

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:00:00.000] - Kai Wegner

I would like Berlin to play in the Champions League in comparison with the other major cities of the world.

[00:00:17.312] - Sarah Tietze

Hello from Berlin and welcome to Siemensstadt Calling, the future podcast. A whole new city quarter is being built in Siemensstadt Square and with it a million square metres of Berlin's future.

Did you know that 70 percent of all resources such as energy, water, building materials and food are consumed in cities? And this share will continue to rise in the coming years as more and more people worldwide move into densely populated urban areas? Clearly, if we want to stop climate change, we need to rethink the city system.

The good news is that many smart people are thinking about the future of the city and there are many innovative ideas to make cities more resource-efficient, more circular and more liveable.

I'm Sarah Tietze, part of the Siemens City team, and it's my great pleasure to talk to exactly these urban designers in our podcast and capture many ideas that are setting our cities up for the future.

Today we are talking to a very special urban designer - Kai Wegner. Kai Wegner has been Berlin's Governing Mayor for just under half a year, and as a native Berliner and native of Spandau, he wants the best for Berlin. And he wants to - quote: "make it awesome". Today we want to find out from him exactly what this means for Berlin's urban development in view of his vision for the future and how Siemensstadt Square can contribute to Berlin becoming a sustainable and liveable metropolis.

Hello Mr Wegner, thank you very much for the invitation to the always beautiful 'Rote Rathaus' (Town Hall).

[00:01:40.730] - Kai Wegner

Yes, thank you. I am glad that you are here.

[00:01:42.600] - Sarah Tietze

We are happy too. Stefan Kögl is also here. Stefan heads the Siemensstadt Square project and implements this Future Place. Hello Stefan.

[00:01:51.440] - Stefan Kögl

Hello Mr Wegner, thank you very much for your time. Hello Sarah.

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:01:55.310] - Sarah Tietze

To get to know each other a bit and warm up, we'll start with a small, quick round. I have prepared sentence starters and would be delighted if you could complete them. Quite spontaneously, openly, quickly.

[00:02:09.560] - Kai Wegner

I'm curious about that...

[00:02:11.600] - Sarah Tietze

And we'll start with: In 2035, Berlin will be...

[00:02:17.620] - Kai Wegner

...a metropolis that continues to grow, a metropolis that is pleasant to live in and a metropolis with a functioning administration that has clear structures, clear responsibilities and that finally uses the opportunities of digitalisation.

[00:02:37.090] - Sarah Tietze

Five years ago I would never have thought...

[00:02:40.850] - Kai Wegner

Oh, there are so many points. But it's also supposed to be a bit personal...Five years ago I would never have thought that Hertha BSC would be playing in the second division again.

[00:02:48.680] - Sarah Tietze

This is personal. Artificial intelligence will make the city...

[00:02:53.410] - Kai Wegner

...will make the city faster. We will be able to simplify and speed up processes. We can deploy staff differently in places where we need them more urgently if we actually use AI in the way we need it. And I also want to make it really useful for the city and for the administration.

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:03:13.080] - Sarah Tietze

The last six months have shown me...

[00:03:16.130] - Kai Wegner

...that great challenges must be tackled and that one must not be afraid of political decisions. Especially not of great challenges, but of courage and determination. The last six months have made that very clear to me.

[00:03:30.240] - Sarah Tietze

A perfect mobility mix...

[00:03:33.620] - Kai Wegner

...looks at all users of transport. I think a perfect mobility mix looks at how we can get more and safer cycle paths. By the way - and especially in the area of sharing mobility - I think many people actually want to travel the last mile by electric bike - or whatever. A good mobility mix ensures that local public transport optimally connects the outer districts, has a different cycle time, and honestly not only connects the outer districts better, but also the state of Brandenburg. We are talking about the metropolitan region of Berlin-Brandenburg and we have incredibly large growth regions in Brandenburg. They have to be connected to Berlin's public transport system. This has to be thought through together. By the way, we also have to think about pedestrian routes and how we can make them safer, especially for older people who also need a walking aid. And a good mobility mix relies on the fact that there will still be individual transport in the future, perhaps with a different form of propulsion. And we have to create the infrastructure for that.

