

Press Information  
15 January 2026

## Comments on WDC 2026 – Collection of quotes

**Andréa Springer, Acting Managing Director World Design Organization:**

‘In a world that feels increasingly fragmented, it’s important to remember that design is a powerful democratic tool. In 2026, we could not have a better, more timely, beacon to demonstrate this than through World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain, a region with ambition to embed participatory design into the very structures, institutions and spaces that shape everyday life, both locally and across the globe.’

**Carolina Romahn, Managing Director WDC 2026:**

‘As so many people and institutions have come forward with their own ideas and projects in such a short space of time, it clearly demonstrates the region’s creative potential and its spirit of collaboration. Design represents a mindset rooted in collaboration and the courage to embrace change. We want this mindset to remain alive well beyond 2026 – in people’s everyday lives, in neighbourhoods, in schools and universities, in companies and associations, and within politics and public administration. Sustainable change emerges when collaborative design becomes second nature.’

**State Secretary Benedikt Kuhn, Head of the Hessian State Chancellery**

‘Hesse and the RheinMain region have been setting standards in creativity and design for 80 years. In the past five years alone, our companies have won more than 500 design awards. The World Design Capital is therefore a great opportunity, especially in our state’s anniversary year, to put “Made in Hesse” design value on the world map for design excellence and to present our region to the world.’

**State Secretary for Economic Affairs Umut Sönmez:**

‘Frankfurt/RheinMain is World Design Capital 2026! Behind this award lies the story of an economic region that, with creativity, courage, and inventiveness, demonstrates how design, innovation, and quality of life go hand in hand – thus setting a visible example for a modern, open Hesse. When the creative industries, industry, and politics work together, new solutions for housing, transportation, and the economy emerge – WDC 2026 makes this visible and shows how design provides practical answers to questions about the future. The title Design for Democracy makes it clear that good design is more than just beautiful form. Design is explicitly to be understood as a contribution to an open, just, and sustainable democracy – in people’s everyday lives as well as in urban life. More guests, more events, more attention

World Design Capital  
Frankfurt RheinMain 2026  
c/o Museum Angewandte Kunst  
Schaumainkai 17  
60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

Presse / Press WDC 2026 /  
Christina Sweeney  
Caroline Mohler  
Mobile +49 151 55620038  
Office +49 69 928 82933  
press@wdc2026.org

Pressebüro / Press Office:  
neumann communication  
wdc@neumann-communication.de  
+49 221 91 39 49 0

Umgesetzt durch /  
Organised by:  
Design FRM gGmbH

Geschäftsführerin /  
Chief Executive Officer:  
Carolina Romahn

Amtsgericht Frankfurt am Main,  
HRB 130442

Gefördert durch /  
Funded by



STADT FRANKFURT AM MAIN



Auf Grundlage der Leitidee von /  
Based on the core idea of

Design for Democracy.  
Atmospheres for  
a better life

World Design Capital® ist eine Initiative der /  
World Design Capital® is an initiative of



wdc2026.org

– the WDC year also brings full hotels, lively city centers, and additional revenue for restaurants, retailers, and many service providers, which directly benefits the people here.’

**Timon Gremmels, Hessian Minister of Science and Research, Art and Culture:**

‘World Design Capital 2026 impressively highlights the international appeal of our diverse cultural landscape and our excellent fine art colleges. I am therefore looking forward to a year that will show how innovation, quality and social relevance shape design. The chosen theme of democracy underlines that design is much more than aesthetic expression: it fosters participation, opens up spaces for dialogue and critical discourse, and takes responsibility for the cohesion and future of our society.’

**Dr. Ina Hartwig, Head of the Department of Culture, City of Frankfurt:**

‘Design is a universal and everyday practice: it makes ideas tangible, guides us through everyday life and gives us spaces. Especially for the design of public spaces I expect fresh impetus that will be visible and effective beyond 2026. For me, WDC is a real-world laboratory, created for experimentation with an open outcome.’

**Stephanie Wüst, Head of Economic Affairs, City of Frankfurt:**

‘World Design Capital 2026 is a future-oriented economic strategy project for Frankfurt RheinMain. Design is a key competitive factor today. It drives innovation, strengthens companies and increases the attractiveness of the region for skilled workers and investment. With WDC 2026, we are increasing the region’s international visibility, providing stimuli so that good ideas can be put into practice and create value more rapidly.’

