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World Carfree Network: Vandalism is not the answer

Response to media reports implying a connection between WCN and car vandals

"We believe that violence and vandalism are inappropriate and ineffective forms of direct action," says Markus Heller. Heller is a Berlin-based member of the World Carfree Network (WCN) Steering Committee and the Director of WCN member organisation *autofrei leben! e.V.*.

Berlin, Germany, has recently experienced a series of attacks on cars, with vandals cutting tyres or letting the air out. Some techniques used cause the air to release slowly and can be life-threatening to unsuspecting drivers. The vandals left flyers referring to climate change. In reporting on the events, Berlin newspapers wrote that the vandals "appear" to refer to the international "Carbusters" movement and goes on to report on World Carfree Network (WCN). The article gives the impression that WCN, which publishes *Carbusters* magazine, supports such dangerous acts of vandalism.

World Carfree Network expressly distances itself from attacks on cars as well as any other types of property damage. The fact that the network is mentioned in connection with such irresponsible behaviour damages the image of positively oriented carfree people around the world, according to Heller.

World Carfree Network sees our highly motorised lifestyle as a social and environmental problem. In Germany in 2006, over 5000 people were killed and more than 420,000 injured in vehicle crashes, whereas worldwide, traffic related deaths claim a staggering one million lives annually.

"Above all we aim to encourage a higher quality of life and a sense of community, which are possible when we focus on creating people-oriented living environments," said Randall Ghent, co-founder of World Carfree Network. *"This is what many of our members, including architects and transport planners, spend their time on: designing carfree neighbourhoods and offering creative solutions for more liveable cities."*

World Carfree Network brings together organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting alternatives to car dependence and automobile-based planning at the international level and working to reduce the human impact on the natural environment while improving the quality of life for all.