years from one that used to suffer from heavy traffic, with up to 14000 motor vehicles per day, into a well-designed urban district with multiple functions and radically upgraded public spaces. This is also going to be particularly beneficial for the popular passenger boats on the Rhine, whose regular route, after all, starts at the Rheinfelden jetty.

The Rhine as the centre of transport linking Switzerland and Germany
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Mobility pricing is the formula of the future

Mobility is a commodity in increasingly short supply – not just in the Basel metropolitan region. The most efficient way of arriving at equilibrium between supply and demand is through price. Dynamic mobility pricing could be the means for establishing the correct incentives for this. The technology that would be needed is already available.

Bernhard Berger, Dipl. Ing. ETH/SIA, CEO of the Rapp Group

In the past, the provision of infrastructure used to be driven almost exclusively by demand. Over the years, the costs of mobility have cheapened compared with many other items – resulting in the well-known negative impacts on the environment and quality of life. This can be seen particularly clearly in the conurbations. The cities at their hearts have got their traffic problems under control, whilst the daily jousting for mobility is worsening in their outskirts. Road congestion is deteriorating, so are train delays and cancellations. The mobility of people and goods is increasingly becoming a precious commodity. So the question of influencing supply and demand is moving higher up the agenda.

Limits to influencing supply and demand today
The most obvious way of influencing supply is to provide more (or less) capacity. Building measures are meeting with increasing resistance on territory that is already intensively used and they are becoming more and more expensive compared with the benefit. So the focus is perceptibly shifting to measures of traffic management. Examples of this are the temporary use of parking lanes for moving traffic, restricting the number of vehicles allowed into city centres, optimising the capacities of heavily trafficked roads with traffic-guidance systems, reducing train headways and streamlining timetables.

Practically the only instrument used today for influencing demand is congestion, which has very negative economic and ecological consequences. It would, however, be most effective to influence it through price. Today, there are no dynamic price elements in either public or private transport in Switzerland that could be used to have a significant impact on demand. Furthermore, the ecologically desirable reduction in the fuel consumption of cars is increasingly eroding the principal price element of road traffic (and hence its main source of revenue), namely taxes on mineral oil.

Technology making it possible to influence demand
If we are to cope with growing demands for mobility in future, we are going to have no alternative to influencing demand more in addition to targeted supply optimisations. The technologies available today already permit us to establish integral and dynamic mobility pricing in accordance with the principle of “pay as you drive or use”. Singapore is already practising such dynamic price models, in which road tolls are charged as a function of the time of day and the traffic load. In air transport, such models have become commonplace (at the latest since Easy Jet introduced them), and similar systems are becoming established in (international) railway transport too.

Technology plays a decisive role in all these systems and is soon going to open very many more options for us. In future, smart terminals are going to provide customised information in real time. Vehicles are going to have inbuilt intelligence, and cooperative systems are going to communicate both with other vehicles and with the infrastructure. In future, individual mobility might increasingly mean travelling in small collective vehicles. The motorcar will then presumably have its day as the number-one status symbol.

Looking forward ten years, mobility in everyday life might mean that we decide on which mode of transport to use before every journey, depending on the current traffic situation and the momentary costs. At the end of each month, we’ll then receive an individual invoice for our mobility outlay, applying the most favourable price model considering for each mode used. With such transparency, we’ll then be able to optimise our mobility behaviour.

Those in political power and society must make up their minds if this is the way we want to go.
Need for action to improve transport structures

The seventh metrobasel forum on “creating the necessary infrastructures for the future” was held in Basel Theatre. The first part dealt specifically with promoting all modes of transport in Switzerland.

metrobasel forum 10 November 2011, Text: Markus Vogt

This year’s metrobasel forum came to a dramatic end. A heavy storm blew across the theatre, and a powerful clap of thunder filled the well-occupied auditorium. Two members of the theatre ensemble had just brought the event to a conclusion with a dramatised reading on the subject of “the 1833 division of Canton Basel – learning from the past”. Their retrospective fitted in excellently with the forum topics, including establishing a consensus in supra-regional transport policy and urban development projects outside of the city of Basel. Not an easy subject! And one that’s already caused thunder and lightning elsewhere!

metrobasel’s director, Christoph Koellreuter, introduced the day’s main topics and explained that the Basel Metropolitan Region, one of the powerhouses of the Swiss national economy, could only play that part if given a globally competitive general environment. First and foremost, that meant a holistic strategy as regards the “gateway” to Switzerland. metrobasel had organised a discussion on that with parliamentarians in Olten, resulting in a far-reaching consensus amongst the cantonal ministers of transport.

