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# Ghent 2022 sustainability report

## Focus on Prosperity

**Voluntary Local Review**

## Foreword by the mayor

You have before you the third sustainability report in the series of five, this time focusing on *Prosperity*.

Prosperity is very much under pressure. Sky-rocketing energy and fuel prices, inflation, more expensive raw material and food prices are stifling our prosperity. We are still feeling the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic that increased inequality and we are feeling the effects of the Ukraine crisis worldwide. As always, it is the people who have the least who are hit the hardest.

In this report, we address five sustainability goals: affordable and sustainable energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11).

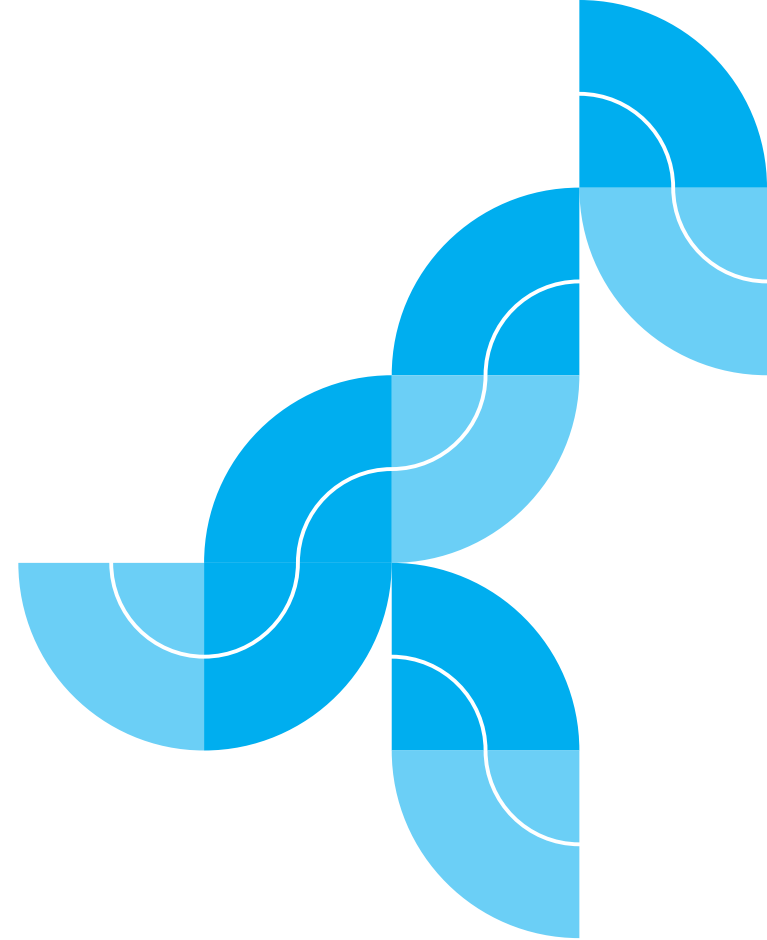
Based in Ghent, we work hard towards these goals, together with our Ghent citizens and numerous partners. If anything characterises our city, it is that we rally together to move our city forward. This cooperation is crucial. The city, civil society, social organisations, entrepreneurs and residents are joining forces in order to together make Ghent a more sustainable city.

I hope the powerful examples in this report will inspire many others to take that same path. As a city, we like to play a pioneering role. We firmly believe that cities like Ghent can make a difference, that we can work from the bottom up here to create a better and more sustainable world. This report will therefore be submitted to the UN as a Voluntary Local Review.

A word of thanks to everyone who has contributed to this and who is committed to our City and to the people of Ghent.

### **Mathias De Clercq**

Mayor  
City of Ghent



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## Introduction

This is the third Ghent Sustainability Report (2022). In it, we highlight initiatives that contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Read [more](#) about the SDGs here.

The focus of this report is on the SDGs centred around the 'Prosperity' pillar:

- > SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy
- > SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- > SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- > SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- > SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities



The 'People' and 'Planet' pillars are covered in earlier or subsequent reports. We include the topics 'Partnerships' and 'Peace' as a common thread each year, as they are central to achieving the goals. Ghent also provides an initial and final report. The initial report (2020) represents a baseline measurement. The final report (scheduled for 2024) aims to show and interpret the evolution in the figures. More information on the various reports can be found on the [website](#) of the City of Ghent.

In the Ghent Sustainability Reports, we highlight inspiring examples. We work on a sustainable transition together with numerous partners: citizens, businesses, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions and the authorities.

The purpose of this report and future reports is to support policy, help prepare policy and fuel debates. But equally, we want to inspire you and perhaps even prompt you to make a new commitment. And, of course, we want to show how we are taking steps together every day towards a more sustainable city and world.



## Focus on Prosperity



[SDG 7](#) states that everyone should have access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy by 2030. Sustainable energy comes from natural sources such as water, wind and sun. To achieve this goal, we need to better explore these sources, as well as the technology we use to generate renewable energy. Energy efficiency must also double by 2030.

SDG 7 topics: including access to energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency.



At [SDG 8](#) decent work for all is key. This means that everyone who can work should have the opportunity to work, in good and safe working conditions. Extra attention goes to young people and persons with disabilities. Work should stimulate economic growth without damaging the environment. Sustainable tourism is also part of healthy economic growth. Countries should pay more attention to entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

SDG 8 topics: including economic growth and productivity, decent work, safe and healthy working environment.



[SDG 9](#) is about developing quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure. In addition, infrastructure in general needs to be upgraded with increased efficiency and sustainable technology. We can achieve this through sustained scientific research and commitment to innovation. Internet access also plays a key role in developing this objective.

SDG 9 topics: including infrastructure, industry, innovation, scientific research and technology.



[SDG 10](#) aims for countries to pay more attention to income growth for poor people. Accordingly, the income of the poorest 40% of the national population should grow faster than the national average by 2030. Global financial institutions should be subject to better regulations and controls. This goal also includes migration: better and safer organisation of migration and mobility. Equal opportunities for all and greater involvement in all social, economic and political aspects of society.

SDG 10 topics: including income inequality, equal opportunities, social inclusion and migration.



[SDG 11](#) is explicitly about cities because half of the world's population - some 3.5 billion people - live in cities. We expect this to continue to rise. This target allows many topics to be addressed. Sustainable growth is the greatest challenge for the cities of the future.

SDG 11 topics: including housing, mobility, urban development, air quality, waste management, quality public spaces and culture.

# Prosperity in Ghent



## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



**22 in 1,000**

homes have a budget meter

**20.6% self-sufficiency rate**

Local renewable energy production compared to total household energy demand (2019)

**18.9%**

Ghent citizens live in homes with solar panels (2020)

**8,392**

companies with staff on Ghent territory (2021), 10% more than in 2005

**Employment rate**

20-64-year-olds (2019) **72%**

**Job seeker rate**

18-64-year-olds (2021) **9.6%**

**10.4 per 1,000**

Ghent citizens are employed within the social economy

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**21.8%**

of total land use is intended for industrial purposes/infrastructure (2019)

**64.7%**

of jobs are represented by (medium) high-tech industry and knowledge-intensive service sectors (2021)

**81,676 students**

(2020-2021)

**35.8%**

is of non-Belgian origin (2021)

**Discrimination**

Percentage of Ghent citizens who have felt hurt, insulted or disadvantaged because of gender/sexual orientation or origin in the past year:

**10.6%** Discrimination based on origin

**11.3%** Discrimination based on gender

## 10 REDUCED



**2nd most expensive urban area**

to purchase a house (after Leuven)

**+ 22.7%**

rent increase in 2021 (+14.6% in the Flemish Region)

**34.6%**

mainly cycles to work or school

**8.5%**

often feels unsafe in the city

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





## Voluntary Local Review

The City of Ghent is among the first European cities to prepare and submit a sustainability report to the United Nations as a [Voluntary Local Review](#) (VLR). This is our third VLR in a row. You can find our VLRs [here](#). In doing so, we take the report directly beyond city walls. The interaction between local, regional, national and international authorities is critical in the SDG story. As a city, we put our local weight behind global goals.

On 11 July 2022, Mayor Mathias De Clercq was invited to the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#), the annual apex for the SDGs in New York. He represented Europe and North America as a region and shared the Ghent experience with the achievement of its sustainability goals.

## International agendas

In addition to the SDG agenda, this report also focuses on other international agendas representing the sustainable transition of cities. We outline these agendas here and link them to the 10 selected initiatives in this report.



### [Leave no one behind:](#)

Eradicating poverty in all its forms, ending discrimination and exclusion, minimising inequalities and (social) vulnerabilities.



### [Human Rights-Based Approach:](#)

Approach to promoting equitable human development. At the centre of this are international human rights and the objective to promote and protect them.



### [Gender Equality & Women's empowerment:](#)

Gender equality and women's empowerment allows development to be more resilient and sustainable.



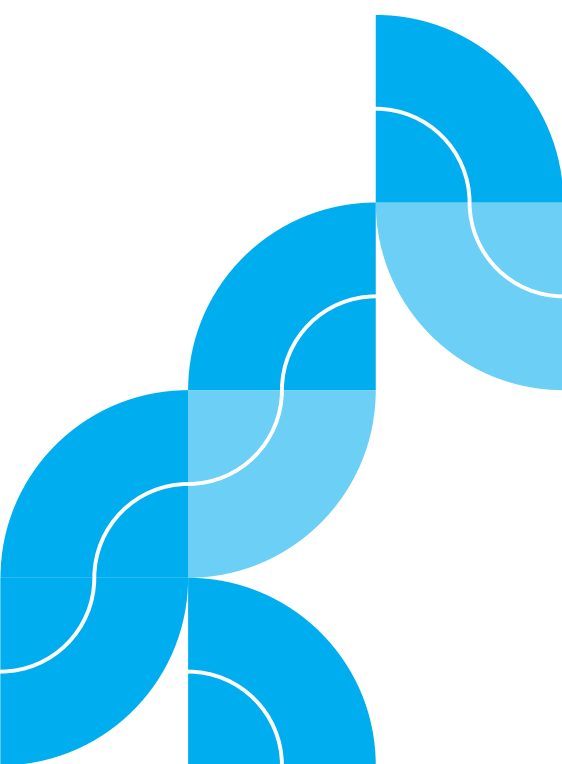
### [Decade of Action:](#)

1. Mobilising all people, throughout the world, to work together to achieve global goals (individually and collectively, locally and globally).
2. The ambition to tackle social issues.
3. Converting ideas into solutions, through sustainable innovation, financial investment and technology.



### [New Urban Agenda:](#)

The New Urban Agenda serves as a roadmap for sustainable urban development. In doing so, it highlights the city's strengths and opportunities as a driver of prosperity and as a centre of cultural and social well-being, with a focus on environmental protection. Strong link with SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities).



## Ghent's long-term strategic plan 2020-2025

The City of Ghent's long-term strategic plan is the elaboration of the administrative agreement that the four majority parties - Liberals, Greens, Socialist and Christian democrats - concluded at the end of 2018. The agreement states that the new governing team aims to govern with ambition and boldness. Ambition to lead as a city in various policy areas. Boldness to make bold choices for the challenges ahead.

