

The port and the city: Klybeck and the Rhine quays

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The port and the city compete for the same land. The Klybeck quay and the Westquai peninsula at Kleinhüningen lie close to the residential districts of Kleinbasel. For this reason, planners have long regarded them as an opportunity for urban development. A planning vision presented around 2012, which proposed high-rise buildings on the riverside and was quickly nicknamed "Rheinhattan" by its critics, provoked public opposition and was not pursued in its original form.¹

The future of the riverside is linked to the relocation of container handling to the planned Gateway Basel Nord terminal. Only if containers leave the Westquai can the land be freed for other uses. The canton has developed plans for the transformation of the Klybeck area in stages, while the large former industrial site of Novartis and BASF in the Klybeck district, known as Klybeckplus and later redeveloped by private investors, forms a separate redevelopment project of considerable size.² Meanwhile, temporary uses on the Klybeck quay, with bars, cultural venues and community gardens, have shown the appetite of the population for access to the river.

The conflict between the port and the city raises legal questions of spatial planning, of the protection of existing building rights and of the major accident risks associated with the storage of dangerous goods near residential areas. It also raises questions of public finance, since the canton must weigh the revenue from port leases against the value of land for housing. For investors and lenders in real estate, the transformation of the port areas represents a long-term opportunity whose timing depends on decisions that remain open.

1 Notes

1. On the planning vision for the Klybeckquai and Westquai presented by the canton of Basel-Stadt around 2011/2012 and the public debate

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about "Rheinhattan", see the publications of the cantonal planning office and the contemporary press. Dates to be verified. ↩

2. On the planning for the Klybeck area, including the transformation of the former industrial site of Novartis and BASF (Klybeckplus) and the plans for the Klybeckquai and Westquai, see the publications of the canton of Basel-Stadt and the investors. Status to be verified. ↩

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