

San Sebastián/Donostia

Twinning association since 2006



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One foreign policy objective of states is to secure peace and economic cooperation through treaties. But you can only reach people personally through direct contacts. German municipal communities recognised this very early on and after the war they established many thousands of twinning programmes initially with France but also with other countries later on. Reconciliation, understanding of another culture, tolerance and many personal friendships have thus come about.

I am certain and have been able to experience personally in the last 40 years repeatedly that exchanges between schoolchildren, young people, artists and athletes, as well as people from all social groups are a personal enrichment for everyone. It is more than just tourism and seeking contact with people and their culture in a friendly encounter.

Today especially, when there are strong currents in European countries once again of isolation, seeking separation and elevating nationalism and one's own culture, the value of twinning cannot be rated highly enough.

We are fortunate in being twinned with San Sebastian, which is beautiful, has a very old and rich culture and where people today are again connected with the rest of the world in an open and friendly way.

This is why I am not worried about the future of our twinning and any of the others.