Based on the administrative agreement, the college drew up a mission for the city in February 2019:

'Ghent is a proud city where people love to live, work and have fun. A city that breathes and lets breathe. Everyone there is equally different and equally Ghent resident. Children are given room to grow here. People are given the opportunity to develop their skills. In Ghent, we undertake and experiment. With eyes on the world. We create the city together. And make the shift to an even better Ghent for future generations.'

Twenty strategic objectives arise from that mission to prepare Ghent for the future.

We bundled these objectives under four topics:

- > City that develops with a view to the future
- > City of opportunities
- > City in which we live together
- > City for and by the people of Ghent

The City of Ghent's long-term strategic plan helps to achieve its sustainable development goals.



**7 AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY**



# SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

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## Strategy and practice City of Ghent

Several objectives can be found in the Ghent [long-term plan 2020-2025](#) that help to achieve this sustainable development goal.

The initiatives in this report provide a picture of how the City of Ghent, together with various stakeholders, is working towards affordable and sustainable energy. The City of Ghent supports its residents, among others, through the Energy Centre for renovation advice and guidance. This has benefits for both housing costs and climate. The rolling climate fund makes energy renovations feasible for more Ghent residents. With the Ghent Refurbishes Ghent aims to renovate 300 homes owned by necessity-driven homeowners by 2025.

Since 1999, there has been a [Lighting Plan](#) in Ghent. Besides atmosphere and an increased sense of safety, the Lighting Plan also aims to save energy: among other things, through a well-thought-out choice of (non-)lighting principles and the use of LED technology. Ghent also aims to avoid light nuisance and light pollution.

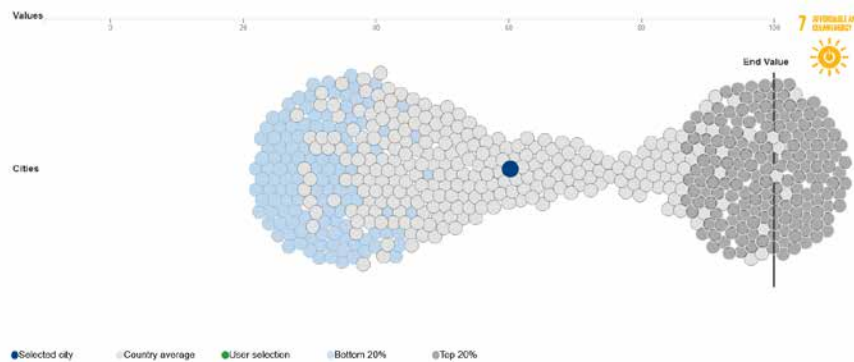


## Ghent compared to other cities

In order to enable an international comparison for SDG 7 'affordable and sustainable energy', the [OECD SDG index](#) prioritises the following indicators: percentage of electricity production from renewable sources, percentage of electricity production from coal, and percentage of electricity production from fossil fuels (gas and oil). The data from these indicators is combined in an SDG index and dates back to 2019, providing a picture of where Ghent is positioned compared to other international cities with respect to this target.

The SDG index assigns a score of 1-100, with a score of 100 being the proposed final value for the indicators to achieve the target by 2030.

**Chart 1** OESO SDG index – SDG 7



Gent = 'selected city'  
Source: OECD<sup>1</sup>

## International cooperation

[BE REEL!](#) is a project that started in January 2018 and runs until December 2024. The project aims to ensure that Belgium stays on track to meet the 2050 renovation targets. The partners involved are the Flemish Energy and Climate Agency (VEKA), *Service Publique de Wallonie - territoire, logement, patrimoine, énergie*, Knowledge Centre for Flemish Cities, the cities of Ghent, Antwerp, Mechelen, Mouscron and La Louvière and the Scientific and Technical Centre for the Construction Industry. Together with all the BE REEL! partners, we are working on an energy-efficient residential housing stock.

The following concrete achievements in Ghent were possible through sub-projects/ part-projects within the BEReel project: (1) The sub-project *Buurzame Stroom* in a neighbourhood near the Dampoort, which focused on increasing the number of solar panels in one specific neighbourhood, with attention to vulnerable local residents. It was completed in 2020 with a CO<sub>2</sub> saving of 205 tonnes and a whole series of policy recommendations. (2) Three sub-projects on collective renovations (focusing on bottom-up initiatives, flats and neighbourhood approaches respectively) have already successfully encouraged hundreds of Ghent citizens to renovate and have so far provided important insight into optimising our approach as a city. (3) Lastly, a small-scale research project on geothermal energy will help us to provide even more adequate support to citizens with questions on geothermal heat pumps in 2022 and 2023.

<sup>1</sup> OECD. (2020). Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities. Consulted at <https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/index.html>

## Ghent and SDG 7: in figures

Here we elaborate on a number of telling figures. More data per sustainable development goal can be [found](#) here.

### Household energy poverty

The cost of energy has skyrocketed since 2021. Prepayment bills went up significantly, putting major pressure on the household budgets in many families. Even before that, numerous households experienced energy poverty. In 2019, 15.1% of Flemish households were affected by some form of energy poverty: they got energy bills that were too high compared to their disposable income (after deducting living expenses).<sup>2</sup>

The number of budget meters<sup>3</sup> Per 1,000 homes it provides a better view of the situation in Ghent. Budget meters protect vulnerable energy consumers against disconnection. If an energy supplier terminates the contract of a particular family for non-payment and this family also fails to pay its bills to the network operator, the latter installs a budget meter. On 31 December 2021, 2,592 budget meters for electricity had been activated in Ghent, for gas, there were 2,091 of them. This represents 22 budget meters per 1,000 customers in Ghent. For Flanders, this number averages 12.<sup>4</sup> in order to help these households, the City of Ghent granted 2,409 winter bonuses (charging budget meter gas, electricity worth €100) to 2,355 households for paying their energy bills. 3,193 Ghent households received financial aid for energy problems in 2021. In case of persistent non-payment, the system operator (for electricity, gas or water) can submit a request for complete disconnection to the municipality's local advisory committee (LAC). In 2021, 2,272

cases were submitted to the LAC to prevent the disconnection of gas, electricity or water. During the 2020 lockdown, disconnections were not possible.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1** Number of budget meters per 1,000 access points in 2020

	Flemish Region	Ghent
<b>Budget gas meters</b>	12.38	22.13
<b>Electricity budget meters</b>	12.45	21.69

Source: VREG (Flemish Regulator for the Electricity and Gas Market)

### Renewable energy

Renewable energy figures include wind energy revenues, energy from solar panels, energy from waste incineration (biomass fraction) and heat revenues from solar boilers and heat pumps.<sup>6</sup>

In order to calculate energy self-sufficiency, we plot local renewable energy production against total household energy demand (electricity and heating). The amount of renewable energy produced in Ghent has increased considerably in recent years, primarily from sun and wind. The self-sufficiency rate rose to 20.6% in 2019, more than the 15% ambition in Ghent's climate plan.<sup>7</sup>

2 Coene, J. & Meyer, S. (2021) *Energy and water poverty barometers: Analysis and interpretation of results 2019*. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation. Consulted at <https://www.kbs-frb.be/nl/barometers-energie-en-waterarmoede-2009-2019>

3 By means of a budget meter, one pays in advance for the consumption of electricity or natural gas. The system works with a rechargeable card, like a prepaid SIM card. After the card is inserted into the budget meter, one can use that amount for electricity and natural gas.

4 VREG (Flemish Electricity and Gas Market Regulator)

5 City of Ghent (2022) *Poverty policy plan evaluation 2021*. Department of Welfare and Society. Consulted at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/20220511\\_evaluation\\_ABIP\\_2021\\_DEFINITIVE.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/20220511_evaluation_ABIP_2021_DEFINITIVE.pdf)

6 VITO: Flemish independent research organisation in the field of cleantech and sustainable development

7 City of Ghent - Environment and Climate Department: CO<sub>2</sub> monitor 2019.

The installation of new wind turbines takes place in fits and starts; in 2017, for example, we saw a sharp increase due to the start-up of 14 wind turbines in the port. In 2019, revenue from large installations of solar panels doubled compared to 2018. Revenue from residential solar panels is also increasing year-on-year.

Despite the rising trend, renewable energy systems are still limited in Ghent homes: in 2020, 18.9% featured solar panels (almost double compared to 2017) and 5.2% had a solar water heater. 44.5% of Ghent citizens live in a home that (partially) recovers energy. That is, at least one of the following features is present: green roof, solar panels, solar boiler, heat pump or rainwater use.<sup>8</sup> 2019, 341,539 MWh were generated through renewable energy in Ghent. This is more than double that of 2013 (133% increase).

## Energy efficiency

One aspect of energy efficiency is heating a home using less energy, following energy-saving measures.

Many houses in Ghent are in poor energetic condition. Yet the housing quality of Ghent homes is systematically improving.

In 2017<sup>9</sup> a study was commissioned by the City of Ghent on the energetic status of Ghent homes. The status of Ghent houses was examined by means of a door-to-door survey and a visual inspection. The result? The insulation on Ghent roofs and glazing scored best. Floor slabs and façades were the least well insulated. If we look at the housing categories that are the least insulated, it is striking that these mainly involve houses in closed construction built before 1945. They mainly consist of rented houses, often owned by people living alone. As for flats, we see that façade and floor slab are the least insulated.

**Table 2** Total renewable energy (MWh)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Wind energy [MWh]</b>	82,539	79,801	105,037	102,572	133,639	158,811	205,685
<b>Residential photovoltaic (&lt;10kW) [MWh]</b>	16,527	17,640	18,294	20,154	22,789	29,472	33,000
<b>Large photovoltaic installations (&gt;10kW) [MWh]</b>	32,877	35,504	37,065	35,667	35,254	38,330	81,254
<b>Energy from waste incineration [MWh]</b>	10,536	11,049	10,914	11,138	9,707	9,688	8,671
<b>Total renewable energy - Electricity (MWh)</b>	<b>142,479</b>	<b>143,994</b>	<b>171,310</b>	<b>169,531</b>	<b>201,389</b>	<b>236,301</b>	<b>328,610</b>
<b>Solar water heaters [MWh]</b>	1,390	1,709	2,109	2,464	3,475	3,625	3,865
<b>Heat pumps [MWh]</b>	2,479	3,279	5,034	7,112	6,180	6,496	9,064
<b>Total renewable energy - Heat (MWh)</b>	<b>3,869</b>	<b>4,988</b>	<b>7,143</b>	<b>9,576</b>	<b>9,655</b>	<b>10,121</b>	<b>12,929</b>
<b>Total renewable energy (MWh)</b>	<b>146,348</b>	<b>148,982</b>	<b>178,453</b>	<b>179,107</b>	<b>211,044</b>	<b>246,422</b>	<b>341,539</b>
<b>Self-sufficiency rate [%]</b>	7.73	9.29	10.78	10.32	12.63	14.77	20.63

Source: City of Ghent - Environment and Climate Department: CO<sub>2</sub> monitor 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Citizen survey Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

<sup>9</sup> City of Ghent (2017), Energetic status of dwellings, Environmental Department, <https://en.calameo.com/read/006395447e825be7405a3>

Nevertheless, we see that in just under half of the surveyed houses, one or more procedures were carried out in the five years preceding the survey.