**Dr Susanne Völker, Managing Director of Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain:**

‘Kulturfonds is one of the biggest sponsors of World Design Capital 2026 and a key partner for institutions and projects in the region. The projects funded under the banner of “Design for Democracy” combine design and the visual arts with issues relating to how we live together and are being implemented in close collaboration with project partners and local communities throughout the region.’

**Ulrich Caspar, President of the Frankfurt am Main Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK):**

‘The design possibilities and ideas of the creative industries help to bring new products to market in all sectors and simplify processes. Frankfurt is the city of St. Paul’s Church and free trade: this is a great opportunity for the World Design Capital, the metropolitan region, and Hesse to focus on entrepreneurship and the market economy over the next twelve months. We are delighted that ideas from an IHK working group have also been incorporated into the WDC plans. Among other

World Design Capital  
Frankfurt RheinMain 2026  
c/o Museum Angewandte Kunst  
Schaumainkai 17  
60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

Presse / Press WDC 2026 /  
Christina Sweeney  
Caroline Mohler  
Mobile +49 151 55620038  
Office +49 69 928 82933  
press@wdc2026.org

Pressebüro / Press Office:  
neumann communication  
wdc@neumann-communication.de  
+49 221 91 39 49 0

Umgesetzt durch /  
Organised by:  
Design FRM gGmbH

Geschäftsführerin /  
Chief Executive Officer:  
Carolina Romahn

Amtsgericht Frankfurt am Main,  
HRB 130442

Gefördert durch /  
Funded by



STADT FRANKFURT AM MAIN



Auf Grundlage der Leitidee von /  
Based on the core idea of

Design for Democracy.  
Atmospheres for  
a better life

World Design Capital® ist eine Initiative der /  
World Design Capital® is an initiative of



things, we are planning a series of events on the topic of design in collaboration with the German Design Council.'

**Hanno Benz, Mayor of Darmstadt, City of Science:**

'Democracy is not a sure-fire success or a single solution, but a demanding process that enables cohesion, freedom, and self-determination – and must be secured again and again. As World Design Capital 2026, we are opening up creative spaces throughout the region and inviting everyone to actively participate in shaping them. The participation of all is a prerequisite for a stable democracy. In this way, we are sharpening a regional identity that is creative, innovative, sustainable, and accessible to all.'

**Prof. Dr. Matthias Wagner K, Partner at Design FRM gGmbH, Director of the Museum of Applied Arts in Frankfurt**

'The title World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026 offers the opportunity to understand design as a tool that can promote peaceful, diverse, and democratic co-existence. It enables us to tackle the enormous challenges of our time in a concrete way. Design for Democracy is an invitation to actively participate in shaping our liberal democracy and our future.'

**Dr Georg Stocker, Chairman of the Board of Deka Bank:**

'The motto for the year ahead is 'Design for Democracy – Atmospheres for a better life'. At a time when democratic values are once again becoming the focus of social debate, this is more important than ever. It is therefore particularly important to us at Deka to support initiatives that bring together social discourse in the public sphere. We are convinced that if we work together – openly, sustainably and democratically – we can create spaces in which everyone can flourish.'

**Note:**

Detailed images and further press releases on the main themes, WDC signature events, key cooperation partners, the WDO, and an overview of highlight projects from the annual program can be found here:

<http://media.wdc2026.org/press>

World Design Capital  
Frankfurt RheinMain 2026  
c/o Museum Angewandte Kunst  
Schaumainkai 17  
60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

Presse / Press WDC 2026 /  
Christina Sweeney  
Caroline Mohler  
Mobile +49 151 55620038  
Office +49 69 928 82933  
press@wdc2026.org

Pressebüro / Press Office:  
neumann communication  
wdc@neumann-communication.de  
+49 221 91 39 49 0

Umgesetzt durch /  
Organised by:  
Design FRM gGmbH

Geschäftsführerin /  
Chief Executive Officer:  
Carolina Romahn

Amtsgericht Frankfurt am Main,  
HRB 130442

Gefördert durch /  
Funded by



STADT FRANKFURT AM MAIN



Auf Grundlage der Leitidee von /  
Based on the core idea of

Design for Democracy.  
Atmospheres for  
a better life

World Design Capital® ist eine Initiative der /  
World Design Capital® is an initiative of

