

**ghent:**

# Ghent: so much city

Ghent should rank as the most surprising city in Flanders, combining beauty and culture with creativity, cutting edge design and a vibrant restaurant and nightlife scene. - THE OBSERVER, 2009



## 4 towers

Four towers dominate the Ghent skyline. Three of them date back to the Middle Ages. The Saint Nicholas' church, the Belfry and the Cathedral form an imposing trio, while the modernist Book Tower towers over the university district.



## a festive city

Including the Ghent Festivities, the largest street festival in Europe

## a port city

the port of Ghent employs 60,720 people and generates 6.7 billion euro in revenue

## a popular city

with a population of almost 250,000

## a monumental city

that counts the highest number of heritage buildings in Belgium

## an enterprising city

with remarkably innovative and creative businesses

## a musical city

with the right to call itself 'UNESCO Creative City of Music'

## a university city

Ghent is home to approximately 70,000 students



250,000

inhabitants



122

parks



13

museums



250

varieties of beer



1,000,000

overnight stays per year



The third most authentic destination in the world, according to National Geographic Traveler Magazine



176

playgrounds

Ghent  
is Europe's  
best  
kept secret

— LONELY PLANET



## At the heart of Europe

Ghent is right in the centre of Europe, close to Brussels. A city with 250,000 inhabitants and as many opportunities. By train, Ghent is a stone's throw from London, Paris and Amsterdam. The city is ideally located at the junction of the E17 and the E40 motorways, while its harbour is accessible from the sea.

# So much history

Ghent harbours many treasures. Its proud towers, its elegant merchant townhouses or the Castle of the Counts all bear witness to the city's rich past. For centuries, Ghent was the commercial centre of The Low Countries. Its strong, even stubborn will had much to do with that. To this day, the historical centre of the city steadfastly retains its solid character.

[www.visitghent.be](http://www.visitghent.be)

CASTLE OF THE COUNTS



*the elusive missing panel*

## The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb

In 1432, the **Van Eyck brothers** painted this unquestionable masterpiece of primitive Flemish art. The polyptych survived pillages and was confiscated by both Napoleon and Hitler before being returned to its rightful place in Saint Bavo's Cathedral. At least partially returned, because the panel of **The Just Judges** was stolen in 1934 and it has never been recovered. The investigation has been enthralling the people of Ghent ever since.

“If The Mystic Lamb were on display in Paris, it would easily knock the Mona Lisa off its throne.

– NOAH CHARNEY, ART HISTORIAN



“my lady  
Ghent”  
- LEONARD COHEN

Ghent is an inspiration to artists of all kinds. The city is a favourite of that troubadour of love, **Leonard Cohen**. He regularly returns to Ghent to give recitals. Many other musical talents such as **Trixie Whitley**, **2 Many DJ's**, **Dirk Brossé** and the **Collegium Vocale Ghent** have taken up residence in the city.

LEONARD COHEN AT SINT-PIETERSPLEIN

**gent:** UNESCO  
Creative City  
of Music

# So many festivals

From the **Film Fest Gent** to the **Festival of Flanders** or **Gent Jazz Festival**, there's always something to celebrate in Ghent. The high point, of course, is the **Ghent Festivities**. Ten days of fun, culture and performances. Where else would you find such a popular outpouring in a one-thousand-year-old historical centre? It should come as no surprise to learn that over 1 million festivalgoers come to these celebrations every year.

SINT-BAAFSPLEIN DURING THE GENT FESTIVITIES

## So much greenery

A breath of fresh air, a stroll in the park? Go green in Ghent. The city's plants are flourishing without the use of pesticides. The people of Ghent like to meet in the parks for an impromptu picnic or a barbecue with family, friends or neighbours.





# Climate neutral city

The future of Ghent is green. By 2050, the city aims to no longer negatively impact the climate.

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This is essential, not only for the environment, but for the quality of life of the people of Ghent. A 'zero emissions' city is a healthier, more pleasant place to live and stimulates the economy.

The municipality could never reach this target alone. In 2011, the city joined a **climate alliance**: businesses, citizens and associations are reflecting together on the concrete initiatives that will make their city more sustainable. These are not just empty words: the city is already supporting businesses and individuals with environmental projects.

