Frankfurt/Rhein-Main 2020 – the European metropolitan region

Strategic Vision for the Regional Land Use Plan and for the Regionalplan Südhessen
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Dear reader,

quite a while ago we passed the Strategic Vision for Frankfurt/Rhein-Main Metropolitan region. In some respects we performed beyond expectation: Metropolitan Regions are of increasing importance, in Germany alone we are now competing with 10 of them. They are the centres and engines of internationality and innovation, of modern environmental management, of new concepts for mobility, improved quality of life, and much more.

The Strategic Vision has been and is the guideline for the Regional Land Use Plan and for the Regional Plan Südhessen. Both of them are in place now. Much of what the Vision prescribed has been implemented: Further development of the towns and cities is planned to take place preferably in the agglomeration, from the Vordertaunus (the area between Frankfurt and the Taunus mountains) in the north to the Rhine-Neckar-Zone in the South, from Wiesbaden in the west to Hanau in the east. Elsewhere, development is designed to take place along the transport axes. All in all, we achieved, in an intense process of co-ordination, to reduce the size of the development zones: Within the Ballungsraum (the core area where the Regionalverband is responsible) alone, the size of the areas for housing was reduced from an initially envisaged 4400 hectares to 2300 hectares, that for industry and trade from 3100 to 2100. And eventually, the retail concept integrated into the plans will strengthen the city centres.

Beyond the plans we have been busy developing our region according to the Vision: The Initiative Wissensregion (the Knowledge Region Initiative) now is a platform for Knowledge and Education and published both a Knowledge Atlas and a Knowledge Inventory. Several industry sector reports provide details about this region’s clusters, of chemistry and pharmacy for example, or of information and communications technology. The ever increasing demand for mobility is taken care of, not only through the expansion of Frankfurt Airport but also by an initiative as ‘bike + business’. The continued expansion of the Regionalpark maintains and develops space for recreation and leisure for inhabitants of and visitors to this region. This list could be continued.

We will continue to do our very best to advance this region. The vision provides us with the aims and objectives.

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Reason for this Strategic Vision

A population that is no longer growing; a changing economic structure; increasing mobility, and its effects on the towns and municipalities of our region – these are the challenges with which our region will be faced over the next 15 years. We intend to face up to this situation and to create a Strategic Vision for the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region. This Strategic Vision forms the basis for regional planning in Südhessen – for the first Regional Land Use Plan in a German conurbation, and for the Südhessen Regional Plan, which covers a wider area.

In this Strategic Vision, all the municipalities of the region have agreed on the goals which the region intends to pursue up to the year 2020 in order to assert itself in the national and international competition between regions. To do this, a broad consensus is needed. Once finalised, this Strategic Vision has an advisory function for spatial planning in our region.

A broad process of discussion across our region was necessary in order for this Strategic Vision to be developed. To achieve this, the Planungsverband Ballungsraum Frankfurt/Rhein-Main and the Regierungspräsidium Darmstadt organised two workshops, each with over one hundred participants. In these workshops, over 600 suggestions for the Strategic Vision were gathered. From January 2004 onwards, a Drafting Committee made up of representatives from the municipalities, external experts, and members of the staff of the Planungsverband and of the Regierungspräsidium jointly developed a draft document. This draft was discussed in a third workshop on 1 April 2004 with over 230 participants, and over 600 suggestions were generated. This process was followed by a process of discussion and decision-making in the Regionalversammlung Südhessen and in the Planungsverband’s Verbandskammer.

This brochure is divided into the following sections:
- The Strategic Vision in brief
- Our region, today
- Our region, a changing place
- Frankfurt/Rhein-Main 2020 – the European metropolitan region

The fundamental objectives contained in German Federal and Land legislation covering spatial planning are, of course, the foundation of our Strategic Vision. For that reason, we have not included these objectives in the current brochure. They include objectives such as protecting the natural world as the basis for life, and the overreaching goal of spatially balanced and sustainable development.

1 The term »Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region« is used, in this brochure, to refer to the Darmstadt Regierungsbezirk, or Regional Authority area, also known as Südhessen. The economic region of Frankfurt/Rhein-Main covers a larger area.
The Strategic Vision in brief

We intend to develop the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region as a leading European metropolitan region by the year 2020. To do this, we will have to assert ourselves in the international competition between regions. One prerequisite for this process is that everyone involved in the region coordinates their efforts, because communication and the exchange of information form the basis of a successful region. The spatial planning process intends to play its part in attaining this goal.

