

Climate Alliance President Wolter on ICCA2019 and Climate Neighbourhoods



Andreas Wolter, Climate Alliance President and Mayor of Cologne, visited the International Conference on Climate Action (ICCA2019) and the Climate Neighbourhoods in May 2019 in Heidelberg and answered questions from Climate Alliance:

Climate Alliance: Dear Andreas, you were one of many prominent participants at the major climate conference in Heidelberg in May. Are you satisfied with the results to be transmitted to the UN, or would you have liked stronger messages?

Andreas Wolter: In global climate action, the goals we aim for and the joint decisions we take are important, but it is even more important that they are implemented and observed. Germany and most EU countries miss their targets by miles. Something urgently needs to be changed here. We need CO2 pricing, an end to coal-fired power and stringent support for building renovations and energy storage.

CA: The ICCA has emphasised the interaction of the three levels of cities, regions and governments in climate action, focusing on local potential. Has this succeeded?

AW: Again, it is important that local authorities are supported by their national governments: Cities and municipalities alone have little opportunity to make the overflowing car traffic more environmentally friendly and to reduce it. And local authorities need financial support to expand public transport.

Cities and municipalities are prepared to do a lot for the energy transition, but we need support and co-financing from the federal states, the federal government and the EU. This applies in particular to the energetic refurbishment of rented housing. Here, rent increases must be significantly mitigated by financial support from the federal government and by changes to the legal basis.

This is also the reason why more and more cities are declaring the climate emergency.

CA: The Climate Neighbourhoods and the Youth Climate Summit have involved other actors such as young people and the population. Young people have also been demonstrating for months within the framework of the Fridays for Future movement for more climate action. Why are young people so committed and why do we need the population for climate action?

AW: The effects of climate change are already being felt today - here in Germany and unfortunately also in many poorer countries - but the negative consequences will have an ever greater impact. Rising sea levels may confront young people with uninhabitable cities or food shortages due to lack of rain and rising temperatures.

We also need the population to make climate change less drastic. Everyone can do something: for example, get electricity and heat from renewable sources, replace car journeys with cycling and public transport, and drastically reduce meat and cheese consumption. For the energy and climate change to succeed, we need a culture of climate mitigation throughout the entire population.

CA: Thank you very much for the interview.