[00:04:35.950] - Sarah Tietze

Very exciting. Stefan, a few quick questions for you too. I associate Berlin with...

[00:04:42.580] - Stefan Kögl

...the digitisation capital. And thus fit for the future or a driver of the future.

[00:04:49.080] - Sarah Tietze

I'm really proud...

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:04:51.420] - Stefan Kögl

...on the cooperation we have developed with Berlin. It's a very complex situation for the Siemensstadt Square project, also in the administration. But we have found a very good mode and do not dwell on discussing deficits but look forward to constructive cooperation.

[00:05:14.790] - Sarah Tietze

And the highest priority from my point of view is...

[00:05:18.520] - Stefan Kögl

...of course, that Siemensstadt Square becomes a liveable district of Berlin, and indeed a part of Berlin, not a special topic, but really integrates itself and of course also shows sustainability accordingly as a groundbreaking, as a basis and not as an add on to finished plans.

[00:05:41.910] - Sarah Tietze

That's it for the quick questions. Talk fast...

[00:05:44.460] - Kai Wegner

I was too long.

[00:05:45.320] - Sarah Tietze

...both of you can, but I wouldn't say you can get to the point quickly. We want to get down to the nitty-gritty now, and as a doer, as an urban designer, you are also thinking a lot about the future of Berlin and the questions "How can politics shape a city of the future? What are your most important decisions for the future?"

[00:06:06.360] - Kai Wegner

I believe that on the one hand we must not be afraid of growth and innovative ideas. In Berlin, precisely such ideas are created and that is also our strength. Mr Kögl just said it: digital capital. We are also the start-up capital. So many ideas are developed here. We have a very strong science and research landscape, also in the field of technology. And we have to push that further. Berlin can profit

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

incredibly from this, and that's at least my goal. And Berlin has already developed really strong future locations in the past. We have different places of the future. And for me, Siemensstadt Square will be another place of the future. I am quite sure of that. You just said, Mr Kögl, what you are proud of. I can tell you I am - pride is perhaps the wrong expression - I am grateful. I am really grateful to Siemens for this confidence in Berlin as a location, for this investment, for a new place of the future in our city, which will also be a place worth living in, because it combines living, working and feeling good. And it will simply be a great place in Siemensstadt.

[00:07:10.380] - Sarah Tietze

Berlin is also embarking on the journey towards becoming a smart city. What are some important points here that you see - where Berlin has already taken a step forward?

[00:07:19.960] - Kai Wegner

Well, if I'm honest, I wish we'd made a bit more progress, because we've been talking a lot about digitalisation and smart cities in recent years, even in Berlin. But if I'm completely honest, we're still pretty much at the beginning. We still have a very, very long way to go. And what annoys me so much is that we actually have all the ideas, all the competences already in our city. I spoke about the start-ups, I spoke about science and I know so many ideas that we simply have to apply in our city. This applies to the administration, the digitalisation of the administration. There are great ideas in the administrations, but everyone somehow does their own thing. And that's not how digitisation works. I need uniform processes, uniform structures. That's what we want to do now. But for me, a favourite example is always: Smart City is actually traffic management. And there are great ideas: intelligent traffic light control, parking guidance systems, much, much more that could all be applied in this city, because there are companies here that deal with exactly these topics and that is not being done at the moment, but I would like to change that. I would like Berlin to really become a flagship for a smart city. That people come to our city and say: "Wow, how did they do that in Berlin? Let's take a look at that." And I think Berlin can become a role model for other metropolises. But we still have a little way to go.

[00:08:36.280] - Sarah Tietze

Yes, let's dive into Siemensstadt now. That's where a future location with lots of smart ideas is being developed. But it starts a little earlier. Today it is an industrial site, which means that transformation is the first focus. What are the goals of Siemensstadt with regard to this community, which Mr Wegner also mentioned?