The particular strength of the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region lies in the multiplicity of towns and municipalities that it is made up of; alongside the core, in the form of the city of Frankfurt, we have a large number of smaller centres. We intend to make use of this extraordinary quality in a metropolitan region by developing the various different strengths and potentials of the different towns and rural areas. We intend to secure the development of the urban centres, make optimal use of existing settlement areas, and, in particular specific cases, develop new areas for settlement.

Our region has attained a high level of economic performance and has a modern sectoral structure. Our task now is to more clearly define the region’s profile and to meet the needs of a dynamic economy. The Competence Networks in the areas of biotechnology, finance, communication technology and media, logistics, materials science and management consulting are especially important for the region’s profile and deserve particular support.

Our region provides attractive employment opportunities and is an international nodal point for networks of goods, services, finances and information. We intend to optimise people’s mobility. For this reason, it will be necessary to develop all our transport facilities further to ensure that our region remains competitive into the future. We will continue to improve the exchange of goods as the basis for our development.

Frankfurt/Rhein-Main is home to more research institutions than other similar regions. Demands are increasing, and include the need for interdisciplinary cooperation between different research centres. We intend to make use of this existing network of institutions and develop the region as a region of knowledge.

Our region has always been a focus of interest for people from many different nations. We intend to continue to be an open, tolerant location, and to remain a particularly attractive place for young, qualified people from around the world. At the same time, we intend to be an attractive place to live for young people, and to be a region which is family-friendly.

The contrasts contained within our region make it special. These contrasts – culture, urban spaces and areas for relaxation and recreation – offer a high quality of life. We intend to increase this quality of life and to ensure that the people of our region enjoy living here. We plan to improve the cultural and recreation facilities in our region, as well as our attractive landscape and, to do this, to extend the Regionalpark.
Our region, today

Urban skylines and idyllic landscapes; a thriving economy and a slower pace of life: today, its contrasts are the most characteristic features of the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region.

Us and them

Comparing other German and European regions to Frankfurt/Rhein-Main calls up a variety of images: Munich, a high-tech region with a high quality of life; Hamburg, an open, tolerant media and port city, or even London, considerably larger, a financial and cultural metropolis. But Frankfurt/Rhein-Main cannot be characterised using one single phrase. Almost 200 cities, towns and rural municipalities combine to form the polycentric structure which characterises Frankfurt/Rhein-Main as a transport centre, a business location, a centre for research, and a space for living.

Frankfurt – the core of the region

The city of Frankfurt is a point of reference often used as a synonym for the entire region. It is the centre of the region’s economic and cultural life. Frankfurt’s skyline, the Stock Exchange, the trade fair grounds, the European Central Bank, the financial sector overall, the management consultancy firms and advertising agencies are what makes the city a place of international importance – along with its function as a transport hub in the form of a major international airport. Every day, over 300,000 people commute to work in Frankfurt alone.

There are four other major cities in the region; each has developed its own individual profile. Darmstadt is a major research centre; Hanau is the city of materials science; Offenbach is the city of design, and Wiesbaden is the capital of the Land of Hessen. All of these cities possess the advantages of urban life, with a wide variety of different neighbourhoods and cultural institutions.

The Rhein and Main rivers, the backbone of the region

The region is named after its two main rivers, the Rhine and the Main. Here, at the centre of Germany, where ancient river valleys meet, a metropolitan region has developed over many hundreds of years.
Frankfurt/Rhein-Main and its neighbouring regions

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region and the bordering areas of Mittelhessen, Bayerischer Untermain, Rhein-Neckar and Rheinhessen maintain close relationships and engage in constant exchange with their neighbours for example, in the form of contacts between research institutions. And, of course, their inhabitants take up jobs and enjoy the cultural life and recreational facilities available to all, across regional borders.

People from many nations

Our region is an ever-popular destination for people from all four corners of the world. One of the reasons for this is that our population has always been international, tolerant, and welcoming. Frankfurt alone is home to more than 170,000 people who are not German citizens. The region can boast European and international schools, along with some 88 different consulates; it is also home, for example, to the largest South Korean community in Germany. With 3.8 million inhabitants and almost 2 million people at work, Frankfurt/Rhein-Main is one of Europe's major metropolitan regions.

