

Ghent

Twinned with since 1969



Daniël Termont
Mayor

Twin cities are at the basis of the current co-operation in the European Union. The most traditional twin city relationships were created in the aftermath of World War II to bring European citizens closer to each other. Allowing citizens to get acquainted with each other's culture entails in mutual trust and respect. Today it still involves reuniting people, forging trans-border bonds of friendship, in which the involvement of inhabitants, local associations, organizations and volunteers is essential.

The last decades many of the Ghent twinnings became merely symbolic. When I assumed office as mayor at the end of 2006, I wanted to regenerate these co-operations. As a matter in fact, the co-operation with Wiesbaden never lost its momentum. Various projects and forms of co-operation are splendid initiatives, like the projects of the students of our Ghent University who invited already 50 citizens from Wiesbaden and the Wiesbaden Knabenchor to Ghent, which I fully support in my capacity as mayor of Ghent. Therefore, I do hope that in the future more of this kind of exchanges will be set up between our two cities.

In the world of today it is even more important to build relationships between cities and their citizens based on mutual trust and respect. I am convinced of the fact that the future of Europe will be made both *in* and *by* 'smart cities' that involve their inhabitants in policy making. Hence, the exchange of knowledge and expertise beyond city borders is indispensable. I therefore strongly believe that twinnings still have a future in the contribution to a peaceful world.

