How can potential for innovation be mobilised in cities?

A Practitioner's Handbook

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Preface

We are pleased to present this publication, which originates from the research project on *Conditions for Institutional and Cultural Innovation in German and Greek Cities (CICI)*, as a result of the German-Greek bilateral research and innovation cooperation.

The German-Greek Research and Innovation Programme addresses collaborative projects in applied research, development and innovation in research areas which are important for both countries. The programme aims at enhancing cooperation between Greek and German partners in science and industry and strengthening knowledge and technology transfer.

To further strengthen the Greek-German Partnership Initiative, the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) of the Ministry of Development and Investment of the Hellenic Republic and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) agreed on a follow-up funding measure to the first Greek-German research programme of 2013. The second funding measure, as well as the first one, aim at enhancing the overall competitiveness and innovation potential of both countries.

The CICI project is funded under the programme priority 'Development of cultural and institutional innovations in industry, government, administration and civil society' within the framework of the second programme. The project addresses the following question: *What are the most favourable conditions for the development of cultural and institutional innovation in local government and local civil society?*

The publication at hand presents results that are aimed in particular at practitioners who are interested in innovation at the local level. It contains recommendations based on the experience of five German and five Greek cities which were studied in the course of the project.

We would like to thank all those involved for their dedicated work and hope this handbook will provide readers with helpful inspiration for their work in the field.

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How to mobilize innovation potential in cities. An Introduction

Some cities manage to mobilise innovation potentials and respond to challenges such as demographic change and immigration and economic restructuring, while others do not. The project on *Conditions for Institutional and Cultural Innovation in German and Greek Cities (CICI)* addresses the problem of lack of innovation and how it can be solved by identifying conditions under which cities can successfully develop innovation. Identification of such conditions will be achieved by means of a comparison of five German and five Greek cities.

These cities were selected because they are perceived as cases of successful innovation in local government and local civil society by the respective local communities, but also by outside observers. We focussed on cases seen as successful in local innovations – namely in Germany on

- *Bensheim*, a growing smaller town in southern Hesse with companies that operate globally and a high-income population committed to culture and social issues,
- *Frankfurt*, which not only demonstrates economic development strength as a financial centre, but has for years been pursuing innovative paths in drug policy, the integration of foreigners, the development and protection of urban green space and local climate policy,
- *Leipzig* as an economically strong centre, but also as a dynamic centre of civil society in eastern Germany,
- *Kassel*, which has undergone remarkable economic and cultural developments during the last three decades, and
- *Offenbach*, which is regarded as a 'problem case' in the generally prosperous Rhine-Main area, but which has nevertheless displayed courage in successfully pursuing new perspectives in urban development in recent years.

In Greece, research focussed on

- *Athens*, where cooperation of the municipality with civil society and private actors (foundations, companies) has triggered remarkable innovations and achieved tangible results, which led to the city being awarded the title of 'European Capital of Innovation' by the European Union in 2018,
- *Thessaloniki*, where an overlooked multicultural heritage was integrated into the local narrative, bonds with its multi-ethnic diaspora were created, and the city rebranded as a traditionally cosmopolitan city, attracting tourism, events and businesses,
- *Chania* where innovations introduced to promote and maintain a particular type of tourism are playing a relatively important role,
- *Elefsina*, a place particularly affected by deindustrialisation and environmental pollution which secured social cohesion and successfully applied to become European Capital of Culture 2021, in order to rebrand the city, and
- *Kalamata* where not only the extensive destruction of the city by an earthquake was an impetus for redesigning the city, but where cultural innovations are also strongly developed.

Although these cities were selected because local actors themselves and external observers assessed them as 'success cases' in achieving innovation, we have also observed that innovations that had already been introduced were discontinued. To some extent this has applied recently to Thessaloniki. It is also true that some innovations in policy areas were not achieved in the selected cases, even though they were also considered necessary. Housing policy in Frankfurt is an example of this. Moreover, previous innovations may have been so successful that they led to urban growth. From the point of view of local actors, this makes new innovations necessary, but these have not (yet) been agreed upon. Leipzig is an example of such a case. Finally, a number of selected cities were characterised by a lack of innovation in the past, but have recently been able to carry out remarkable innovations. This applies to Athens and Thessaloniki, Kassel and Offenbach. Consequently, we studied not only success stories, but also failures.

Because not only cities in Germany and Greece, but also the cities selected in the two countries differ, it is also reasonable to define innovation not in an abstract and general sense. Instead, the term has been used to refer to what is understood by innovation in the cities studied (and possibly in the German or Greek context).

That this approach makes sense is illustrated by the example of associations that have been known in Germany since the 1980s under the name *Bürgerhilfe* (or in the academic debate as *Tauschringe* or *Kooperationsringe*).[1] In these associations, help for others is 'credited' in hours, which can be redeemed for help from other members of the association if necessary. In Greece, similar structures of mutual assistance have developed in a number of cities since the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis under the name of *time banking (trapezes chronou)* which is considered an innovation there.

This contextualisation of the definition of innovation means that the notion (meaning) of innovation which has emerged in the context of a given case (the city or the country) is taken seriously into account.

The contextualisation of what is understood by innovation seemed important to us for another reason as well – namely a particular conceptual approach to understanding differences in innovations among cities.

To characterise this approach, let us start from the following reflections (in the terminology of Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom): When actors have to decide whether and which innovations are possible, they find themselves in an 'action situation'. This is not located somewhere, but in a certain 'action arena' embedded in particular contextual conditions. Such contextual conditions can be differentiated into specific 'attributes of the physical world' (i.e. the physical environment, including technical infrastructure), 'attributes of the community' (i.e. the social structure of the population and its behaviour) and also institutional rules ('rules in use'). The latter can, for example, refer to the power relations within a municipality (the relationship between mayor and council) and to the relationship of the municipality vis-à-vis upper levels of government.

However, these contextual conditions do not have a direct effect on the actors who have to make decisions in an 'action situation' – at least not in a mechanical sense, as though actors behave like puppets on a string. Instead, actors need to develop an understanding of the possibilities for action – for example, regarding certain innovations – that these contextual conditions offer them. Of course, this can be done by each actor individually, but political decisions require processes of understanding or sense making among the people who have to make those decisions. Consequently, communicative interaction is essential, which leads to the joint identification of possibilities and limits for action arising from the contextual conditions.