The study concludes by analysing the presence of minimum requirements specified by the City of Ghent for energetic homes. These requirements include heating with condensing boiler or heat pump, while the study also found homes with collective or non-electric decentralised heating to be energetic. In terms of insulation, there should be at least a moderately insulated roof (>15cm) in the house. And the requirement for energy-insulating glazing is that high-efficiency glass or triple glazing is installed. In the chart below, we see that in 16.5% of the houses, none of the criteria are met. 1/3 of dwellings meet one criterion and another 1/3 meet a combination of two criteria. Finally, 18.8% of dwellings meet all three criteria.

We see that flats meet the three imposed criteria the least. Looking at the construction period, houses built between 1971 and 2000 emerge as scoring the worst. The worst-scoring houses are also mainly found in the city centre, this district having the lowest percentage of houses in which energy renovations have been carried out. Again, we see that rented houses and houses lived in by single occupants in particular are the worst at meeting the three criteria.

The City Monitor also gauges the energy efficiency of housing. The criteria are less 'strict' than those set by the City of Ghent, but allow us to make comparisons with other cities. In 2020, 71.2% of Ghent citizens live in a home that is energy-efficient, compared to 54.8% of residents in 2017. Energy-efficient means that at least 3 of the 4 following features are installed in the home: insulated roof or attic, insulated walls, double glazing and an energy-efficient boiler.<sup>10</sup> We see a similar increase for the total of the 13 Flemish urban areas. This also translates into a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from homes.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 3** Percentage of Ghent residents living in a home with energy-efficient features

	2014	2017	2020
<b>Attic/roof insulation</b>	75%	78.2%	85%
<b>Wall insulation (cavity walls)</b>			58.2%
<b>Double or triple glazing</b>	88.3%	89.4%	91.9%
<b>Energy-efficient condensing boiler/high-efficiency boiler</b>	64.7%	65.9%	68.5%
<b>Energy-efficient home (at least 3 of the 4 above features installed)</b>	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>

Source: Citizen Survey Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

The energy status of Ghent offices, hospitality, commercial, educational and healthcare buildings is less well mapped out. But there is a difference between the owner market and the rental market. Overall, we can say that the quality of housing in the owner market is better than in the rental market. Tenants, both in the social and private rental market, are more vulnerable to energy poverty than owners. They have limited options to change anything about the choice of energy sources or to improve the energy performance of their home or equipment.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Citizen survey Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

<sup>11</sup> City of Ghent - Environment and Climate Department: CO<sub>2</sub> monitor 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Coene, J. & Meyer, S. (2021). Energy and water poverty barometers: Analysis and interpretation of results 2019. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation. Consulted at <https://www.kbs-frb.be/nl/barometers-energie-en-waterarmoede-2009-2019>



**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



# SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

## Strategy and practice City of Ghent

In the Ghent [long-term plan 2020-2025](#) you can find several objectives that help to achieve this sustainable development goal.

The initiatives in this report illustrate how the City of Ghent is collaborating with various stakeholders on the topics of decent work and economic growth.

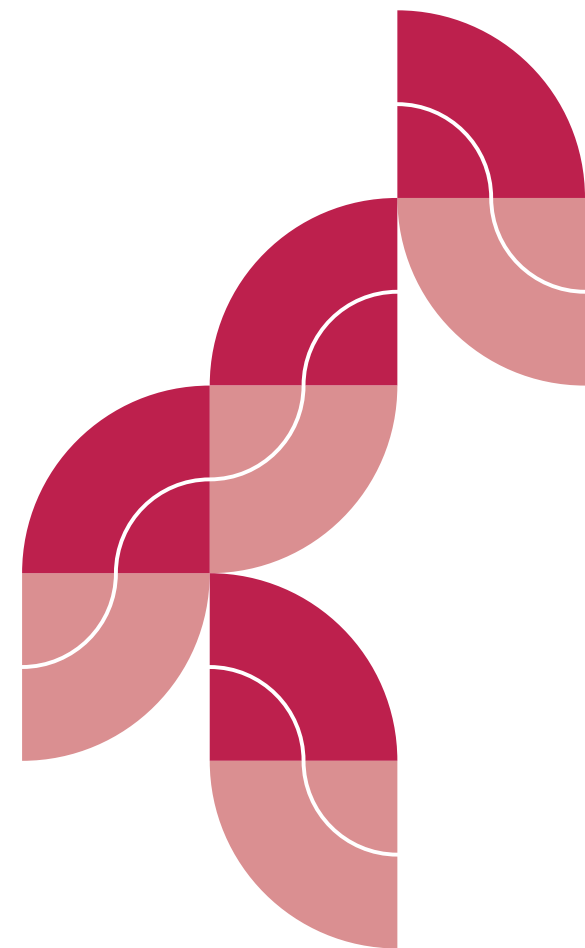
The City of Ghent is one of the initiators of the Labour Pact, a partnership between authorities, businesses, trade unions, employers' organisations, sector federations and training providers. The partners are committed to eliminating job market mismatches, making the labour market forward-looking and qualitative, and increasing the deployment of people and resources. The policy group of [Ghent, city in action](#) is helping to implement the pact. The City of Ghent provides employment in the social economy through the [Service Company Social Economy](#) (DBSE).

The City of Ghent focuses on the [Ghent Economic Board](#) (GEB) as the face of Ghent's economic ambitions. The GEB facilitates consultation between the city government and the main economic stakeholders in Ghent, such as Ghent University, key players in the [spearheading sectors](#)<sup>13</sup>, North Sea Port, the province, Voka and Unizo. In addition, Ghent entrepreneurs can contact the [Ondernemingspunt Ondernemers Gent](#) (OOG). The City of Ghent also encourages young people and students to become entrepreneurs through [Gentpreneur](#).

In terms of the circular economy, the City of Ghent supports the [Circular Kickstart programme](#), Flanders' first acceleration programme with an exclusive focus on circular economy. The city of Ghent is promoter of the Social Circular Hub Ghent.

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13 See below, SDG 9

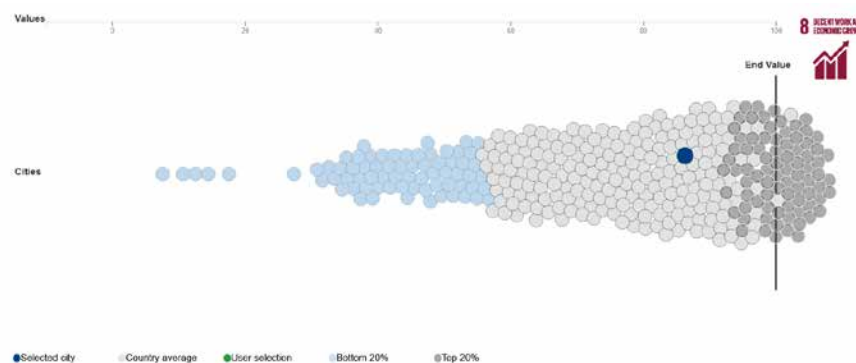


## Ghent compared to other cities

In order to enable an international comparison for SDG 8 'decent work and economic growth', the [OECD SDG index](#) prioritises the following indicators: annual growth rate of gross added value per employment and unemployment rate. The data from both indicators is combined in an SDG index and dates back to 2015. The index shows where Ghent is positioned compared to other global cities for this objective.

The SDG index assigns a score of 1-100, with a score of 100 being the proposed final value for the indicators to achieve the target by 2030.

**Chart 2** OESO SDG index – SDG 8



Ghent = 'selected city'  
Source: OECD<sup>14</sup>

## International cooperation

[SPEED-You-UP](#) is a European Interreg 2 Seas project. It ran from 1 February 2020 to 30 September 2022. Partners involved include *Artevelde Hogeschool*, City of Ghent, *Economisch Huis*, City of Ostend, City of Sint-Niklaas, City of Amiens (FR), *Associations des Centres Sociaux Wattrelos* (FR), *Jong Ondernemen* (Netherlands), knowledge centre PRO WORK (NL), Digital Peninsula Network LTD (UK), Salengro Social Community (FR) and Plymouth University Marjon Business School (UK). The aim of SPEED-You-UP is to combat school fatigue, school dropout and youth unemployment. Therefore, the project focuses on young people who are at high risk of dropping out of school or are already unemployed. In Ghent, starting from the school context, we want to test together with young people whether they can provide services in the form of pop-ups for the immediate school environment, but also the wider neighbourhood. In Ghent, we set up three hubs for young people. We reached 116 pupils, 25 NEET youngsters<sup>15</sup>, 20 teachers and 2 coaches. Together with 19 community organisations, they set up a total of 7 pop-ups in the world. The project had an impact on students' level, increase in their self-confidence and self-esteem. At teacher level, there was an increase in awareness of the importance of life-like learning and an advancement of their skills as coaches. At the school and community level, sustainable partnerships were initiated, which will continue long after the project. We felt a willingness from different contexts to develop networks around the schools. With this project, we worked on the framework to combat school fatigue.

<sup>14</sup> OECD. (2020). Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities. Consulted at <https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> NEET stands for 'not in education, employment or training'.

Source <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/samen-tegen-schooluitval/vroegtijdig-schoolverlaten/neet-jongeren-not-in-education-employment-or-training>

## Ghent and SDG 8: in figures

Here we elaborate on a number of telling figures. More data per sustainable development goal can be [found](#) here.

Ghent enjoys a dynamic and resilient entrepreneurial fabric. The Ghent economy maintains a healthy entrepreneurial dynamic. A robust growth in the number of start-ups is taking place. In 2021, 3,868 new enterprises were set up, which was an absolute record year (there were 2,281 in 2011). The number of closures also rose slightly, but this increase was much less pronounced (1,522 to 1,747 between 2011 and 2021).<sup>16</sup> was at 5.7 in 2021<sup>17</sup>. Although the corona pandemic initially caused a decrease in the number of start-ups, net growth is unprecedented with 180 new enterprises every month. The impact on Ghent companies during the corona crisis was significant: 22% of Ghent companies urgently needed additional capital to survive this crisis. Nevertheless, the Ghent economy did relatively well compared to the rest of Flanders (25.8%)<sup>18</sup>. Since the end of 2021, business confidence did fall again. Uncertainty, labour shortages and rising prices led to reduced investments. In the first half of 2022 the number of bankruptcies rose in Flanders<sup>19</sup>. This is partly attributed to a catch-up effect as no bankruptcy proceedings were initiated during the lockdowns<sup>20</sup>.

All this points to a dynamic and resilient entrepreneurial fabric in Ghent.

**Chart 3** Business confidence<sup>21</sup>



Source: Impact score calculation based on Graydon analysis

<sup>16</sup> The net growth ratio is the number of companies established minus the number of closures/active companies \* 100 = establishment ratio - exit ratio.