“The City of Ghent works alongside business people and is sensitive to their challenges. Ghent is attentive to their needs and this greatly facilitates things for business entrepreneurs. It is precisely because the city supports all kinds of sustainable initiatives that it is such a great place to live.

- STEFAAN DEBOOSERE, CEO TREVI ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS





**KAA GENT**  
— STAMNUMMER 7 —

# Buffalo, buffalo!

In 2015, local football club KAA Gent earned its first ever national championship title. Buffalo - also the club's nickname - is a symbol of friendship, respect, generosity and courage, which is currently watching over Ghelamco Arena, the club's state-of-the-art stadium. This new multifunctional football temple, boasting a capacity of 20,000 supporters, was elected 'Stadium of the year 2013' on the website [www.stadiumdb.com](http://www.stadiumdb.com). It is the most modern sports complex of Belgium.

Football is so much more than just a sport; it also contributes considerably to society. In 2014, the npo **Voetbal in de stad** won the Pro League+ Award for having delivered the best community work in Belgium.



# So much sport

Sports connect people. That's why the City of Ghent has decided to invest in sustainable sports infrastructure.



The **Blaarmeersen** Sports and Recreation Park - the green lung of Ghent at Watersportbaan - is a large area boasting sports infrastructure and facilities catering for all tastes.



The **Flanders Sports Arena** is the place to be for sporting events at national, European and international level. This state-of-the-art multifunctional hall boasts a capacity of over 5,000 people.



The city is investing in athletics and jogging through a wide range of facilities and events for all ages.



The **Six Days of Ghent**, with its spectacular sprints at the legendary 't Kuipke indoor cycling track, attracts over 40,000 visitors, making it the highlight of Belgian track cycling. Discover this tradition dating back to 1922!

**BIOVER** is one of the world's largest climbing gyms, boasting two indoor halls, with climbing walls of 16.5 m and 14.5 m respectively.



# So cutting edge

Ghent is a metropolis on a human scale. This small city has a port, a university and several schools of higher education.

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Despite its small surface area, Ghent has enormous potential and the city is aware of it. Its management has been adapted to economic needs, without losing sight of the quality of life of its inhabitants. The nickname '**smart city**' is well deserved.

Visionary businesses like to come to Ghent. The **ICT sector** and a **biobased economy** are in thriving form. Ghent's biotechnological companies are cutting edge and pioneers on an international level in terms of research. Not forgetting other innovative start-ups that have chosen Ghent as their base.

[www.investinghent.be](http://www.investinghent.be)

Ghent seems made for business. Highly-trained professionals, flexible authorities, what more could you ask for? Thanks to the kindness of the people of Ghent, the wide range of cultural activities on offer and the appeal of the friendly street cafes, I felt at home right away.

- JENS HOLTINGER (SWEDEN),  
DIRECTOR OF VOLVO EUROPE TRUCK



# The port of Ghent

## Facts and figures

Ghent wouldn't be Ghent without its port. It has always been the driving force behind the Ghent economy. Today the port has grown into one of the principal maritime zones in Europe. Several sectors of activity are represented there: the world's **largest newsprint manufacturing machine**, integrated **steelworks** and **fruit juice terminals** (both the largest in Europe), the bioenergy cluster that is **Ghent Bio-Economy Valley** and the **automotive industry**. And the future looks good! In 2021, the new **sea lock** will allow even larger ships to dock in Ghent. [www.portofghent.be](http://www.portofghent.be)



**18,000** ships every year

**60,720** jobs



27,368 direct jobs + 33,353 indirect jobs

Surface area  
**4,700** hectares

  = 10,000 soccer fields

**>6,7** billion euros  
of added value

# So much inspiration

Ghent is inspirational. It's been proven. The figures show the importance of the creative sector in Ghent. But what is it that makes the city so magical? Here's what a few well-known and respected figures from Ghent's creative scene have to say...

For me, Ghent is no smaller than New York. Because people who live in the East Village never go to the Upper West Side, just 7 subway stations away. **Ghent is perfect: there is talent, there's an audience and everything is close by.**

- BEN VAN ALBOOM, GALLERY OWNER AND JOURNALIST



I have only been living here for three years, but I am already crazy about this town. **The people of Ghent are open-minded and the city abounds with things to do.** There are so many places I can play. In short, I've taken to Ghent like a duck to water.