Of course, reference to the requirement for actors to develop an understanding of what can be achieved together under the given circumstances does not mean that everything is possible everywhere. Particular contextual conditions limit the choices of action. However, there are usually choices and not just one choice (or option for action). Of course, decisions regarding innovations are no exception here.

It is thus not only the comparison of German and Greek cities, i.e. quite different cases, which makes it advisable not to define innovation in abstract terms. It also makes sense to contextualise the definition of innovation by seriously considering the notion (meaning) of innovations which has emerged in the context of a case.

Using the example of the selected cities, the research project empirically investigates communicative interaction that has led to an understanding of the possibility, if not the necessity, of certain innovations and, based on this, their implementation. Empirical study of the cases is based on interviews with local actors and the analysis of local newspapers, policy documents and other documents which derive from political processes (e.g. minutes of council meetings).

We are particularly interested in communicative mechanisms that are regularly (or at least frequently) used in these interactions.

- One example of communicative mechanisms is *comparison with other cities* that frequently occurs in debates, which can lead to imitating, emulating and surpassing

the innovations observed in those cities – or even to rejecting them – according to the motto: 'We will never, ever do it like that!'

— Another communicative mechanism comes into play when actors try to *find a reference point for future activities* (in our case: innovations). This can be done by referring to recognised experts, but also by (broadly based) argumentative exchange in the city, from which a certain idea of what is feasible and desirable becomes dominant.

— Once such a reference point for future activities or a certain idea of what is feasible and desirable has been established, it can be referred to in communicative interaction. This results in communicative *framing* of (inter)actions. This widespread communicative mechanism is often very effective in dealing with contradictions that arise in specific situations – for example, by pointing out that this has long since been clarified and that it is unclear why debates about what has been clarified should be reopened.

— This becomes even clearer when it comes to the communicative mechanism of *immunisation*. By using this mechanism, the prevailing understanding of what can meaningfully be achieved and carried out is protected (immunised) from other ideas. In the case of innovations in particular, this often happens through references to a pioneering or role model, which should not be questioned. Similarly effective with regard to the immunisation of developed (innovative) projects may be a reference to investments made so far for this purpose, which should not be questioned. Moreover, common innovative practice can be immunised by the fact that other innovations (given the budgetary situation) are not affordable.

— And finally, *issue relabelling* of measures represents a communicative mechanism. This mechanism is based on pointing out that an activity that actually has little or nothing to do with already well-established innovations contributes to these innovations. This applies, for example, to cultural activities or institutions which (as 'soft' factors in a location) contribute to an innovative orientation of local economic development. The

same can apply to kindergartens, which help to make a city attractive for young families of well-trained individuals and thus attract the labour force needed by innovative local companies.

However, these communication mechanisms cannot be applied easily in every city – even if they have proven successful in achieving innovation elsewhere. Rather, the crucial point is that these mechanisms must be linked to locally prevailing narratives about the particular city. These narratives express a certain self-image of the city or its inhabitants– and thus an essential aspect of local identity. To be convincing as a narrative (at least to those who tell them to each other), they must have a certain story line. A story line results from the site-specific expression of narrative patterns, i.e. patterns that are inherent in narratives. The following narrative patterns appear frequently (according to our own empirical studies):

– Narrations gain in persuasive power when *past, present and future are brought into relationship with each other*. Concretely: Current activities designed for the achievement of a specific aim in the future are convincing if it can be pointed out that the same or similar thing has already worked in the city in question in the past – or has always been the way it is. The examples presented below for Leipzig, Thessaloniki and Offenbach illustrate this.

– Every story needs bad guys and heroes – or at least *an explanation of why there are problems that somebody or something has caused, but that somebody else can solve*. If stories only tell about problems and their causes, but not about perspectives for solving them, there is no innovation. At best, there is an apathetic waiting for the 'big bang' or the 'white knight' to turn everything around for the better. Those who are considered capable of getting innovations off the ground and moving forward may– depending on the city-specific interpretation – be a local leader, an 'alliance of doers' or a broad active citizenship. The example for Athens given below illustrates this.

– Narratives live from a distinction between 'we' and 'they'. A distinction between 'we' and 'they' within a local community often leads to conflicts and obstacles for action that are usually detrimental to innovation. More conducive to innovation, which in a

city is also predominantly or even consistently perceived as an improvement, is, however, a widespread attitude that people must stand together as local actors or as a local community in order to achieve improvements through something new. This means that a city as 'we' must be contrasted with the others as 'they' (such as upper levels of government or other cities).

Although the effectiveness of the communicative mechanisms outlined above depends on adapting them to the local characteristics of the aforementioned narrative patterns mentioned above, skilful use of the communicative mechanisms (e.g. reference to others and the success they have achieved) can also break up established narratives that express a certain self-image about the city or its inhabitants – in order to recognise, mobilise and stabilise potential for innovation. This is the central concern of the CICI project.

What can be learnt from the cities studied?

In the following it is not possible to go into all aspects of what could be learnt from the cities studied. Instead, only one interesting example from each of the cities is analysed and briefly presented in this section.[2] In the final section, important details about each example are listed on just two pages – partly in the form of striking statements by local actors. The last section also contains basic data on the cities and information on persons or organisations that can be contacted for further details and background information on the example of a local innovation that was outlined.

However, before relating the examples presented to the conceptual considerations outlined above, a short explanation of what has been sketched out for each city under *Plots of dominant local narratives framing discussions on innovation* will be given. Because what is considered a feasible and meaningful innovation in a city results from struggles over ideas in the local community, it is important to identify dominant local narratives that influence these struggles. This applies not only to (outside) researchers who want to explain why particular innovations have prevailed in a certain city and not others, but is especially important for local actors who need to know what needs to be said, and how, to get their ideas accepted. Successful actors – particularly politicians – either know this or do it intuitively. And outsiders who want to engage successfully in local struggles over ideas should first listen carefully and find out what should be said and how to say it in order to be understood and accepted. For this reason, we have started the presentation of each example with the 'Plots of dominant local narratives framing discussion on innovation' in the city from with the respective example is taken.