This “Olten consensus” is based on a “gateway study”, which was presented by Stefan Kritzinger, deputy managing director of ProgTrans. Specialists use the term “gateway” to mean the interlinking of various transport routes and infrastructures. The study covered the territories of seven of the Swiss cantons (Jura, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau, Zurich and Schaffhausen), which account for 14% of Switzerland’s national territory, 36% of its population and 40% of jobs. More than half the imported goods (25 million tonnes) travel through this area, and about half the exports (7 million tonnes) do too. Considerable growth is also expected here: the volume of international rail freight is going to grow by 74% by 2030, and there will be 66% more passen-
ger flights. The awkward situation is that nothing is being done to eliminate the bottlenecks despite growing volumes. So action is needed here.

Transport policy needs waking up.
Martin Dätwyler, from the Basel Chamber of Commerce, and Markus Traber, from the Zurich transport department, explained where they would start. Given that transport infrastructure is of such fundamental importance, the stakeholders' interests are bound to diverge, stated Dätwyler. The “northern Swiss gateway” fulfills strategic functions not only locally but for the whole country. What matters now is to agree on the direction in which to work, and the two speakers listed the 14 specific recommendations that had emerged as the “Olten consensus” from the discussion with parliamentarians in Olten earlier in the year.

For air transport, the three national airports (Zurich, Geneva and Basel) are advised to act more like a network in meeting demand and improving infrastructure. Building the rail link to EuroAirport should be brought forward, and support given to technical developments to reduce noise. Legal certainty too is a necessity for the airports of Basel-Mulhouse (applicable labour and tax law) and Zurich (the German-Swiss controversy over noise).

As far as waterborne transport is concerned, the Swiss Confederation ought urgently to play its part in funding the Rhine ports, including the two new terminal projects: “Basel North Container Terminal” and “Limmattal Gateway”. The railways through the gateway need better national and international passenger services, with a 15-minute fixed headway and an improved service to the centres. The necessary upgrading of the infrastructure includes an additional route through the Jura (Wisenberg Tunnel), better segregation of train movements through the whole Basel hub, including the new “heart line”, three tunnels (Brütten, Zimmerbergbasis II and Heitersberg II) and four tracks all the way between Basel and Zurich.

Several road bottlenecks need to be eliminated, such as by building Basel’s eastern ring road, Zurich’s northern bypass, the Glattal motorway and the city tunnel in Zurich, combined with making life more bearable for frontagers. The national network of trunk roads ought to be completed without delay, whereas more holding space for HGVs is needed at the customs posts, customs clearance should be done electronically, and traffic-management systems should be generalised.

The working party had finally also dealt with funding. It saw possibilities of tapping up the financial resources, for instance by charging more for the motorway vignette and train paths. The financing of railway projects ought to continue to be fund-based, with “mobility pricing” introduced in the longer run.

Financing is always the be-all and end-all.
The above questions were discussed in greater depth by a panel of experts chaired by the Zurich journalist and lecturer, Esther Girsberger. Christoph Brutschin, a member of the Basel-Stadt cantonal government, saw it as a key public responsibility to provide infrastructure. He recommended including financial considerations from the very beginning. As minister of economic affairs, he stressed the importance of transport by water. Today, 15% of freight arrives in Switzerland by water, including 25% of the mineral-oil products; 100,000 containers are carried today, and the number is set to double in the next 10-15 years. “If we don’t increase the infrastructure, we’re going to be in for a national problem.” He saw no competition between the two terminal projects referred to above, since both were needed. He personally would start work on the Wisenberg Tunnel first.

Elisabeth Schneider (CVP), who represents Basel-Landschaft in the National Council of the Swiss Federal Parliament, expressed her regret that the federal authorities in Berne had to date failed to recognise the importance of the Rhine ports; she now placed her hope in the “Olten consensus” and support from Zurich. It would be wrong to try and play the various modes of transport off against one another. It would be a mistake for all future money to flow into marginal regions; the centres had to be promoted too, including through urban development.

