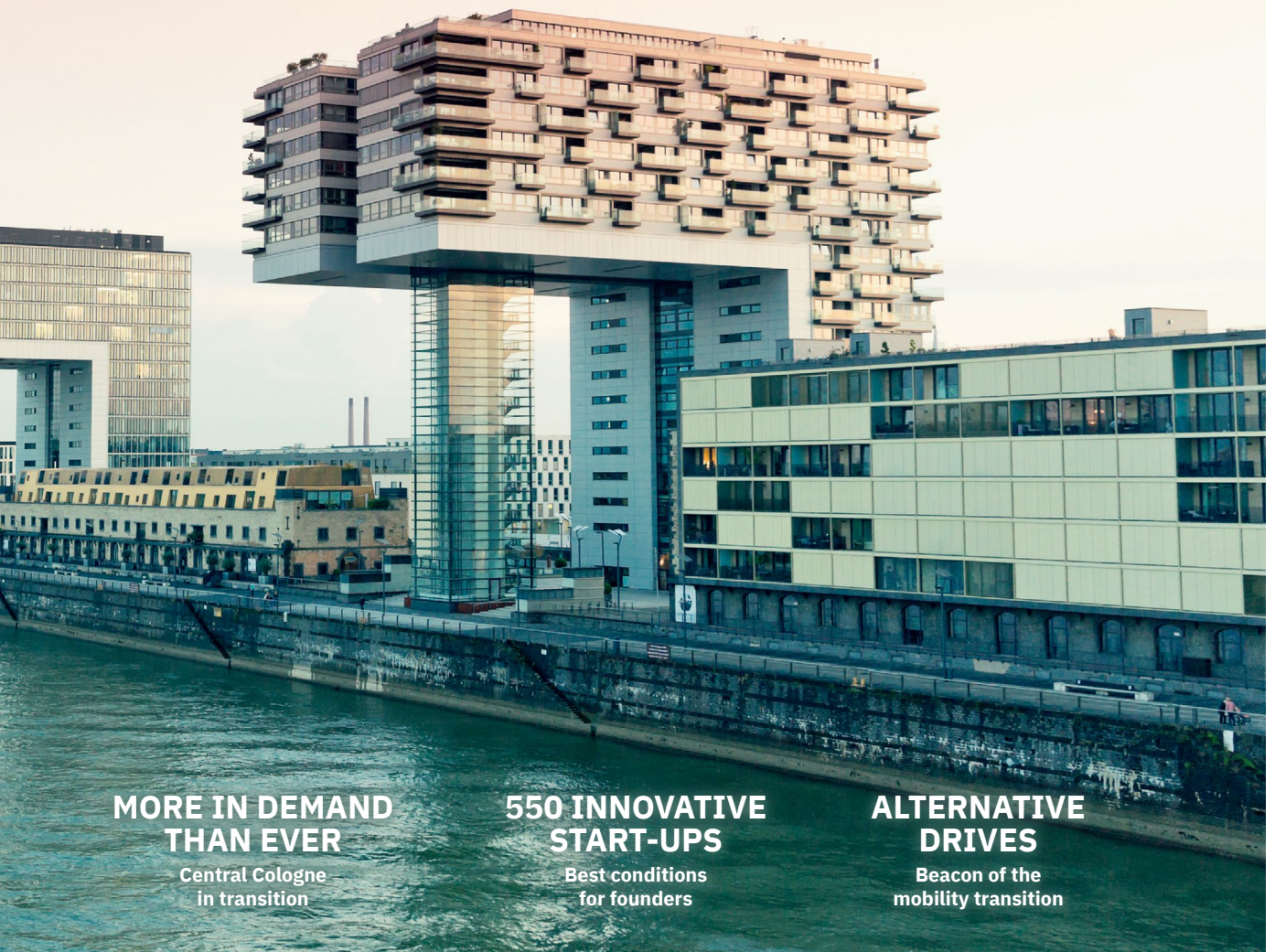


# Made in Cologne.



## MORE IN DEMAND THAN EVER

Central Cologne  
in transition

## 550 INNOVATIVE START-UPS

Best conditions  
for founders

## ALTERNATIVE DRIVES

Beacon of the  
mobility transition

# CONTENTS

MADE IN COLOGNE

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Shaping the mobility transition: insights into the new e-production at Ford.

## 04

### 04 MOBILITY OF THE FUTURE

Rene Wolf, Managing Director of Production at the Ford factory, offers exclusive insights into the **biggest transformation in the company's history**. Dr Manfred Janssen, Managing Director of KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency, met him at the factory by the Rhine.

### 06 THAT'S THE APPEAL OF COLOGNE

Academic landscape, welcoming culture, exciting infrastructure: **the advantages of Cologne at a glance**.

### 08 BROADBAND TURBO KICKS OFF

Fibre-optic expansion by 2025, high-performance 5G network: Cologne shines with its **digital infrastructure**.

### 10 A CITY IN TRANSITION

From Deutzer Hafen to Mattes & Düxx: a portrait of **sustainable building projects** for even better quality of life at work and at home.

### 12 ANYTHING BUT DULL

The city centre is a magnet for businesses, tourists and locals – and it's here that **innovative usage concepts** are continually developing.



### 14 "OUTSTANDING HOST"

In an interview, Cologne's mayor **Henriette Reker** reveals why her home city is a great host – and what is being done here to help the economy.



# 14

Cologne's mayor for the last seven years:  
Henriette Reker



## 16 550 INNOVATIVE START-UPS

Cologne offers the **best conditions for start-ups**: how company founders are utilizing the support services of the metropolis on the Rhine.

## 18 “DISNEYLAND FOR ENGINEERS”

igus GmbH has been developing high-performance plastics for almost six decades. Its owner Frank Blase talks to us about plans, projects – **and innovations made in Cologne.**

## 20 A BEACON FOR ALTERNATIVE DRIVES

From Deutz to Toyota: As an attractive **automotive city**, Cologne is working hard at the mobility transition.

## 22 THE ENERGY TRANSITION ON THE RHINE

How researchers are collaborating with businesses to develop **solutions for the energy supply of tomorrow.**



# 24

## 24 FERTILE GROUND FOR SUSTAINABILITY

**Climate neutrality by 2035** – this is the goal Cologne has set for itself, and everyone is pitching in to achieve it. That goes for start-ups as much as for municipal companies and the city administration.

## 28 LOCATIONS FOR LOVING LIFE

From the Stadtgarten to the surf school. This selection of some of the city's hippest places shows **the many great ways to relax in Cologne.**



# 28

Cocktails with a touch of charm: Suderman tempts visitors as one of Cologne's stylish local bars.

## 31 A BIT OF BEIJING

**Tielin Fan**, the owner of the Rhenish brewery “Tünnes und Schäl” comes from China, has lived in Cologne since 2000 – and loves Rhenish roulades as much as Peking duck.



# 18

## COMPANY AND LEGAL INFORMATION

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In conversation: business promoter Janssen with Ford Managing Director Wolf (left to right)

# Two billion euros for the mobility of the future

Cologne is playing a key role in shaping the mobility transition. **RENE WOLF**, Managing Director of Production at Ford-Werke GmbH, offers exclusive insights into the biggest transformation in the company's history. **DR MANFRED JANSSEN**, Managing Director of KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency, met him at Ford by the Rhine.

**A**utomotive production goes back a long way in Cologne. At Ford, around 15,000 employees are currently converting production from combustion engines to electric drivetrains, a process that should help to create Europe-wide industry standards.

**With almost two billion euros, Ford is making one of the biggest investments in our city. So what will electromobility made in Cologne look like?**

Ford is setting up its Electrification Center in Cologne with a development



centre, prototype construction and production of two e-models. As early as next year, the first all-electric volume model by Ford in Europe will be rolling off the production line here, and 1.2 million e-vehicles are set to follow within six years. From 2030, Ford will produce exclusively all-electric cars within Europe, and we're starting that process in Cologne.

**To what extent is Ford formative in shaping Cologne's profile as a sustainable metropolis?**

For us, sustainability is an overriding corporate goal. By 2035, we are aiming to be carbon-neutral in Europe, a target that incorporates our entire fleet of vehicles, our production and logistics, and our supply chain. Our Cologne factory has been running entirely on green energy since 2008, on top of which we are also switching to green gas for the launch of the all-electric vehicles. This will make us carbon-neutral in our vehicle production in Cologne, and we are also motivating our suppliers to become more sustainable at the same time. Cologne is establishing itself ever more as a source of ideas for new, sustainable mobility solutions, and I am confident that our investment will help to create further stimuli.