For *Bensheim*, this means that the question 'How can you become a 'sticky place' where you can find sites of global companies, such as European headquarters of Suzuki, TE Connectivity and Dentsply Sirona?' can only be answered against the background that people (locals as well as some external observers relevant to the development of the city) are convinced that Bensheim is and should remain an economically flourishing city where people

feel at home. This dominant idea, reproduced by the narrative about the city, has led to the conviction that the municipality must be an active property owner in order to be able to sell real estate only to companies according to clear rules established by political decisions. Furthermore, in the business park owned by the municipality, as an active property owner the municipality was also able to offer companies what they could not develop on their own – such as day-care facilities, sports and fitness centres or a hotel.

The same can be learnt from *Chania*. To answer the question 'How can the characteristics of the city be preserved and it be ensured that small hotels dominate (from comfortable but simple to expensive 'boutique' hotels in former palaces) – instead of big hotels as in neighbouring cities?' it has been crucial to develop and reproduce a dominant local narrative emphasising that it is important to improve the living conditions and to keep the old city centre intact, because this will ensure the attractiveness of the city for tourists and thus provide the economic basis for the wellbeing of all inhabitants. And to preserve the characteristics of the city (as *'a crossroads of cultures'*) a traffic management system was introduced which made it possible to remove motor vehicle traffic from the old town and create extensive pedestrian zones in it. Based on this common understanding of what had to be done for the wellbeing of all inhabitants the municipality was also able to improve the image of the city regarding cleanliness and as a pioneer in environmental matters by creating a recycling system.

Leipzig presents a case which not only shows nicely how largely focussing on local narrative helped create a narrative that was also actively used. The dominant local narrative is centred on the notion of Leipzig's freedom *(Leipziger Freiheit)* and the image of a 'cool kid town.' In the notion of Leipzig's freedom, past, present and future have been narratively linked – not only with regard to the long history of a cosmopolitan urban centre of trade, but also to the city's role in the 'peaceful revolution' of 1989 and the experimental social and political atmosphere of the period that followed. The image of the city associated with this notion was used purposefully not only in Leipzig's city marketing until 2017, but also in the context of the recent innovative municipal housing policy. *Kalamata* is another case where a dominant local narrative was actively used. This narrative was created in the 1980s, after the successful

16

response to a devastating earthquake which attracted nationwide and international attention. The almost forgotten provincial city took advantage of this positive publicity in order to implement a dynamic and innovative cultural policy and acquire a position in the circle of cities which organise internationally renowned festivals. Following an internationally oriented, inclusive and participatory cultural policy, the city managed to brand itself as a stronghold of contemporary European civilisation. This asset has been used for the promotion of tourism and local products of high quality; moreover it shaped the main line of argument for Kalamata's attempt to become the European Capital of Culture for 2021.

However, it is not only dominant local narratives and their underlying storylines and core notions can be deliberately used for innovative policy measures. A dominant local narrative and the story it tells as well as core notion can also be intentionally changed in order to foster innovation. This is demonstrated by *Offenbach*. Offenbach was and still is known as the 'problem child' or an 'island of poverty' of the economically flourishing Rhine-Main region around Frankfurt. Most of the city's social problems are related to the fact that Offenbach has the highest rate (around 62 percent) of inhabitants with a migration background in Germany. Interestingly, Offenbach has succeeded in turning the negative image of an immigrant city into a positive one – namely that of an 'arrival city.' Largely focussing on dominant local narratives to frame decisions on innovation can thus be summarised as follows: Offenbach might not be perfect, but the city fulfils a crucial role within the Rhine-Main metropolitan area: as an 'arrival city' [the entry and starting point for integration into the region, if not into Germany], Offenbach is almost all right. However, not only must the story be an authentic one that fits the dominant characteristics of the city, it must also be backed up by corresponding results. And such results can be achieved through innovation. Accordingly, Offenbach is recognised as a pioneer in the integration of migrants, local labour market policy and administrative reforms. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Offenbach's transformed image into that of an 'arrival city' was also made possible by referring to the city's past, as Offenbach has been welcoming migrants and refugees in search of a place to live and work since the 17th century, when the

first Huguenots settled there and made the city the former centre of the leather industry in Germany.

The city of *Elefsina* on the outskirts of Athens had a glorious past as an important cultural and religious breaks centre in antiquity, but after WWII it became the symbol of unscrupulous industrialisation and environmental disaster. Elefsina has been described in Greece as 'the wounded child of the 20th century,' which was facing deindustrialisation, high unemployment and impoverishment even before the financial crisis of 2008. Yet the city adopted an innovative approach to develop social cohesion and environmental protection through open cooperation and networking both with private businesses and the local civil society; moreover it undertook the endeavour to transform itself into a city advancing services and cultural development and finally managed to be proclaimed as the European Capital of Culture 2021.

In a similar way *Kassel* was able to enhance its image by means of two complementary story elements. On the one hand a new narrative was created that Kassel is an often underestimated city full of variety and stark contrasts, which, after closer consideration, has quite a lot to offer. On the other hand, the narrative now dominant in the city emphasises that networks play a key role in its development. This allows not only external observers (including researchers investigating the development of the city) but above all local actors to find answers to the question: 'How is it possible for a city along the margins to rise like a "phoenix from the ashes"?' For local actors, it was initially important to recognise that after German unification and the eastward expansion of the EU the city had moved from a peripheral location (on the former 'iron curtain') to the geographical centre of the continent – which made it interesting for companies to locate there (especially companies from the international freight forwarding sector). Furthermore, members and graduates of the local university were discovered as a resource and were offered development opportunities by means of the Science Park Kassel. This occurred in the context of the development and strengthening of open, but nevertheless goal-oriented networks (so-called 'cluster initiatives') in which actors from the economy, research and local, but also regional politics collaborate.