Developing all four modes of transport simultaneously
For Markus Traber, it was clear that the message had to be got across to the parliamentarians that the two terminal projects were interlinked. Anita Lachenmeier, a Green member of the National Council sitting for the City of Basel, reported that the importance of the Rhine ports was accepted by that house’s transport committee, but it had no clear view on why there was a shortage of money. The ecological consensus was important, and the “Alpine Initiative” had to be implemented. More cost transparency was also called for, for instance through road pricing.

Martin Dätwyler called for the simultaneous development of all four modes of transport. Business was demanding transparency – in costs too. It was also demanding that users should pay. He called for more courageous solutions too, such as the transport of freight at night: “we must talk about taboos”. The waterways still had spare capacity, the bottlenecks occurred at the transshipment stage.

Another Basel member of the National Council, Beat Jans (SP), wanted to see port expansion tackled first, to be followed by rail, road and air transport. He felt disconcerted by the discussion on priorities; if there was going to be growth, Switzerland would have to be ready to expand its entire infrastructure: “all the modes are going to grow up to 2030, so something’s got to be done, and business must play along too”. A great deal had been done recently in fiscal reform, but there was still a tight-fisted attitude towards education and infrastructure. The proceeds of corporation tax would have to contribute to the financing of infrastructure. Patrick Altenburger, the head of public transport in Canton Schaffhausen, stated that investments to date had concentrated primarily on north-south and transit traffic as well as the new rail link through the Alps. The Swiss Mittelland had been almost forgotten, and the time had come to rectify that.
The forum’s conclusion was that those concerned about the “northern Swiss gateway” must speak with one voice, or, as Beat Jans put it, “if the little Basel choir sings along with the big Zürich choir, together they are more likely to be heard in Berne”.

**Visions for Basel and its environs**

In the second part of the forum, the ETH-Studio Basel put forward proposals for landmark projects of urban development. The first of these was the University of Basel, where it had become necessary to look beyond cantonal boundaries. Ulrich Vischer, President of the University Council, outlined the university’s latest geographic strategy, as published on 10 November. After that, Manuel Herz, head of research at the ETH-Studio Basel, presented the vision for the university in 2040. Four different locations outside of the city of Basel, which would be able to house a considerable part of the university, had been examined. If the student numbers were to continue to increase linearly, there would be around 25000 by 2040, and then it would be necessary to spread beyond the municipal boundary. With the choice of Birsfelden, which could become “Saint Tropez on the Rhine”, the central issue is not closing down its port but developing an urban district. It is already the case today, Herz added, that the port district of Birsfelden is not used only as a port but quite simply as industrial land too.

**Gravel pits to lakes**

As a second landmark project, the ETH-Studio Basel is also thinking about what to do with the various gravel pits around Basel. Andreas Courvoisier reported on the vision of making especially those in the south of Alsace into lakes and of finding new uses for them. A total of fifty had been examined, and most of them were simply being filled again. Ten or so were found to have development potential, and expressions typically used in this context were: idyll, tourism, homes, bathing, fishing, recreation and nature. Nearly all of these would need a bit of a “helping hand”, such as improved public access or aeration of the water. The gravel pits in Sierentz, Bartenheim, Blotzheim, Weil-Haltingen and Eiken were appropriate for such reorganisation.

Finally, the third landmark project, again presented by Manuel Herz, concerns the commune of Grenzach-Wyhlen. It could be upgraded through territorial interventions and moved to the Rhine and closer to the metropolitan region. That could be achieved by diverting some of the water in the form of a Rhine Canal.

**Happy to have visions**

A celebrity panel, again chaired by Esther Girsberger, discussed these matters in greater depth. Raymond Cron, of Orascom Development, warned that it was folly to proceed with such reorganisation projects unless there was solid backing from the people, the authorities and the investors. The mayor of Sierentz, Jean-Marie Belliard, struck a sceptical note, stressing that they were talking about no more than a vision. If such a project were to go ahead at all, it would have to include everyday life – and jobs – and not just tourism and leisure, as city dwellers imagined them. Jörg Lutz, mayor of Grenzach-Wyhlen, stated that his commune was not as badly connected as all that, for instance through Roche as an employer.