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:10:58.011] - Stefan Kögl

Yes, so if we take the term smart city, then it starts with urban planning - let's say. That has nothing to do with technology, but simply with finding an intelligent master plan with a good mix. You just said it, Mr Wegner: bringing together work, life, research and social infrastructure. That is exactly what we are redesigning in Siemensstadt. It's not something that happens every day. Here, too, I say quite deliberately that these are also new topics for the administration. This is not a blueprint that you can pull out of a drawer. You just have to be allowed to say it out loud. So in the sense of the administration now. Then, of course, our first goal will be to preserve the jobs. I must mention that again here. The industrial jobs. We will relocate several plants to make them fit for the future. And then, of course, it's a question of using technologies to make life worth living for people. So the question for us is always: "What will arrive?" Of course, it's about Siemens technologies. It's about networking these technologies, which we will do here via the digital twin.

Of course, the next topic - networking with Berlin - is at the end. We don't want to remain an isolated case. And of course it's a question of optimising the whole thing in operation accordingly, so that we have already done the planning digitally, optimised it and can then also deal with this data accordingly in operation and design it in an optimised way. So just as an umbrella term, if you now take CO2-neutral operation, then the first thing is the regenerative energies that you have to generate or have, but of course also the energy efficiency and how you deal with it. And we have 250,000 square metres of listed buildings. That means we also offer a bit of a blueprint for Berlin, because the question is not the new building or the difficulty, but the existing stock. We have that everywhere in all cities. That means we will also offer solutions and we are also in the process of offering solutions that are economically feasible. So I say quite, quite deliberately. We are not the company that is now spending a lot of money to implement innovations and say: "Hey, this is how it could work" and no one can pay for it, but we are in the process of developing truly scalable solutions - especially in the energy sector at the moment, but also in mobility. I think that is important for the entire city in the end.

[00:11:21.610] - Kai Wegner

I believe that - if I may go into this very briefly, Mr Kögl - I am really grateful to you, because I believe that this is precisely the point. At the moment, people are very, very insecure. At least that's what I perceive, and that's what I hear from my fellow Minister-Presidents. So it's not a Berlin problem, but many people see the current events around the world. They are afraid of that. They see rising interest rates. They see that weekend shopping at the supermarket is becoming more and more expensive. Rents, energy costs, much, much more. So, and then you always hear climate protection and realise how expensive it's all getting. And I believe that we will only be able to achieve our climate goals if we

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

take people along with us. And that can't fail because at some point people say, "I can't afford it any more." Because if people turn away at some point because they say: "I can't afford climate protection", the climate goals that Germany has set for itself - Berlin, by the way, has even more ambitious goals, we want to be climate neutral as a city a little faster - if people don't join in or can't join in because they can't afford it, we will have a problem. And that's why we need precisely such measures, such ideas, to convince people: "We're on the right track and you can do it too. We can do it together."

[00:12:30.240] - Sarah Tietze

Digitality, in other words, as a means, as a technology, to allow sustainability to find its way into cities even more quickly. You just mentioned that Berlin would like to become climate-neutral more quickly. Behind the special fund for climate protection there is also a rather large figure. 5 billion are to be invested here to make the city CO2-neutral. Can you go into a little more depth here? What exactly is the master plan here?

[00:12:58.700] - Kai Wegner

It is as much as 5 to ten billion euros.

[00:13:02.050] - Sarah Tietze

The span now sounds so wide to me that I have now taken the smaller edge.

[00:13:07.390] - Kai Wegner

Yes, but we didn't want to set ourselves any limits, because you know - Mr Kögl has already said this - we have a very, very great potential when it comes to climate protection, CO2 savings, we have to get to work on the buildings. That is the main potential that we can tap. Of course, also in the area of mobility - no question about that. But the buildings, we talk a lot about that and then we add another centimetre or two or three to the front of the buildings. And at the end of the day, that doesn't help at all; we have to break new ground here. And that's why we are taking money in hand, because I really want us to invest in this issue of the future. We have watched for years, also in Berlin, for decades, how our infrastructure literally crumbles. So now we can watch for even longer. But then at some point, when we then close buildings, bridges - whatever - schools. Or we take money in hand now and invest. And that is what we are doing now. We are investing, yes, also in new buildings, but above all, for example, in the energy-efficient refurbishment of buildings. I think that is such an

