



# Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg

Erster Bürgermeister

## **Montevideo: Einführung zum Vortrag von Prof. von Storch an der Universität am 18. April 2013**

Dear Prof. von Storch,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are hardly any serious doubters anymore concerning the crucial importance of the current and future climate changes for the future of our planet. However, there are a number of vital questions:

- The consequences of these climate changes, and whether they truly represent a climate disaster
- What can be done to ameliorate the expected changes
- And how we cope with the unavoidable climate changes: in other words, how we can cut emissions on the one hand, and reduce the risks on the other hand

We face the challenge of considerably reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide, at the same time as ameliorating the regional consequences of manmade climate change. Hamburg has an obligation here and tackles the problem with its commitment to climate protection, climate adaptation, and improving the scientific basis on the climate, climate change and climate consequences.

Hamburg knows full well that an efficient contribution to climate protection is hardly possible solely on the basis of the frugality of the citizens of Hamburg, but can only be achieved through the development and testing of efficient technological and organisational measures which are also competitive in the global markets. One example could be "Power-to-gas" technologies which are now close to large scale industrial application. This technology enables windpower which cannot be used directly to be used for electrolysis and storage of hydrogen or methane – opening up the possibility of zero-emissions road transport for instance.

With respect to adaptation to the intensified climate risks, Hamburg is confronted by the outlook of higher storms, floods and stronger rainfall. We are facing up to this challenge by implementing a comprehensive programme of adaptation planning measures: amongst other things, we are making the port and the other parts of the city storm-flood-proof, and enlarging the capacities of the urban sewer system.

All of these things are being tested in practice in Hamburg and are based on a solid scientific platform with our "Climate Campus": which encompasses the research centres, the general and technical universities, and our federal government research institutes.

Hamburg is setting up networks to solve the economic and scientific challenges and opportunities – political networks as well as clusters with the involvement of research institutes, companies and the city administration. We intend to harness the natural strengths of our region, with the enormous potential for innovation and growth of the regional industry and workforce.

This is already a success story: Hamburg has enjoyed huge growth in recent years with the development of offshore windpower – a growing number of businesses in this sector have their research and development centres and headquarters in Hamburg.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The slogan "Think globally – Act locally" is an old one, but has not lost any of its validity. This philosophy is also upheld by the German climate and coastal scientist Prof. Hans von Storch, who has accompanied me on this trip.

Together with his co-author, the cultural scholar Werner Krauß, Prof. von Storch has recently published the book "The Climate Trap" which looks at the relationship between science, politics, and society in the context of this question about the future.

In his book, Prof. von Storch again demonstrates his strength as a level-headed author who is just as averse to panic making as he is to issuing an ungrounded all-clear. His book leaves no doubts about the need for action, but he also makes clear that the key aspect is about creating a political willingness to act, and not about enforcing scientific criteria.

This means in particular, local political action. Although climate change is a consequence of the total worldwide emissions, counteracting its effects must primarily be undertaken locally.

It is our task – not only in Hamburg – to find ways of reducing emissions and ameliorating the risks facing people, business and ecosystems. That is why we are intensifying even further the establishment of international networks. And I should be very pleased if opportunities could be found to establish cooperation between our two countries.

Prof. von Storch will now sketch out the scientific-technical solutions that are being elaborated in Hamburg to tackle the challenges faced by our coasts as a result of climate change. I very much look forward to his presentation.