**Ford and Cologne have belonged together since 1931. Are you now embarking on the biggest transformation in the company's history?**

In the 91 years, we have been based in Cologne, there have been many upheavals. But the conversion to an Electrification Center is the biggest investment in our history, and it's undoubtedly the biggest change I have seen in my 31 years at Ford because everything is new. We are introducing a new product with a new platform and a new drive. To do so, we are creating new work structures, installing innovative Industry

---

## THE INTERVIEWEE: **RENE WOLF**

has been responsible for the Manufacturing division within the management of Ford-Werke GmbH in Cologne since 2021. The engineering graduate will ensure that Ford's first battery-electric volume model in Europe rolls off the production line at the Ford plant in Cologne-Niehl starting in 2023.

## **DR MANFRED JANSSEN**

has been Managing Director of KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency since 2019. The organization is the first point of contact for companies, start-ups, investors and project developers and focuses on services that are geared to the needs of the business community.

---

4.0 technologies, and constructing new buildings – including a 100-metre-long hall for pre-treatment of body shells. I am proud to be able to help shape this extensive transformation.

**You emerged the winner in a Europe-wide competition with the Centre for E-Mobility. How did Ford in Cologne position itself for this?**

Yes, we are part of an internal competition between sites for which we positioned ourselves as best we could. Our Fiesta production is considered one of the most efficient production plants in the entire

sector, and that's an aspiration we aim to live up to in the future with the production of e-models. To this end, we launched a restructuring programme early on. We took a close look at our processes and identified potential for optimisation. Now, we are focusing entirely on digitalisation as well as smart Industry 4.0 applications and creating simpler, faster and more efficient processes.

**How are you taking your employees along with you on this journey?**

We are changing work structures consistently across all areas of production under the slogan "Factory of the Future". That also means that each and every employee must be ready to learn something new and be flexible. After all, we want our e-production to set industry standards, for example, in the work with collaborative robots or with autonomously operated transport systems. We are taking our employees along with us in this process right from the start, meaning all our employees in production are getting at least 12 days of training to acquire skills so that they can embark on this journey and help shape it together.

**Ford in Cologne employs people from around 80 countries. Is that typical for this city?**

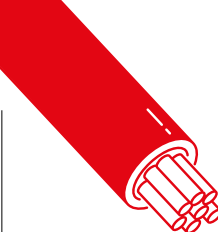
The diversity here in the factory is unique, and this openness towards other people is what defines Cologne. As a native of Thuringia, I have experienced for myself how you are welcomed here with open arms and quickly find your feet. Everyone works side by side together in the factory, and that's one of the reasons why we have achieved top placings for efficiency in an industry-wide study for many years. Our qualified staff are the basis of our quality and delivery reliability. In the battle for talent, Cologne's universities and its appealing leisure offerings constitute a major asset. ■

515

HOTELS, INNS, GUESTHOUSES AND  
OTHER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS  
INVITE YOU TO STAY AWHILE.

1,000,000 tonnes

of air cargo is handled by Cologne Bonn Airport annually,  
making it Germany's third-largest air cargo centre.



90%

of Cologne's households  
have a broadband internet  
connection.

# Crunching the numbers

600,000

employees subject to social  
insurance contributions  
were registered in Cologne in  
September 2021. That is the  
highest figure ever, meaning the  
city's job market has recovered  
from the covid crisis better than  
expected.

Cologne offers compa-  
nies **MANY ARGUMENTS**  
for settling in the city  
– ranging from the well-  
connected location to the  
science landscape to the  
welcoming culture.



100,000  
STUDENTS

STUDY AT COLOGNE'S  
22 UNIVERSITIES  
AND THE 18+ RESEARCH  
INSTITUTES.



17

**MILLION PEOPLE  
LIVE,  
WORK, CONSUME  
AND RESEARCH  
WITHIN A  
RADIUS OF 100  
KILOMETRES IN  
THE GREATER  
COLOGNE AREA.**

Every  
third  
day

a new start-up is  
set up. Even in the  
pandemic year of  
2021, 106 innovative  
new companies  
were founded.



280,000

travellers and 1,300 trains converge daily at Cologne Central Station,  
one of the busiest railway hubs in Europe.





**1.1**  
**MILLION**  
**INHABITANTS**

FROM 180 NATIONS  
LIVE IN COLOGNE.  
AROUND 40 PER  
CENT HAVE A  
MIGRATION BACK-  
GROUND.



**1/3 of the population**  
is younger than 30  
and around one in ten  
people self-identifies as  
lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
trans\*, inter\* or queer.



**131**  
**HECTARES**

**IS THE SIZE OF THE INLAND  
PORT AT COLOGNE-NIEHL –  
GERMANY’S SECOND-BIG-  
GEST INLAND PORT WITH A  
DIRECT CONNECTION TO  
THE WORLD’S LARGEST SEA  
PORT AT ROTTERDAM IN THE  
NETHERLANDS.**

## “Radiant Cologne”

**Felix Neugart** is CEO of NRW.Global Business, the foreign trade promotion agency of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. In an interview, he sheds light on Cologne’s role as a point of reference for businesses establishing themselves in the state.

### **What is the significance of Cologne as a beacon within NRW for national and international companies settling here?**

The city offers many advantages as a location, which international firms appreciate. One aspect of this is its research and development landscape, which is among the biggest and most innovative in Europe. There are four Max Planck Institutes, for example, researching in Cologne. One strong argument for the city in investor discussions is also the potential for skilled workers, thanks to the strong landscape of higher education institutions with around 100,000 students. What’s more, Cologne is a trading and exhibition city and therefore offers foreign investors an ideal platform.

### **What role do the geographical location and the infrastructure play when it comes to companies settling in Cologne?**

Cologne is an international hub for the entire region. The Port of Cologne is the second-largest inland port in Germany and Cologne Bonn Airport is Germany’s third-largest centre for air cargo. Every UPS package that leaves or reaches Europe, for example, travels via Cologne Bonn Airport. The Cologne-Eifeltor freight centre is considered Germany’s most efficient trans-shipment centre for combined loading traffic, and Cologne Central Station is one of Europe’s busiest rail hubs with 280,000 passengers and around 1,300 trains daily.

### **What kind of appeal does Cologne have in combination with the land potential in the Rhenish mining area?**

In the Rhenish mining area, the goal is to develop a largely greenhouse-gas-neutral region that is not only located centrally within Europe and sees itself as a European model, but can also serve as an example for successful transformations worldwide. With over 30 commercial sites and a potential land area of over 1,000 hectares, the region offers innovative companies the ideal growth conditions to be part of this transformation. Already now, we are seeing that companies really value the neighbouring hinterland of the large NRW metropolises, for example, due to more favourable costs. With the location factors presented in the first question, the cathedral city also inevitably “radiates” into the surrounding area and benefits reciprocally from the availability of land. But it also from “soft” factors such as access to nature or good living conditions for potential workers and their families.





# COLOGNE LAUNCHES BROADBAND TURBO

With a major **FIBRE-OPTIC EXPANSION**, all areas in Cologne will be optimally served by 2025. Together with the new, high-performance 5G mobile communications standard, this catapults the Rhine metropolis to the top of the list of German cities with the best digital infrastructure.

**L**ive streaming is more popular and in demand than ever. Since the coronavirus pandemic, Lukas Best, founder of the video platform Streamdust.tv, has been glad to see rising demand. The development suits him and his young company with which he has been bringing people from all over the world together for conferences, trade fairs and congresses since

2015 – without the expense of travelling. The coronavirus has naturally boosted demand and prompted new desires. “There is a rise in 360-degree live streams and videos where users can immerse themselves in other worlds with their mobile phones even without special VR glasses,” says Best. These Extended Reality applications, abbreviated to XR (see box), play an

important role in more than just the gaming industry. Businesses, too, are increasingly using them, for example, for interactive training sessions, simulation solutions for product presentations, and virtual 360-degree live panoramic views.