Research and education

Very few other places in Germany possess such a high concentration of universities, art colleges and research institutes. These research institutions offer a broad range of specialisations. International schools and universities and various professional training institutes complete the picture.

A centre for services, and more

The economic structure of the region is based on our particular strengths in financial services, consultancy services, logistics, the media, and software development. These sectors provide over 70 percent of the jobs in the region. In addition, the automotive construction sector, the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, biotechnology, materials science and communication technologies, with their research centres and manufacturing facilities, play a vital role in making our region future-proof. Our economy is also based on the huge potential provided by small and medium enterprises. And finally, the region is also well-known for its large number of globally-oriented decision-making and sales centres, and for the airport, the region’s largest employer.
A dynamic business location

Today, organisations communicate and cooperate with partners around the world, 24 hours a day, manufacture products just-in-time and provide services overnight. A traditional location for trade, kept alive with the international trade fair grounds in Frankfurt and numerous regional trade fairs, and our central location, have meant that this region has become a centre for the transfer of goods, services, money and information. Frankfurt is home to Germany’s most important internet exchange, and its international airport is the most important hub on the European landmass. The region is characterised by rapid access to all the key global markets and excellent accessibility for customers.

Attractive landscapes

The vineyards of the Rheingau and Bergstraße regions, the rolling, forested hills in Odenwald, Spessart, Taunus and Vogelsberg, and the rural, open landscape of the Wetterau, with its fertile soils, form the context in which our dynamic region is situated. Our landscape offers a high quality of life for its inhabitants and is also a favoured destination for visitors; it invites us to explore it, to take long cycle tours or relaxing walks.

2,500 years of history

The history of our region, which goes back more than 2,500 years, was for many centuries shaped by the presence of a multitude of small principalities and dukedoms together with the Free Imperial City of Frankfurt. This inheritance has left our region with an extraordinary potential consisting of a variety of small settlements, buildings and monuments, all of historical importance. They are layers of history, housing the stories of generations.

Culture and comfort

With the State Theatres in Darmstadt and Wiesbaden, the Frankfurt theatres and the Alte Oper, an unparalleled range of museums, the Rheingau Musik Festival and other major events, the region enjoys an extraordinary variety of cultural life. Quieter or more private activities in the region include enjoying a glass in one of the popular apple wine taverns in Frankfurt, in the wineries of the Rheingau region or at the Wiesbaden Weinfest; or mountain-biking in the Taunus hills, paragliding on the Melibokus hill in the Odenwald, family walks or cycles along the Mainuferweg (River Main paths) or in the Regionalpark; festivals such as the Wäldchestag, the Museum Quay festival, or the Heiner festival or Wilhelmstraße festival; and finally, an extremely active network of private sports clubs and voluntary groups and associations. But it is precisely this combination of these different activities which is the strength of our region. Metropolitan life and a dynamic economy on the one hand – quiet, private comfort on the other: life is full of contrasts.
Our region, a changing place

Globalisation and the demographic changes expected in the coming years will pose new challenges for the region. In order to ensure a first-class network of professional training institutions and jobs, combined with a good supply of quality residential accommodation and good transport links, the region and its municipalities will need to develop a clear profile.

Demographic changes
According to recent forecasts, the population of Germany will not increase over the next 15 years. By 2050, in fact, it is expected that the population will have decreased. In addition, people are living longer and there will be fewer people of working age. The consequences of this development on the type of accommodation and municipal infrastructure people will require must be taken into account. In contrast to the national trend, our region may see a slight increase in population over the next 15 years, due to migration. But this will only happen if we achieve the right levels of economic prosperity, provide the jobs and homes needed, and offer high quality of life. However, when divided between the 187 municipalities in the region, even this level of inward migration would be low.

People on the move
People are attracted to regions that offer them a variety of different opportunities for employment and training. Young, highly-qualified people, in particular, are often highly mobile and rarely build up a personal relationship with the place and the region in which they are living. Here, the rich variety of the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region actually creates a problem: it takes a long time to develop people’s sense of regional identity, to get them to identify with the region.