The university was the bigger discussion point. Christoph von Arb, a former Swiss scientific consul in Boston, saw the campus as an excellent model and an appealing one for academics whom the university would like to attract. Doubts about Birsfelden being the right location were expressed by Marc Joset (SP), a member of the Basel-Landschaft cantonal parliament for Binningen and chairman of the inter-parliamentary commission for the university. As a political realist, however, he was pleased to have visions, which was what the canton was short of at that time. Moving university institutes to Liestal or wherever should not be left to chance; it was necessary to think in a broader context and to strive for large-scale solutions. One argument in favour of the campus idea was that Novartis has set one up too.

**Confined city boundaries**

The region, along with the university, had no alternative to long-term growth, said Hans-Peter Wessels (SP), a member of the Basel-Stadt cantonal government. However, finding space within the city for a fast-growing university for the more distant future was not at all easy. So the only option was to open up an area outside the city, where it would be able to spread. “The city’s confined boundaries are facts of life”, he added. Whether it was to be Birsfelden or somewhere else, the overall approach was basically correct. Ralph Lewin, a former member of the Basel-Stadt cantonal government and currently president of the SVS (the trade association of Swiss shipping and ports), had nothing against visions either. However, it was essential to get the timeframes right: “we can only give up Birsfelden [as a port] once an adequate replacement is available.” Rotterdam was currently upgrading its port for two billion euros: “so it’s not going to be long before lots more goods than today start arriving in Basel. Then we’re going to need every square metre of port.”
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Successful Start for “Infrapark Baselland” in 2011

Ideal Infrastructure in Border Triangle of Switzerland-Germany-France
Especially Attractive for Companies in the Chemicals and Life Sciences Industries

Interview: Ulrich Nies

Clariant, the Swiss specialty chemicals company, has converted its 37-hectare corporate campus in Muttenz into an industrial park. Companies of all sizes can make use of a total of 16 hectares of available industrial space. In early 2011, “Infrapark® Baselland” was ready to be launched. And, not even a year later, in addition to Clariant, companies such as PanGas and Bayer, as well as Aprentas, the training association of the Basel chemical and pharmaceutical industry, are residents there. The new industrial park is especially attractive for chemicals and life sciences companies that specialize in research and production.

Located in the border triangle area of Switzerland-Germany-France its road, rail, ship and airport infrastructure offers an ideally developed base. With a comprehensive range of services all from one source, “Infrapark Baselland,” which will continue under Clariant’s ownership, has all the advantages of an industrial base that is unique in Switzerland. The director of the new industrial park is Renaud Spitz, who is also the country head of Clariant Switzerland.

Mr. Spitz, why has Clariant converted this site into an industrial park?

Over the years, Clariant has had an extensive and positive experience with industrial parks. Frankfurt-Hoechst, in Germany, with more than 90 companies and around 22,000 employees – including Clariant, with 1,300 employees – demonstrates the type of potential industrial parks can have. In spite of all the prophecies of doom, the former corporate headquarters of Höchst AG has developed into a prospering base for companies in the chemicals, life sciences, and service industries.

What do you see as the significance of the industrial park for the region?

Infrapark Baselland can be viewed as an important piece of the puzzle for the global positioning of the chemicals and life sciences group of the Basel region. Opening up the industrial park to other companies will lead to a diversified company portfolio. By minimizing the risk, we are expecting sustained development of Muttenz as a location, which should lead to new jobs, especially in companies that have production operations. That also means a higher level of value creation for the region in general.

What does the industrial park offer?

Available, open, unimproved lots that are suitable for the construction of new production and laboratory facilities, vacant buildings that can be converted for production, laboratory or warehouse use. And, our services in the areas of waste disposal, environmental protection and safety represent ecologically sound and safe operations for companies that locate there. And, our excellent transport connections and logistical services are highly valued by potential customers. In addition, the services outside the Infrapark Baselland have attracted a great deal of interest. For example, medical care is available through our company’s medical services; the Schweizerischen Rheinsalinen (Swiss Rhine Salt); ARA Rhein; and Lufthansa, at the Euro Airport. And, companies have shown interest in our services in the Engineering and Maintenance areas. This move, to act as an independent provider of services, requires an even stronger customer focus on the part of the service areas within today’s Clariant (Switzerland) AG. I am convinced that our experienced staff and employees will be able to take this on without any problems.