It is no coincidence that Streamdust.tv was founded in Cologne since the metropolis on the Rhine is considered the bastion of Germany’s



XR industry. A June 2021 study conducted by Christian Zabel, Professor of Corporate Management and Innovation Management at Cologne University of Applied Sciences, found that there are a total of 1,767 main and secondary locations. Most of the branches are located in NRW, whereby Cologne is the location in Germany with the highest density of XR companies – over 100 XR technology providers are based here. “Company clusters generate competition, but above all competence, and they enable synergies,” says Stefan Sorkin, Chairman of the First German Virtual Reality Association (EDFVR e.V.) in Cologne.

### Model city for digitization

To ensure that the transmission of such data-intensive XR applications works in real-time, the metropolis on the Rhine has fired up the Broadband Turbo with its “Gigabit Masterplan 2025 Cologne”: Together with the telecommunications provider NetCologne, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the federal government, less well-served areas known as the dead zones will be connected to the broadband network by 2025 thanks to massive expansion as part of a 33-million-euro project. NetCologne already operates one of the densest fibre-optic networks in Germany with more than 28,000 kilometres of laid cables. “We aim to make our home city a model city for digital infrastructure,” says Timo von Lepel, Managing Director of NetCologne. This is set to benefit around one million private households and over 2,000 companies in the digital economy. This includes 550 start-ups like Streamdust.tv and the City of Cologne, which can use it to



### BASTION OF THE XR INDUSTRY

XR stands for Cross Reality and comprises all areas of augmented reality (extended reality, AR), virtual reality (VR) and mixed reality (MR). XR applications blur the boundaries between reality and computer simulation.

Cologne is the city with the highest concentration of the XR industry in Germany. More than half of German XR companies that were founded before 2010 are based in Cologne.

The reasons for which include proximity to skilled workers, good infrastructure, strong media presence within the city, and access to many business customers.

implement further smart city applications, such as rubbish bins that transmit their fill level by radio and are only emptied when they are full.

### Gigabytes through the air

In its quest to provide the best possible digital infrastructure, Cologne is using not only the fibre-optic network but also the powerful fifth-generation mobile communications standard 5G: “Cologne is already largely covered by 5G,” explains Michael Müller-Berg, head of partner management for business customers at Telekom Deutschland. With data throughput up to 100 times faster than the LTE/4G mobile communications standard, 5G offers companies completely new possibilities in the Internet of Things (IoT). These range from robot automation on the factory floor to autonomous

driverless transport systems and predictive maintenance applications in real-time. Further applications are being researched by companies at the TH Köln sites in Mülheim and Deutz with the support of Telekom in the open 5G Co:Creation Lab.

### Smart city

In the Smart City Index 2021, the technology association Bitkom ranks Cologne second in Germany. In addition to its fibre optic network, NetCologne is also expanding the LoRaWan (Long Range Wide Area Network) radio network so that machines and devices can communicate with each other and with us humans via the Internet of Things. Cologne is also playing a pioneering role in intelligent street lighting: Telecommunications provider Vodafone, together with Rhein-Energie, has installed the first street lamps in Europe with 5G Plus antennas that combine fibre-optic and power connections. This, too, helps Cologne to bolster its position as a future-oriented smart city. ■



Ensuring highspeed internet: Timo von Lepel, Managing Director of NetCologne.

# A CITY IN TRANSITION

Building real estate sustainably is one of the key challenges of the energy transition. Materials, power and heat can be saved, but mobility can also be made environmentally friendly – criteria that play a central role in four important building projects in Cologne.



## DEUTZER HAFEN: A NEW URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD ON THE WATER

Historic mills characterise the former harbour of Cologne-Deutz. In future, the new neighbourhood will offer space for around 7,000 residents and around 6,000 jobs with sustainability a top priority in the conversion. The German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) awarded the urban district a platinum certificate in advance since this is where functional space is created that combines living and working in a meaningful way and pays attention to social, cultural and ecological aspects. “Deutzer Hafen, therefore, offers the very best opportunities to attract investors for the long-term sustainable goals of Cologne’s urban development,” says Andreas Röhrig, Managing Director of moderne stadt GmbH. The company will start marketing the first commercial construction site in the port in autumn 2022.

## BUTZWEILER HOF: DIVERSITY IN THE “BUTZ”

A new district with different uses is growing on 55 hectares on the site of the former airport. The majority of the residential and commercial buildings will be completed and occupied before the end of this year, and once the infrastructure is complete, a total of 5,000 new jobs and 850 new homes will be created at the Butzweilerhof. The district, which is affectionately known as the “Butz” among locals, will be used in various ways. “Constantly changing companies looking for large contiguous spaces with good location conditions for their employees and their business can no longer ignore the Butzweilerhof,” says Dominic Müller-Jaeger, board member of Lang & Cie. Rhein-Ruhr Estate AG in an interview with the magazine “Der Butz”. “Secretly and on the quiet, the neighbourhood has become one of Cologne’s major office locations,” Müller-Jaeger continues: “Our investment is the logical consequence of this development.” Renewable energies such as large-scale photovoltaic systems or climate-friendly district heating are also being used. The mixed concept of climate protection, work-life balance and personal quality of life is being well received, and restaurants and event locations are also well frequented in the evenings and on weekends.



## MATTES & DÜXX: OFFICE BUILDINGS OF THE FUTURE

Flexible working for the movers and shakers of tomorrow – this aspiration becomes a reality in the innovative office buildings Mattes & Düxx. The foundation stone was ceremoniously laid in May 2022, and the architecture of the two office buildings in the Deutz neighbourhood blends seamlessly into the setting, completing the Büro Campus Deutz. With almost 26,000 square metres of rental space, the ensemble will in future offer premises for companies of all sizes. The design of Mattes & Düxx attracts them not only with sustainable building concepts but also with the green recreational areas within the complex.





Butzweiler Hof in Ossendorf: a neighbourhood for living, commerce and offices

## KREUZFELD: A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY QUARTER

The new Cologne-Kreuzfeld neighbourhood is taking shape over an area of 80 hectares in the Chorweiler district. Here, on the left bank of the Rhine in the north of Cologne, there will be around 3,000 homes in future with climate protection and an environmentally friendly infrastructure playing a key role in the planning. Alongside cultural and educational institutions, green spaces are the neighbourhood's defining feature, while the link to local public transport means mobility in the area lives up to its sustainable and carbon-neutral aspirations. Meanwhile, a public citizens' workshop involves interested people in the further planning, which reveals the emerging favourite as the design "The Woodhood – Kreuzfeld Garden City 2.0". This is no ordinary garden city, however: It also takes into account the history of settlement in the area and has been inspired by nature and the surrounding forests.



# "Quality of life with short distances between work and home"

**Markus Greitemann**, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Building of the City of Cologne, on the transformation of the metropolis.

### What trends do you see in the city's development?

We have the unique opportunity to refine historical industrial areas to create modern neighbourhoods. Sometimes the focus is on establishing creative and innovative companies, sometimes it's on urban production. This way, we combine quality of life with short distances between work and home.

### That sounds like competition between living and commerce.

Yes and no. Intelligent re-densification and urban development concepts make it possible to reconcile these needs. Our city needs districts and neighbourhoods that reflect everything that makes Cologne so liveable: homes, places to spend time, educational and commercial areas, and high-quality outdoor space. We create living space and new jobs at the same time with farsighted neighbourhood developments. The city administration is addressing the major shortage of commercial space, which plays a subordinate role in public discourse, and is using its planning instruments to ensure that sites that are predominantly used for commercial purposes are also secured for the future. "The city of short distances" is always the focus here.

### And what support is there for project developers who want to realise projects with commercial use in Cologne?

The City of Cologne creates spatial development opportunities for companies together with the KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency and real estate players. KölnBusiness supports anyone dealing with commercial real estate or space in Cologne, and to reinforce the service, it provides free guidance for commercial construction projects. As a municipal company, KölnBusiness acts as a hinge between business and administration. This has advantages for all sides.



# ANYTHING BUT DULL

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Exemplary solutions for a vibrant retail landscape and hospitality scene: Cologne city centre continues to be a **MAGNET** attracting businesses, tourists and locals alike. The vacancy rate is extremely low – and innovative usage concepts are continually developing.

**C**oronavirus hit retail hard. And it didn't spare Cologne. "During the pandemic, lots of people switched to the internet as their source for shopping," says Jörg Hamel, Managing Director of the North Rhine-Westphalia Aachen-Düren-Cologne Trade Association. For many people, however, visiting a store remains a fundamental part of the shopping experience. They feel it's important to hold their new smartphone in their hands before

purchasing, or try on a new item of clothing to see whether it actually fits.