Athens is another case in point, from which it is possible to learn how to change not only the image of a city from the perspective of its inhabitants, but above all political practice and develop innovations. However, this case also makes it clear that what is necessary is not merely a change in the framework conditions of local politics (due to the financial crisis). The case shows that successful innovation depends on actors (a new mayor with a newly founded political organisation) who change the narrative that is told in urban society about the city. The new mayor and the newly founded political organisation called *Dikaioma Stin Poli* (Right to the City),[3] implying that the city in general and the municipality in particular should open up to its citizens and their ideas, were able to create a new narrative in Athens – namely that the city is following a participatory approach and is counting on cooperation to be able to face challenges in a flexible and innovative way. Furthermore, this narrative emphasised that Athens has not only historic and symbolic capital but also a high level of human capital that is active in all kinds of international networks. On the basis of this new understanding of the city's potential for innovation it became possible for the city to become open and attract previously unexploited knowledge and capacities and the municipality act as a multiplier of creativity that launches innovations even in the hard times of crisis. The mayor emphasised: 'The party-politicised municipality focussed on reproductive clientelistic practices. The civil service of the municipality was introverted and hostile to civic activists. We changed that. I personally tried to approach these people in order to obtain input of ideas from the civic field. We jointly elaborated different sorts of platforms and organisations in order to join forces. The municipality has a dynamic strategic vision that has been open enough to integrate a wide range of input. I was impressed by the richness and the originality of ideas and actions that already existed in Athens but remained unacknowledged and sometimes could barely be sustained because they were completely deprived of any kind of institutionalised recognition or support.'

Something similar happened in *Thessaloniki*. In this case, too, the new mayor and his supporters succeeded in helping a new narrative to break through, culminating in the following thematic focus: Provinciality is not a characteristic feature of Thessaloniki. The

rediscovery of the multicultural heritage was one way of rebranding the city as open and cosmopolitan and thus winning the future in a globalised world. Based on this broadly shared narrative it was possible to integrate a multicultural heritage into the city's identity, which enabled bonds to be created with the city's multi-ethnic diaspora and to rebrand Thessaloniki as a traditionally cosmopolitan city. This was decisive for attracting tourism, events and businesses. As a local businessman put it: 'We have this famous asset called Chalkidiki just around the corner, but very few tourists paid a visit to our city. This changed when we attracted Jews, Turks and our northern neighbours. We are good at organising events and now we have enlarged our innovation zone, attracting several IT businesses, also from Israel.'

Local political leadership can also be relevant for innovations in cities like *Frankfurt.* That is, in a case where, on the one hand, a narrative prevails that the city is a fast-moving place that wants to move forward because it is changing quickly and adapting to global trends, making innovation a necessity rather than a side-effect. On the other hand, Frankfurt is a case of a local community taking care of itself and not waiting for initiatives from city hall. However, even under such conditions political leadership – particularly when it comes to establishing innovations that will last. This is shown by Frankfurt's *GrünGürtel*, urban green space roughly encircling inner Frankfurt and, at around 8,000 hectares, covers about one third of the area of the municipality. Tom Koenigs, who was head of the Environmental Department of the City of Frankfurt am Main from 1989 to 1999,[4] identified Frankfurt's urban green space as an undisputed characteristic of the city that should be preserved and, if possible, expanded according to broad public opinion. Although he played an important role in the creation of the *GrünGürtel,* he emphasised: 'I did not invent it, but I pushed it through and made many people enthusiastic about it.' Most importantly, however, it was he who was responsible for protecting this innovation through strict rules – namely the so-called *GrünGürtel Verfassung* (Green Belt Charter) established by a unanimous decision of the municipal council. It determines the goals and the boundaries of the *GrünGürtel* as well as the obligation of the municipal council to take all measures necessary for safeguarding it. This obligation implies that in the case of a council decision on using parts of the Green Belt for other purposes

(roadways, etc.), the equivalent amount and type of green space has to be added to the GrünGürtel. Nevertheless, although the GrünGürtel in Frankfurt am Main is a success story, it has to be 'constantly ensure[d] that this remains present in people's minds. A great strength of the green belt as a never-ending programme, as a challenge, as a vision and a commitment is that citizens are intensively involved' – as emphasised by the current head of the Division for Environmental Protection and head of the *GrünGürtel* Project Group. This means that ongoing public debates must be ensured so that preserving and, if possible, expanding Frankfurt's Green Belt remains a crucial reference point for policy choices in Frankfurt.

The cities studies: Basic data and some lessons that can be learnt

In this final section, some important details of the examples of local innovations and their implementation outlined above are summarised on two pages for each city. The following section also contains basic data on the city from which each example originates, in order to provide some insights into the given city. We also provide information on how to contact individuals or organisations for further details as well as background information on each example of local innovation.

Athens

Inhabitants 2011:	664,046
change during the last 10 years:	- 12%
Population distribution across age groups (year):	
up to 15 years:	12%
15 to 64 years:	69%
65 years or more:	19%
Local jobs 2017:	241,000
change during the last 10 years:	- 15%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€342
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€233

Fiscal revenue data include taxes collected by the municipality and shared taxes: 20% income, 12% VAT, 50% real estate tax.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Athens is a vivid, open and inclusive city. Next to its huge historic and symbolic capital, the city has a high level of human capital that is active in all kinds of international networks.

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How to become an 'open city' attracting knowledge and capacity, acting as a multiplying factor for creativity that launches vitalising innovations in times of crisis.

Contact: Antonis Ekonomou
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1. Open the municipality to its citizens and their ideas.

'We jointly elaborated different sorts of platforms and organisational schemes in order to bundle forces. The city had a dynamic strategic vision that was open enough to integrate a wide range of inputs. I was impressed by the richness and the originality of ideas and actions that already existed in Athens but remained unrecognised and sometimes almost came to nothing because they were totally deprived of any kind of institutional recognition and support' (Giorgos Kaminis, Mayor of Athens from 2010 to 2019).

2. Open up to knowledge gained elsewhere – learn from others.

'There were environmentalists and civic activists with US experience. We knew about the network of resilient cities. We managed to become a part of the network. They offered their know-how and a common methodology that each city was expected to transform and adapt to its own needs. We also considered already existing experience in other "resilient cities" and then elaborated our own, tailor-made Athenian strategy' (Eleni Myrivili, Vice-Mayor for Urban Resilience 2018–2020)

3. Jointly develop strategies with stakeholders.

'I told companies: "We're not here for business, we're here for strategy – to help each other." It wasn't easy to do because a lot of people had to change their mind sets. We had to learn to talk with big companies. We didn't have this mentality inside the municipality. The businesses had to learn to talk with the local authorities without discussing contracts and sales. And the universities had to talk more openly about what they are doing' (Costas Chambidis, Chief Digital Officer on the Digital Council of Athens).