- JEF NEVE, JAZZ MUSICIAN

Ghent is first and foremost my birthplace and where I live. **I love its down-to-earth side.** In terms of cinema, the city has a lot to offer. I believe in interacting with colleagues who pursue other careers in cinema and other disciplines. - KADIR BALCI, FILM DIRECTOR



© ANNE DERNOCK

Ghent stole our hearts away. **This is a city that likes to party; it is open-minded and there are so many opportunities to meet other designers, photographers and artists.** Fashion is on a roll, and breaking into the international market.

- SARAH BOS AND CLÉO BAELE, FASHION DESIGNERS, BLACK BALLOON



© JESSE WILLEMS



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© ANNE DERNOCK





## So much talent

With 70,000 students, Ghent is the number one student city in Flanders. Having so much talent in the universities and schools of higher education is bound to rub off on a city... Students like to paint the town red. It's no wonder that the city is so lively. Such a pool of vibrant youth, full of recently acquired know-how and knowledge helps to build a creative and innovative economy.

[www.studentingent.be](http://www.studentingent.be)

# So much diversity

Ghent and its citizens are incredibly diverse, with inhabitants of all ages from every part of the world. Walk down a single street and you can just as easily hear people speaking in the local dialect, in Turkish or in English.



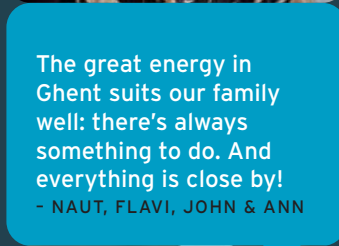
I came to live in Ghent with my husband in 1938. At the time Ghent was a little grey and gloomy. But it has become such a beautiful city!

- ROSA



The Dampoort district is a lively one from early morning to late at night. I really feel at home in this blend of cultures.

- JEROEN



The great energy in Ghent suits our family well: there's always something to do. And everything is close by!

- NAUT, FLAVI, JOHN & ANN



Because of my disability, I can't live just anywhere. But in Ghent I found the perfect place to live. My many hobbies mean that I have an active social life.

- KURT



Ghent offers a life of freedom, and infinite possibilities. For me, it's the best city in the country!

- MOUSA



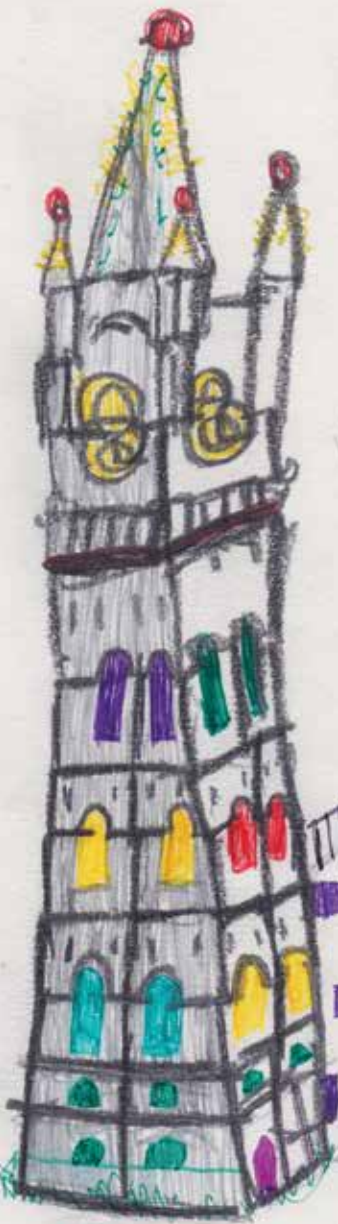
We just keep on discovering new and surprising places in Ghent. Fans of culture, like us, are really spoiled here.

- LUC AND JEANNEKE



## A child-friendly city

Maya, a budding artist, loves the Ghent Festivities and the Festival of Lights. But Ghent has so much more to offer, all year long. The city boasts over 150 sports and playing fields. There is a wide selection of cultural, sporting and leisure facilities for children and teenagers, as found on their own website. The city becomes their play area thanks to the many safe cycling lanes and pedestrian zones and free public transport. In Ghent, children and youngsters really count.



# A city of water and lights

Ghent has always been defined by its waterways. That's why the typical **maze of waterways** has recently been opened up and cleaned up.

So take a cruise and discover the city from a different angle.