## Top internationally

This is why shop premises are still in demand on the main shopping streets of Cologne, such as Hohe Strasse and Schildergasse. A Europe-wide study by BNP Paribas Real Estate in December 2021 concludes that both streets are among the busiest shopping zones in Europe, and the apparent vacancy rate of shops in Cologne's retail locations is less than three percent. The high level of interest in the city is evident in the flagship store of Chinese smartphone manufacturer Xiaomi, which was opened on Hohe Strasse back in September 2021.

A prime example of how the city centre can become even more attractive is the Antoniterquartier of the Evangelische Gemeinde Köln, the city's Protestant community, located right next to Schildergasse and the famous Weltstadthaus by architect Renzo Piano. On the

3,300-square-metre site, the Protestant church community has developed buildings for gastronomy, housing, offices and retail, along with a church. Located just a few metres from the shopping streets, visitors can relax as they linger in cafés and restaurants.

"We want to be an oasis on lively Schildergasse and connect the church with the urban life of the city," says Sandra Thomas, press spokesperson for the Evangelische Gemeinde Köln. Concerts and other cultural events are held regularly both on the Kirchplatz square and in the community's event rooms. "After the coronavirus, we want to make a contribution to making Cologne city centre even more attractive," says Thomas.

Combining shopping with culture and some kind of experience is likewise the goal of a new concept that KölnBusiness is promoting. The economic development agency is supporting innovative concepts through its new funding programme "Kölner Rahmen – [Time to shine]" with a total of 50,000 euros. By way



A shopping landmark: the Weltstadthaus on Schildergasse.





of example: Through one of the funded projects, temporary sales spaces for interior and lifestyle products are to be created in vacant business premises in three locations. The concept is intended to revitalise the shopping streets – in combination with cultural and hospitality offerings.

### Revitalising Cologne's creativity

“These concepts stand for the creative power of Cologne and invite you to rediscover our city,” says Dr Manfred Janssen, Managing Director of KölnBusiness. “We view the structural change in the city centre and the districts as a major opportunity, which is why we are deliberately supporting temporary projects so that new trends can be explored and given a chance to develop. These fresh concepts are revitalising our city and enhancing the attractiveness of Cologne as a metropolis.” KölnBusiness is also testing a digital management system for vacant properties and the establishment of new businesses as part of the pilot

project “City Labs for Germany: Vacancy and Settlement”, funded by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology together with the renowned market research and consulting company IFH Cologne and 13 other German model cities. This is intended to help find suitable new tenants quickly. KölnBusiness already established a free property portal for commercial units back in 2021. Through efforts like these, Cologne is managed the structural

**3%**  
is the  
vacancy rate  
of  
shop premises  
in Cologne

change better than other cities, meaning the demand for store premises is high and there are no structural vacancies.

### Online meets offline

The future belongs to the networked formats in retail – for example, the digital sales with an attractive presence in the city centre. The Blaenk store in Schildergasse is another example of a creative, innovative and deliberately temporary store concept in Cologne's city centre. From 2020 until the end of March 2022, customers could scan the respective products in the presentation and sales area for changing companies on site via QR code with their own smartphones. The online shop then displayed further information. If they decided to make a purchase, customers could then take the products with them directly, have them delivered to their homes, or pick them up later – a successful experiment for new forms of shopping between stationary and digital retail. ■



Henriette Reker opened  
Cologne Pride – the biggest  
CSD parade in Germany.



# “Cologne is an outstanding host.”

For six years now, the qualified lawyer has been steering the fortunes of the fourth-largest city in Germany. In an interview, **HENRIETTE REKER**, mayor of Cologne, reveals why her home city is a great host – and what is the most important location factor for the economy.

## What do you consider to be Cologne's strongest location factor?

It's undoubtedly the attitude of the locals. I always say: In Cologne you'll find friends even if you're not looking for them (laughs). That is because we are open and approachable to everyone and we stay curious. As soon as you're within the city limits, you belong here. We have been a trading city for 2,000 years, the ideal place for good business. We combine business with our zest for life, which I believe is something you won't find anywhere else in the world.

**It was partly this openness that led to Cologne being named the “European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity” by the European Commission.**

And rightly so, because Cologne is home to 1.1 million people from 180 nations living peacefully together – this diversity enriches our city and we should view it as an opportunity.



For me, it's important that Cologne is seen as a beacon of diversity and cordiality. Every day, people from the administration and the city's society are working here to prevent discrimination and exclusion. And by the way, these efforts don't stop at the city limits. We are setting an example on a national and international level. Cologne Pride, for example, draws around a million guests – a strong signal that is visible all over Europe.

**How do you actually promote the business metropolis abroad?**

I was recently in Brazil and in Turkey – partly to encourage businesses to set up branches in Cologne. Many globally renowned products were invented here, including Farina Eau de Cologne, the world's oldest perfume. This scent gave rise to a whole genre of products bearing the name of our city – there can be no better advertising than that. And on delegation trips abroad, I often take other products from here with me, too. I like travelling, for example, with a Remowa suitcase or a backpack by Fond of, both Cologne-based firms.

**“In Cologne, we have an environment in which people pursue new ideas. That is the ideal basis for innovation.”**

---

## THE INTERVIEWEE: **HENRIETTE REKER**

has been mayor of the City of Cologne since October 2015. She was re-elected on 27 September 2020. Her objectives are to make Germany's fourth-largest city even more liveable, climate-friendly, digital and modern.

**Alongside the established brands, is there also room for innovative and entrepreneurial spirit in Cologne?**

Absolutely. Companies and start-ups also view the effects of the pandemic and the Ukraine war, as well as the challenges posed by digitalisation, as an opportunity to actively tackle new things. They are actively shaping the change. In Cologne, we have an environment where people pursue ideas without knowing exactly whether or not they will be successful. That's an ideal basis for innovation, as is evident in the fact that a new start-up is founded in Cologne every three days.

**Where does this innovative potential come from?**

Cologne is an industrial and service-sector location, but at the same time it's one of the most innovative scientific regions in Europe. Around 100,000 people research and study here, and more than 14,000 highly qualified graduates enter the job market every year. Cologne is also home to four Max Planck Institutes, numerous clusters of excellence at the University of Cologne, and the German Aerospace Centre, as well as the European Union's Aviation Safety Agency. Business and academia are intrinsically linked in Cologne and

provide each other with important impetus.

**The potential for finding skilled workers is a crucial factor for the economy. Alongside work, though, quality of life is also important. What does Cologne have to offer in that regard?**

Our diverse art and culture scene is an important factor. In our museums, you can experience virtually the full history of humanity – from its Roman beginnings to contemporary art. In the Museum Ludwig, for example, you'll find Europe's most extensive collection of Pop Art. Our museums, the opera, theatre, philharmonic, the Gürzenich Orchestra and the WDR Symphony Orchestra, as well as the independent culture scene, are an enormous treasure.

**Does that mean the city of Cologne is also always worth a visit?**

I would like to invite everyone to see that for themselves. Cologne is an outstanding host. Around three million business travellers visited the Koelnmesse exhibition site before the pandemic, and Cologne continues to offer appealing restaurants, entertainment, shopping opportunities and accommodation – a complete package that can by all means keep pace with other big cities. Guests from all over the world will experience this when we welcome them for both the European Football and Handball Championships in 2024. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that they'll get to see some exciting games here and can promise them an incomparable championship atmosphere in Cologne. Our city and the people who live here will be doing their part to make that happen. ■

# 550 INNOVATIVE START-UPS

Successful firms like the cybersecurity specialist SoSafe and the reusable heroes at Vytal began as start-ups in Cologne: Thanks to **EXCELLENT CONDITIONS FOR COMPANY FOUNDERS**, they are now growing beyond themselves – and yet remain rooted in the city.

**I**n 2021 alone, 106 start-ups launched in Cologne, almost one every three days – in spite of the pandemic. Together with Berlin, Hamburg and Munich, Cologne is one of Germany's top four locations for company founders and is home to around 550 start-ups. This success is no coincidence because in Cologne, young entrepreneurs find a closely networked start-up scene, many highly qualified potential employees and a wide range of funding and advisory opportunities.

