

Remarks by ambassador Ole Egberg Mikkelsen at the presentation of the masterplan for Mykolaiv, 4. July 2024

Mr. Mayor, dear participants

Thank you very much for inviting me for the presentation of the masterplan for Mykolaiv that has been developed by COWI and One Works for the Mykolaiv City Administration.

I know that the idea of developing a masterplan for Mykolaiv was conceived by you, Mr. Mayor, at a very early stage of the Denmark-Mykolaiv partnership, while the Russians were still at the gates of your city. I still remember what you said in one of our first conversations when I asked you about your vision for your city. Your response was that you wanted Mykolaiv to become a "Small Denmark on the Black Sea, just as affluent, just as efficient, just as green and environmentally friendly and not least – just as non-corrupt". This was your bold vision at a time when your city was under daily shelling.

Now the masterplan is finalized. Looking at the part that has been prepared (with Danish support) by COWI on energy and district heating, water and waste management it has all the right elements to bring the city closer this vision.

The vision for energy has as its headline: "Towards a sustainable and carbon-neutral city" and it points to the following tools and components:

- heat pumps,
- integration of renewables
- green fuel
- combined district heating and cooling
- utilization of waste and biomass

To me it makes a lot sense and it will undoubtedly bring Mykolaiv closer to its vision to become "a small Denmark". These are some of the elements that we are using in our own green transformation.

But basically it not up to me or to Denmark if this is the way that Mykolaiv should pursue. It is up to the mayor, the city council and not least the citizens of Mykolaiv.

I hope that the master plan will be used as a solid technical foundation for discussions in Mykolaiv on how to jointly formulate and implement the vision of the city you want.

There are many visions out there. When we had the memorable bike ride back in September last year I met a group of young people. When I asked them about their vision for their city they pointed to Dubai. They wanted Mykolaiv to become a "a little Dubai on the Black Sea".

Thus there are many visions out there and Denmark is just one of them. Now it is up to the citizens of Mykolaiv and their elected leaders to decide.

We will be happy to discuss the vision with you and support you in your implementation – including by sharing our Danish experience. I would recommend you to reach out to your Danish sister city Aalborg and listen to their experience.

I am given to understand that the masterplan has not been formally approved yet. Nevertheless, the City of Mykolaiv has already started its journey towards the green and sustainable vision. It is clearly reflected in your requests for support in the framework of the Denmark-Mykolaiv partnership:

- You asked for support for your water supply system in order to reduce water losses in the pipe network ("non-revenue water"), which is mentioned in the masterplan. At the recent Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin Denmark announced its support through NEFCO and the Danish Refugee Council for the non-revenue water project. The total amount is 13 million Euro.
- Earlier we have committed through DSIF another 7 million Euro for the pipe network, and approximately 10 million Euro through the EBRD for the support of water sector.
- For the district heating sector, also part of the masterplan we have made a feasibility study for the installation of solar panels in Mykolaiv. The project is currently under review. The estimate investment is 8 million Euro and we are considering to further support the DH sector with the feasibility and possible investments in individual heating substations. Both projects are energy related - first to increase energy capacity and second to reduce consumption.
- For the waste part - we have already delivered 12 garbage trucks to the city. We have also delivered some of the reconstruction vehicles needed e.g. front loaders, dump trucks etc.
- We have also decided to support the new de-carbonization office in Mykolaiv run by the Agency for Energy Efficiency.

Thus Denmark is already supporting a number of the elements that are part of the master plan leading towards a green and sustainable city. And as always in the Denmark-Mykolaiv partnership we want to take tangible steps now and not wait for peace.

I wish to thank the COWI team for your hard work. You have charted a clear course for Mykolaiv to follow if this is the political decision. Now it is up to the citizens of Mykolaiv and their elected leaders to decide and to find the money needed to realize the vision.

It is not going to be easy. We all know the financial squeeze that Ukrainian municipalities find themselves in at the moment. At the same time international financial institutions are reluctant to support activities close to the frontline.

Therefore, in my opinion the best possible course of action is to help private businesses getting back in operation, so jobs will be restored and employees start paying taxes. I know that this is a strong ambition in Mykolaiv. It is an enterprising city with proud and hard-working people. They want to earn their own money and not being dependent on aid and charity.

Therefore, economic recovery is an important part of Danish support in to Mykolaiv. Yesterday I visited one of the success stories – a tomato processing plant that is now back in business with Danish support. This example shows that business revival is possible even in a frontline region.

With the masterplan the course for a green and sustainable Mykolaiv has been charted. The next thing to look at is a plan for economic revival of the city and the oblast that can support the green and sustainable vision.

How can the city and the oblast thrive economically and commercially? What can you do to attract investments and businesses and how can your partners support you in such an endeavor?

I look forward to discuss those crucial questions with you and to share the Danish experience. Thank you for your attention.