<sup>17</sup> Source: Graydon data

<sup>18</sup> Calculation of impact score based on Graydon analysis

<sup>19</sup> *De Standaard*, 2 July 2022, Bankruptcy wave in Flanders, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20220701\\_97264734](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20220701_97264734)

<sup>20</sup> *De Standaard*, 2 July 2022, Bankruptcy wave rises in Flanders, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20220701\\_97264734](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20220701_97264734)

<sup>21</sup> Provincial synthetic business cycle curves East Flanders

### Ghent labour reserve and jobseeker rate

Ghent has a fairly low employment rate, combined with a relatively high job-seeking rate. However, as a large urban area, Ghent experiences a fairly high and rising employment rate.

Employment rate<sup>22</sup> was 72% in Ghent for 2019.<sup>23</sup> This has been on the rise in recent years.

By comparison:

Flemish Region (2019): 75.5%<sup>24</sup>

13 urban areas (2019): 70.7%<sup>25</sup>

**Table 4** Employment rate 20-64-year-olds

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
67.7%	68.6%	69.7%	70.8%	72.0%

Job seeker rate<sup>26</sup> stood at 9.6% in 2021 for Ghent<sup>27</sup> and experienced a slight decline in recent years.

By comparison:

13 urban areas (2021): 7.7%<sup>28</sup>

**Table 5** Job seeker rate (annual average<sup>29</sup>)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
12.4%	11.7%	10.5%	9.7%	9.9%

22 The employment rate, the share of employed people in the total population aged 20-64.

23 Flemish Labour Account through *Steunpunt Werk*, provinces.incijfers.be

24 Source: EAK Statbel (General Statistics Administration - Statistics Belgium), editing *Steunpunt Werk en Statistiek Vlaanderen*, at <https://www.vlaanderen.be/statistiek-vlaanderen/arbeid/werkzaamheidsgraad>

25 Flemish Labour Account based on RSZ-DMFA. RSZPPO, RSVZ, RIZIV, CBS, IGSS, OEA, SEE, RVA, IWEPS, Statbel, DWH AM&SB with the KSZ, editing *Steunpunt Werk*, through Gemeente-Stadsmonitor, Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur

26 The jobseeker rate: jobseekers without work compared to the sum of employed and unemployed jobseekers

27 VDAB, through Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

28 VDAB, through Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

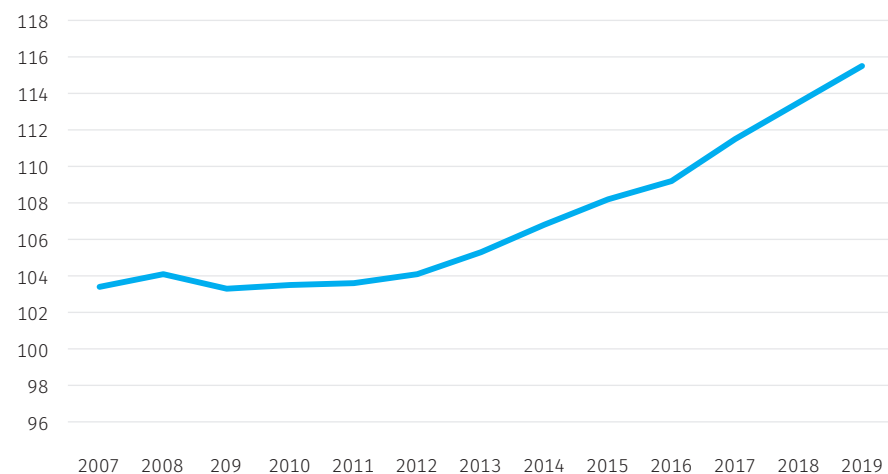
29 Arvastat, VDAB - provinces in figures

## Productive employment in Ghent

For productive employment in Ghent, we look at three indicators: job ratio, net job creation and inbound commuting.

- > The job ratio is the ratio of total employment (employees, self-employed and helpers) to the total number of inhabitants of working age (15-64). For Ghent, it was 115.5 jobs per 100 inhabitants in 2019. Ghent has more jobs and therefore attracts workers from outside Ghent. The job ratio is lower for the 13 urban areas: 101.4 jobs per population.

**Chart 4** Productive employment in Ghent in %



- > Net job creation reflects the evolution of employment<sup>30</sup> In 2018, it was 2.3%. It is slightly lower for the Flemish region, at 1.9%<sup>31</sup>.
- > The inbound commute indicates the percentage of people working in certain municipalities but living elsewhere. For Ghent, this figure was 64.6% in 2019<sup>32</sup>. In other words, 64.6% of people working in Ghent live in another municipality. For East Flanders, this amounts to 6.4%.

Based on these three indicators, we can conclude that Ghent experiences productive employment.

## Employment within social economy

See also further under SDG 10.

Employment within the social economy has been increasing over the past five years, although 2020 is an exception to the trend.<sup>33</sup>

Employment within the social economy aims to achieve job growth and quality careers in the social economy (Source poverty policy plan).

- > The Service Company Social Economy Ghent was the link to jobs for 391 employees in 2021. Together, they achieved 2,055 construction and logistics orders, 700 tonnes of redistributed surplus food, 122,554 IKOOK consumptions and 6,987 bike work orders.
- > Throughput rate to employment (both in the mainstream and social economy circuit) is 35%.<sup>34</sup>

30 Evolution of employment (expressed in terms of employee and self-employed jobs) between year x and year x-1 in relation to employment in year x-1 (annual average)

31 Employment Support Centre, Department of WSE, at <https://www.stadsmonitor.be/indicators/netto-jobcreatie>

32 Flemish Labour Account of *Steunpunt Werk* (General Administration of Statistics - Statistics Belgium) at [https://arvastat.vdab.be/arvastat\\_arbeidsmarkt.html](https://arvastat.vdab.be/arvastat_arbeidsmarkt.html)

33 Department of Work and Social Economy, through Municipal-City Monitor, Domestic Administration Agency

34 City of Ghent (2022), Evaluation 2021 Poverty Policy Plan

**Table 6** Employment within social economy per 1,000 inhabitants

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
8.3	9.3	9.4	11.3	10.4

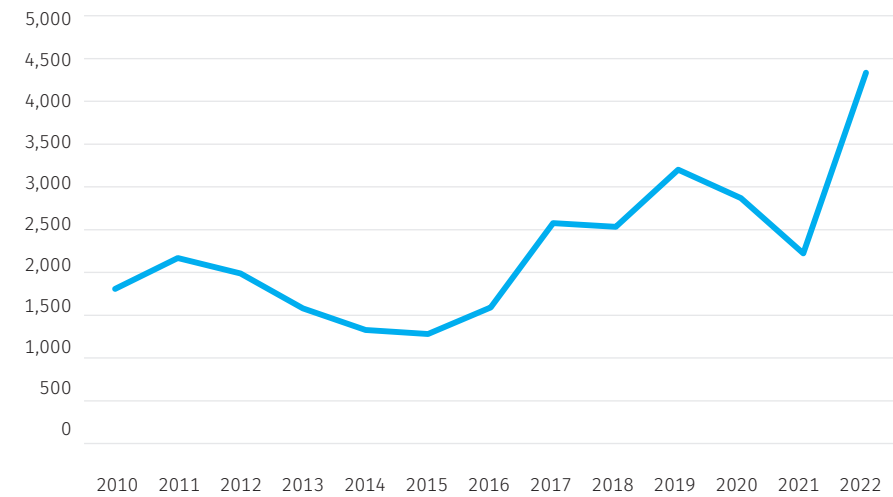
### Continuing job market mismatch

After the first lockdown, we again noticed a sharp increase in the number of received (and open) vacancies. The job market crunch-even during the lockdown-has never really abated and is worsening.

In other words, the known challenges on the job market (such as ongoing digitalisation, displacement of low-skilled workers, the further evolution towards a bottleneck economy) in other words, have not disappeared because of the coronavirus pandemic (City of Ghent, 2021). The tension indicator measures the crunch on the job market<sup>35</sup>. For the top 5 professions in Ghent with the highest number of vacancies, the tension ratio is an issue.

The number of vacancies is increasing:

**Chart 5** Vacancies - Ghent<sup>36</sup>



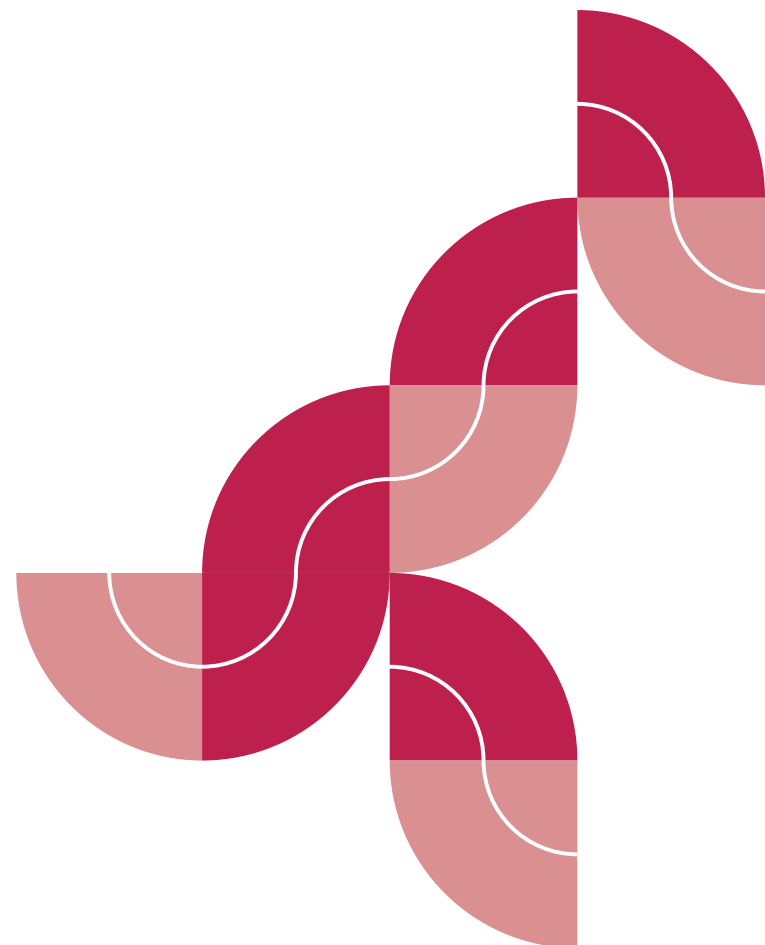
<sup>35</sup> The tension indicator(/ratio) shows the ratio between the number of jobseekers (who have registered for this profession) and the number of vacancies available. If this ratio is high, filling jobs goes more smoothly. A tension indicator < 5 indicates too high a crunch to fill vacancies smoothly.

<sup>36</sup> Arvastat, VDAB, provinces.incijfers.be

The tension ratio shows that the job market is tightening. The tension ratio is the number of jobseekers without work (WSW) in mediation (annual average)<sup>37</sup> divided by the number of open vacancies. The numerator here is thus limited to the WSWs who are immediately employable. WZW's in training or pre-training and WZW's who are not considered employable in the long term are not included here. If this tension ratio is high, jobs are filled more smoothly; if the tension ratio drops, the job market becomes tighter. The requirements of vacancies and the characteristics of jobseekers without jobs (in mediation) are not taken into account by the tension ratio.