At night, Ghent shines brightly thanks to the superb **Ghent Lighting Plan**, a carefully developed network of light accents and atmospheres that make the city and its waterways stand out. Take our advice: stay in town until nightfall to fully appreciate this award-winning display!



OLD COURTHOUSE

# A shopping paradise

Shopping is so much more relaxed in this city! The heart of Ghent is home to the largest pedestrian shopping centre in Flanders. Original boutiques, local designers and international brands are all gathered here for your shopping enjoyment. In between shopping, the many cafes and bars offer a pleasant break.



# Such a rich heritage

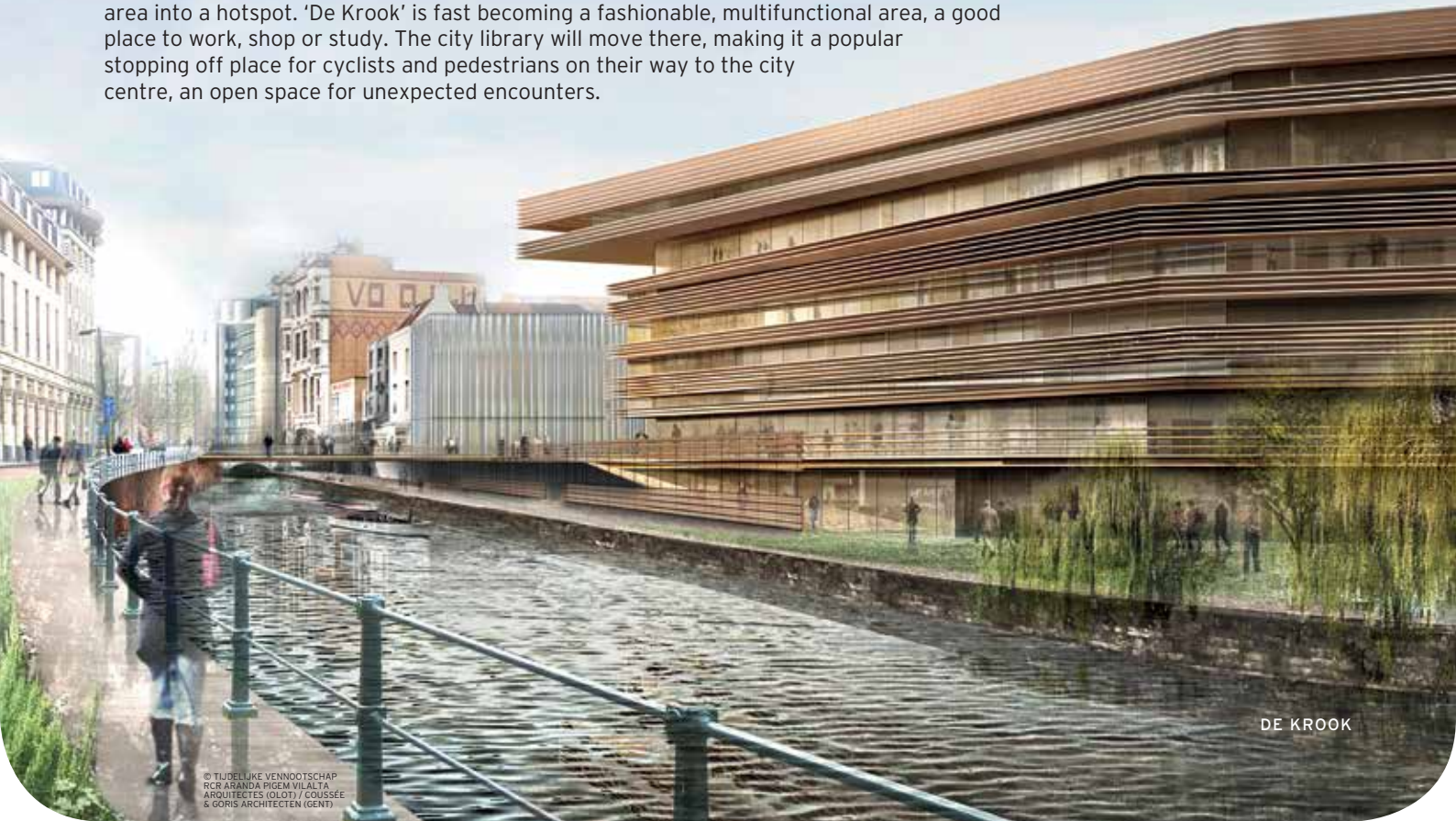
Ghent looks after its precious heritage, yet its past doesn't stop the city from living in the present and looking towards the future. The city encourages visionary architectural projects that show character. That's why the all-new **City Pavilion** won the public space award. Located in the historical centre, this futuristic monument allows its thousand-year-old neighbours to stand out to their full advantage.