How important is a good logistical infrastructure to the industrial park?

The region’s logistical advantages are readily apparent. Located in the heart of Europe, in the border triangle of Switzerland-Germany-France, the Infrapark Baselland is a part of Basel’s business base. Hardly any other region in the chemicals and life sciences sectors can offer a comparable concentration of industrial companies and research institutions. The Basel Region is attractive to workers from all over the globe. Five of the world’s top 100 universities are located in Basel and the surrounding area, and they ensure that there will be a large pool of high-quality professionals. Our property is superbly connected to international transportation routes – by train, motor vehicle and ship – via railways, motorways and our own access to the Rhine. There is even a public bus-stop right at the entrance to our property, where one has a direct connection to the downtown city center of Basel.
World stars as Basel’s guests

Events like the AVO Session Basel, the Swiss Indoors and the Basel Tattoo attract huge crowds and contribute significantly to Basel’s reputation as a venue. Authenticity and credibility are two of the decisive keys to the success of such occasions.

Text: Sydne Müller

Events that make the headlines and are popular with a broad public are important for the city of Basel and the region as a whole. During such events, hotel bookings shoot up to record levels. Restaurants, department stores and even small shops put in extra marketing efforts so that they too can benefit from the incredible success of these mega events. Visitors from Switzerland, Germany and France make their way to Basel to come within touching distance of the world stars for once. Thanks to their prestige and topicality, these glittering events strengthen Basel as a cultural centre.

When thousands are listening spellbound to the music of bagpipes and drums in July, it means that the Basel Tattoo has taken over the barracks’ grounds. Its originator, Erik Julliard, spends the whole year working up to this event with his team of 21. In the autumn, Roger Brennwald, founder and organiser of the Swiss Indoors tennis tournament, welcomes the sport’s top stars.

Events like the Basel Tattoo, the AVO Session Basel and the Swiss Indoors are going to remain important success factors for the city and the region as a whole if Basel is to manage in future too to maintain and further develop its position as an important venue for mega events. These are moments in time in which the whole world is looking at us.

Shortly after that, the doors open for the AVO Session Basel. Its roll of honour of stars who have already performed at it includes names like Sir Elton John, Sir Tom Jones, Deep Purple and Pink – household names that have been attracted to Basel. But what’s the fascination of performing a concert for a small audience? The secret lies in the intimate atmosphere of the club tables and candlelight. The closeness between the stars and the aficionados is virtually unbeatable.

The history of the event goes back to the five sold-out “Rheinknie Session” concerts of 1986. The name was changed to “AVO Session Basel” a year later, when Matthias Müller, its founder and president, and two friends together staged a series of concerts. The breakthrough came two years later with the legendary performance by Miles Davis. Since then, music lovers have been travelling from near and far to attend the festival. It has a good financial cushion and is thus able to plan well ahead. The AVO Session Basel concerts are broadcast to five continents and up to 80 countries.

Rosy future thanks to the new Event Hall

It is important that the event is held near a city centre with good transport access and that the festival premises are of such a high quality that leading entertainers are going to be enthusiastic about performing there. Given that the old exhibition hall is being demolished to be replaced by a new project from Herzog & De Meuron, the 2012 concerts are to be held exceptionally in the Basel Musical Theatre. In later years, the venue will be the new, modern Event Hall run by Swiss Exhibition.

Swiss Indoors – world class

The biggest national sports event and one of the world’s major indoor tennis tournaments is the Swiss Indoors, which has been traditionally held in Basel and is scheduled as one of the last contests in the nail-biting finish to the world championship. Every year, the elite of the tennis world gather in the St. Jakobshall. For a whole week, the Basel region goes tennis-crazy, and everyone shares in the tension when the local tennis matador, Roger Federer, sends the balls humming round the ears of his opponents.

Events like the Basel Tattoo, the AVO Session Basel and the Swiss Indoors are going to remain important success factors for the city and the region as a whole if Basel is to manage in future too to maintain and further develop its position as an important venue for mega events. These are moments in time in which the whole world is looking at us.
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The phenomenal VitraHaus on the Vitra Campus is dynamic, artistic and yet unbeatably simple all in one. Numerous visitors everyday enjoy the experience of art brought to life.