This likewise benefits Vytal. The company, which was founded in 2019, now employs 50 people and is fighting against the flood of waste caused by disposable packaging for food deliveries. Vytal counters this problem with a cycle of deposit-free reusable bowls: Restaurants get sealable reusable containers and pay a fee each time they fill one;

## 550

start-ups are based in Cologne. This makes the city one of the country's top locations for company founders alongside Berlin, Hamburg and Munich.



Deposit payable. Vytal offers an alternative to disposable packaging.

then, when customers pay for their order, the box complete with QR code is scanned with the Vytal app and they can return the container to a Vytal partner at a later date. More than 2,000 restaurants, cafeterias and food retailers are already on board – and with the statutory obligation to offer reusable packaging coming into force in 2023, the market is growing rapidly.

### From start-up to scale-up

Vytal is growing as well. And since March, it has, among other things, been participating in the "Scale-up. NRW" programme of the State Ministry of Economics that supports start-ups in their expansion all the

way to scale-up, i.e. to a company that grows organically and becomes larger. The programme is paying off: In the very same month, Vytal raised ten million euros from a venture capital investor.

"Cologne was the ideal starting point for our business," says Sven Withthöft, one of the three founders. "The city has a very active start-up scene, including in the circular economy sector, and offers a large pool of potential employees and customers, thanks to the university and proximity to trade and recycling companies. What's more, the city's economic development agency is very enterprising and a real asset for the location."

### A vibrant network

In general, company founders in Cologne find plenty of stimulation and support in various different ways. Gatherings like the "Startup Breakfast" or the annual "Pirate Summit" start-up conference help with networking, while incubators such as "xdeck" or "Insurlab" and experts that link up company founders with medium-sized businesses provide stimuli for company development. The contacts at the "Digital Hub Cologne", for example, are there for precisely that reason. And the academic world also takes care of



young entrepreneurs: The Gateway Excellence Start-up Center at the University of Cologne supports start-ups from the university – like the noho team, which develops ecological detergents that do not pollute water unnecessarily. The joint project “Fit for Invest”, involving the four largest universities in Cologne, also links science, investors and start-up teams.

### From Cologne to the whole of Europe

Niklas Hellemann is well aware of the importance of a good and secure network. The psychologist teamed up with two partners to found SoSafe in Cologne in 2018, and the trio found their first office via the incubator at the University of Applied Sciences. Now the company is one of the world’s fastest growing providers of training in cybersecurity for businesses. SoSafe currently has around 1,500 customers and is opening offices in several European cities following a new €73 million round of funding. “But Cologne is our headquarters,” says Hellemann. “With the increasing internationalisation of SoSafe, the city is becoming even more important; after all, we bring the human factor in cybersecurity from Ehrenfeld to the whole world.” By the end of 2022, SoSafe should have a good 500 employees – one year ago it was still just 150.

So will aparkado be equally successful one day? At the very least, the Cologne-based company won the “Startup-Champ 2022” competition at the end of June as the most innovative company nationwide in the field of mobility and logistics. aparkado uses an app to help truck drivers plan routes more efficiently and find free parking spaces – an idea with a bright future in view of the increasing importance of cargo transport. ■



Founders of the start-up noho have developed an environmentally friendly detergent kit at the University of Cologne’s Gateway Excellence start-up Center.



## SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR START-UPS AND SCALE-UPS

The Cologne Masterclass is a programme run by KölnBusiness and partners that brings outstanding start-ups together with top-class investors, paves the way for them to access funding programmes, and provides them with marketing support.  
[koeln.business/cologne-masterclass](https://koeln.business/cologne-masterclass)

With the NRW Founders’ Scholarship, company founders or founding teams with forward-looking business ideas receive 1,000 euros per person per month for a maximum of one year and are advised by experienced coaches.  
[koeln.business/gruenderstipendium](https://koeln.business/gruenderstipendium)

The programme Scale-up.NRW is aimed at established start-ups that have already received a first round of funding and now wish to grow internationally. Over a period of 18 months, the companies work with experts to develop an individual path for scaling and implement it.  
[scale-up.nrw](https://scale-up.nrw)

**“Give me your most difficult part and I’ll find a solution,” your father once said. Does this also reflect the Cologne way of life – namely to overcome all challenges with imagination and tenacity?**

Yes, and also the art of improvisation. When you start out in a garage, you really need your product offering to be sharp. That’s exactly the way today’s start-ups operate, and there are a lot of very good ones in Cologne. Still today, the clear area of focus for igus remains plastics for motion with the aim of “improve what moves”.

**igus was founded in a garage in 1964 – and has remained true to Cologne as a location to this day. What does the city have in its favour?**

The diversity, the attractiveness for young people moving in, the breadth of industry – often underestimated from the outside – which means you can organise a very good supply chain. And the delight in innovation, for example, replacing expensive metals with the help of innovative plastics. There is a clear message here: You don’t need to go abroad to save money and improve the product. You can do that with a firm in Cologne, too.

**What else defines Cologne?**

The density and quality of higher education institutions in Cologne and throughout the region is often underestimated, and in Cologne it’s good. Skilled workers are also plentiful, and we as a company have additionally set up an “adult education” programme with the IHK (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) in Cologne. In recent years, we have trained almost 200 adults there as skilled workers on full pay, for example, in plastic injection moulding. Here, the flexibility of Cologne’s IHK was very helpful.



# Disneyland for engineers

igus GmbH has been developing and producing lubricant-free high-performance plastics in Cologne since 1964. Here, its owner **FRANK BLASE** finds the perfect conditions for improving products and driving innovations: The plastic bicycle or joints for robots are just two of many examples.



**“We get an awful lot of ideas from customer requirements.”**

**Plastics are often viewed critically these days. What is the position of igus with regard to sustainability and climate protection?**

Those who use our products can calculate the service life online, use products with a longer service life, and need never use lubrication, for example. These are strong contributions to sustainability. At the same time, we have to make great efforts in terms of manufacturing and plastic waste in order to – in the language of Star Wars – stay on the light side of the force. And we do indeed do that. Our goal is to be climate-neutral by 2025; right now we are at 95 per cent. We are having increasing success with our “chain-ge” programme, in which we take back worn-out old energy chains in exchange for coupons and feed them into the circular economy. In the spirit of “cradle to cradle”, we have brought out the cradle-chain from this recycled plastic waste this year, which is 100-per cent made from this valuable refuse.

**igus is working with DutchFiets/mtrl.bv on the concept for a plastic bicycle. How is that progressing?**

The dream of a complete bicycle made of plastic that never rusts, never needs lubrication, and can be made for the most part from recycled household waste has become a reality with DutchFiets, now renamed mtrl.bike. We have played a major part in this company. The first

complete bikes are being manufactured by mtrl.bike, while all the moving parts come from Cologne. What’s more, we have launched the igus:bike platform the purpose of which is to equip the bicycle industry to produce wheels made of plastic.

**What is the source of igus’s ideas – how does your company become such a Disneyland for engineers?**

We get an awful lot of ideas from customer requirements. Our organisation, as it is conceived and lived, is like a solar system. The customer is the sun from which we get light and energy, meaning money and ideas. Sometimes the sun also causes sunburn, meaning we get complaints, but many of our new products are the result of complaints we have taken very seriously. Another source are our dreams, which we turn into reality – for example, the bicycle or robots made entirely of plastic. Those aren’t things we are asked about, but we just try them out.

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## THE INTERVIEWEE: **FRANK BLASE**

is the owner and CEO of igus GmbH. When the business economist joined his father’s company in 1983, it had annual turnover equivalent to 1.4 million euros. Today, with more than 4,500 employees, igus achieves turnover of around 961 million euros and supports around 188,000 companies in over 80 countries.

Important industries include the automotive and packaging industry, railway and agricultural technology, machine tool manufacturing and renewable energies.



An innovative idea made in Cologne: plastic robots by igus.

**To what extent do igus’s ideas also help medium-sized companies to decide to enter robotics without shying away from high investment costs?**

One of these dreams was a robot made entirely out of plastic. Forty per cent of the hardware costs of a multi-axis robot come from the gearbox. By creating the gearbox using plastic injection moulding, which took many years of research and testing, we reduce the cost of the robot to less than 5,000 euros, including the control system.