Mobility versus quality of life
This region is an important European transport hub. Both the amount of traffic in the region and the distances travelled, will increase in the future, due, in particular, to the extension of the EU to the east, the continual increase in goods transportation, and people’s leisure-time behaviour. At the same time, the region has to cope with a high level of internal, regional traffic. On the one hand, people want to be as mobile as possible; on the other, they would also like to live in residential areas with high quality of life and which are free from noise pollution. Combining these two factors leads to conflicts between objectives. Solving these conflicts is one of the biggest challenges with which the region is faced.
Competition

The regions of Europe and of the world are in competition: for businesses looking for new locations, for qualified staff, for inhabitants, for research institutions, for students. The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region is not in a position to compete with the low costs offered by eastern Europe, India or China. Many different regions can provide land, excellent transport infrastructures, attractive places to live and further education facilities. Even a supply of well-educated potential employees is no longer a unique characteristic; across the world, this is becoming common.

The challenge for our region is to develop an internationally recognisable economic profile. To do this, we must focus on specific sectors, combining competencies in research, development, manufacturing, services and education. Only by establishing excellent quality and new products and services, developed individually for specific customers, will our regional economy succeed. Here, our medium-sized enterprises, with their flexible ways of working, have excellent prospects if they orient themselves towards international markets. An appropriate policy of economic promotion must create the basic conditions in which this can happen.

A knowledge society

One prerequisite for new, competitive products and services is that the people of the region are well qualified and highly skilled. The most important factor in this regard is the quality of schools, universities and further education facilities. Vital, too, are innovative businesses, research which has close links to business, knowledge transfer, and an innovation-friendly climate. The quality of life in our region will determine the outcome of competition in terms of attracting staff and innovative businesses to the region and keeping successful organisations here permanently.

Societal change

Differing ways of living, different family structures, and different styles of life, need freedom: freedom to live in experimental, innovative ways. Spatial planning should not prevent this. One of the characteristics of a cosmopolitan metropolitan region is that different groups can find their own space in the region.
Urbanised landscapes

Over recent decades, this region has been shaped by continual increases in population and in the numbers at work. Initially, this development was concentrated on the major towns and core cities. Since the early 1970s, however, this growth has increasingly taken place in the suburbs – creating an urbanised landscape. People’s desire for an affordable house of their own outside the city limits and the increasing mobility of society, have speeded up this process. Businesses, too, have good reasons to locate outside towns and cities: there is more land available, the infrastructure is good, costs are lower, and transport links are excellent. It is likely that the core cities of Frankfurt, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Hanau and Wiesbaden will be further weakened by people and businesses moving out to the suburbs.

Settlement versus landscapes

In recent years, the amount of open countryside in the region has been reduced to create residential and commercial areas, roads, and railways lines. There is a basic conflict between people’s desire for as much living space as possible and for good transport connections and their wish to be able to enjoy nature close to where they live. Municipalities, too, want to grow, but also to preserve the ecological balancing functions of the open countryside.

The profile of the region and the municipalities

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region needs to take on two major tasks. Firstly, it must present an image of itself to the world, creating a profile as a region with good educational facilities, attractive jobs, and a high quality of life – a region where people enjoy living and working. Secondly, the individual municipalities must, as part of their role in managing their own affairs, develop their individual strengths – without neglecting positive synergy effects with other towns and municipalities. Thus, they can develop productive competition which will benefit the region, and play their part in creating the region’s profile.
Frankfurt / Rhein-Main 2020 – a European metropolitan region

Frankfurt/Rhein-Main, a knowledge region and a business region with high quality of life – international, multi-cultural and innovative: this is the profile the region intends to establish for itself until 2020. As a leading European metropolitan region, it is pursuing, through the cooperation of many different people and agencies, the following equally valid objectives:

- region of well-developed centres
- region of young people and families
- region of science and of education
- region of innovative sectors
- region of mobility and logistics
- region of attractive landscapes and culture

Cooperation of many different people and agencies

No man is an island and today, the world is more closely interlinked than ever. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. For this reason, communication and the exchange of information form the basis of a successful region. One individual body or municipality cannot, alone, meet the variety of demands made of it. But the region, as a cooperation between a large number of different agents, can ensure that everyone profits from, and participates in, the overall network.

This competitive advantage is of benefit both to each individual and to the region as a whole. We intend to work together more closely with other metropolitan regions on a national and European level in order to increase efficiency and to jointly represent our interests in Europe. This Strategic Vision is an important step towards presenting our region to the world with a single voice.