Text: Martin Heller

Culture seeks to prompt curiosity, and curiosity is fun. So anyone visiting Basel as a cultural centre can look forward to fun – the fun of lots to discover, much of it unique. That applies not only to the city itself, with its cornucopia of art and culture, but also to its surrounding districts.
Where the tedium of suburbia really begins in other cities is where curiosity comes to its own in Basel, with world-class offerings, such as the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen, the Schaulager in Münchenstein and – already out in the region’s “green belt” – the Vitra Campus in Weil am Rhein.

An astonishing hub of culture has grown up here over the years – a magnificent park that defies pigeonholing on account of the exceptional and spectacular bridge it effortlessly and distinctively spans between the lofty heights of art and everyday life. The processes and results of a fascinating world of creativity have been rendered tangible.

At heart, this engaging holistic work of art is about that form of design that is closest to us in our daily life and work: furniture. That is what Vitra manufactures, and one of its locations is Weil am Rhein, just across the border from Switzerland.

It is where the successful family business once began – producing furniture to enrich the lives of many, through its beauty, its cheerfulness and its capacity to make any four walls into a home.

This is the outcome of an unparalleled alliance with the best designers and architects, and the campus in Weil am Rhein affords us an insight into it – step by step, as we stroll through the extensive grounds and the exhibitions, or even the shop.

All demarcation lines between shape and content have been eliminated. Everything is allowed to combine with every-
thing else. Frank Gehry’s wonderful museum (his first building outside of North America) is dedicated to the history and future of design. At the time of writing, it is showcasing the world of Rudolf Steiner’s thought and images, through which he aimed to bestow his anthroposophy on humanity. It is an impressive theme, especially since Steiner’s original building, the Goetheanum, is also one of the cultural pinnacles of the Basel region.

Gehry is just one of many who have worked with and for Vitra – and still do. It is possible to see other creations by Zaha Hadid, Tadao Ando, Nicolas Grimshaw and Alvaro Siza, devised as contributions to an industrial reality transcending mere functionality. They include some real gems: a historic filling station by Jean Prouvé, the genial French designer, a cupola dome by the visionary Buckminster Fuller and, finally, the bus stop by Jasper Morrison, a master of British understatement.

The newest prestige object in Weil am Rhein (as things stand at present) is the VitraHaus by the Basel architectural magicians, Herzog & de Meuron – a house of houses stacked on houses, a magnet for all the senses.

The “window shopping” continues indoors with Gehry, Prouvé and Morrison, here again in the company of great names like Charles & Ray Eames, Isamu Noguchi, George Nelson and Verner Panton as well as contemporary designs by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Hella Jongerius, Maarten van Severen and Antonio Citterio.

If it hasn’t happened already, curiosity is bound to turn to fun on the Vitra Campus. Culture and art present themselves in a never-ending alternation of inventiveness and utilitarianism. It is this movement that makes a happening out of the visit. It has a lasting effect, because it is so matter-of-course and so convincing: like an open secret culled from life itself.

**Top-class theatre**

The Basel Metropolitan Region is a privileged location with a vast amount of culture on offer. Georges Delnon reveals to metrobasel report what highlights he would like to stage in future to entice audiences into Basel Theatre.

Interview: Regula Ruetz

Mr Delnon, for the second time, your theatre has been chosen as the “Opera House of the Year”. What is this award based on? Does it help you increase the numbers of theatre-goers or sponsors?

Nowadays, rankings have become important in culture too. They are closely scrutinised by insiders and outsiders alike. The “Opera House of the Year” award has naturally helped us – all the more so, now that we’ve received it for the second time. It has enabled us to make our theatre better known and more attractive, to increase our audiences and to become more interesting for sponsors as well.

Can you keep up the high quality of the performances even with cuts in your budget, if, for instance, Canton Basel-Landschaft stops your grants?

That is a question of striking a balance between quality and quantity. The aim for an institution acknowledged as a leader, such as ours, must be to guarantee high quality for the whole season. That is impossible if grants are cut.

More than half your visitors come from Basel-Landschaft. Are you considering differentiated ticket prices, depending on the contributions of cantons and communes?