**In your free time, you are investing in the musical “Himmel und Kölle”, which has won multiple awards, including a special prize for producer Frank Blase. Is that your way of relaxing?**

My business card states that I am a CEO and entrepreneur, because I now get to work with four other CEOs. My entrepreneurial passions also extend to culture, and in the production of the musical, I was able to see what I had always suspected: that the jobs of a plastics producer and a musical producer are very similar – in the end, everything boils down to work. And for both of them, you need creativity. Both of them are fun and both are things I do with great passion. ■

A shining example:  
Cologne is a role model for  
the automotive industry.



# A beacon for alternative drives

Cologne is home to the German headquarters of numerous automotive manufacturers and suppliers. At the same time, **CLIMATE PROTECTION** is a duty the cathedral city practices conscientiously – which makes it the ideal setting for the **MOBILITY TRANSITION**.

**C**yclists whizzed silently on their e-bikes along the cycle paths around Cologne's Rudolfplatz while some car drivers tried out electric car-sharing. Visitors to polisMOBILITY, the trade show for contemporary mobility, can experience live how the mobility transition feels. The organisers had to shorten the fair from four to two days because of severe weather warnings due to an unusual heat wave – but that does rather fit the picture. High temperatures in May are harbingers of climate change

and make it clear how seriously we need to take climate targets. The city of Cologne, for example, has committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 50 per cent (on 1990 levels) by 2030.

A major point of leverage is the transformation of road transport that, according to the Federal Environment Agency, was responsible for the emission of around 148 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2021. The EU-wide phase-out of combustion engines by 2035 is a done deal, so alternative drive systems are

needed – especially electric cars. By 2030, seven to ten million electric cars are set to be registered in Germany, compared to just 700,000 in April this year.

## Ready for the electro offensive

But the industry is confident, especially since Cologne and the manufacturers based there have got off to a good start: Ford, for example, is expanding its Niehl plant into an electric site and announced that, as part of an electromobility offensive,



all passenger car models in Europe will be available at least in a plug-in hybrid or battery-electric variant from mid-2026. On the Ford factory site, the Japanese-Italian supplier Marelli produces electric vehicle drives, and the engine manufacturer Deutz AG will in future also be focusing on hydrogen propulsion in addition to electric motors. polis-MOBILITY boss Gerald Böse puts it in a nutshell: “Cologne is Germany’s car city. Here, the narrative of a new and sustainable mobility can be honestly combined with economic, social and ecological purpose.”

### Industry meets research

Cologne is home to the German headquarters of numerous automotive manufacturers and suppliers, including Ford, Renault, Toyota and Volvo. According to NRW.Global Business, 800 companies with around 200,000 employees and one third of suppliers in Germany are based in the metropolis on the Rhine. Automotive production accounts for more than a third of all industrial jobs in the economic region on the Rhine.

So what makes Cologne so interesting for the automotive industry? “The business location is characterised by the diversity of the resident companies and industries,” explains Markus Siebrecht, CEO of Renault Deutschland AG. “This is where established industry giants, renowned research institutes and numerous start-ups come together. However, the central location within Germany and Central Europe, as well as the favourable transport connections, also make the city attractive,” he says.

### Most sustainable product range

The French manufacturer has just moved its German headquarters to I/D Cologne on Schanzenstrasse after a national location competition. “In our view, Cologne is making a strong contribution on the path towards climate-neutral mobility,”

**“We believe Cologne is making a strong contribution on the path towards climate-neutral mobility.”**



Markus Siebrecht, CEO of Renault Germany, chose Cologne as the new location.

says Siebrecht with conviction. “The projects associated with that fit perfectly with our goal of strengthening our leadership role in the energy transition through efficient and powerful electric and hydrogen solutions,” says Siebrecht. In addition to the new Renault Scenic, which will be purely battery-electric in the production version, Renault is introducing eight more fully electric models by 2025. “With this, we aim to offer the most

sustainable product range in Europe with an e-share of over 65 per cent,” says Siebrecht.

### Onwards with hydrogen

Cologne-based engine manufacturer Deutz is remaining open to all technologies in its approach to alternative drive systems: “We approach it from the customer’s point of view: What do they need to be able to operate their application so it is climate-neutral in future? It is clear to us today that electrification is likely to play a dominant role for power requirements of up to 100 kilowatts,” explains Dr Sebastian Schulte, Chairman of the Executive Board of Deutz AG. “But if more power is needed or there is no charging infrastructure on site, there have to be other solutions,” he says.

For that reason, Deutz produced its first hydrogen engine in 2021 and is launching a pilot project with Rheinenergie this year. The plan is to start series production in 2024. “This makes us a pioneer in hydrogen engine technology. We want to make Cologne a beacon location and are investing accordingly,” says Schulte – a good sign that mobility and climate protection are not mutually exclusive. ■



Deutz AG aims to use hydrogen in engines for heavy commercial vehicles in future.



# The energy transition on the Rhine

In Cologne, **RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND BUSINESSES** are working together to develop sustainable solutions for Germany – and beyond.

## More efficient flying

The German Aerospace Center (DLR) has its headquarters and nine of its research facilities in Cologne. At the Institute of Propulsion Technology, DLR scientists focus on the development of powerful and environmentally friendly aircraft engines and power plant turbines. Meanwhile, the Institute for Future Fuels researches new technologies for the production of climate-neutral fuels, especially for aviation and shipping, and tests high-flux-density solar furnaces and high-performance emitters for CO<sub>2</sub>-free industrial processes.

## New green power alliance

Work is underway on new solutions for the energy transition at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences (TH Köln) and the Shell Energy

and Chemicals Park Rheinland. At the new Energy Campus in Wesseling, Shell is working with representatives from research and teaching as well as corporate partners and start-ups. TH Köln is supporting the establishment of the Energy Campus as a scientific partner, helping with knowledge transfer and training Shell employees. The corporation aims to become one of the leading suppliers of green electricity and the services associated with this. Part of this strategy is the acquisition of the Cologne-based company Next Kraftwerke. It is one of the world's largest operators of virtual power plants with more than

10,000 decentralised energy units in Europe, including photovoltaics, bioenergy and hydropower.

## Recycling and bio raw materials

Cologne-based special chemicals company LANXESS has set itself ambitious climate protection goals: The group aims to be climate-neutral by 2040. The company's own carbon footprint is already a central control parameter, both for investments in plants and acquisitions and for the remuneration of top management. For its production of high-performance plastics, LANXESS is now increasingly using recycled, bio-based and CO<sub>2</sub>-reduced raw materials.

## Hydrogen for industry

The chemical company INEOS and the industrial park operator

Green energy: the DLR hydrogen production facility in Cologne





LANXESS Tower in Cologne-Deutz. The chemical company aims to be climate-neutral by 2040.

Currenta are planning a 100-megawatt water electrolysis plant as part of the “ChemCH2ange” project. The green hydrogen produced with the help of renewable energies will be used directly in INEOS’ ammonia and methanol production, while Currenta’s heat generation processes can also be made more sustainable with the large-scale industrial plant. According to INEOS, the ChemCH2ange project should lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of more than 120,000 tonnes a year.

### **The fight for the climate**

And there’s more to stimulate Cologne’s economy. For example, there is EIN-HUNDERT Energie GmbH that is using software and scalable services to support real estate and energy companies in implementing smart-meter-based tenant electricity projects and, if required, also linking them with heat and water billing and e-mobility. The start-up also takes care of installing photovoltaic systems. It now manages more than 200 tenant power systems and has 2,000 end customers.

The young company Installion GmbH, meanwhile, has created a nationwide online marketplace for climate-friendly environmental technologies. These include photovoltaic systems, battery storage and Wallboxes for charging e-vehicles. The platform brings together clients and installers, and more than 20,000 installation companies already belong to the network nationwide. ■

# **The shared task of shaping the future**

**Professor Dr Lisa Fröhlich** is chair of the Cologne Science Forum that promotes stronger networking between science, business and society.

### **Professor Fröhlich, what role does science play in the economy?**

Science fuels innovation and progress, encourages reflection and rethinking, and reveals technical, theoretical and business correlations. We see science as a source of inspiration and stimulus for the economy.

### **How important is the networking of science, business and society for the energy transition?**

It’s essential! The interplay of all stakeholders is important, and that includes NGOs and the media, for example. Science considers itself a mediator here tackling topics that do not immediately bring a profit but are essential for the digital and sustainable transformation.

