

**Press Release**

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**Lord Mayor Richard Leibinger appointed to  
Chairman of Cittaslow, Germany**



**The city of Waldkirch represents the German association of livable cities, cittaslow.**

Waldkirch, district of Emmendingen (swb). The German association of "livable cities" (cittaslow) is henceforth represented by Lord Mayor Richard Leibinger, city of Waldkirch. On the occasion of the meeting of members in Bad Schussenried, he was elected first chairman of cittaslow, Germany. Richard Leibinger wants to seize the chance to bring forward the goals of the member cities of the cittaslow association, among which Waldkirch is often seen as a prime example.

Due to the resignation of Wolfgang Plattmeier as mayor of the German city of Hersbruck, the „Association of livable cities in Germany – cittaslow“, founded in 2008, was to elect a new first chairman. On the occasion of its meeting of members in Bad Schussenried, the previous second chairman, Lord mayor of the city of Waldkirch Richard Leibinger, was elected first chairman unanimously. His predecessor in office, Plattmeier, was assigned the status of a representative chairman: he will henceforth engage in international contacts.



Waldkirch, which is often attributed the title of an "organ city" is a member of the cittaslow association - with its over 100 member cities - since may, 5th, 2002, being then the first city throughout the southwestern part of Germany (Baden-Württemberg) and the second one throughout Germany. Accepted members have to count less than 50.000 inhabitants. The targets of the cittaslow movement are to cultivate the characteristics and specialties of a city. Or in other words: the things that distinguish it from others.

Among these: a sustainable urban development and ecologic politics as well as the preservation of a characteristic urban structure. Local products and economic circuits, good and tasty food are to be boosted. Contrarily to the process of globalization, the cittaslow cities attach great importance to their own identity including local culture, traditions and history. This attitude fits perfectly to the city of

Waldkirch with its 20.000 inhabitants and its over 200 year old tradition in organ construction, says Richard Leibinger who is the head of the city hall since 1983.

With the Museum of the Elz Valley and its considerable collection of hand organs, ancient fair organs and automatic orchestra organs, with its International Waldkirch Organ Festival that takes place every three years (27.-29.5.2011), its organ handicrafts and lots of other actors on behalf of organ tradition, Waldkirch was able to establish again and continuously its reputation as *The Organ City* internationally.



#### **Waldkirch as a prime example**

According to the concept „Waldkirch 2020“ and to the United Nations Agenda 21, the targets as formulated for the cittaslow cities are part of the city philosophy since a long time, the new chairman of Germany points out. Far from being artificially imposed, these criteria are the practical guidelines for a sustainable city development. Administration and city council keep to them ever since and they are supported by active citizens – e.g. the craftsmen in organ construction, organ cooks and the workshop of agriculture. M. Leibinger himself sets value on the factor of time in struggling against the everyday pressure of time.

#### **Cittaslow as an element of city development and marketing**

Lord Mayor Leibinger sees a mark of confidence and a personal confirmation for himself but also for the city of Waldkirch and the pioneer work that has been done here since 2002. Waldkirch has advanced to a prime example of cittaslow, so called on occasion of the last meeting of member cities, but which can also be deduced from the numbers of national and international requests that Waldkirch has regularly. As for this, the membership in the cittaslow association may also efficiently support the city marketing. Richard Leibinger is pleased that the next meeting of members will take place in October 2010 in Waldkirch.

The election as a first chairman of cittaslow Germany is a challenge and a responsibility at the same time for Richard Leibinger. He would like to be the contact person to everybody. One task is to strengthen the networking and the exchange of experiences among the members of the German association that has been established two years ago in order to learn from each other. His new function will allow Waldkirch to continue developing its profile among the exquisite members.

The first action to take place was the official admission of the city of Bad Schussenried among the cittaslow members. Lord Mayor of Waldkirch Richard Leibinger gave the certificate of appointment of Bad Schussenried as the 10th German cittaslow to Mayor Deinet surrounded by the magnificent library of the monastery of Bad Schussenried.