



Foreign Affairs Strategy of the City of Zurich

Key points of foreign policy, updated in 2014

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Current status

Zurich is growing and prospering, and that is good news. It proves that the city is attractive and successful. Growth and success nevertheless create significant challenges: the economic foundations must remain constant, social cohesion needs to be fostered while infrastructure and services have to be both attractive and future-orientated.

For many of these challenges, it is becoming increasingly difficult to deal with and overcome them alone in what is a globally connected world. In order to be able to maintain Zurich's quality of life and well-being in the future, the city needs sustainable relationships and is reliant on partnerships. It must also represent its own interests ever more actively on a regional, national and international basis.

With this in mind, the Urban Development department of the City of Zurich created an Office of Foreign Affairs in 2008 and also decided on a strategy (STRB 568/2008 and 1111/2008). The latter was an extension of the City's Zurich 2025 strategies which had been drawn up in 2007 and which saw the city council set out to strengthen Zurich's standing as a location and as a destination, to promote its stance as an open and international city and to nurture various partnerships across national borders.

After four years of development phase, the previous foreign affairs strategy was re-examined with the aim of further strengthening and targeting the City of Zurich's foreign policy activities. The previous activities of the foreign affairs department were analysed in terms of their usefulness and focus based on the new framework conditions and challenges that the City of Zurich was dealing with. The following updated City of Zurich foreign affairs strategy 2014 is the result of this re-examination.

The foreign affairs department's activities to date have had positive results overall:

- Over the past four years, the City of Zurich has managed to strengthen its relationships with important partner cities, municipalities and cantons (for example as part of the Zurich Metropolitan Conference that was founded in 2009 and the Association of Swiss cities (SSV)).

Exchanges with other cities on subjects relevant to future urban development as part of city networks and partnerships were increased within the framework of specific projects (for example the City-Hinterland cooperation as part of the City of Zurich's City Region.Net project in conjunction with 12 neighbouring municipalities and the activities within the "Eurocities" European cities network).

- Lobbying by the City of Zurich in Berne was increased (for example by means of regular contact with the Zurich members of the Swiss Federal Assembly and by professional work within the Association of Swiss cities).
- The image of the City and the Canton of Zurich was re-focused, and this was combined with the development of integrated location and destination marketing (in conjunction with the Canton of Zurich and Zürich Tourism).

- Zurich's international presence as a city of finance, education, research and culture was strengthened (with its participation along with Basle and Geneva at Expo 2010 Shanghai China and the 2014 "Zurich meets New York" culture and knowledge festival, to give just two examples).

The updated 2014 foreign affairs strategy illustrates the image of the City of Zurich which shapes its foreign policy relations, which areas of foreign policy activities will have to be adapted in the years to come and which challenges and strategic aims will form the basis of these activities.