### **What is the role of the Cologne Science Forum in all this?**

We bring science to life with a variety of event formats, for example, during the Cologne Theme Weeks or at our monthly event “Science at City Hall” for locals of Cologne. And we advise businesses, for example, start-ups, on sustainable procurement. A start-up doesn’t have the capacity to be able to oversee and trace all the steps involved, and that’s where we as the Cologne Science Forum come in.

### **What is the importance of Cologne as a science location for the energy transition?**

With the University of Cologne and TH Köln, the DLR and multiple Max Planck Institutes, we have concentrated knowledge here. They provide impetus for the energy transition and can strengthen the location – although no longer with the help of coal, which made NRW economically strong for decades, but with the help of renewable energies and innovative technologies. We now need to channel the inventive spirit for which Cologne and NRW are known in this direction.



# ON THE WAY TO BECOMING A SUSTAINABILITY METROPOLIS

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Climate protection and sustainability are a **SHARED TASK**. In Cologne, start-ups, municipal companies and the city administration alike are all pitching in.

**C**ologne is aiming to become climate-neutral by 2035. The right strategy is already in place with “Kölner Perspektiven 2030+”, a compass for future-oriented, strategic and sustainable urban development. Business and the city administration can make a crucial contribution here, so we take a look at four examples of engagement on the city’s path to becoming a true sustainability metropolis:

## A boost with an impact

The company Capacura, founded by Ina and Ingo Dahme, specifically supports “Impact Start-ups” and brings them together with investors. “Impact” means that the companies aim to apply their ideas to have a positive effect on people, society and the environment and have committed to at least one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. “We want to inspire people to invest together with us in sustainable projects,” says Ingo Dahme. Working with start-ups is so



Exemplary: the everwave platform collects plastic waste from rivers.

exciting for Capacura primarily because, if they are well positioned, they grow very quickly. “If they have also anchored some kind of impact, it means you can combine financial return with impact return extremely well.” One of the companies in Capacura’s portfolio, for example, is everwave. The young company uses innovative technology to clean rivers

of plastic waste, which then does not end up in the sea. Another is eevie, a developer of software that enables large companies to plan and implement scalable climate campaigns for their employees. It also measures the effect generated this way on nature and the environment.

Before Capacura takes on a start-up, there is a thorough, data-driven process. After an initial review of the idea, timing, strategy, business model and the team by means of special AI software, each start-up is then reviewed personally. Only about 0.3 per cent of the candidates make it to the final round and are presented to the investment committee, which then makes the final decision.

## Leading by example

Municipal companies, too, are helping to make Cologne more sustainable. One example is





A steady transition:  
RheinEnergie AG will  
shift entirely to renewa-  
ble energies by 2035.



Together with the city of Cologne, RheinEnergie launched the joint project SmartCity Cologne. Cologne-based businesses, private individuals, associations and authorities come together here under the motto "Implementing the energy transition together" for a sustainable way to supply energy. The project will test technologies and services that will shape environmentally conscious urban living in the future.

a wide variety of solutions since the project launched. A climate app, city gardens, water reservoirs, sun sails and other shade providers are set to help on the way to a climate-friendly Deutz. Another particularly important aspect is informing and educating citizens – for example, on how to protect their cellars from heavy rain or which roof surfaces are suitable for greening.

The city of Cologne has launched a solar offensive. The funding volume of the programme “Building Renovation and Renewable Energies – Climate-Friendly Housing” is to 20 million euros. “We want to support as many homeowners as possible in saving energy and sparing our climate. Every solar system installed on the roofs of Cologne counts on the way to climate neutrality,” says William

## Promoting pioneering ideas

With a special funding programme KölnBusiness promotes groundbreaking ideas for the Cologne economy. The [Sustainable Innovations] sub-programme was aimed at companies that are on their way towards CO<sub>2</sub> neutrality by providing grants of 6,000 to 10,000 euros available for each project to support measures to increase resource efficiency, protect the climate and reduce environmental pollution. In this way, KölnBusiness enables companies to invest in energy optimisation, climate-neutral value chains or entering the circular economy. ■

**KLIMA-APP DEUTZ**

- Refill Station
- Kühle Orte
- Hitzetelefon
- Starkregnmelder
- Zapfstelle Glæsswasser

**Stadtplan „heiße Tage“**

**Hitzeangepasste Beläge**

**Schattige Kreuzungen**

**Veddelgärtnerei**

**Platz am Rhein**

**Gemeinschaftsprojekt Grünes Deutz**

**Trinkbrunnen**

**Alte Bäume**

**Wasserwände**

**Platz für Abends**

**Schattige Freiheit**

**Blau / grüne Kasemattenstraße**

**Schwammstadt Deutz**

**Pilotprojekt Ottoplatz**

**Kühle Höfe**

**Schattiges Arbeiten**

**Mobiles Grün**

**Offene Höfe**

**Fassadenbegrünung**

**Schattige Wege**

**Wasserspielplatz**

**Blau / grüne Dächer**

**Schattige Haltestellen**

**Wildblumenwiesen**

**Grünes Wegenetz**

**Bunker Garten**

**Wasserzugang**

**Dachbegrünung**

**Blau / grüne Schulhöfe**

**Schulhöfe für Alle**

**Extra-„Plätzchen“**

**Pilotprojekt BüZe**

**Wasserspeicher**

**PLATZ**

**SOCKEN**

**Deutz Freiheit EINMALSTREIF**

**Trinkwasser**

**Deutscher Freiheit**

**Platz am Rhein**

**Gemeinschaftsprojekt klimafittes Düx**



# “The time for the transformation to climate neutrality is now”

## **Ms Damke, why should the construction and real estate industries work more closely together?**

Sustainability not only takes place in the planning and construction process but also extends to the operation, refurbishment or demolition of properties. The many different players along the value chain must work together from the outset to make a climate-friendly future a reality. We want to build these bridges and use specific pilot projects to show how sustainability can be implemented in the construction and real estate industry.

## **What form does that take exactly?**

We are working with various formats, particularly pilot projects, network gatherings, round tables and hackathons. Our current pilot project relates to the transformation from existing portfolios to climate neutrality: We have completed the first strategic phase and are now starting on the second phase of the CO<sub>2</sub> risk analysis. The third phase will then involve planning measures, while the last phase will be the various implementations. Our member EDD Engineering & Digital Design already wants to use the current findings in its own pilot and set up a tender on the conceptual basis of our sustainability methodology. That constitutes a very innovative approach.

## **What exactly is the PropTech hackathon?**

With this format, which took place for the first time in May 2022 in Cologne, we offer companies in the real estate industry an interactive platform for the development of innovative solutions. The many interesting approaches in this round were



The PropTech Powerhouse e.V. (PTPH) was founded by well-known companies, innovative start-ups and organisations in October 2021 with significant support from the Digital Hub Cologne. The aim of PTPH is to improve networking between the construction and real estate industries. Its chairperson **Christine Damke** explains the background.

provided by interdisciplinary teams consisting of industry insiders, experienced professionals and students. In autumn 2022, we will organise another hackathon specifically for the skilled trades together with Mittelstand-Digital Zentrum Rheinland. After the actual event, we help ensure that new business relationships and products emerge from the hackathon prototypes developed.

## **How are you expanding your network?**

We are currently pursuing three specific topics: How can the existing technical building equipment in the building stock also be digitalised “behind the wall” as cost-effectively as possible and without structural interventions and be better managed, optimised and renovated? How can CO<sub>2</sub> emissions be taken into account in future in the procurement of energy for buildings in operation? And thirdly: How can a large asset owner easily and quickly obtain transparency on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and risk factors of its portfolio?

## **Which digital solutions contribute to sustainability in the construction and real estate industry?**

Digital solutions help to avoid waste, for example, with the use of AI for optimisation of the technical building equipment already in place. In addition, the necessary transparency can be created through appropriate data links, for example, in the case of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from building materials and energy sources. Transparency is the basis for “data-driven decisions”, meaning decisions based on specific parameters. This can help in the planning or purchasing process to optimise not only the criterion of price but also systematically the sustainability criteria such as CO<sub>2</sub> or water consumption. And of course, e-commerce solutions such as marketplaces for re-use and recycling of building materials can also be used in our industry. As you can see, the areas of application are diverse, the demand is great and the time for the transformation to climate neutrality is now. The PropTech Powerhouse offers a platform to help us to work towards our shared goal: “Greener. Smarter. Now.”