4. Gain trust through transparency and prudent management.

'Civic activists and the civil society in general, private enterprises, the community of donors, some important foundations etc. knew about the prudent management of the city government, how transparent it was. This created an unprecedented level of trust and the willingness of many to cooperate and support different initiatives for the benefit of the city' (Erifyli Maroniti, Coordinator of Athens CultureNet).

Bensheim

Inhabitants 2018	40,456
change from 2008:	(+ 2.1%)
Age group distribution 2018 (changes from 2008):	
up to 15 years:	13.6% (- 1.1)
15 to 64 years:	64.5% (- 1.2)
over 65 years:	21.9% (+ 2.3)
Local jobs 2018:	15,400
change from 2008:	+ 19.5%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€1,934
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€1,313

Fiscal revenue data include property tax, business tax, municipal share of income tax and sales tax. Job numbers include only regular jobs with social insurance.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Bensheim is and should remain an economically flourishing city where people feel at home.

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How to become a 'sticky place' where you can find the sites of global companies, such as the European headquarters of Suzuki, TE Connectivity and Dentsply Sirona?

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1. The municipality needs to be an active real estate owner.

'The real estate business with commercial premises is extremely important for urban development. It is not the plan, but the position the municipality has as a real estate owner which it can pursue with the help of these resources' *(Georg Stolle, mayor of Bensheim from 1972 to 2002).*

2. Sell real estate only to companies which fit to your development goals.

'We don't sell commercial real estate to make money. We sell it to companies that fit in with our development goals' (Helmut Sachwitz, head of the planning department of Bensheim from 2007 to 2019).

3. Develop clear rules for selling commercial space to companies.

'We've got the ball in our court. We can say that the company fits our marketing concept. I don't need to bring that to the politicians. Politicians get the information from us: "Five logisticians asked for it in the first quarter. That's it, you don't have to deal with it, we ruled that out in the marketing concept." Storage space versus workplace – no chance in Bensheim. Point end! We have a quota that we apply to decisions: 150 square metres per employee - plus minus. If this quota is not reached, the entrepreneur has almost no chance' (Helmut Richter, managing director of MEGB, the Marketing- und Entwicklungs-Gesellschaft Bensheim GmbH/Marketing and Development Company Bensheim Ltd).

4. Offer companies in a business park what they cannot develop on their own.

'When you look at the big companies – what are they looking for? You'll soon come across the campus concept, which became part of our marketing concept. If you go to BASF, you'll find the same thing. They were the first to have their own day-care centre for children of their employees on the company grounds – apart from company sports. And then we said, "Okay, we'll organise that for the companies in our business park. They can't do it on their own, so we will do something cross-company." It is important to think cross-company for offers of a business park. Such offers include day-care centres, sports and fitness centres or a hotel. In addition, a day-care facility could be added that takes care of family members of employees of local companies who are in need of care. Looking back, this has been an innovation, where you can say that we not only had a crazy idea, but we also implemented it' (Helmut Richter, managing director of the Marketing- und Entwicklungs-Gesellschaft Bensheim GmbH/Marketing and Development Company Bensheim Ltd).

Chania

Inhabitants 2017:	108,642
change during the last 10 years:	+ 6.5%
Population distribution across age groups (year):	
up to 15 years:	17%
15 to 64 years:	67.4%
65 years or more:	15.6%
Local jobs 2017:	41,417
change during the last 10 years:	+ 3.2%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€273
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€41

Fiscal revenue data include taxes collected by the municipality and shared taxes: 20% income, 12% VAT, 50% real estate tax.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Let's keep the old city centre intact. This will ensure the attractiveness of the city for tourists and thus provide an economic basis for the wellbeing of all.

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How can we preserve the characteristics of the city and ensure that small hotels dominate (from comfortable but simple to expensive 'boutique' hotels in former palaces) – instead of big hotels as in neighbouring cities?

Contact: Sevasti Polychronaki
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1. Take car traffic out of the old town and create extensive pedestrian zones in it.

2. However, this requires the introduction of a traffic management system.

This was done by means of the following measures:
- limiting or even prohibiting cars from entering the old city and its surrounding neighbourhoods,
- creating car parks near the old city (mainly for the use of tourists and less for local residents),
- improving the network of public buses,
- building own lanes for bikes (in progress)
- taking strict action against illegally parked cars (by towing cars and imposing high penalties),
- promoting e-mobility (in progress)

3. Do not care for cleanliness in the city alone. Improve the overall image of the city in terms of the environment – for example by becoming a pioneer through the creation of a recycling system.

'For decades Chania was considered the black sheep in waste management. […] This situation forced us to deal with the problem effectively and turn the city into a pioneer in waste management' (John Koutrakis, CEO of the local recycling company).

Elefsina

Inhabitants 2017:	29,902
change during the last 10 years:	-23.7%
Population distribution across age groups (year):	
up to 15 years:	17.3%
15 to 64 years:	69.5%
65 years or more:	13.2%
Local jobs 2017:	11,064
change during the last 10 years:	+ 3.0%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€533
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€129

Fiscal revenue data include taxes collected by the municipality and shared taxes: 20% income, 12% VAT, 50% real estate tax.

<u>Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation</u>

Elefsina was a 'wounded child' of industrialisation, but today the city is trying to ensure social cohesion and environmental protection and to become a place that promotes cultural development.

<u>Topic about which something can be learnt using this example</u>

How can we secure social cohesion and at the same time promote the rebranding of the city?

Contact: Antonia Zeppou
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1. Create and generously finance social innovations.

2. Take concrete measures and build specific structures.

This was done by means of the following measures:
- Social grocery store
- Social pharmacy
- Social tutoring school
- Movement without intermediaries
- Counselling centre for abused women

3. Use the opportunity to organise events as the 'European Capital of Cultural' to turn the city into a new cultural hub.