It goes without saying that we want to make our programme available to everybody interested at the same conditions, regardless of where they live. But we have introduced a customer fidelity card, a bit like those at the supermarkets. Our visitors can collect points with them every time they come here, and they are credited to them at the end of November. It is certainly worth considering other steps in this direction.

How important is it for Basel Theatre to have activities in several of the performing arts?

That is less important for Basel Theatre itself than for the region. Basel Theatre is the largest theatre in Switzerland offering three distinct performing arts, which is also a USP for Basel. Whether to keep that or not is a decision of cultural policy.
Quite apart from that, managing a range of performing arts is tremendously important artistically too, since each of the sections always inspires the others. That also influences the way the institution works and the working climate in it.

How can you defend your position in competition with other cultural institutions?
I would say that it is not always a matter of coming off better in a fight against other cultural institutions. The question is rather how to make joint progress along with other cultural institutions. At all events, a theatre’s hallmarks must be quality, professionalism, continuity and innovation.

Which section or type of performance is currently the most successful (as regards reputation and finances)?
The three sections have very different targets. Opera is targeted on a highly international audience and must do well both locally and on the international scene. Drama must do that too, but it is more focused on intervening in urban life and playing an active part in it, by being provocative, asking searching questions, exaggerating and holding up a mirror. Dance too aspires to reach both a regional and an international audience, which it can achieve effortlessly by not being bound to a single spoken language.

Does a theatre need star actors or dancers as well if it is to be successful? Or do famous choreographers, like Richard Wherlock or Heinz Spoerli, act as bigger crowd-pullers?
Basel, in particular, is a place where big-name actors are very popular. In dance, on the other hand, it is rather the impression made by the team, the company, that counts. But, of course, the choreographer and the producer too are eminently important for the success of a section.

How important is culture for a society?
No less important than breathing. A society defines itself through its culture. Culture is the place where socially relevant questions are asked, where we scrutinise our actions and values and ideally even where a change in perceptions can be brought about. That is precisely why it is so important to kindle awareness for the significance of culture in the younger generations.

Is solidarity towards culture dwindling in the region?
No, I don’t think so. The cultural programme on offer has grown massively in recent years. The difficult task faced by public funding is coping with this shift and neither suffocating in variety nor attaching too much importance to the innumerable tendencies. That makes it all the more important for those in positions of responsibility to recognise what it is that keeps our society moving forward.

What visions do you have for Basel Theatre in the immediate future and the medium term?
For the immediate future, I see Basel Theatre in the top class and occupying an important position in cultural Europe. I see a stronger fusion of the various sections, for instance with the creative arts and also an increase in performatve art.

Basel is a privileged place on account of its cultural wealth. It has both the resources and the capacities – and also the critical public – for the further development of a theatre. We have already succeeded in gaining several sponsors for our theatre, which is helping us take on greater risks in the experimental field and to give our theatre the best possible position.

However, it is not just a matter of trying out experimental theatre but of attracting new people to sit in the stalls and of making our theatre into a place of living cultural experiences.
Lonza is one of the world’s leading providers of products and services to the pharmaceutical, healthcare and life-sciences industries. With its headquarters in Basel, it is strongly anchored in the metropolitan area of Basel.
“New Basel”: a trinational municipal development

Starting with the development of the docklands in Basel, a cross-border vision has now been presented for coordinated urban and port development in Huningue, Weil am Rhein and Basel.

Fritz Schumacher, Cantonal architect, Basel-Stadt

The land to be developed covers roughly 175 hectares on both banks of the Rhine, between Dreirosen Bridge and Palmrain Bridge. It is to be divided into various districts, sketched out in the vision, and there is to be enough space for housing for 10000 people and jobs for a similar number. This is creating new future prospects for the whole region. A tri-national master plan is to ensure urban, economic, social and ecological added value, representing a win-win situation for all the partners and the residents. This approach is giving the three towns the possibility of attaining a top-grade, high-value development aligned to their individual objectives and needs. The further planning stages are being coordinated with the land owners and with the involvement of the population.

The vision includes new facilities for life sciences, research or services as well as new housing in new districts in the southern part of the town of Huningue. In the north, to the south of Palmrain Bridge, a new residential district may be able to develop on the banks of the Rhine.