**Table 7** Tension ratio - WSWs in mediation - Ghent<sup>38</sup>

<b>2017</b>	5.6
<b>2018</b>	4.2
<b>2019</b>	3.7
<b>2020</b>	5.1
<b>2021</b>	2.9



37 Annual average calculated as the average of the number of open vacancies at the end of January to December.

38 Arvastat, VDAB, provinces.incijfers.be



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



# SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

## Strategy and practice City of Ghent

In the Ghent [long-term plan 2020-2025](#) several objectives can be found that help to achieve this sustainable development goal

The initiatives in this report provide a picture of how the City of Ghent is working with various stakeholders on topics such as industry and innovation.

The city of Ghent is focusing on four [economic spearheading sectors](#) for the economy of the future: CleanTech, HealthTech, BioTech and Life Sciences and Digital Economy. The city administration's ambition is to make Ghent the Technology Capital of Europe. The Cleantech Cluster Region Ghent is an important partnership for Ghent actors in the cleantech and circular economy. In addition, Ghent has the [Tech Lane Ghent in Zwijnaarde](#): this economic zone ranks among the top regions in Europe in terms of knowledge and high-tech economy in, among others, life sciences, MedTech and AI.

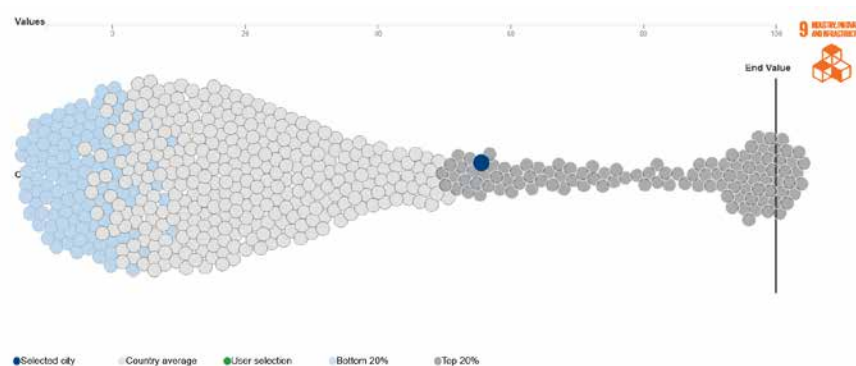
In terms of innovation, the City of Ghent focuses on three topics, i.e., education, climate and health. Ghent is committed to open innovation through the [UPI network](#). Various stakeholders in the city such as citizens, entrepreneurs, researchers but also knowledge institutions join forces to innovate together and hence come up with innovative solutions for urban challenges. In Ghent, some 80,000 students and researchers are active in the various higher education institutions (HEI). The City of Ghent involves them in complex urban issues, including through the HOI platform and urban issues. The City of Ghent also launched the [Living Lab Health](#) as part of Comon's Living Lab. The City of Ghent is also committed to the availability and transparency of data, through the [Open Data Portal](#).



## Ghent compared to other cities

In order to enable an international comparison for SDG 9 'industry, innovation and infrastructure', the [OECD SDG index](#) favours the following indicator: number of patent applications per 1,000,000 population. The indicator's data is incorporated into an SDG index and dates back to 2014. The index gives a picture of where Ghent positions itself compared to other world cities for this objective. The SDG index assigns a score of 1-100, with a score of 100 being the proposed final value for the indicators to achieve the target by 2030.

**Chart 6** OESO SDG index – SDG 9



Ghent = 'selected city'  
Source: OECD<sup>39</sup>

## International cooperation

The [Capture platform](#) aims to make a disruptive contribution to the circular economy by focusing on radical technological innovations in the field of sustainable resource recovery through multidisciplinary collaboration between stakeholders, with a clear focus on enhancing value. In terms of content, the focus is mainly on the sustainable reuse of CO<sub>2</sub>, water and plastics. The research partners involved include Ugent, VITO, the University of Antwerp and Free University Brussels. In 2021, the Capture research building in Zwijnaarde was opened with financial aid from the European Regional Development Fund, the Flemish Government, the Province of East Flanders. The City of Ghent supports UGent (€500,000) for Capture to further develop the Ghent CleanTech ecosystem together and further work out a community programme. Capture also aligns with the ambitions of the [CleanTech Cluster Region Ghent](#), in which the City of Ghent, the North Sea Port, the Province of East Flanders, POM, Cleantech Flanders and UGent put forward our region to excel in CleanTech innovation and its enhanced value by 2030.

39 OECD. (2020). Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities. Consulted at <https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/index.html>

## Ghent and SDG 9: in figures

Here we elaborate on a number of telling figures. More data per sustainable development goal can be [found](#) here.

### Infrastructure for industry

Of Ghent's total land take in 2019, 21.8% is intended for industrial purposes/ infrastructure<sup>40</sup>.

Ghent industry's percentage of employment fell from 21% in 2006, to 18% in 2018. This is not a result of decreased production, but of increasing productivity. Over the past 20 years, it grew by 45.9%<sup>41</sup>. Digitalisation and automation are causing shifts in the sectoral employment distribution. Repetitive, low-skilled jobs are largely automated and the remaining jobs are becoming increasingly complex. As a result, industry is increasingly looking for higher, technical profiles, but these are exactly hard to find.

In 2021, the (medium) high-tech industry and knowledge-intensive service sectors accounted for around 64.7% of jobs<sup>42</sup> in Ghent. There has been an increase of 1.5% since 2018.

**Table 8** Jobs in high-tech industry and knowledge-intensive services in Ghent <sup>43</sup>

	2018	2021
<b>(Medium) high-tech industry and knowledge-intensive</b>	63.2%	64.7%
<b>High and medium high-tech industry [number]</b>	12,985	13,285
<b>Knowledge-intensive service sectors [number]</b>	105,325	114,146

The commercial and non-commercial service sectors (tertiary and quaternary sectors) continue to account for the largest share of Ghent-based employment. For productivity growth in this sector is limited, leading to additional employment.

High productivity in the industrial sector and high employment in the service sector means we can conclude that Ghent has a diversified economic structure with a solid industrial foundation.

**Table 9** Percentage of Ghent industry in employment (2018)<sup>44</sup>

Working residents by main sector	
<b>Primary sector</b>	1,114
<b>Secondary sector</b>	17,276
<b>Tertiary sector</b>	55,370
<b>Quaternary sector</b>	41,698

40 Land use file, through province in figures

41 Flemish Government, Department of WSE (2016). The Flemish job market after 2020. Analyses by the study division of the WSE Department (March 2016). Consulted at <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/the-flemish-labour-market-after-2020-analyses-by-the-study-service-of-the-department-wse>

42 Jobs are calculated as the sum of salaried employees (National Social Security Administration) and the number of self-employed in main occupation (National Institute for the Social Security of the Self-Employed)

43 RSZ and RSVZ, through province in figures

44 VAR, through province in figures

**Table 10** Employment by sector in Ghent<sup>45</sup>

Ghent	Primary sector	Secondary sector	Tertiary Sector	Quaternary sector
<b>2018</b>	862	27,196	79,268	72,595
<b>2021</b>	958	27,898	82,686	77,078

### CO<sub>2</sub> emissions industry Ghent

Industry's share of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was 11% in 2019, excluding ETS<sup>46</sup>. From 2007 to 2018, the share of industry (excluding ETS) experienced a decrease of 24%.<sup>47</sup>

- > 2019: 1,378 ktonne CO<sub>2</sub> in total, of which 156 ktonne from industry excluding ETS = 11.3% contribution.
- > 2014: 1,457 ktonne CO<sub>2</sub> in total, of which 181 ktonne from industry excluding ETS = 12.4% contribution.

**Table 11** CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (ktonne) by type, Ghent<sup>48</sup>

	2014	2019
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions industry excl. ETS</b>	181	156
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions tertiary sector</b>	397	387
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions transport</b>	555	520
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions dwellings</b>	324	315

### North Sea Port as a sustainable port

A major reason for industrial activity in Ghent is the presence of the port, North Sea Port. Some figures<sup>49</sup>:

- > 550 companies active in the port area
- > These together provide 100,000 jobs
- > The port area adds €12.5 billion in value to the Ghent economy

### Innovation and sustainability

Ghent's economic ambitions are linked to society's sustainability challenges. These are defined in the UN's SDGs and to the strategic perspectives that inspire European and Flemish policy. Connections are actively sought between different sectors (agriculture, industry, retail, market services, healthcare, etc.), different technologies (ICT, biotech, cleantech, etc.) and different actors (public, private, civil society, educational and knowledge institutions, etc.).<sup>50</sup>

A few examples:

- > Cleantech Cluster region Ghent (°2016) aiming to set up a structural cooperation for a cross-sectoral approach in energy, materials, water and mobility.
- > Tech Lane Ghent: a large part of the economic zone in the south of Ghent is among the top regions in Europe in terms of knowledge and high-tech economy. More than 100 start-ups and scale-ups in areas such as life sciences, MedTech and AI are based there.

45 RSZ and RSVZ, through province in figures

46 ETS stands for Emission Trade System and is the trading system in Europe for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from industry. In this system, for every tonne (1,000 kilograms) of CO<sub>2</sub> an industrial company emits, it must surrender one emission credit. These emission credits can be bought and traded.

47 Heyse, T. (2020). Climate plan 2020-2025. City of Ghent. Consulted at <https://stad.gent/en/city-governance-organisation/city-policy/ghents-climate-actions>

48 CO<sub>2</sub> monitor

49 North Sea Port (s.d.). Sustainable economic activity. Northseaport.com. Consulted at <https://www.northseaport.com/over-ons#z21>.

50 City of Ghent (2020). For a strong business climate and an economy of the future - Economy policy note (preliminary draft). Consulted at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/ Preliminary draft Policy note Economy 20-2025.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Preliminary%20draft%20Policy%20note%20Economy%2020-2025.pdf)

### Brains to spare

Innovation relies on the presence of knowledge and talent. Ghent is known as a major student city. Some figures:

- > In the 2020-2021 academic year, 81,676 students were enrolled in universities and colleges.
- > In the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 5,473 PhD students in Ghent.
- > In the 2020- 2021 academic year, there were 5,814 foreign students in Ghent.

The number of undergraduates, PhD students and foreign students is on the rise.

**Tabel 12** Number of unique students Ghent

2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Number of unique higher education students Ghent<sup>51</sup></i>			
76,510	77,416	78,647	81,676
<i>Number of PhD students Ghent<sup>52</sup></i>			
4,896	5,172	5,169	5,473

### Number of foreign students in Ghent

5,814 foreigners in the 2020-2021 academic year<sup>53</sup>. These are regular foreign students, i.e. not students in Ghent through an exchange programme.