As part of its activities as a "European Capital of Culture", Elefsina created a new narrative about itself by linking the city's past with its present and future.

Frankfurt

Inhabitants 2018   753,056
  change from 2008:   (+ 13.3%)

**Age group distribution 2018
(changes from 2008):**
  up to 15 years: 14.5% (+ 1.5)
  15 to 64 years: 69.8% (+ 0.1)
  over 65 years: 15.6% (- 1.6)

Local jobs 2018:   306,107
change from 2008:   + 33.2%

Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:   €3,312

Municipal debt per capita 2016:   €2,233

Fiscal revenue data include property tax, business tax, municipal share of income tax and sales tax. Job numbers include only regular jobs with social insurance.

<u>Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation</u>

Frankfurt is a fast-paced city that wants to get ahead. The city is changing rapidly and adapting to global trend. This makes innovation not a side-effect, but a necessity.

<u>Topic about which something can be learnt using this example</u>

How to establish innovations that last? The case of the GrünGürtel *(Frankfurt's Green Belt) which covers about 8,000 hectares, i.e. about one third of the territory of the municipality of Frankfurt*

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1. **Identify an undisputed attribute of the city that should be preserved and, where possible, extended – such as connected urban green spaces.**

2. **Use a broad consensus on this undisputed characteristic of the city to create a durable tool and a new approach to the further development of this characteristic (such as connected urban green spaces).**

3. **However, such options for action must be recognised and used.**

Tom Koenigs of the Green Party, who was head of the environmental department of the city of Frankfurt from 1989 to 1999, played this role in creating the *GrünGürtel*. He emphasised: 'I did not invent it, but I pushed it through and made many people enthusiastic about it' (translation from Stadt Frankfurt: 20 Jahre GrünGürtel: Frankfurt – Menschen, Daten und Projekte. 1991–2011. Frankfurt a.M.: 2011, p. 6).

4. **Protect innovations through strict political rules.**

This was done in Frankfurt by means of the so-called *GrünGürtel Verfassung* (Green Belt Charter) established by a unanimous decision of the municipal council (https://frankfurt.de/-/media/1e25d52602934b2e8c5f1d323d3d2b1a.ashx). It determines the goals and the boundaries of the green belt as well as the obligation of the municipal council to take all necessary measures for safeguarding it. This obligation implies that in the case of a council decision on using parts of the green belt for other purposes (streets etc.), an equivalent in size and kind of area have to be added to the green belt.

5. **There is also a need to ensure that even the strictest political rules are observed.**

'Frankfurt's green belt is a success story – but without any guarantees. This means that you have to constantly ensure that this remains in people's minds. A great strength of the green belt as a never-ending programme, as a challenge, as a vision and a commitment is that citizens are intensively involved' (Thomas Hartmanshenn; head of the Division for Environmental Care and head of the GrünGürtel Project Group).

Kalamata

Inhabitants 2011:	69,849
change during the last 10 years:	+ 21.2%
Population distribution across age groups (year):	
up to 15 years:	15.3%
15 to 64 years:	67.4%
65 years or more:	17.3%
Local jobs 2017:	26,414
change during the last 10 years:	- 8%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2015:	€288
Municipal debt per capita 2015:	€111

Fiscal revenue data include taxes collected by the municipality and shared taxes: 20% income, 12% VAT, 50% real estate tax.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Kalamata is a dynamically growing city relying on tourist activities, its beautiful physical environment and its culture.

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How to escape from the picture of a provincial coastal town, famous for its natural beauty and olives, and rebrand itself as a rising city of culture

Contact: Panagiota Kourakli, General Manager, City of Kalamata
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1. **A disaster can be faced as an opportunity.**

After the disastrous earthquakes of 1986 that destroyed a large part of the city, Mayor Benos managed not only to restructure Kalamata, but also change its character. He managed to form a new development model for the city, based on life quality and culture. In the culture sector of, new institutions were established and cultural associations were supported, making the city an exemple for the country. "Culture was the thread holding tight all sectors in the city and our mental counterweight against the devastation" (P. Kourakli, General Manager of the City).

2. **Be prudent in completing a master plan and stick to it.**

"On the night of the earthquake, although very upset, I felt calm and optimistic about the future of my town. Thanks to the recently completed planning, we knew exactly where the new buildings and services would be placed. […] For our city the earthquake was our saviour" (Benos, Former Mayor of Kalamata). More importantly, "right after the disaster, the mayor didn't deviate from his vision and from the newly approved master plan [April '86], in spite of opposing groups of people, whose interests were affected" (P. Kourakli, General Manager of the City).

3. **Take advantage of existing networks.**

Taking advantage of the National Cultural Network of Cities initiated and implemented in 1995 by Minister of Culture, T. Mikroutsikos, the city of Kalamata built on its existing artistic work and material and chose to be further promoted as the city of dance ("[…] the initiative came from the Ministry of Culture, but the response of the city was bold and decisive […]", A. Polychronopoulos, Member of the Board of FARIS").

4. **Organise an annual international event.**

Today, after 25 years since its inception, the International Dance Centre of Kalamata constitutes one of the most important artistic entities in the city, while its most pivotal activity is the renowned Kalamata Dance Festival. The latter has succeeded in building bridges with international choreographers and promoting young creative talent, and represents a significant source of financial income for the city.

5. **Care about and renew the brand of your city.**

Although it lost to the rival city of Elefsina, Kalamata competed for the title of European Capital of Culture for 2021, projecting its comparative advantage as the "only example of a city implementing cultural decentralisation. It's a typical provincial Greek city functioning as a stronghold of contemporary European civilisation" (E. Tsatsoulis, Executive Director of the Office for Candidate City).

The citizens vividly demonstrated how they care for their city by drafting a cultural strategy and actively engaging in working groups for the common cause, thus proving that they felt the need of and were seeking innovative actions.