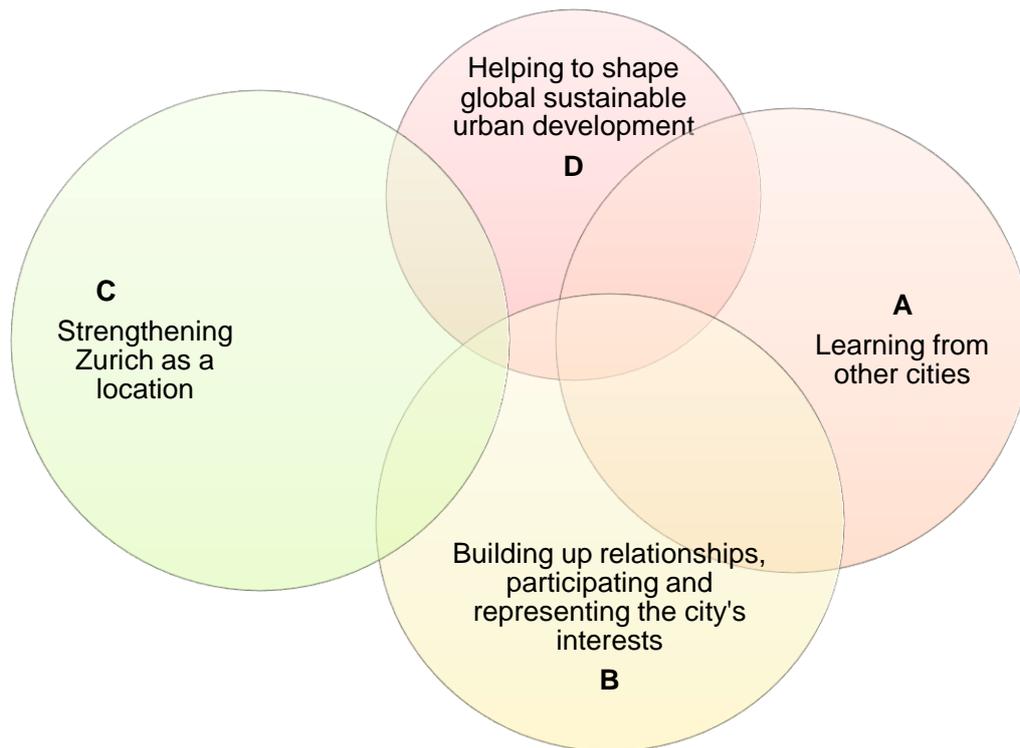
Zurich's image around the world

Zurich is a city with strong international ties, a dynamic economy and a socially, culturally and ethnically diverse society. The City of Zurich forms the core of the Zurich Metropolitan Area, whose international reputation and economic strength are intimately linked with a globally recognised quality of life, an innovative education and research landscape and tolerant social attitudes. It has excellent qualities to offer as a cultural, scientific and creative location. As a hub for leading international businesses as well as national, regional and local companies from a whole host of sectors, the City of Zurich is an attractive place for employees from all around the world. In order to ensure that these qualities do not suffer in the face of new challenges and international competition among locations, the City of Zurich has a vibrant foreign policy which involves actively showcasing its strengths and nurturing its relationships within the metropolitan area and with other cities in Switzerland, Europe and around the world.

Cities and agglomerations around the world currently face similar sets of challenges. Everyone is searching for innovative solutions to the issues of population growth, environmentally sound sustainable mobility, sufficient infrastructure and services for all levels of the population, a sustainable and diversified economy, financing issues, safety, the environment, culture or quality of life. Via its foreign affairs, the city maintains active exchanges with other municipalities in cities and agglomerations, identifies the right solutions for Zurich and is happy to pass on its experiences of sustainable urban development for the benefit of others.

Foreign policy issues

The updated 2014 foreign affairs strategy has defined four foreign policy issues.



A) Learn from other cities

B) Build up relationships beyond local, regional and national borders to strengthen the city's interests and levels of participation

C) Reinforce Zurich as a location: promote it with the city's scope for political action and whilst maintaining its economic interests, and

D) Actively help to shape global sustainable urban development.

Challenges and strategic aims

Below, the core challenges in the four areas of the City of Zurich's 2014 foreign affairs strategy are adapted and the corresponding strategic goals defined. We also explain which focuses and core topics from the previous foreign affairs strategy are to be *continued* or *developed* (✓ continuation of proven practice) and which specific tasks are to be the subject of a *new focus* (★) in the coming years.

Priority A: Learn from other cities

1) Challenge: the City of Zurich is to work with others to find different solutions to the challenges of urban spaces in the 21st century

Many cities in Switzerland, in Europe and indeed around the world are currently facing similar challenges. Whether it is for traffic, housing, the economy, finance, the environment, culture or quality of life, the questions are similar and so are the ways of finding an answer. Exchanges of knowledge and experience are thus valuable, as it means that each individual city is not required to reinvent the wheel. Solutions that have been borne out elsewhere can be used and adapted by Zurich – and vice versa.

2) Strategic goal: Strengthen international exchanges with other cities

- **Focus on short-term cooperation (★)**

Zurich systematically and actively engages in short-term co-operations with other cities (primarily in Europe) on specific ranges of topics that are of significance for the city. Knowledge and exchange transfers are heavily weighted towards Zurich as a centre for knowledge and research, for finance, the creative economy, culture, health care, life sciences, the hi-tech and cleantech industries, hosting congresses and tourism. These topics correspond to the priorities of the Zurich 2025 strategies.

- **Working with selected city networks (✓)**

The City of Zurich fosters mutual transfers of knowledge and exchanges of best-practice experiences in working groups that are part of international city networks, most notably "Eurocities". It also participates, within the scope of the Interreg/URBACT Programme, in European Union projects which contribute to global sustainable urban development. This enables knowledge to be gained – or indeed shared – in a way that focuses on specific subjects.

- **City partnership with San Francisco (✓)**

The City of Zurich is strengthening the city partnership with San Francisco and launching projects in the fields of life sciences, ICT, culture, green architecture and culture, which will benefit the companies, start-ups and creative firms involved on both sides.

- **Coordinate the exchange of experiences (★)**

The exchange of experiences between Zurich city government's departments and services and other cities involved, either in Switzerland or abroad, will be documented on an information platform which will be run by the City of Zurich foreign affairs department. It will be accessible to all parties involved and will contribute to expertise management.

Priority B: Expand relationships, represent interests and participate

1) Challenge: the City of Zurich should be able to participate appropriately at a higher level

11% of Switzerland's overall GDP is created in Zurich, and one job in every 11 in Switzerland is located there. The City of Zurich forms the economic, social and cultural centre of an agglomeration and of the Zurich metropolitan area, which is an important driver for Switzerland both economically and socially, and belongs to central regions of Europe. This economic capacity combined with its social and cultural significance stands in contrast to the modest levels of political participation on a regional and national level. Zurich produces much but is given little say.

2) Strategic goal: Strengthening the representation of the city's interests on a regional and national level

- **Active lobbying for the City of Zurich (★)**

The City of Zurich carries out active and timely lobbying of federal parliamentarians who deal with important subjects as far as the city is concerned.