# LOCATIONS FOR LOVING LIFE

Bars, cafés, clubs, restaurants and events  
make Cologne a **LIVEABLE METROPOLIS** that  
ensures a good work-life balance.  
We present a selection of the hippest locations.



**I**t is the largest multifunction hall in Germany and ranks among the top five most attractive event locations worldwide: The Lanxess Arena in Cologne-Deutz hosts stars like Genesis or Dua Lipa as well as regular top-class sporting events. “A box used all year round or even just once offers companies excellent marketing and sales opportunities for customer acquisition or customer retention in just the right atmosphere – outside of the direct business environment,” says the arena’s Managing Director Stefan Löcher. “Others simply want to forget about work for once and enjoy a relaxed and special evening seeing a great show or a thrilling sporting highlight.”  
[lanxess-arena.de](http://lanxess-arena.de)

#### **The best club in Germany**

Also on the right bank of the Rhine in the Deutz district, the “Boots- haus” attracts international star DJs such as Tiesto, DJ Snake, Robin Schulz, Vini Vici and Trumpet. “It’s no wonder that we were voted Germany’s best club in the last DJ Mag voting and were also able to

hold our own in the top ten in the international rankings,” says managing director Tom Thomas proudly. The “Bootshaus” team under Thomas and owner Fabian Thylmann focuses 100 per cent on techno and electronic music. “The Bootshaus has been an institution in Cologne for 17 years already,” says Thomas.

[bootshaus.tv](http://bootshaus.tv)

#### **More than 400 concerts a year**

The team at Cologne’s Stadtgarten is currently revelling in being awarded the “German Jazz Prize 2022” for the category “Venue of the Year”. The accolade is thanks to the Stadtgarten’s cultural diversity. “That’s what has made us one of the most popular meeting points in Cologne’s Belgian district for a fourth decade now,” enthuses Michael Hinz, 58, Operations Manager of Gastronomy for Stadt- garten Köln. “We have a concert hall here where we hold more than 400 concerts a year from all areas of contemporary musical life,” says Hinz. Back in 2017, the concert hall was also upgraded to the status of



**Stylish indulgence: cocktails and sandwiches await guests at Suderman.**

European Centre for Jazz and Contemporary Music by the state government of North Rhine-West- phalia.

[stadtgarten.de](http://stadtgarten.de)

#### **A touch of charm and a paper umbrella**

How about a delicious after-work cocktail? Fans of drinks that come with a paper umbrella and a touch of charm have come to the right place when they step through the doors at Suderman. This stylish local bar has been managed by Felix Engels, age 36, and Dominique Simon, age 48, since 2015. What does the house recommend? The vodka-based “Prince Peach” with peach, thyme, paradise tomato and lemon. “Tasty food” is also available, of course. Engels smiles: “We make the best pastrami sandwich in the city!”

[sudermanbar.de](http://sudermanbar.de)

#### **Homemade bread like grandma used to make**

Also worth a visit is “The Lemonade Stand” café on Klarastrasse. Its owner Craig Simpson is originally from Texas, and the name of his café sets the tone. “A fond memory from my childhood is of me and my family selling ice-cold homemade



**The place to perform: More than 400 concerts a year are held at the Stadtgarten.**





An ice-cold delight: homemade fizz at The Lemonade Stand.

lemonade to our neighbours outside on hot summer days,” the 41-year-old recalls with a smile. Now, he spoils his guests with homemade lemonade made from market-fresh, seasonal ingredients. “I recommend pairing it with our bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich. I bake the bread for it myself using a recipe from my grandma Ada,” explains Simpson.  
[thelemonadestand.de](http://thelemonadestand.de)

### The rock star of Michelin-starred restaurants

Another culinary tip: “Puls” restaurant was opened in the spring right in the heart of the old town by two-star chef Daniel Gottschlich. The 39-year-old is considered a rock star among the Michelin-starred restaurants – after all, he is the passionate drummer of the rock band “Wonderful Bones”. Gottschlich is likewise the owner and head chef of the internationally renowned Cologne restaurant “Ox & Klee”, which gained its second Michelin star in 2019. His new restaurant “Puls” is his next big challenge.  
[pulsrestobar.com](http://pulsrestobar.com)

### The perfect wave

#### with the cathedral as a backdrop

After all the indulgence, we ought not to forget about exercise – and there’s a very special form of it to be found in Cologne after work. After all, the cathedral city is home to Germany’s first and only surf school on a river, “Surf.Kologne”, which offers surfing courses on the Rhine! The school was founded by city natives Ben Ickenroth, Lukas Staallekker and Romi Zöllkau. “Surf.Kologne” sees up to 500 people each week taking part in its courses that cost 69 euros per person. It’s great not only for leisure time, but also after a long day at the office, says 30-year-old Ben: “You can take off your shirt and tie, put on a wetsuit – and then ride the perfect wave in front of the setting sun with the cathedral behind you!”

[surftkologne.de](http://surftkologne.de)

## EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The vibrancy of the many different places in Cologne matches the mentality of this special city. It was Cologne’s tireless promotion of diversity that convinced the jury for the “European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity” award. Cologne won gold in the category “Municipalities with a population of more than 50,000” for its exemplary integration policy. The accolade is a new award for integration presented by the European Commission and falls within the framework of the “EU Action Plan against Racism 2020–2025”.

The perfect wave: the surfing lifestyle close to the Rodenkirchen Bridge.





# “Relax and enjoy”

A Rhenish brewery with “Heaven and Earth” on the menu and an owner from China – that’s Cologne. Tielin Fan, head of the Cologne brewery “Tünnes und Schäl”, was born in Beijing and has lived on the Rhine since 2000 – leading to a rather special epicurean relationship.



A fan of Rhenish cuisine: Tielin Fan, boss at “Tünnes und Schäl” at Alter Markt.

Opposites attract: Tünnes, the good-natured chap with the big bulbous nose, and Schäl, the sly bon vivant, have been firmly rooted in Cologne since 1803 – the stick puppets from the Händchen Theatre are in a way representative of the sometimes quick-witted, sometimes irreverent, but always endearing character of the people of Cologne. And this is precisely why Tielin Fan christened his brewery on the Alter Markt “Tünnes und Schäl”. “I wanted a name that incorporated the original soul of the city,” says Fan, a restaurateur and himself a unique character.

Tielin Fan was born in Beijing, China. In 2000, he came to Germany as a student of business economics and immediately felt at home in Cologne and at the university. “Cologne is so international and colourful, and the people here are so relaxed,” Fan enthuses. “Cologne has a lot in common with the city where I was born. Beijing is also as lively and likewise has lots of historical flair.”

His studies lasted five years, so he started his professional life in 2005. First he worked as a buyer for a textile company, then he ran a shop selling souvenirs of Cologne. In 2008, Fan discovered his passion for the German gastronomy industry – a logical step, since he is a sociable person who loves to eat and cook. “Although my home city of Beijing and the city of Cologne don’t have much in common at first glance, a second, closer look reveals many parallels between the two cities,” says Fan. “After all, Beijing also has corners and streets where you can find a traditional, quaint old-town flair.

Neighbourhoods in which history is downright tangible. This is precisely the feeling I have in Cologne every day anew.” And so, Fan took over the Lederer restaurant right next to the cathedral. In August 2021, it was converted to the “Täglich” brewery, which he then renamed “Tünnes und Schäl.”

Since then, Tielin Fan has felt even more at home in the cathedral city: “I love the local food,” he enthuses, “Rhenish roulades are my favourite dish.” And naturally, they are also on the menu of his brewery, as is “Himmel und Äd” (“Heaven and Earth”, a dish of black pudding with fried onions and

## “Everyone in Beijing loves Cologne Cathedral”

mashed potatoes) and the obligatory “Gaffel Kölsch” beer. “All of it is just as delicious for me as a crispy Peking duck baked in oil,” says Fan with a grin.

A large part of his family lives in Beijing. But although the two metropolises are around 7,800 kilometres apart, it is as if his relatives from the Middle Kingdom merely live in a different district of Cologne. “Everyone in my family in Beijing knows and loves Cologne Cathedral,” says Fan. Meanwhile, Mum and Dad Fan are also familiar with Tünnes und Schäl – albeit not from the Händchen puppet theatre, but from stories about the brewery at Alter Markt. ■