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region is already one of the most important nodal points in the financial, transport and data exchange networks, both nationally and internationally. We intend to secure this position, and to develop it further.

One of the most important tasks of spatial planning is to promote the ordering of functions and uses in order to shorten journeys and increase accessibility. To achieve this, settlement planning and landscape planning, transport planning and transport management must work in unison.

The settlement structure of our region can be seen as a networked urban landscape in which the different municipalities, with their differing strengths, complement one another but are, at the same time, dependent on each other. The relationship between built-up areas and open spaces that has developed in the region over recent decades must be re-examined and re-evaluated in the context of the jointly developed planning objectives cited above. On the one hand, it will be necessary to increase the value of existing buildings and open spaces using planning instruments; on the other, new land for development will be needed, especially in order to promote the development of small and medium enterprises.
A region of strong urban centres

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region takes its strength and its unique quality from the large variety of the cities, towns and municipalities that make it up. Several different centres form a region, with Frankfurt as the core city; but these different centres can only be a motor for development when combined. We expressly intend to underline the importance of these centres for development. Depending on the position of each centre, this will have a different quality, in order to best develop and make use of its individual potential. We will not question the right of each municipality to manage its own affairs.

We must strive to attain, or to uphold, equivalent living conditions across the entire region. The needs of groups that have particular requirements with regard to the accessibility of workplaces, retail outlets and infrastructural facilities – women, older people and people with disabilities – must be taken into account. A region which is made up of independent municipalities with strong urban centres is more flexible and can further increase the quality of the services it provides. The land needed for these services must be provided and areas for further development must be reserved.

The towns functioning as major central places are the large cities of Frankfurt, Offenbach, Wiesbaden, Darmstadt and Hanau, and the many medium-sized towns throughout the region.

The conurbation

- The conurbation area is of decisive importance for the international competitiveness of our region. By ‘the conurbation’, we mean the mainly urbanised area stretching from the Vordertaunus in the north to the Rhein-Neckar area in the south, and from Wiesbaden in the west to Hanau in the east. In order to succeed in competition with other European metropolitan regions, we intend to focus the growth opportunities for the region on this area.

- The urban quality of the central zones of the towns and municipalities in the conurbation must be strengthened by providing an adequate supply of housing. Land should be developed in a compact manner, and used for residential, commercial, infrastructure, culture and retail purposes.

- The central places in the conurbation are already, to a large extent, characterised by specialisation and complementary functions. We intend to increase the visibility of these individual profiles, and to develop them further, in the interest of the region as a whole.

- Existing retail centres outside town centres and city centres present particular challenges for planning. Our objective is to actively improve these locations by locating complementary organisations and uses there and by attempting to integrate these areas into the urban fabric. In this way, we intend to create new, integrated centres.
Outside the conurbation

- A minimum amount of land for development and of infrastructural facilities must be provided in every municipality. Growth potentials for housing, business and infrastructure which cannot be realised within the conurbation should be concentrated along the transport axes.

- The central places outside the conurbation shall continue to provide all the major functions for their areas, in terms of retailing, employment and infrastructure. In individual cases, it may be wise to create groups of functions and services in the form of town networks.

Living town centres

- A vision for living town centres is to be developed in order to maintain the functioning of all the towns and municipalities in the region. The objective is to preserve the special cultural and historical attractiveness of town centres and to increase the atmosphere of a ‘shopping culture’ – partly in order to counteract the trend towards convenience purchasing in out-of-town centres. Town centres should also provide a range of opportunities for entertainment. For this reason, retail stores, services and cultural attractions should be combined at individual locations.

- Where new, large-scale retail developments are planned, the towns and municipalities must coordinate their activities and cooperate with each other.

Built environment

- To succeed in keeping inhabitants here and attracting migrants from other parts of Germany and from abroad, the region does not merely need to provide employment; it must also provide a high-quality built landscape and interesting cultural events. The suggested Bauaustellung, a national long-term building exhibition, combined with a first-rate programme of cultural events, could form the basis for this.
A region of young people and families

Our region wants to be attractive to young people. We enjoy having people from across the world in our region and welcome them here; we want them to choose our region as a place to live and work in. At the same time, we also want older people to feel at home here. Our region is multi-ethnic and international, and we want it to stay that way. We intend to carry on the long tradition of citizen involvement in our towns and municipalities.