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

important point, where I have so much room for improvement - in schools, universities, police stations, fire stations, by the way also administrative buildings. When I look at some of them, there is not much in the way of energy, quite the opposite. And we want to use this money for precisely that purpose. We also want to use the money to generate energy ourselves. Keyword district heating, keyword geothermal energy... These are all topics that we have discussed again and again in Berlin in recent years, but honestly have made little progress. And that's what we want to do now, because that's the only way we can achieve our climate goals. And we also want to make the economy resilient. We want to continue to support and promote the transformation, especially to make these businesses in our city climate-neutral. And I believe that these are such important issues for the future that they really are investments in the future. And that is why I am absolutely behind the special fund. Critics always say: "Well, that's more or less new debt and you're doing it on credit". And I say: "Yes, that's how it is. We are doing it on credit. And then I often hear, "Yes, our children will have to pay for all that." That is also true. I can't reject that at all. But I just say: "If we don't invest now, it will become even more expensive. It will become even more expensive and future generations will have to pay for it. And I at least don't want to be responsible for that.

[00:15:35.080] - Sarah Tietze

Stefan, Mr Wegner once mentioned the great challenge of decarbonising existing buildings. Siemensstadt also has 250,000 square metres of listed buildings and is taking innovative approaches to making them CO2-neutral.

[00:15:50.390] - Stefan Kögl

Yes, I just wanted to say that the topic of geothermal energy, which we don't have as a main topic, but you have, for example, now initiated deep geothermal energy in various places. I think these are important signals and I can only confirm them from the Group's point of view. In 2014, I think it was, we set the goal of being CO2-neutral by 2030, and I can see how much investment we have. And the longer it takes, the more expensive it will be in the end. That's exactly the point. That means that if we don't start and do something, it will be more and more difficult for the next generation. And we, for example, are in the process of negotiating with the water companies to use wastewater heat here to a large extent. We want to supply over 50 per cent of the area with heating and cooling via wastewater heat. These are also new concepts, not technologically per se, but it is not the case that there are somehow so and so many projects in Berlin and one says: "We're going to do it just like that", but rather there are many new topics - also in terms of contractual obligations. It's not always just the technology. It's very much... you have to make a long-term commitment - it has to work in the long term. At the same time, we are talking to suppliers who should also be involved. So a utility company

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

- because we, Siemens, are not an energy supplier at the end - we are working on corporate structures, joint venture structures to make this possible. That's what I said at the beginning, to show a model that can work for a single area. And of course we are also talking to our neighbours. Some of them are contractually bound to suppliers, but there are also some that are not yet bound, so we are trying to scale these issues as well. And I think that brings us to the topic of cooperation. We talk about digitalisation, hardware, software, but cooperation, which is inevitable, is also very important because many things are more transparent and also lead to much, much better results. And that is what we are doing very strongly in Siemensstadt.

[00:17:57.180] - Sarah Tietze

The model of designing a new city that is CO2-neutral, that supplies 100 per cent cooling and heating via renewable energies, which are also produced on campus, is wonderful. Can you think about it on a larger scale? Is this also a Berlin scenario that can be scaled from Siemensstadt to Berlin? Or is it the special case of Siemensstadt that is being considered here?

[00:18:19.410] - Stefan Kögl

So of course we have the advantage that the area is larger. We have a longer piece of road, to put it simply, that we could connect. But I do believe that it is - or perceive that it is - being thought about in various other places. And I think the main thing is not just to wait for it. So, a city may prefer to have a central supply, can control that and I say influence that. But in the situation, we are in today, everyone has to see what they can contribute and not just wait for the city. And we have our neighbours here partly in Spandau. We now have an area that has concluded a contract with the computer centre, for example, from which waste heat is extracted, where we are also in talks, cooperatively, and are considering whether we can get parts of it back. In other words, our second 50%, which we also need. And so, I believe, this is being put together very constructively and will lead to better results in the end.

[00:19:13.700] - Kai Wegner

May I?

[00:19:14.440] - Sarah Tietze

Of course.