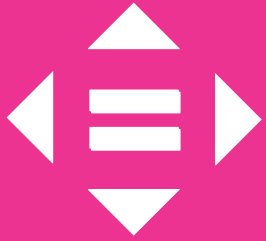


<sup>51</sup> Flemish Community, Department of Higher Education, available at <https://gent.buurtmonitor.be/>

<sup>52</sup> Flemish Community, Department of Higher Education, available at <https://gent.buurtmonitor.be/>

<sup>53</sup> Flemish Community, Department of Higher Education, available at <https://gent.buurtmonitor.be/>

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



# SDG 10: Reduce inequalities within and between countries

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## Strategy and practice City of Ghent

In the Ghent [long-term plan 2020-2025](#) several objectives can be found that help to achieve this sustainable development goal.

The initiatives in this report provide a picture of how the City of Ghent is contributing to this topic together with various stakeholders.

When it comes to discrimination, the City of Ghent, together with the police, the public prosecutor's office, Unia and çavaria, applies the Pentagon Consultation. Through this consultation, the partners take the initiative to increase the readiness to report hate crimes.<sup>54</sup> Ghent also has set up a hotline for homo- and trans-phobia, making reports of hate crimes against people from the LGBTQIA+ community easier. This initiative ensures better aftercare for victims. The Welfare and Equal Opportunities Department takes a supportive role in the diversity policy of the Ghent police. The city of Ghent invests in bystander training courses so that Ghent residents learn to react appropriately to racism, discrimination and sexual harassment. A cooperation agreement is in place with In-Ghent for integration courses for new Ghent citizens with a migration background.

In addition, the City of Ghent is committed to being an age-friendly city. We operate on the assumption of a highly diverse society. Everyone, young and old, takes part in all aspects of social life: living, working, mobility, greenery and facilities.<sup>55</sup> In 2019, the City of Ghent signed the charter 'Working towards an accessible Ghent, even before the first step' and citizens can contact an accessibility officer.

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54 De Bruycker, A. (2020). Everyone different, all Ghent: POLICY NOTE Equal Opportunities and Welfare. City of Ghent. Consulted on 30 June 2022, at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota\\_Gelijke\\_Kansen\\_en\\_Welzijn\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota_Gelijke_Kansen_en_Welzijn_2020-2025.pdf)

55 Coddens, R. (2020). Ghent, age-friendly city: ELDER POLICY PLAN. City of Ghent. Consulted on 30 June 2022 at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota\\_Ouderenzorg\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota_Ouderenzorg_2020-2025.pdf)



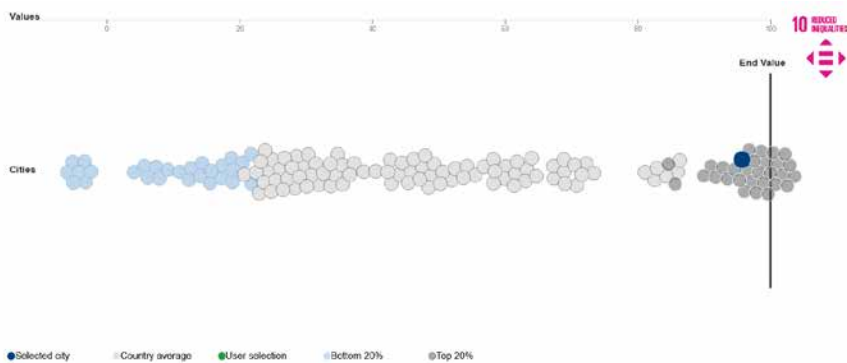


## Ghent compared to other cities

In order to enable an international comparison for SDG 10 'reduced inequalities', the [OECD SDG index](#) favours the following indicator: the Gini index of disposable income. The indicator's data is incorporated into an SDG index and dates back to 2016. The index provides a picture of where Ghent positions itself compared to other world cities for this target.

The SDG index assigns a score of 1-100, with a score of 100 being the proposed final value for the indicators to achieve the target by 2030.

**Chart 7** OESO SDG index – SDG 10



Ghent = 'selected city'  
Source: OECD<sup>56</sup>

## International cooperation

The Human Rights Council was officially established in 2021. This advisory body with seven volunteer experts advises on human rights in international contacts by the City of Ghent.

This deals specifically with official receptions, e.g., by ambassadors, participation in networks, trade missions or bilateral partnerships. The relevant city counterparts can carry out their own human rights assessment in advance and request advice from the Human Rights Council. In doing so, Ghent aims to put human rights more prominently on the agenda.

56 OECD. (2020). Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities. Consulted at <https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/index.html>

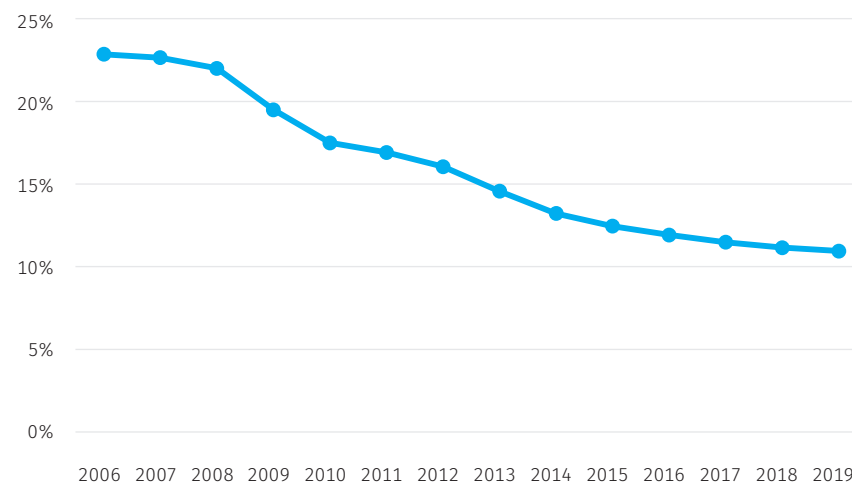
## Ghent and SDG 10: in figures

We highlight some telling figures here with explanations. Further data per sustainable development goal can be found [here](#). On this dashboard, you will always find the most recent data.

### Proportional labour force participation: employment rates by age and origin

We measure the proportional labour force participation by 50-64-year-olds by their employment rate and by comparing it with the employment rate of a reference group (here, 20-49-year-olds). The (age) gap in this employment rate provides insight into the extent to which working 50-64-year-olds (either self-employed or employed) are in work and manage to participate actively in economic life in a proportional representation. The smaller the gap, the smaller the difference in labour market participation between 20-49-year-olds and 50-64-year-olds. A positive gap indicates higher employment rates among 20-49-year-olds than 50-64-year-olds. The age gap in employment in Ghent fell from 22.8 to 11.0 between 2006 and 2019, indicating that the employment rate among 20-49-year-olds is higher than among 50-64-year-olds. We see a similar trend for Flanders, but Ghent scores better on this with lower age gaps. The decrease in the age gap in Ghent is due to a higher employment rate among 50-64-year-olds. The employment rate among 20-49-year-olds remained stable during this period.

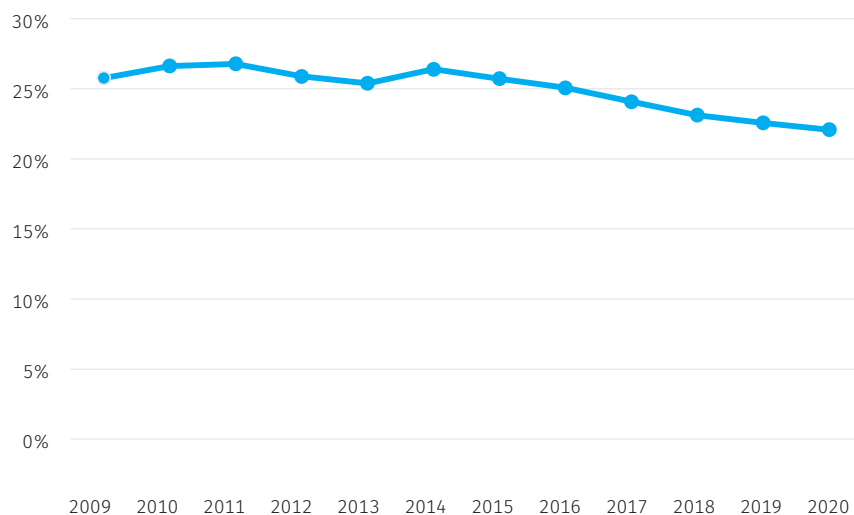
**Chart 13** Age gap in employment<sup>57</sup>



The origin gap in the employment rate is an indicator that shows the extent to which residents (20-64 years old) of foreign origin are effectively employed. High employment by individuals of foreign origin is favourable for labour market prospects. It indicates a good match between the job market and society. There is a clear difference between the employment rate of individuals of Belgian origin and those of foreign origin. The origin gap - the difference between the employment rate of individuals of Belgian origin and non-EU origin - stood at 22.6 percentage points in 2019 in Ghent and has been declining slightly since 2006. In other words, the employment rate of Ghent citizens of non-EU origin is 22.6 percentage points lower than for Ghent citizens of Belgian origin. Compared to 2009, this gap has decreased slightly. This corresponds to the average of the 13 urban areas and is slightly higher than the Flemish average. The gap is therefore slightly higher in Ghent than on average in the Flemish Region.

<sup>57</sup> Labour Market and Social Protection data warehouse of the Crossroads Bank for Social Security, through Municipal City Monitor 2020, Domestic Administration Agency

**Chart 14** *Origin gap in employment<sup>58</sup>*  
*Employment rate - gap between individuals of Belgian and non-EU origin*



In summary, there is still unequal participation in the job market by both age and origin. By origin, this unequal participation is greater than by age. The gap by age has halved since 2006. For origin, we see a slight decrease of a few percentage points since 2009.

## Discrimination

A survey from 2020<sup>59</sup> examined what percentage of the population had felt hurt, insulted or disadvantaged because of gender/sexual orientation, origin, physical or mental disability in the past year. Here, we see a clear delineation of experience of discrimination with respect to origin and gender.

**Table 13** *Percentage of Ghent citizens who feel discriminated against*

	2020
<b>Discrimination based on sexual orientation</b>	4%
<b>Discrimination based on physical or mental disability</b>	5.2%
<b>Discrimination based on origin</b>	10.6%
<b>Discrimination based on gender</b>	11.3%

In summary, there is still unequal participation in the job market by both age and origin. By origin, this unequal participation is greater than by age. The gap by age has halved since 2006. For origin, we see a slight decrease of a few percentage points since 2009.

## Diversity

The number of residents of non-Belgian origin continues to rise in Ghent, mainly in the younger age groups. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go when striving for a positive attitude towards diversity.

**Table 14** *Non-Belgian origin (compared to inhabitants)<sup>60</sup>*

	2016	2021
<b>Share of residents of non-Belgian origin</b>	32.3%	35.8%

<sup>58</sup> Job Market and Social Protection data warehouse of the Crossroads Bank for Social Security, through Municipal City Monitor 2020, Domestic Administration Agency

<sup>59</sup> Citizen Survey Municipal City Monitor 2020, Domestic Administration Agency

<sup>60</sup> National Register, provinces.incijfers.be

SDG 10: REDUCE INEQUALITIES WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Among urban areas, Ghent ranks second after Leuven when it comes to positive attitudes towards diversity.