VIEW OVER THE CITY PAVILION AND THE BELFRY

# So much revival

Ghent never stops reinventing itself and has opted for an ambitious approach to urban development. Take 'de Krook', for example. The objective of this yet to be finished project is to turn a forgotten area into a hotspot. 'De Krook' is fast becoming a fashionable, multifunctional area, a good place to work, shop or study. The city library will move there, making it a popular stopping off place for cyclists and pedestrians on their way to the city centre, an open space for unexpected encounters.



DE KROOK

A GHENT RECIPE - BALLS & GLORY

# Chicory meatballs with Tierenteyn mustard

© PIET DEWES/STETER



[www.ballsglory.com](http://www.ballsglory.com)

## SERVES 4

9 chicory  
3 soup spoons of Tierenteyn mustard  
750 g of minced meat  
half a lemon  
1 shallot  
butter  
200 ml beef stock or gravy

## MEATBALLS

Pre-heat the oven to 170°C. Mix the chopped chicory with a spoon of mustard and the minced meat. Make 4 meatballs. Roll them in breadcrumbs. Cook for around 30 minutes.

## BRAISED CHICORY

Remove the white chicory hearts. Sweat the leaves in butter in a pre-heated pan. Cover. Cook over a low heat until the chicory leaves are tender. Season with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice.

## TIERENTEYN GRAVY

Heat the chopped shallot in butter, add two soup spoons of mustard. Deglaze with the beef stock. Leave to simmer and add a little butter to finish.

# So many savours!

The people of Ghent are famous epicureans. No wonder young creative chefs are drawn to this city. *Bon appétit!*



© PIET DE KERSGIEVER

Ghent is now a reference in gastronomy: the city is open to new ideas and is innovating in 'food & drinks'.

- WIM BALLIEU, CHEF



© STAD GENT

The '**Flemish Foodies**' help build Ghent's international reputation. Their mastery of cooking results in an inventive and pleasantly surprising cuisine.

## Vegetarian capital

Ghent is a vegetarian's paradise: no other European city can claim as many vegetarian restaurants per citizen. It's no surprise that Ghent became a worldwide inspiration when in 2009 it invented the concept of '**Vegetarian Thursday**'. The goal? Incite citizens to have at least one meat-free day per week.



© STAD GENT

Feeling thirsty? Many of Ghent's cafés offer a wide choice of local beers on tap. Try the **Gruut**, a local beer brewed using ancestral methods.



© PIET DE KERSGIEVER

An excellent Ghent specialty is the '**Gentse waterzooi**'. It's a very tasty soup from the Middle Ages made with chicken or fish.



© STAD GENT

Those with a sweet tooth will love the sweets called '**neuzekes**' ('little noses') or **cluberdons**. Do you want to know what they taste like? Come find out!

“Ghent, a city for and by smart citizens.”

## Smart city

Ghent has set up several large-scale, innovative initiatives promoting citizen participation and co-creation. Smart technology and collaboration between inhabitants, industry, the academic world and the city take centre stage. We are establishing sustainable links between the citizens and their city, but also between the available resources and technologies. The result? The inhabitants of Ghent are now jointly responsible for their city. After all, smart citizens are the key to transforming Ghent into a smart city.

[www.gent.be/smartcity](http://www.gent.be/smartcity)





# Let's join forces to shape our city

Day in, day out, the inhabitants of Ghent showcase their creativity in more ways than one. The city therefore encourages its citizens to jump on board and invests in their becoming smart citizens. Discover how the inhabitants of Ghent have joined forces to improve life in the city for everyone.



The place to be for Ghent citizens with a concrete idea to shape the city. < On [www.crowdfunding.gent](http://www.crowdfunding.gent) they can get the necessary funds. The crowdfunding platform is a first for Flanders.



