



Press Release: „Cycling Unites“-Critical-Mass-Tour on Sunday, March 22, 2015

Together for Respect and Tolerance: We take back our streets!

Berlin, March 12: On Sunday, March 22 at 17 hours, several tandems, each ridden by one imam and one rabbi, followed by hundreds of cyclists male and female will lead the **"Cycling Unites"-Critical-Mass-Tour** beginning at the Brandenburg Gate. Jews, Muslims and cyclists also want to live without fear in our city – and will thus conclude the BERLIN BICYCLE WEEK by cycling together from the Brandenburg Gate past Jewish and Muslim institutions and terminating at the Tempelhof Park.

Since 2013, imams and rabbis visit schools together where Muslim children and adolescents are in the majority as part of the project meet2respect sponsored by the non-profit organization Leadership Berlin eV. In "tandem", the imams and rabbis speak out against violence and discrimination. To set yet another example for a good coexistence, respect and tolerance, they will mount a tandem bike together. Symbolically and jointly with hundreds of cyclists, the imams and rabbis will bike in solidarity through Berlin for a better city.

"All people, not only Jews, Muslims and cyclists should be able to live in our city free of fear and without discrimination: Thus, we ride united," states Heinrich Strößenreuther, initiator of the "Cycling Unites"-Tour from the Initiative clevere Städte or Smart Cities.

"As a result of recent events in the past weeks and months, the climate between Muslims and Jews in Germany has visibly deteriorated. Also, repeatedly, there have been cases where Jews have been victims of abuse and attacks due to their yarmulke," explains Ferid Heider, Imam of several Berlin mosque congregations. "For a healthy climate with each other and against all forms of xenophobia, we will mount the tandems together with rabbis."

"There should be no no-go areas for Jews in Berlin. To fight for this, we will demonstratively mount the tandems jointly with rabbis," says Fazli Altin, imam, lawyer and former president of the Islamic Federation of Berlin. "We want to signal the kindred spirit between the two religious communities. Islam does not justify abuse or even violence towards persons of other religious beliefs. "

"Since the PEGIDA demonstrations, Muslims have more than ever the impression that they are not accepted and respected by fractions of the public as equals. To fight across the board hostility towards Islam, we rabbis will mount tandems together with imams and set an example with the bike tour and the stops at Muslim and Jewish institutions," maintains Rabbi Daniel Alter, Anti-Semitism Representative of the Jewish Community in Berlin.

"Our roads are too often no-go areas for children and youth on bikes," declares Strößenreuther. "Even adults on bikes often feel discrimination- whether it be due to a lack of a sufficiently expansive and subjectively safe infrastructure or due to experiencing the aggression of automobile drivers. The idea of a good city promises equality, respect and tolerance for all. "

"We wish for a society free of discrimination, where no one has fear or feels pushed aside. For more diversity and respect in our city and society: Cycling Unites," claims Fares Hadid, organizer of the BERLIN BICYCLE WEEK. The "Cycling Unites Critical Mass" Tour draws a line under this year's BERLIN BICYCLE WEEK from March 16 to 22 March 2015, bringing it to a powerful conclusion.

Meeting Point: Sunday, March 22, 2015, 17 hours, Brandenburg Gate, west side, with bike.
Tour: From the Brandenburg Gate via mosques and synagogues to the Tempelhof Park.
Note: The "Cycling Unites Critical Mass" tour is not a registered demonstration but a bike ride for participants together as Critical Mass. Please observe the rules (<http://criticalmass-berlin.org/critical-mass/verhaltensregeln-der-critical-mass/> and §27 StVO - Traffic Laws for Private Organizations <http://criticalmass-berlin.org/critical-mass/stvo/>).

Blog-Link: <http://clevere-staedte.de/cycling-unites-cm>
Facebook-Link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/976789308999296/>
Twitter-Hashtag: #CyclingUnites

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PHOTO

Imam Ferid Heider and Rabbi Daniel Alter
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