- Schooling and childcare play an important role in integrating the different groups of people into the life of their local districts. These services should be extended.

- One overriding objective is that the region is family-friendly. We would like additional places in all-day childcare and all-day schooling to be provided as needed. If we manage to make it even easier for people in our region to combine family life with their career, this will increase the region’s attractiveness for young families.

- We expect employment opportunities to be created in all areas demanding high levels of knowledge, in business-to-business services, and in training and education. In addition, we expect that there will be a strong demand for labour in services for younger and older people living in the region, whether in the areas of recreation, culture or nursing care. We intend to improve the conditions surrounding people’s working lives by providing appropriate housing, infrastructure, culture, recreational facilities, and an attractive landscape.

- For older people, a wide range of services from infrastructural facilities to cultural events should be provided. In order to ensure this, we must construct infrastructural facilities in such a way that they can be adapted to changing population age structures. Attractive housing arrangements in the centre of settlements should be promoted, as they allow people to remain in a familiar environment.
A region of science and of education

One important prerequisite for strengthening the position of Frankfurt/Rhein-Main as a knowledge region is to extend facilities for both basic and applied research. Our objective is to make knowledge the driving force behind our region. New products and services should be developed and marketed successfully with the help of business.

- We intend to continue to build on our strengths in biotechnology, materials research, information and communication technology, media and design, and finance and business. Special attention must be paid to supporting international exchange.

- The cooperation between research institutions and business must be intensified. This will assist businesses and investors in gaining access to the most modern technologies and organisational processes, and will facilitate universities in marketing the results of their research. The spatial proximity of specialised manufacturing centres and suppliers and of research and development centres must therefore be actively promoted. One initiative which is particularly deserving of support is the Biotech Initiative by the Land of Hessen and the City of Frankfurt, aimed at strengthening the pharmaceutical industry.

- The increasing links between different specialist areas of research, and the need to take societal and environmental issues into account, means that interdisciplinary cooperation both within and between individual universities and research institutes will continue to gain in importance. We intend to support and develop interdisciplinary research and existing research networks in the region. This also entails promoting relationships with research centres in the neighbouring regions.

- To ensure that the labour force is sufficiently well-qualified, we intend to provide adequate facilities in the region for continuing education during people’s working lives. Here, a more intensive cooperation between the businesses, political institutions and public bodies engaged in training is needed. The “dual apprenticeship” model, combining practical on-the-job training and theoretical learning, should be extended, as should the provision of specialist professional training academies.

- Particular emphasis should be placed on opportunities for international training and study. Additional international schools should be set up and school-leaving diplomas should, increasingly, correspond to international criteria.
A region of innovative sectors

We intend to define the region’s economic profile more sharply. The competence networks in biotechnology, finance, communication technology and media, logistics, materials science and management consultancy form a good basis for doing so. In addition, sectors such as the automotive construction and chemical industries, life science and health, and nanotechnology have excellent potential for further development. The existing high standard should be further improved. To do this, we intend to improve the conditions for research, development, manufacturing, and the related services, and to promote cooperations. This should help to tighten individual businesses’ links to the region.

- We intend to place greater emphasis, in the future, on the needs of medium-sized enterprises and trades, and to assist these businesses in orienting themselves towards international markets.

- Support will be provided for new businesses being set up in the proximity of universities. This will increase the market potential of new products, processes and working methods. Frankfurt/Rhein-Main wants to become a region of entrepreneurs. We intend to support initiatives such as the »Gründerstadt Offenbach« (Entrepreneurial City of Offenbach) and the »Route A 66«.

- Sector-specific lands for development should be provided both within towns and municipalities, i.e. in already built-up areas, and development land supplied – mainly in central places. Good access to transport and data networks is an important condition, and these links must be developed further.

- Planning should provide support for the increasing interconnectedness of work, home and recreation – both in terms of space and time – by ensuring that built-up areas provide a mixture of residential and commercial functions. This can create areas of especially high quality in terms of spatial planning and architecture, and highly attractive neighbourhoods.