Kassel

Inhabitants 2018	201,585
change from 2008:	(+ 3.8%)
Age group distribution 2018 (changes from 2008):	
up to 15 years:	13.3% (+ 0.6)
15 to 64 years:	67.2% (+ 0.3)
over 65 years:	19.5% (- 1.0)
Local jobs 2018:	72,972
change from 2008:	+ 30.2%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€1,459
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€2,312

Fiscal revenue data include property tax, business tax, municipal share of income tax and sales tax. Job numbers include only regular jobs with social insurance.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Kassel is an often underestimated city full of variety and stark contrasts, which, upon closer consideration, has a lot to offer. Networks play a key role in its development.

Topic based on which something can be learnt using the above example

How was a city along the margins able to rise like a "phoenix from the ashes"?

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Product development and innovation management of Science Park Kassel GmbH
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1. Use spatial changes and existing conditions.

"This strategic location in the middle of Germany and other strengths, such as tourism marketing, make Kassel very attractive. [...] Added to this was the dynamism in the cultural sector. The [people in this area] naturally tick even faster and have much more fuel in their blood than those from a scientific institution" (Stefan Roetzel, Science Park Kassel GmbH).

2. Support pioneers who go ahead with an idea.

"Sometimes it's quite odd. Pioneers such as those who try out 'best practice' solutions based on established relationships – primarily in projects in which actors have worked together in specific contexts" (Stefan Roetzel, Science Park Kassel GmbH).

3. Identify potentials and strengthen the creation of networks.

"We have always said very early on what is possible in Kassel and how to do it. That naturally had a self-reinforcing effect. [...] We have created a positive climate of expectations, and to me this was also associated with some very painful statements, because the strategy for mastering this structural change was that the decisive companies, players, politics, research [...] in certain sectors had to be networked regionally within the framework of so-called cluster initiatives – by networking from within" (Holger Schach, former managing director of Regionalmanagament Nordhessen GmbH).

4. Make these networks open and goal-oriented.

"There are very many, very open networks here in Kassel. Each time we think about who else we can involve, who else can be invited, who perhaps does not yet have a connection to us but the know-how, the expertise, the perspectives that we can still integrate. If you think of specific areas, such as the creative industries, [then you come across] a very, very lively, very exchange-oriented scene, which [...] is developing its formats, networks and structures in order to build bridges between creativity and business and to develop future perspectives" (Susanne Völker, municipal Department of Culture).

Inhabitants 2018   587,857
   change from 2008:   (+ 14.0%)

**Age group distribution 2018
(changes from 2008):**
   up to 15 years: 13.9% (+ 3.3)
   15 to 64 years: 65.6% (- 1.4)
   over 65 years: 20.4% (- 1.9)

Local jobs 2018:   235,431
change from 2008:   + 45.1%

Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:   €931

Municipal debt per capita 2016:   €1,118

Fiscal revenue data include property tax, business tax, municipal share of income tax and sales tax. Job numbers include only regular jobs with social insurance.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Leipziger Freiheit/Leipzig's freedom. 'Cool kid town' (suggested by the New York Times to be visited in 2020)

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How to create a catchy keyword and use it successfully for city marketing, but also for policy making in the city?

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1. **Connect the past, present and future as a narrative.**

"Leipzig has been a commercial city with a trade fair for over 800 years. In order for traders to meet in Leipzig to exchange goods, the people of Leipzig had to be open to trade with others and to make houses and rooms available to other people who wanted to trade. The people of Leipzig have therefore become people who trade and are simply open to other people. *Leipziger Allerlei* (a regional German dish consisting of mixed vegetables) represents the characteristics of Leipzig. *Leipziger Allerlei* actually combines the differences. You leave what all the people have brought to eat as it is, you don't change it, but instead accept it and enjoy it yourself" (Gerd Harry 'Judy' Lybke; owner of a contemporary art gallery).

2. **Highlight the changes of the recent past and their successes – and bring them to the point (Leipziger Freiheit [Leipzig's freedom]).**

'Especially in the 1990s, many people without a local family background came to Leipzig. They had to rebuild their neighbourhoods and social relationships and started to think much more than elsewhere about how they wanted to live, for example - alone and anonymously or in a community. Just the exchange and the flying in of people from outside certainly led to impulses' (Jens Gerhardt, Netzwerk Leipziger Freiheit).

3. **Use the core of this narrative for city marketing.**

See the website (http://www.leipziger-freiheit.de/index/) of the campaign ran by Leipzig through 2017.

4. **Use the core of this narrative to help ensure specific policy objectives are achieved in a targeted manner.**

In its concept for housing policy, the City of Leipzig has declared itself in favour of strengthening cooperative forms of housing. It thus supports housing project initiatives by allocating municipal properties based on the concept procedure [*Konzeptverfahren*][5] and by offering advice on all issues relating to cooperative building and housing. This is intended to remove obstacles to the implementation of cooperative housing projects.

Contact point and hub for such housing projects is the "Leipziger Freiheit" network (https://www.netzwerk-leipziger-freiheit.de/wir/).

Offenbach

Inhabitants 2018	128,744
change from 2008:	(+ 8.2%)
Age group distribution 2018 (changes from 2008):	
up to 15 years:	15.7% (+ 1.0)
15 to 64 years:	67.8% (+ 0.0)
over 65 years:	16.5% (- 1.0)
Local jobs 2018:	52,941
change from 2008:	+ 37.6%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2016:	€1,214
Municipal debt per capita 2016:	€7,495

Fiscal revenue data include property tax, business tax, municipal share of income tax and sales tax. Job numbers include only regular jobs with social insurance.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Offenbach might be not perfect, but the city plays a crucial role in the Rhine-Main metropolitan area: Offenbach is an 'arrival city'. All in all, Offenbach is okay.

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How to initiate an image change

Contact:

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1. Tell an authentic story, which reflects the city's dominant features.

'The problem was that we started to communicate [...] that we have a very high percentage of foreigners here. But this has a negative image: foreigners' ghetto, [...] you cannot live here [...]. We have tried to turn what was negatively connotated [...] into something positive, but also into something that is credibly positive. You can't say anything that's not true. People notice that. The concept of an "arrival city" has led to a change in image' (Prof. Dr. Kai Vöckler, HfG).