- **Membership of the SSV (✓)**

On a national level, Zurich is continuing to target the strengthening the political position of cities with the aim to include urban themes on the national political agenda. Zurich is on the board of the Association of Swiss cities and involved in several of its committees. It also plays a role in the TAK tripartite agglomeration conference, where the city has committed to various relevant TAK-run projects such as the Swiss Spatial Concept and the promoting of agglomeration traffic. Membership of

the SSV and involvement in the TAK means that Zurich is often able to include communal interests at an early stage of the political decision-making process on a federal level.

- **Working together in the Zurich Metropolitan Area and in the agglomeration (✓)**

Zurich defends its interests within the region in conjunction with other cities and municipalities and cooperates with regional partners on how to deal with shared concerns. This includes active membership of the Zurich Metropolitan Conference and close collaboration within the Zurich Metropolitan Area Association and an active commitment on the part of the city to the RZU Zurich and Surrounding Area Regional Planning Association. This continuous exchange enables solutions to be found in a cooperative way for the challenges facing us, with everyone involved reaping the benefits.

- **Strengthening alliances on specific subjects (★)**

The City of Zurich actively and systematically defends its interests regarding important regional subjects (such as Zurich Airport and the Dübendorf Innovation Park) and on a cantonal level in conjunction with other cities from the region as well as municipalities within the agglomeration. This all serves to improve coordination and steering in the functional area.

Priority C: Reinforce Zurich as a location

1) Challenge: the City of Zurich needs to effectively communicate its qualities in the face of international competition in order to remain attractive as a location

The presence of globally active companies such as Google and Disney as well as some 16 million day visitors and over 2.7 million overnight stays demonstrates how attractive the City of Zurich is courtesy of its dynamic economy, its open-mindedness that is clear for all to see and the high quality of life which it offers. The city regularly occupies a leading position in international rankings for places to live and for tourist destinations. International competition among locations has continued to heat up in recent years, and actively representing Zurich's advantages contributes to the recognition of the city as an economic location and tourist destination. Zurich has much to offer, and this needs to be brought to the fore for the city to remain competitive in the future.

2) Strategic goal: diversification and positioning in comparison with other locations

- **ISDM (✓)**

Zurich is strengthening its national and international positioning as a city of culture and creativity, as an economic, scientific and research location, as a city of trade fairs, with a vibrant movie industry and as an attractive place to live. The city implements Integrated Location and Destination Marketing (ISDM) in cooperation with the Canton of Zurich and the Zurich Tourist Board, with the three bodies working together to multiply the effectiveness of dealing with each of their individual issues.

- **Presence abroad (✓)**

Communication with the relevant target groups is to be optimised by focusing the international information, communication and media activities and strengthening representation abroad. In particular, promotion of Zurich as a location can be achieved by developing and hosting specific events which concentrate on topics of importance (for example "Zurich meets New York" in 2014). This can be carried out in cooperation with partners both externally and within the city. Participation in major national and international events such as Expo Milano 2015 is also important. Working visits by members of the authorities and representatives of the city of Zurich to partner cities underpin the political and institutional basis for project-based cooperation.

- **Stringent implementation of event marketing (✓)**

In conjunction with the city's Economic Development department, Zurich is actively campaigning to host large-scale international events which correspond to the city's image (for example the 2014 European Athletics Championships and Manifesta 2016).

- **Zurich as a city of film (★)**

It is crucial to give extra support to the Zurich Film Office which promotes the city as a location for film production and to internal cooperation within the city for Zurich film productions.

- **Trade fair strategy (★)**

The City of Zurich foreign affairs department is developing and implementing a trade fair strategy in conjunction with the Messe Zurich trade fair and the city's Economic Development department.

Priority D: Shape global sustainable urban development

1) Challenge: the City of Zurich should provide a globally effective and active contribution to the shaping of sustainable urban development

At the City of Zurich's suggestion, Kunming introduced separate bus lanes some 20 years ago. Beijing and seven other cities in China are now implementing this measure for public transport, illustrating how an idea from Zurich can help to solve traffic problems on the other side of the world as well as reducing CO₂ emissions. For sustainable development to give future generations a fair chance, commitment from cities is absolutely crucial. For example, more than half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions originate from urban areas. The City of Zurich can and will play a leading role in the promoting of global sustainability, now and in the future.

2) Strategic goal: communicate best practices for sustainable urban development to other parts of the world by taking the lead in medium and long-term international development cooperation projects

- **City partnership with Kunming and project-related cooperation with other cities (✓)**

The City of Zurich upholds its responsibilities in terms of sustainability on an international level and fosters active bilateral and multilateral exchanges of knowledge with other cities and areas which are currently lagging behind in specific sustainability-related areas (for example Kunming, Bhutan and Vinnitsa). Targeted projects and measures in terms of knowledge transfer can create significant leverage.

- **International networking (✓)**

The City of Zurich works actively in international humanitarian and sustainability-related networks (including "ICLEI", the Climate Alliance and the European Coalition of Cities against Racism). This involves the City of Zurich working on national and international development projects.

- **Delegations (✓)**

Foreign delegations looking to get information in Zurich about aspects of sustainable urban development and discuss technical, cultural or political issues with Zurich experts are welcomed here, with the City's various offices looking after their visit. This type of knowledge transfer is both targeted and highly sought-after.