- An active regional economic promotion policy must advertise the region internationally and combine its strengths. Municipal economic promotion bodies have the task of improving the local conditions for business.
A region of mobility and logistics

We intend to safeguard and develop the mobility of our people and the exchange of goods as a basis for the development of the region. Vital elements in this regard include the airport, which is an international hub, a functioning road network, a well-developed railway infrastructure, good water transport routes, and an attractive local public transport system. We intend to make use of the individual strengths of these different forms of transport, networking them and developing them by means of integrated transport management. Our transport system must be developed and designed in such a way that everyone, including children, young people and older people, can enjoy full access to it, taking their differing needs into account.

- Frankfurt/Main airport is the biggest employer in the region. Its function as an international hub must be maintained and developed further. This is the only way in which adequate provision can be made for the increasing need for mobility, both for the population and for business. There is a conflict of objectives between economic interests and people’s desire for mobility on the one hand, and their need for quiet on the other. This conflict must be taken into account.

- The region should be integrated into the European high-speed railway network in an optimal manner.

- Local public transport should ensure that locations in the region can be reached quickly. We intend to promote tangential connections and to continue to extend measures such as the integrated timetabling system. New residential areas should be located in such a way that they are accessible by public transport.

- The network of roads in the region is extensive and of a high standard. Additions to the network should be built if any remaining bottlenecks cannot be dealt with through traffic management or through road-widening. Planning for tangential routes should be completed and realised quickly. Bypasses are to be recommended if this would considerably improve the quality of life of residents.

- River shipping routes should be extended, as these represent an economical way of transporting goods. In particular, solutions combining the different modes of transport – rail, road and water – should be promoted.

- We intend to develop a regional network of cycling routes for everyday transport, as part of the network of individual transport facilities. In addition, the networks of walking and long-distance cycling routes should be extended – so that everyone can explore the Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region at a leisurely pace.

- We intend to develop the region’s role as a centre for trade and logistics. Future-proof logistic locations will secure the region’s role as a distribution centre.
A region of attractive landscapes and culture

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region includes a large amount of green areas, some even stretching into its urban centres. Whether parks, forests or fields, these areas are as much a part of the region’s appearance as the built-up areas. Across much of the landscape, the region can boast a balance of different types of land use; this balance should be preserved.

Large areas of southern Hessen landscape are characterised by fruit trees scattered across the fields. They are a sea of blossoms in the spring, a home for a wide variety of species in the summer, and provide the source for numerous harvest and juice-pressing fairs in the autumn – and for excellent apple wine. In short, they are a living part of our natural and cultural heritage.

Protecting the soil, water and our local climate is very important for securing our quality of life. By developing a long-term, spatially-managed monitoring system for these vulnerable assets, we intend to ensure that they can be used sustainably and to make a contribution to improving their quality. When building, we intend to treat land and soil sparingly and to protect resources. For this reason, more compact building – compatible with social, health and environmental goals – and re-using old sites which have previously been built on should take priority over zoning new land for development.

The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main region can boast a wide variety of different habitats and species of plants and animals. A network of broad, uninterrupted areas linked in the regional biotope network and integrated into the European network of protected areas, Natura 2000, already provides protection for species and for habitats; this must be preserved.

The region places high priority on nature protection and protecting its natural resources. However, intensive farming and business activities and a high standard of living cannot be achieved without placing stress on our environment. The principle of sustainability should be put into practice by making use of the most modern technology. Our goal is to utilise intelligent energy-saving measures and renewable energy sources alongside conventional sources of energy. Existing noise pollution should be reduced, and unavoidable sources of noise should be planned in such a way that disturbances to the region’s inhabitants are avoided. We intend to preserve existing areas of quiet, and extend them where possible.
Town parks in the urban centres

- Many residential areas in the region have extensive green spaces; there are numerous parks, such as the Rosenhöhe in Darmstadt, the Kurpark in Wiesbaden, or the Günthersburgpark in Frankfurt. However, in many of the urban centres in the region and especially in the conurbation area, there is a lack of open spaces that can be used for a variety of activities. We intend to support the preservation of these historic and modern monuments to the art of landscape gardening because they form a vital part of our regional identity.