**Table 15** Positive attitudes towards diversity - 2020 - urban areas<sup>61</sup>

<b>Leuven</b>	60.80%
<b>Ghent</b>	47.20%
<b>Bruges</b>	42.10%
<b>Mechelen</b>	42%
<b>Antwerp</b>	40.80%
<b>Genk</b>	40.20%
<b>13 urban areas total</b>	<b>39.60%</b>
<b>Hasselt</b>	37.30%
<b>Courtrai</b>	34.20%
<b>Turnhout</b>	27.10%
<b>Sint-Niklaas</b>	25.70%
<b>Aalst</b>	25.20%
<b>Ostend</b>	24.40%
<b>Roeselare</b>	22.60%

61 Citizen survey Municipality City Monitor 2020, Domestic Administration Agency

# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



# SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

## Strategy and practice City of Ghent

In the Ghent [long-term plan 2020-2025](#) several objectives can be found that help to achieve this sustainable development goal.

The initiatives in this report provide a picture of how the City of Ghent, together with various stakeholders, is contributing to the numerous SDG 11 topics.

In terms of urban development, the City of Ghent is committed to mixed developments of neighbourhoods, where living, business, leisure and economy coexist and intertwine. Examples of this include [Afrikalaan](#), [the Arsenaal site](#), [The Loop](#), [the Old Docks](#) and [Tondelier](#). In urban development projects, the City of Ghent always provides 20% of social housing. The City of Ghent also provides support to social housing companies to create an additional supply of social housing.<sup>62</sup>

When designing the public domain, the City of Ghent focuses on strollers, pedestrians and public transport users.<sup>63</sup> The [Ghent low-emission zone](#) should improve air quality in the Ghent city centre. Vehicles that do not meet the admission requirements will not be allowed to enter the zone. The city of Ghent is investing in the [Bicycle Embassy](#) to encourage and facilitate the use of bicycles as a sustainable means of transport in Ghent. Cyclists can go to five bike points for repairs and rental.

Together with Plan International, in the Safer Cities project the City of Ghent is fighting sexual harassment in the city. This is one of the actions to increase safety in the city for everyone.

62 Heyse, T. (2021). Housing: POLICY NOTE 2020-2025. City of Ghent. Consulted on 30 June 2022 at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota\\_Wonen\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota_Wonen_2020-2025.pdf)

63 Watteeuw, F. (2021). Urbanism, Architecture, Public Space, Mobility, Historical Patrimony and Heritage: POLICY NOTE. City of Ghent. Consulted on 30 June 2022 at [https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota\\_Stedenbouw\\_Architectuur\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/Beleidsnota_Stedenbouw_Architectuur_2020-2025.pdf)

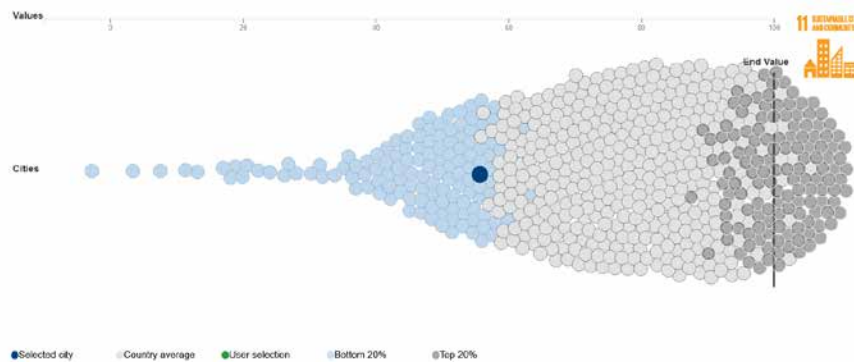


## Ghent compared to other cities

To enable an international comparison for SDG 11 'sustainable cities and communities', the [OECD SDG index](#) favours the following indicators: difference between growth rate of built-up area and growth rate of population and exposure to PM2.5 in  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The data from both indicators are combined in an SDG index and date back to 2014 and 2017, respectively. The index provides a picture of where Ghent is positioned compared to other world cities for this objective.

The SDG index assigns a score of 1-100, with a score of 100 being the proposed final value for the indicators to achieve the target by 2030.

**Chart 15** OESO SDG index – SDG 11



Ghent = 'selected city'  
Source: OECD<sup>64</sup>

## International cooperation

Tackling homelessness structurally was the goal of the [Urbact project ROOF](#). Ghent (lead), together with Liège, Timisoara, Thessaloniki, Braga, Toulouse Metropole, Poznan, Glasgow and Odense implemented various Housing First/Housing Led initiatives in recent years and collected data on the effective number of homeless people. With their findings, they sounded the alarm to higher authorities. During the closing event, ROOFTOPEU 2022, in Ghent, the four key messages were discussed with Commissioner Schmit, the European institutions, national, regional and local authorities and with experts with experience. The initiatives that Ghent developed can be found [here](#). The baseline study of the nine project partners can be found [here](#).

64 OECD. (2020). Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities. Consulted at <https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/index.html>

## Gent SDG 11: in figures

We highlight some telling figures here with explanations. Further data per sustainable development goal can be found [here](#). On this dashboard, you will always find the most recent data.

### Living in Ghent

As Ghent continues to grow, the housing market in Ghent (and beyond) is under pressure. The absolute numbers of students, the elderly and large families are increasing. Purchase and rental prices are rising. Those who want to live in the city are finding it difficult to find housing suited to their needs, family unit and income.

**Table 16** Demographic outlook, households by size, 2017-2027, Ghent<sup>65</sup>

	Number		%	
	2017	2027	2017	2027
<b>Average size</b>	2.13	2.16		
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,546</b>	<b>125,053</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>1 person</b>	50,356	52,226	42.1%	41.8%
<b>2 persons</b>	35,111	36,571	29.4%	29.2%
<b>3 persons</b>	13,883	14,215	11.6%	11.4%
<b>4 persons</b>	12,312	13,275	10.3%	10.6%
<b>5 persons or more</b>	7,884	8,766	6.6%	7.0%

Housing affordability is an issue for more and more people. Not only are the lower income groups 'trapped' in substandard housing, the Ghent rental and sales market also offers limited options for middle-class families. Although the overall figures on the evolution of the number of households and the planned housing developments seem balanced, there is a mismatch between what people need and can afford (demand) and what is available (supply).

Ghent is the fourth most expensive city to rent a flat compared to the other 12 urban areas. The average rent for a flat was €807 in 2020.<sup>66</sup>

Until 2020, the evolution of the average rent for a social housing unit in Ghent was very similar to the evolution at the level of the urban areas and the Flemish Region. In 2021, the average rent in Ghent increased by 22.7% compared to 17.5% and 14.6% for the urban areas and the Flemish Region respectively. Of all the urban areas, Ghent therefore had the greatest increase in average rent during the period 2015-2021, except for Turnhout and Mechelen.<sup>67</sup>

House prices on the Ghent property market are also rising, and this across all market segments. In 2010, compared to other urban areas, Ghent ranked sixth in terms of median house price. In 2020, Ghent has risen to second place and is the most expensive urban area to buy a house after Leuven. Ghent has had the most expensive median price for flats among all urban areas since 2016. The median prices for houses in Ghent have increased the most over the past two decades compared to the other urban areas. We see a similar trend as regards neighbouring municipalities in the first, second and third bands.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Statistiek Vlaanderen

<sup>66</sup> Rent barometer CIB Flanders, 2021

<sup>67</sup> Flemish Society for Social Housing, provinces.incijfers.be, 2021.

<sup>68</sup> Own processing based on Real Estate Prices Statbel



## Mobility in Ghent

The figures below refer to the main mode of travel from home to work or school. The majority of this information is sourced from the mobility survey that took place after the introduction of the circulation plan.

A third of Ghent citizens use a car as their main mode of transport when travelling. Slightly more Ghent citizens cycle (35%).

**Table 17** Relocation mode of Ghent citizens - 2018<sup>69</sup>

By motorcycle/moped	0.8%
By train	5%
By car, as a passenger	5.2%
By bus, tram or metro <sup>70</sup>	8.7%
On foot	12.7%
By car, as driver	33.2%
By bicycle	34.6%

## Culture in Ghent

Ghent cultural life is reaching a level that is noted Europe-wide and worldwide. In the 'Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor 2019' of the European Directorate-General 'Joint Research Centre', Ghent does very well. Our city ranks 13th in the list of 40 European cities with 250,000 to 500,000 inhabitants. Since 2009, Ghent has borne the prestigious title 'UNESCO Creative City of Music'. Ghent citizens often take part in cultural life. In 2020, two thirds of them attended one or more stage performances in their own city, half of them in another municipality/city.

Ghent also comes first as far as cultural activities in its own city are concerned.

**Table 18** Share of cultural participation - 2020 - urban areas<sup>71</sup>

	Cultural activity in own city	Cultural activity in other municipality
<b>Ghent</b>	66.1%	49.8%
<b>Leuven</b>	64.5%	51.9%
<b>Bruges</b>	58.1%	42.6%
<b>Antwerp</b>	57.7%	42.4%
<b>Courtrai</b>	57.5%	47.4%
<b>Mechelen</b>	54.0%	48.7%
<b>Hasselt</b>	53.9%	44.4%
<b>Ostend</b>	53.0%	40.1%
<b>Sint-Niklaas</b>	51.3%	46.7%
<b>Roeselare</b>	51.1%	38.8%
<b>Aalst</b>	51.1%	47.6%
<b>Turnhout</b>	48.1%	41.4%
<b>Genk</b>	44.8%	35.8%

In terms of satisfaction, Ghent shares first place with Leuven and Bruges. 85% of Ghent citizens are satisfied with the city's cultural activities.

69 Mobility study City of Ghent (survey conducted among Ghent residents)

70 Mobility study City of Ghent (survey conducted among Ghent residents)

71 Citizen survey Municipality City Monitor 2020, Domestic Administration Agency

## Cleanliness in the city

**Table 19** Regular cleanliness barometer<sup>72</sup>

	2016	2021
<b>Cleanliness barometer score</b>	88	87

Using the Cleanliness Barometer, we assess the cleanliness of streets on a monthly basis. This measuring tool assigns a score to streets based on how much litter and fly-tipping there is, how full the dustbins are, whether there is graffiti, vacant buildings or posters. The higher the score, the cleaner the street. In 2021, the average score was slightly lower than in 2016.

In total, up to 7.7% more fly-tipping notifications were issued in 2021 than in 2020. While the quantity of reports has increased, the number of tonnes of fly-tipping collected is lower than in 2020. By the way, the same is true for litter, think of cans and rubbish lying around, some 16% less of which was picked up. Conversely, there is much more rubbish in bins.<sup>73</sup>

## Clean air

In March 2014, the World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that some seven million people worldwide died prematurely in 2012 due to exposure to air pollution. This makes air pollution the environmental issue with the greatest health impact. The Flemish Environment Agency (VMM) continuously measures the concentration of harmful substances in the air. Five fixed measuring stations are located on Ghent territory. The number of excess days for fine dust decreased year after year and since 2012 we have been below the standard throughout Ghent.