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:19:15.840] - Kai Wegner

I think that is very important. A municipality wishes: "We have one provider, we have the same system everywhere, everything is simple, everything is transparent. Hooray, here we go." But that's no longer the reality of life, because every location has its own special thing. We have a strong district heating network in large parts of Berlin, which I think we should also expand. But we will not be able to connect 100 per cent of the district heating network to the households. It won't work that quickly, and there's not enough time. In fact, I don't think it's necessary at all, because we have so many different ideas. Mr Kögl has just said how this is done in Siemensstadt. I think it's a great idea and now we have to see where we can use the blueprint in other neighbourhoods. But you know, I don't think we always have to focus on just one thing, but when we tackle these issues, we have to be totally open to technology. We have to see where what fits best. And in the past, this was often not done in Siemensstadt, which is great, but we always looked at the individual building and then thought: "How can we save energy here and how can we supply it?". I think that's total nonsense, but you have to think about entire neighbourhoods. Just like Siemensstadt does. How do I provide for this new neighbourhood? And in the same way I have to go into the urban quarters that are already there in Berlin. I have to take a neighbourhood and say, how do I provide for it? There are so many different ideas. There's district heating, there's photovoltaics, there are combined heat and power plants, air-source heat pumps. Oh, the possibilities are endless. So, approaching this with an open mind and looking at what fits best in this urban district? What is the easiest, quickest and most sustainable way to achieve this? And if we take this approach in an open-minded way, I believe we can achieve our ambitious goals. And at the end of the day it will be affordable, also for the people in our city, it will bring security of supply, because we are also relying on different possibilities and not just on one. And I believe that if we go down this path, other cities will look at Berlin and say, "Hey, how did they do that?" And to think about entire city quarters, other cities are honestly a bit further ahead than we are. I have to say that, too. I once took a look at a whole city district in Cologne that is already CO₂-neutral. It's amazing what they've done there with a very strong municipal utility. I'd like to see something like that in Berlin, and really soon. And not just in a showcase area. I'm quite sure that Siemensstadt Square will become a showcase area. But I would really like to see it across the entire city, and ideally in a joint energy region with Brandenburg, because once again, the Berlin-Brandenburg capital region cannot be thought of separately and certainly cannot be done separately.

[00:22:03.630] - Stefan Kögl

I would like to respond to that. I think that is a decisive statement. Thinking beyond a building, beyond the city, for the whole neighbourhood, for the whole city. That's really our biggest problem, because everyone says they're doing a great job and I think everyone does some things to the best of their

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

knowledge and belief. But you don't know exactly if you don't network, compare and look at how consumption really is now, for example. And I would like to address another topic at this point, namely the topic of water. And you are nodding, Mr Wegner, because of course this is a very important point for all of us and also in Berlin. We have...we are very, very much concerned with the issue of water. We have the Jungfernheide waterworks, which is to be reactivated in our immediate neighbourhood. It is basically a very important topic and there is now a research project in Siemensstadt with the TU Berlin and our Digital Industries - and the Berliner Wasserbetriebe (Berlin water company), very important, not to forget - that is setting up a really digitally controlled water management here. And I say this because it surprised me a bit, because it is obviously still uncharted territory. It is a research project and we know that it is one of the most important topics of the future.

[00:23:15.930] - Kai Wegner

Especially in a city like Berlin. So, we are a sponge city. In some areas we have groundwater levels that are simply too high. Mr Kögl and Siemensstadt know this very well. Not only the Siemens company knows that, but also the sports clubs around it, the people of Siemensstadt know that. And you don't only have this in Siemensstadt, you also have it in Neukölln, in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, in other words, it goes right through Berlin, these groundwater levels...and to come to a sensible groundwater management here. Which, by the way, first of all dries out the cellars again - that's also quite good - but then actually making climate policy with this groundwater management. That is the opportunity. And I am delighted. I have been fighting for so many years in the opposition or in other functions as a member of the Bundestag that Jungfernheide be brought back online, that it be opened up, that precisely this groundwater management take place in Siemensstadt. And now I can at least help to ensure that this happens quickly. And we are working to ensure that this groundwater management also takes place in Berlin.