2. Have the capacity to show results underpinning your story.

'What sets the city of Offenbach apart is that we have implemented something like integrated management on a relatively large scale – through interaction of various city departments. This is a very important factor for success. [...] You can see this here in my area of work, which ranges from urban development and social planning to integration policy, statistics and the job centre. There are interesting interfaces and they overlap everywhere. You can make a little music out of it' (Dr. Matthias Schulze-Böing, City of Offenbach).

'[In local politics] they realised very early on in Offenbach that the integration of immigrants is a major challenge for them. They noticed this earlier [...] than all other municipalities in Germany' (Prof. Dr. Kai Vöckler, HfG).

3. Develop a mindset of being able to act effectively in the administration.

'I would say that there is a 'can do' attitude as a basic mindset, which is supported by many managers. [...] This also applies to standard tasks such as security and order and, interestingly, also across public authorities. There is already a bit of an interaction between the image of the city and the bonding effect that develops in certain professional milieus' (Dr. Matthias Schulze-Böing, City of Offenbach).

We in Offenbach know that we are lagging [behind leading cities in Germany]. That is why it is also a management tool to do benchmarking again and again' (Dr. Matthias Schulze-Böing, City of Offenbach).

'[People in Offenbach] have organised the integration [of foreigners] as a cross-sectional task in city administration and developed an integration management system – with very good coordination processes regularly taking place among different offices. [...] There is an overarching political consensus that this must be tackled as a joint task' (Prof. Dr. Kai Vöckler, HfG).

Thessaloniki

Inhabitants 2011:	325,182
change during the last 10 years:	- 10%
Population distribution across age groups (year):	
up to 15 years:	15%
15 to 64 years:	68%
65 years or more:	17%
Local jobs 2017:	98,035
change during the last 10 years:	- 17%
Fiscal revenue per capita 2015:	€355
Municipal debt per capita 2015:	€92

Fiscal revenue data include taxes collected by the municipality and shared taxes: 20% income, 12% VAT, 50% real estate tax.

Plots of dominant local narratives framing decisions on innovation

Provinciality does not correspond to the personality of Thessaloniki: the rediscovery of the multicultural heritage is one way of rebranding the city as open and cosmopolitan and thus winning the future in a globalised world

Topic about which something can be learnt using this example

How can you creatively integrate a multicultural heritage into your city's identity, create bonds with your city's multi-ethnic diaspora and rebrand as a traditionally cosmopolitan city, attracting tourism, events and businesses?

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1. Break the 'frozen landscape' of a narrative that is condemning your city to provinciality.

'Boutaris [the mayor] instrumentalised the multicultural heritage of the city in order to change the mindset of the people, to help them overcome their "underdog" feelings towards Athens, their idea that they are condemned to provinciality and the belief that their future is not shaped by themselves but by some distant decision makers in Athens or even in Brussels' (Antonis Kamaras, adviser to the mayor from 2011 to 2014).

2. Help your multi-ethnic diaspora discover its roots in your city (and publicise your actions).

'In the beginning I approached the Jews. This was the easiest part because they were open and friendly. Then I visited Turkish Airlines and I asked them to launch direct flights since we are the native city of Ataturk. They were bewildered but they soon did it. I also travelled to Skopje and told them that my mother was born in Krusevo, a city that now belongs to their country. Especially In the media of the Jewish diaspora, but also in Turkish media and in the media of Northern Macedonia there was overwhelmingly positive [sometimes even enthusiastic] feedback about our activities' (Yiannis Boutaris, Mayor of Thessaloniki from 2011 to 2019).

3. Mobilise institutions and networks to promote cooperation in and about your city.

'There is the old tradition of the Trade Fair and the Film Festival. In 2014 Thessaloniki was the European Youth Capital. We also have this Culture Company that supports scientists, artists and other creative people. Since 2010, an open city government has been offering and mediating support for civic groups and NGOs. And there is a beneficial cooperation with the Jewish Holocaust Museum, with Greek foundations, but also with foreign ones like the Rockefeller foundation and George Soros foundation (Stavros Andreadis, CEO of S. Tourist Enterprises and Chairman of the Culture Company).

4. Attract events, tourism and businesses.

'We have this famous asset called Chalkidiki just around the corner, but very few tourists paid a visit to our city. This changed when we attracted Jews, Turks and our northern neighbours. We are good at organising events and now we have enlarged our innovation zone, attracting several IT businesses. I personally travelled to Israel in order to attract investments from their IT companies' (Nikos Efthymiadis, Chairman of the Technology Park).

Notes

1 Claus Offe and Rolf G. Heinze: Organisierte Eigenarbeit. Das Modell Kooperationsring. Frankfurt: Campus 1990; revised and shortened English version: Beyond Employment. Time, Work and the Informal Economy. Cambridge: Polity Press 1992.

2 More about the innovations achieved in the cities studied is presented in detail in the following books:
Hubert Heinelt, Björn Egner and Nikolaos-Komninos Hlepas (Eds.): The discursive conditions for local innovations: Why are some cities more innovative than others? London and New York: Routledge.
Björn Egner and Hubert Heinelt (Eds.): Innovationen in deutschen und griechischen Städten: Wie waren sie zu erreichen? [provisional book title], Baden-Baden: Nomos.
Nikolaos-Komninos Hlepas (Ed.): Innovation in Greek Cities [provisional book title], Athens: Papazissis.

3 The name was inspired by the well-known slogan which was the title of Henri Lefebvre's book *'Le Droit à la ville'* (Lefebvre, H. 1968. *Le Droit à la ville.* Paris: Éditions Anthropos).

4 From 1993 to 1997 Koenigs was also the treasurer of the municipality of Frankfurt. In the 1970s, he took part (along with Joschka Fischer) in the student movement in Frankfurt and in squatting and street fighting. In 1973 he donated his inheritance to the Viet Cong and to resistance fighters in Chile. After he left office in the municipality of Frankfurt, he worked for the United Nations – also as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kosovo from 1999 to 2002, where he was responsible for setting up the local public administration, and as UN Special Envoy for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2007 (https://www.bundestag.de/abgeordnete/biografien18/K/koenigs_tom-258568).

5 Competitive procurement by municipalities (*Konzeptverfahren*) for housing projects meeting the best social, ecological or urban-planning criteria.