The Regionalpark

- Changes in recreational behaviour are leading to changes in the demands made on the landscape, especially in the built-up areas of the region. The idea of the Regionalpark meets this development head-on; it safeguards the open countryside between towns, increases its perceived value, and makes it more accessible to the public. This idea is creating a new kind of landscape and a new kind of use of the landscape, and is receiving attention across Europe. Including rural areas around the conurbation area, such as, in particular, the areas of Wetterau and the Main-Kinzig-Kreis, offers the opportunity of increasing the range of attractions provided by the Regionalpark. We intend to link the Regionalpark with the networks of urban green in the different towns and cities, in particular with the Grüngürtel Frankfurt (Frankfurt Green Belt). We also intend to create transition zones to the neighbouring nature parks by including rural areas. The Regionalpark concept should continue to be developed and extended to cover broader areas.

Nature parks

- The extensive landscapes of the Naturparks Hochtaunus, Hoher Vogelsberg, Hessischer Spessart, Geopark Bergstraße-Odenwald and Rhein-Taunus, and the river landscapes of the Rhine, Main and Neckar and their tributaries are one of the region’s riches. They are an integral part of our identity and many of the region’s historic roots are found here. These often rural areas should be preserved and developed and their links with the conurbation should be promoted; the settlement structures, often still village-like, should be conserved. The varied landscape created by villages alternating with forests, tilled fields and open landscapes is as much a characteristic feature as the rolling hills themselves. These elements should be integrated, preserved and developed.
Historic inheritance and attractive new cultural activities

- Few other regions in Germany have such a variety of different historic roots and such a wide spectrum of cultural activities. Our objective is to preserve this cultural heritage and to create new events and sights. Of particular importance are the World Heritage Sites recognised by UNESCO such as the Lorsch Abbey, the Messel Pit Fossil Site, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley and, in the future, the Limes, the boundary of the Roman Empire. These features underline the special quality of our cultural landscapes and are part of the region’s image in particular for the outside world.

- We intend to develop the range of cultural and artistic attractions in the region, which is of national and international stature, as an essential element of our quality of life and as a contribution to the region’s profile. To do this, we intend to coordinate the existing attractions and integrate new ones. Successful points of departure include the Route of Industrial Culture, the Celtic Road, the Route of Garden Culture, or the idea of a network of »Frankfurt/Rhein-Main Festivals« as part of the suggested Bauausstellung, a long-term national building exhibition.

Sport, leisure and recreation

- The open countryside between the towns and municipalities in the conurbation, and in the rural areas of the region, provides abundant space for sporting and recreational activities. We intend to maintain the wide variety of sporting activities available in the region in order to increase the quality of life of all the region’s inhabitants. In addition, we intend to provide space for new types of sport and to develop and promote a network of routes for cycling, walking and horse riding across the entire region.

- The lakes in the region suitable for swimming are extremely popular destinations. They play a major role in the quality of life provided by attractive landscapes. In order to maintain and improve this quality of life, we intend to provide adequate areas for water activities of all kinds. For this purpose, increasing the water quality of the Rhine and the Main and their tributaries is an important objective. We support the use of former mining areas to create local »lake landscapes«.

- Major national and international sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup in 2006, the Ironman Germany, the Henninger Turm cycling race and the international horse riding tournament in Wiesbaden are branding events for the region. We intend to provide modern facilities for further sporting highlights and to develop southern Hessen as a meeting point for sports enthusiasts.
Agriculture and forestry

The ecological and social functions of agricultural and forested land in the region are gaining increasing attention. Farmers and forest owners have an important responsibility for preserving and developing these areas; the economic function of the land should not be the only priority.

- In some areas of the conurbation, agriculture must take on a subordinate role, in order that a mosaic of uses including grasslands, special crops, the Regionalpark, the biotope network and forests can develop. Agriculture provides the inhabitants with high-quality foods characteristic of the region and is establishing itself as a service provider.

- On highly fertile soils, especially in the rural areas, farms maintain the historic character of the cultural landscape. Vineyards using environmentally-friendly techniques have the same function for the appearance of the landscape. Grasslands maintain an open landscape, and ensure that animals will still be kept in the region. Securing these open areas is thus closely linked to sustainable agricultural goals, including, in particular, livestock husbandry and a corresponding approach to marketing.

- Large areas of forest are a characteristic feature of southern Hessen and we intend to preserve them. In addition, we intend to strengthen the forest, depending on its local importance, by using forms of forest management which are close to nature; this will also secure its social functions. Forested areas in the zone of transition between the conurbation and rural areas should increasingly take on the characteristics of accessible urban woodlands.
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