Lab van Troje is a creative laboratory promoting a sustainable, liveable and climate-neutral Ghent. A concrete < example? As part of the project **De Leefstraat** a group of residents are transforming their street into a sustainable gem.

The Rabot-Blaisantvest neighbourhood boasts a proper currency. Inhabitants who actively promote sustainability in the area can earn **torokes**. >



Ghent is focusing on digital forms of participation. Head to [www.ruimtevoor.gent](http://www.ruimtevoor.gent) and < discover 234 creative citizen proposals for urban planning in Ghent.



< **Gentse Zonkaart** (sun map) is one of many tools aiming to transform Ghent into a climate-neutral city. Citizens and businesses alike can consult this digital map to see if their roof is suited to the installation of solar panels.

During the annual **Apps for Ghent** hackatons, developers will use the city's accessible information (open data) to > develop apps set to make life in Ghent a whole lot easier.



*All cast and crew members  
will leave Ghent  
with nothing but  
positive memories.*

THE 'EMPEROR'  
PRODUCTION CREW.

## And... cut!

Ghent is increasingly in demand as a backdrop for films and TV series. Top-ranking directors including Lee Tamahori (Emperor) and Felix van Groeningen (The Broken Circle Breakdown) will gladly tell you why. Not only does the city offer all the advantages of the Flemish Tax Shelter system, it also boasts a unique blend of authentic historical and contemporary settings. The Ghent Film Office provides logistical support and coordinates the applications for the required permits. Ghent also hosts the annual Film Fest Gent

FILM  
CREW

# So much to discover!

Ghent, a medieval masterpiece on the surface, but bang up to date. Highlights such as the Castle of the Counts, St Bavo's Cathedral, which is home to the Mystic Lamb, and the Ghent Festivities attract countless tourists year in, year out. Let's face it, who wouldn't enjoy the spectacular panoramic view of the city's three towers, a boat trip through the city centre, the beautifully lit buildings and the city's culinary treats? [www.visitgent.be](http://www.visitgent.be)



**36**  
hotels  
1980 rooms



**128**  
Bed & Breakfasts



**1,000,000**  
overnight stays / year



**7**  
youth hostels  
504 beds

## Annual number of visitors



**753,000**  
St Bavo's Cathedral



**200,800**  
The Mystic Lamb



**327,500**  
St Nicolas' church



**300,000**  
Castle of the Counts

## City Card Gent



**30 € / 48** hours  
**35 € / 72** hours



**Gent all-in**  
Entrance tickets to museums,  
historic buildings and attractions,  
including use of public transport



**1,400,000**  
visitors to the Ghent  
Festivities in 10 days

# Ghent

one city, so many worlds



## Networks:

- EUROCITIES
- EUniverCities
- Urbiscoop
- ICLEI
- Unesco Creative City of Music
- Climate Alliance
- Covenant of Mayors
- Mayors for Peace
- European Network of child friendly Cities

# Ghent: one city, so many worlds

The world is important for the City of Ghent. Through the investment in international networks and co-operation and sharing knowledge and experiences with cities all over the world, Ghent strengthens its position and supports other cities.



Ghent sets up **partnerships** with other cities in and outside Europe, aiming to realize specific objectives. These co-operations are elaborated in a project.



Ghent stimulates **international solidarity** and wants to gain knowledge outside the own borders. The city informs and encourages the Ghent citizens on how to take action in concert with a consultative platform of North-South associations. Ghent focuses on fair trade and maintains a direct contact with cities in Africa, Latin-America and Asia.

Ghent is active in various international **networks**. Through these networks, e.g. EUROCITIES, the city shares information and expertise, finds the most appropriate partners for its European projects and inspires the international institutions (e.g. the European Commission) in an attempt to make the urban policy part of their own policy.



**Twinning cities** form the basis of the current European co-operation. They have been created after the Second World War in order to stimulate reconciliation in Europe.

Ghent applies for European **subsidies**. With these extra financial means the city is able to achieve substantial infrastructural works, it sets up trans-border projects and shares its expertise it has acquired in the course of time. Important finance programmes are e.g. Interreg, EFRO and the ESF.



## Info



[www.gent.be/international](http://www.gent.be/international)

[www.visitgent.be](http://www.visitgent.be)

[www.investinghent.be](http://www.investinghent.be)



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