[00:24:25.160] - Sarah Tietze

If we talk about such a scenario, the sustainable city of the future, will that also change the attitude to life for the residents in such a city, Mr Wegner?

[00:24:34.810] - Kai Wegner

I think life changes more or less every day for Berliners in such a metropolis. Berlin is never really finished. Berlin is always evolving. And if I just look at the last few years in Berlin, there has been some very nice development in some areas, right? That Berlin has now really become the international, cosmopolitan metropolis that we have always talked about over the last 20 or 30 years,

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

but we weren't quite sure about it in the beginning. Now we are. And on the other hand, of course, we have major challenges and problems in some areas that now need to be addressed, where people have perhaps looked the other way for far too long. But today we want to talk about the nice things. And of course, that will also change the lives of Berliners. But you know, that also has something to do with digitalization. Digitalization has many opportunities, but there are also risks when dealing with digitalization. How do we as a society deal with this? And you have to take people with you. This starts in the education system, but also has something for older generations. Many people are now very active in the area of digitalization through adult education centers and the like, where they take courses. I think that's really great. So, you have to take people with you. So, I don't think we need to be afraid of the future. We just have to design it sensibly and then all Berliners will benefit from it.

[00:25:53.920] - Sarah Tietze

Stefan, how do you think life will feel different in the sustainable city of the future?

[00:25:58.730] - Stefan Kögl

So, I think, above all, we have to consider what expectations the now aging generation, including our children, will have or how they view the topics. And we are - I am a baby boomer - we are still very much in the majority, we old people. If I may say so - without looking at anyone in the room - we still determine a lot. And people who are 30 or younger today have a completely different approach and way of thinking. And I'll just take the car. We grew up with it. Signs of prosperity 70s, 80s. Our children today have a different approach and simply switching from combustion to electric is not enough; other solutions have to be found. And I'm saying, if we don't get them started already, they're going to be... it's going to be necessary at some point anyway. And I say, we have to offer something, we have to cooperate. And a second topic, which I always like - is housing and, for example, the costs and additional costs. One is rent, but additional costs. I also grew up when I had a rented apartment. Such a reckoning came once a year. "Oops, so much back pay? Why?" Sure, you could get into some notes, but yeah, basically no chance. And the topic of transparency here is clearly about digitalization. Today you usually get an app from your provider so you can take a look. "Where are you?" You can theoretically prepare for it, you can also react, you can perhaps conclude a different electricity contract because you know: "Okay, it's more expensive here." So, I'm given resources, really act and I can also optimize myself. And those who look after me are also challenged because they have to explain what they are doing. Any major leaks, poor purchasing prices, they have to be responsible for, to name a few examples. And I think that a lot of what the citizens really need comes across.

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

[00:27:57.510] - Kai Wegner

I totally share that. And exactly as Mr. Kögl put it. I'll tell you - I think I can speak for both of us - 30 or 40 years ago, life without a fax machine was unimaginable in our generation. Well, my son doesn't even know what a fax machine is anymore, he's growing up completely differently. And when I see how my children use my smartphone and my tablet, it's crazy. So even the middle one, who is now seven years old, how she handles this cell phone and what she can open, where I sometimes think: "How do you actually do that?" Where I sometimes think: "Crazy". They grow up completely differently and have expectations. And you have to live up to these expectations. We can't prevent it at all because it will continue to develop in our society. It's exactly the same thing when I sometimes hear populist parties talk about how terrible globalization is. Globalization must be designed sensibly because I cannot prevent globalization. I can seal off a country, I can wall up Germany, then maybe. But I don't think anyone wants that. Well, at least I don't want it. And therefore, simply take these topics positively, shape them positively. They will change lives, but I believe in many areas really for the better. And you gave the examples, so you automatically have more transparency and much more creative space. Yes, and the opportunities are there; we have to make better use of them. Also, by the way, as a Berlin administration, because many providers, including state-owned companies, already do a lot of this through apps and so on. And that, for example, is a goal that I have, even in these three years, where I can now be Governing Mayor until the next time, that Berlin finally gets an app that works, where you have all the services on it, the digital ones are already available, but where you can actually access things transparently from the public order office, citizens' office, police, whatever, where you have everything on a Berlin app. I think it would really be a milestone if we could do that in Berlin.