The vision's German partner is looking into possible ways of extending Weil am Rhein as far as the banks of the Rhine in Friedlingen. This suburb is to be made more attractive and varied, with gradual urbanisation and more compact building. An urban master plan is to be drawn up here too, with the involvement of local government, the people and the port operators.

The centre of the planning for the City of Basel concerns the future use of Klybeckquai and Westquai along the lines of the port and urban-development plans presented back in 2010. New housing and workplaces and an attractive Rhine promenade, with bridges over to France and Germany, are key elements in the programme for implementing the vision of the “New Basel”. These objectives and the necessary improvements in the port infrastructure and its relocation onto former railway land once used by Deutsche Bahn are also to be fed into a district master plan, with residents being invited to participate in an open discussion.

“New Basel”, a tri-national urban development at the point where the three national borders meet, represents the unique opportunity of growing closer together and transcending borders, with high quality as the declared focus of urban development for the 21st century.

We should like to express our thanks to the Basler Zeitung (BAZ), the Basellandschaftliche Zeitung (bz) and Swissprinters AG for their kind support. It is thanks to them that it has been possible to distribute the metrobasel report to so many homes.

We thank in particular Brenntag Schweizerhall AG and Schweizerische Rheinhäfen for their generous support.
Life Sciences in the Basel Metropolitan Region: a success story with a future?

Dr. Christoph Koellreuter, Director metrobasel

At the end of October 2011, Novartis announced that it was going to cut the headcount at its Basel operation by roughly 750 full-time jobs. This measure is intended to ensure that the company has sufficient strategic room for manoeuvre in the face of falling pharmaceutical prices. It does not represent the end of the success story of the Basel Metropolitan Region in the life-sciences sector. It is to be assumed that the total number of jobs in the sector will grow much more slowly over the next 2-3 years and might even decline.

Taking 2010 as the baseline, however, it is still to be expected that there will be more jobs in pharmaceuticals in 2020. This finding has been distilled from the more optimistic scenarios for pharmaceuticals presented at the metrobasel economic forum in May 2011 by BAK Basel Economics in a study commissioned by metrobasel.

In 2020: more jobs than in 2010

The general environment for the life-sciences sector in the Basel location remains very good – at least considered in the European context: flexible and open labour markets, a low fiscal burden, pharmaceutical regulations generally favourable for research (at least in a European comparison) and an excellent quality of life compared with big competing life-sciences locations around the world (more detail in the metrobasel economic report of 24 May 2011).

These scenarios for pharmaceuticals were also presented at regional metrobasel forums held between mid-August and mid-September 2011 in Allschwil, Frick, Liestal and Laufen. They were then discussed by decision-makers from business, government and civil society in each of the sub-regions.

Sub-regions: what development up to 2035?

Apart from the development of the sub-regional business locations within the Basel Metropolitan Region, the most important planning issue for the cantonal and communal authorities is the expected growth in the residential population. So metrobasel has commissioned Wiest & Partner to work out population scenarios for 2101, 2020 and 2035 to be submitted to the next metrobasel economic forum at the end of May 2012. It is intended that these scenarios should clearly show the impacts of the expected demographic aging on the individual parts of the Basel Metropolitan Region. Connected with this study, BAK Basel Economics is to look specifically into the role of migratory movements, which, as in the past, are likely to result in a net gain for the Basel Metropolitan Region. The decisive factor in this is going to be the improvement in the quality of the general environment for life sciences.

Later on, the regional metrobasel forums are going to have the opportunity of considering the territorially differentiated population scenarios.

Need for action in the universities and in pharmaceutical regulations

In analysing the general environment for the Basel Metropolitan Region as a life-sciences location, metrobasel is concerned above all with the global competitiveness of the universities and the pharmaceutical regulations. metrobasel arranges studies into these matters and uses their findings for establishing where there is need for action. One example of this was the discussion it organised with parliamentarians in Aarau at the end of March 2011 around the Tripleye study into “Universities in Switzerland: with incentive-driven structural reforms into the global top league”.

A further debate with parliamentarians is planned for early May 2012 in Zurich on the topic of “Swiss regulations in the banking and pharmaceuticals sectors: catching up on non-European competitors?".
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Private individuals – At the time of going to press, more than 220 private individuals had already joined the metrobasel association
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