

**16th Meeting of the UNECE/FAO FCN Team of Specialists
September 28 – 30, 2009, Lyss, Switzerland**

Welcome

Ladies and Gentlemen

1)

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you in Lyss.

I would like to give you a few informations about our city.

But I have first to apologize for my English which remains very elementary! Thank you for your comprehension.

2)

1009 – 2009

This year we celebrate the 1000th anniversary of our city. It is in 1009 that the name of “Lyssa” is mentioned for the first time in a historical document: a contract, according which a local church is sold by a monastery from the Valais.

3)

During many centuries, the region was regularly overflowed, which forbid any development. After 1874, thanks to the achievement of the Jura-Waters Correction-Plan and the construction of a channel in the low lands, the River Aare flows directly into the Lake of Biel.

4)

This allowed the construction of road- and rail-networks and from this date, the so-called “Lake-Land” has developed quickly.

5)

Today, Lyss counts 11'500 inhabitants and offers about 6'000 jobs. 85 % of the residents are Swiss; the other 15 % come from 65 different countries.

Organisation of the Municipality

6)

The executive organ is the Municipal Council, which functions according to the collegiality principle. It means that different political parties work together.

For the last 16 years, I have been the president of this council. As I retire from politics, the new council which has been elected last Sunday, will be presided in the next 4 years by the new Mayor

It is composed of ___ BDP (Conservative Democratic Party) members, ___ FDP (The Liberals), ___ EVP (Christian Democrats), ___ Grüne (Green Party), ___ Grün Liberale (Green Liberals), ___ SP (Social Democrats) and ___ SVP (Swiss People's Party)

7)

A new Municipal Parliament has also been elected. The 40 seats are shared as follows:

Left ___ representatives, Centre ___, Right_____

8)

Culture and Sport

Being located between two big cities (for Switerzland), Bienne and Berne, Lyss has to do its best to prevent being a "dormitory-town" and preserve the community life. The municipality supports a wide range of sporting and cultural activities from about 150 associations.

9)

Ecology

Since the year 2000, Lyss is proud to be one of the Swiss “Energy cities”. This label is granted and must be renewed every 4 years by a federal association according mainly to following aspects (criteria):

- production and use of energy
- land use and planning
- construction standards
- recycling
- traffic and mobility
- communication politics

10)

Between town and countryside

The necessary collaboration between town and countryside is one of the main challenges which the next generations will have to solve. In my opinion the grouping of small villages in larger municipalities which would be able to work as partners of importance with the cities, would allow a balanced sharing of the “costs and profits” of the economical and social development.

For more information, please consult:

www.lyss.ch (in German)

In English, you can find a few more details in this small leaflet

I thank you for listening and wish you an interesting congress!