[00:29:50.710] - Sarah Tietze

According to Bitkom - they just did a survey - Berlin is in third place in the digital city rankings. Quite okay throughout Germany. But internationally, I think we still have a bit of catching up to do. Mr. Wegner, you just spoke about the global perspective. You are also known for looking at international destinations and drawing inspiration from them. You have already been to Warsaw, for example. Exciting cities are still on the table. I think they want to go to New York, to Tokyo, to Istanbul to see what digital innovations and ideas are there? Can you deduce anything from what you have seen so far that we might be able to adopt for Berlin?

[00:30:29.850] - Kai Wegner

Transkription Podcast Siemensstadt Calling #12 mit Kai Wegner English Translation

So I always don't think it's a bad thing when you actually look at other cities and say: "Hey, what works better here than here?" And then just to look, according to the motto best practice: "What can I use in Berlin?" Berlin is a different city than Warsaw. Berlin is a different city than the cities you just mentioned where I'm going. That's why you always have to do it precisely for Berlin. But I would really like to do that once or twice during my term in office and see where things are going well. I was fascinated in Warsaw, I have to tell you honestly, how quickly, if we talk about rail planning there for example, how quickly rail planning works there. So, we have now achieved a majority in Berlin and Brandenburg in the Federal Council with an initiative for a planning acceleration law. When Dietmar Woidke and I started this, we thought: "This is an important topic, we have to address it in order to put pressure on it." I think I can speak for both of us that we weren't sure - to put it very diplomatically and reticent to say - that we weren't sure whether we really had a majority for it in the Bundesrat. We had a very clear majority and now the federal government is being asked to present a draft law, which I think is very, very good. There is the Polish one Page much faster than us, when I sometimes see how the electrified rails lead to the German border and then not, then I always think: "That doesn't exist. Why is Poland further than Germany, a highly industrial country?" So, we have to get better at that. What I specifically looked at were digitization projects. How can you manage parking space and monitor management differently, better and more efficiently? I found what was on offer in Warsaw very, very exciting. And there are great ideas in the other cities too. You mentioned New York, Los Angeles. I primarily visit our sister city partnerships. Los Angeles is a long-standing city partnership between Berlin and Los Angeles. But I have picked out one point, for example, where I really want to go. To Boston because it is a very, very strong location for science and research, especially in the health sector. Where Berlin, I think, also has a beacon character, where many people look: "Man, how do you do it in Berlin with all the research facilities?". Also with health care, when I think of the Charité - much more. So, I want to take a look at that and then you have to take a look. They are competitors, but I think it can be Berlin's goal to copy one thing or another in order to perhaps be even better and to overtake cities like Boston in this area.

[00:32:54.560] - Sarah Tietze

High aspiration.

[00:32:56.020] - Kai Wegner

Yes, but that has to be Berlin's claim. You know, I said before that five years ago I would never have thought that Hertha BSC - my favorite club - would play in the second division. But I could have phrased it differently. I could also have said: "Who would have thought that Union Berlin would be playing in the Champions League four years after improving?" And that shows what is possible in

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Berlin, that you can do it in the shortest possible time with the right team and the right people Measures to advance to the Champions League. This is football now. But I would like Berlin to play in the Champions League compared to other cities in the world. I don't want to look backwards; I always want to look forward. And I think Berlin has the power, has the potential, has the opportunities to be at the forefront of international competition with the major international metropolises. And that is my claim. And we have to work on this together. And for that we need companies like Siemens, but also many, many other and perhaps somewhat courageous political decisions to get us exactly there.

[00:33:54.130] - Sarah Tietze

Berlin wants to play in the Champions League and wants to become an international city at eye level. A Smart City, sustainable and livable. A wonderful conclusion. Thank you very much, Mr Governing Mayor, Mr Wegner. It was great to be here. We learned a lot about the future of Berlin, about the future of the city. If you enjoyed the podcast, please subscribe, and join us again. We look forward to it. Bye from Berlin.

[00:34:18.160] - Kai Wegner

Bye. Have a nice day.