The annual average nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is not to exceed 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Since 2014, this limit has not been exceeded at the five fixed monitoring stations, but local concentrations vary widely. Street-level passive samplers still showed excesses in some streets through 2019. Nonetheless, the figures continue to fall systematically. In 2020, in addition to the overall decreasing trend, Covid measures also resulted in an additional downward trend.

Soot is the most harmful to health, but there are no standards for this. Since 2012, we have been taking measurements at three locations in Ghent. Here too, the annual average concentration is systematically falling.<sup>74,75</sup>

## Safety in the city

We no longer see a statistically significant difference between the feeling of lack of safety in the city and that in the neighbourhood.

**Table 20** General feeling of lack of safety - Ghent

	2017	2020
<b>Feels unsafe in own neighbourhood</b>	6.3%	8.1%
<b>Feels unsafe in the city</b>	7.0%	8.5%

In 2020, Covid measures affected crime figures and there was a 6% increase compared to 2019, with 34,957 crimes recorded.

Non-compliance with Covid measures led to an exponential increase (x132) in health crimes. On the other hand, there was a sharp 29% drop in property crimes, due to limited social life. There has been less opportunity to commit bike theft, pickpocketing and shoplifting, and burglars have been hampered by telecommuters.

72 Figures City of Ghent, Environmental Department

73 <https://stad.gent/nl/groen-milieu/nieuws-evenementen/proper-gent-aanpak-sluikstort-en-zwerfvuil-prioritair>

74 Figures Flemish Environment Society

75 Figures Flemish Environment Society

In contrast, criminals were taking advantage of the accelerated digitisation of society and computer crime and scams using the internet were on the rise.

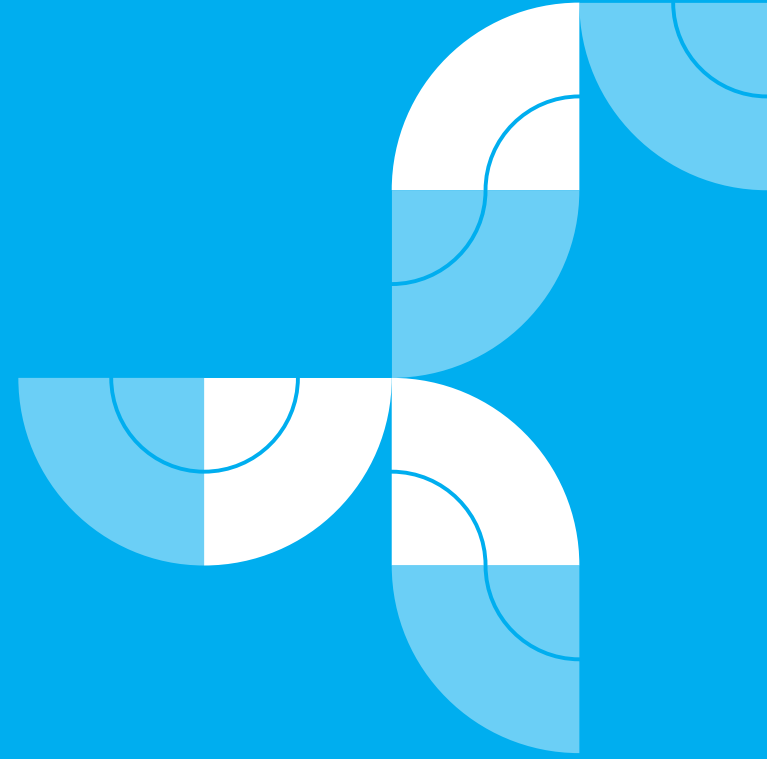
Covid forced people to stay home, which led to stress, tension or even aggression. Outreach workers reported more interfamily violence, more conflicts between neighbours, more young people using drugs, etc.

In 2021, Covid measures relaxed and public life resumed in stages, which is reflected in crime rates. Crimes against public health declined sharply, traditional crimes slowly increased again and approached the level of previous years. 2021 recorded a total of 32,750 offences (i.e., a decrease of 9% compared to 2020; 1.8% compared to 2019).

**Table 21** Total number of crimes

	2019	2020	2021
<b>Total number of crimes</b>	33,343	36,020	32,750





# Ten initiatives contributing to prosperity in Ghent

## LabLand's Slide-in House: an innovative construction technology



The Slide-in House is an innovative construction technology for quality, affordable and sustainable living. A row house that is difficult or impossible to renovate is replaced by a new, prefabricated timber-frame house. This concept is one of LabLand vzw's innovative projects. Labland vzw aims to speed up the transition in the building sector, make optimal use of space and, above all, show that things can be done differently.



### Further info

Info on Labland <https://labland.be/>

Info on slide-in housing <https://labland.be/wat/inschuihuis/>

## Energent: citizen cooperative for renewable energy



Energent is an East Flanders-based energy cooperative aiming to promote energy transition. From 2018 to January 2020, they completed the Neighbourhood Electricity project in cooperation with the City of Ghent. Energent is also currently conducting field tests on heat pumps and energy management systems in the Mariakerke district. In their vision of energy sustainability, they always focus on the bigger impact picture in the energy transition.



### Further info

Would you like to know more about Energent's various activities and projects? You'll find a great overview in the [2021 annual report](#)

Info on Energent <https://energient.be/>

## North Sea Port: 'Connect 2025' strategic plan



**North Sea Port** is the 60-kilometre-long cross-border port area stretching from Vlissingen in the Netherlands on the North Sea to Ghent, 32 kilometres inland in Belgium. North Sea Port is an important partner for our city and is progressive in terms of energy transition and industrial symbiosis. Based on these topics, they are contributing to SDG 7 (energy transition), SDG 8 (sustainable economy and work) and SDG 9 (the port authority as an innovator with a focus on infrastructure and space).

In this sustainability report, therefore, we choose to include the port's strategic plan, focusing on areas such as energy and climate.



**Further info**

<https://en.northseaport.com/>

## TriVelo: a social bike taxi service



Making people more mobile and connecting people with each other is bike taxi service TriVelo's mission. Volunteers - a diverse mix with a focus on newcomers - drive a bike taxi, making short journeys possible for seniors and less mobile individuals. In this way, the project immediately kills two birds with one stone: by making the elderly more mobile, social isolation is removed. Newcomers integrate more easily due to their social contacts as bicycle volunteers.



**Further info**

Want to book a bike taxi ride or find out more about TriVelo?

<https://fietsambassade.gent.be/nl/Trivelo>

## Toreke asbl: community social restaurants



District restaurant 't Oud Postje and Dining café Toreke are Ghent social restaurants and meeting places in the Muide-Meulestede and Rabot districts, managed by Toreke vzw. They are cosy venues, where local residents can meet and buy a tasty healthy meal. At the same time, they represent training and employment projects for people struggling in the job market.



### Further info

Info on Toreke asbl and its social restaurants <https://www.torekevzw.be/>

## Tondelier: a sustainable living and housing concept



The Tondelier project is the largest component in the urban renewal project *Bruggen naar Rabot* and is a public-private partnership between the City of Ghent and private partner Oryx Projects. It involves a sustainable experience/living and residential concept around a public park. Together with Rabotpark and the park around the tram bridge, Tondelierpark will be the second largest park near the Ghent inner ring road, after Citadelpark. Much attention is paid to connecting residents, both from the site and from the surrounding neighbourhoods. On offer are a community sports hall, youth clubs, a crèche and even vegetable gardens. The developers plan on building 530 units, 20% of which will consist of social housing and 20% of budget rental accommodations, spread over four building blocks.



### Further info

Would you like more info on the Tondelier site? <https://www.tondelier.be/nl/>

## Labeur vzw: Urban Mining Company Ghent



**Labeur vzw** is a tailor-made company whose main objective is to put people to work. The Sustainable Development Goals guide their operations. Employees can work in four shifts as full-time staff. Among these, the Urban Mining Company Ghent is the most recent. Urban Mining looks for residual building materials from vacant buildings to be reclaimed and given a new lease of life. Thanks in part to the Social Circular Hub Ghent, Labeur is where it is today with its Urban Mining operation.



### Further info

Info on Labeur <https://labeur.be/>

Info on the Social Circular Hub Ghent <https://stad.gent/nl/werken-ondernemen/nieuws-evenementen/sociaal-circulaire-hub-gent-van-start>

## Samen Leven vzw: jobcrafting for the over 55 population



In order to boost employment rates, people over 55 also need to stay in work. **Samen Leven vzw** aims to use jobcrafting to keep those workers on board, motivated and successful. Older workers can then adapt their jobs to their changing interests and skills. The tool is being tested in two Ghent-based companies, after which the approach can be rolled out to other companies.<sup>76</sup> The project could be launched as part of the Labour Pact for Ghent, a joint agenda implemented with a variety of partners.



### Further info

Would you like to know about the further course and results of the project? Then be sure to keep an eye on the *Samen Leven vzw* website <https://www.samen-leven.eu/>.

76 <https://www.samen-leven.eu/jobcrafting-voor-55ers/>



## URBCON: circular benches made of sustainable concrete



Are you looking for somewhere to rest after a stroll around Ghent? Then chances are you will take a seat on one of the two circular benches, which can be found on the redesigned square at the intersection of Brusselsepoortstraat and Sint-Lievenspoortstraat, near *De Zonnepoort* primary school. But, what are circular benches? They are made from waste flows, materials that are given a new lease of life. A product can be called circular if the raw materials, materials and/or parts of which it is made up are reused. In addition, it must be able to be converted back into new products after use, as the materials are recyclable or degradable. And these benches meet these requirements.



### Further info

Info on Resourceful <https://www.resourcefull.eu/>  
Info on Cleantech Cluster Region Ghent <https://stad.gent/nl/ondernemen/economische-speerpunten/cleantech-cluster-regio-gent/een-cleantech-cluster-voor-duurzaam-circulair-ondernemen>  
Info on URBICON <https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/urbcon-by-products-for-sustainable-concrete-in-the-urban-environment/>

## Cargo Velo and CityDepot: sustainable urban logistics



© An Van Gijsegem



Logistics are responsible for at least a quarter of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by transport, and demand for urban freight transport continues to grow<sup>77</sup>. Sustainable and smart urban logistics are therefore necessary for accessible and liveable cities. In Ghent, this is already in full swing by both the city organisation and various private players, such as Cargo Velo and CityDepot.



### Further info

Info on GentLevert <https://gentlevert.be/>  
Would you like further info on or collaboration with CityDepot?  
<https://www.citydepot.be/nl/>  
Would you like further info on or collaboration with Cargo Velo?  
<https://cargovelo.be/nl/>

77 <https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/nl/over-de-green-deal-duurzame-stedelijke-logistiek>



<https://www.stad.gent/sdg>  
<https://stad.gent/en/city-governance-organisation/city-policy/ghents-sustainable-development-goals>