

Good afternoon everybody, and thank you for the introduction and invitation!

As mentioned, I come from Vienna and originally from Bavaria, which is both basically next door to here – but it sometimes it feels as if we were oceans away. As if we lived on different planets, or: different continents.

And this is exactly what I am talking about here: We should start again to talk BECAUSE we are living on the same continent, sitting in the same boat: because we are NEIGHBOURS.

Don't worry, I won't bore you with the hassles of the present. I am talking about the future, that we should take care of. A future that some of us might fear, because it bears a load of seemingly unsolvable problems and conflicts.

But we shall not forget: that what we call the FUTURE, will be the PRESENT of those who come after us, especially our children. So we should, no we have to take care of it, that's our task. And today, I want to show you a bit of this future. A glimpse. It's a picture that stands for itself, and all you have to do is to lean yourself into your own imagination. Imagine that this is already true.

During our preparation talks my host Pal said to me, „seeing is believing“. First I thought, this is some kind of media or promotional bullshit. But after a while, I realized: he is right.

So watch this:

*„this is Europe“*

What do you see? It's Europe as it is today, in its actual state: But now – it's changing... the coloured countries and especially the borders disappear! It's transforming! It turns in something different.

This is what I wanted to show you. May I introduce to you METROPA! It's a project, an initiative that I launched some years ago and which gained some attention all over Europe the past months.

So what do you see? There are connections instead of borders, and the countries disappeared. There are lines instead and cities. It shows Europe – the continent we're living in – as an entity. It shows Europe as a ... city. And metropa is its transportation system. Its PUBLIC transportation system.

But it's not about transportation only.

I am no engineer or politician, nor am I a company boss, and I don't have to be one. I use art to address you, the people, because I know that it's art that you will rather follow than any technical or financial details. I show you the grand plan. There are young people who will someday turn this map into reality. But what we need today is: to make Europe a dream again. And every dream starts in the unreal.

Pal told me: I have 5 minutes here to attract your attention and want to use these 5 minutes to take you on a trip into the future.

Leave behind the past. Leave behind borders, airplanes and nationalism. Leave behind narrow-mindedness and populist stupidity.

This network is not only about trains, it is about ideas, thoughts, culture, exchange. It is our common future, because we are neighbours.

And I think that mobility plays a key role in the future because it's about being connected instead of separated by borders. I furthermore consider mobility as a basic right that is not reserved to those like us who can travel freely, for fun or job wise, but also for those who have to because they have to flee. We are no trees – we all should be allowed to go wherever we want, for what reason we want.

I consider mobility as a basic human right and Europe has a strong responsibility to stand for this kind of freedom in the world.

That's what metropa is about. Thank you for listening!