

// MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL //

REPORT BY THE OFFICE FOR EU AFFAIRS
AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY 2021/22



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WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

Dear readers,
Dear citizens of Mannheim,

In recent years, the City of Mannheim has established a highly regarded international profile as a result of numerous European and international cooperation activities. In particular, these include maintaining relationships with our twin cities around the world. The City of Mannheim's essential international duties include actively participating in important international and European networks and implementing specific aid projects during times of acute global crisis, such as the war in Ukraine.

In our role as an international city, these activities are based on a central belief – global action and international cooperation always begin at the local level. Many people's first international experience takes place during interactions at school or in local clubs and organizations. These experiences are essential for promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the city. For this reason, the City of Mannheim aims to encourage opportunities for international interaction. At the same time, we work to participate at the international level as a municipality and play an active role in political and decision-making processes that directly influence city life.

To guarantee that we are consistently meeting these objectives and developing our international profile further, the municipal administration's international competencies are led centrally by our Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability. I hope you enjoy reading this report and are able to learn more about the wide range of topics included in the City of Mannheim's international work.

Christian Specht

Mayor of the City of Mannheim



FOREWORD

Dear readers,

For many years, the City of Mannheim has been engaged at the international level through active involvement in our city partnerships, representing municipal interests in global networks and bodies, and being increasingly willing to assume global responsibility. Recent years have made the significance of international partnerships during times of crisis even more apparent. Municipalities are becoming more and more crucial in reacting effectively and quickly to acute emergencies and drafting solutions for global challenges.

In light of this, the City of Mannheim has firmly anchored international cooperation and projects promoting global sustainability in its administrative structures. Using this approach, the City of Mannheim aims to set an example for international cooperation, while demonstrating support for international solidarity. Our objective is to create a local action framework to support and promote a wide range of international commitments within urban society, civil society organizations, and associations.

This report provides initial insights into the numerous initiatives and projects carried out by the Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability during 2021/22. We hope that you enjoy reading our report.

Stefanie Miller

Deputy Department Head of the Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability



// FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD //



International connections are critically important for municipalities. Cities work together in various areas, exchange experiences, and cooperate to develop project ideas and learn from one another. Mannheim's national and international partnerships with 14 cities worldwide are among its oldest relationships. For more than sixty years, interactions with twin and friendship cities across four continents have formed the crucial foundation for a wide range of international activities carried out by the City of Mannheim.

City partnerships thrive when people from both municipalities come together. Through these connections, like-minded people interact across borders and citizens become actively committed to shared projects. The City of Mannheim provides support for these interactions on many levels. The Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability offers financial assistance to associations and other institutions in Mannheim for cross-border community events. In particular, school partnerships enable Mannheim's young people to improve their language skills and get to know different countries and their people.

When designing these international connections, Mannheim is guided by the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

// ANOTHER CHAPTER /

Toulon has been officially twinned with Mannheim since 1959. After bridging two years during the pandemic with virtual communication, in-person visits were possible in spring 2022. At the end of April, a high-level delegation from Toulon visited Mannheim. A few weeks later, the youth councils from both cities met in Mannheim to share ideas.

Finally returning to meeting in person

The French Market on the 'Kapuzinerplanken,' organized by the Mannheim Marketing Board, was one of the main reasons the Toulon delegation visited in spring 2022. Both cities continued their partnership and friendship during the two pandemic years, for example via virtual communication between schoolchildren and projects, such as the German-French Youth Council. "I'm delighted we can once again experience and strengthen our German-French friendship without physical distance," said Christian Specht, Mayor and Chair of the Institut Français in Mannheim. "Especially during these times we're reminded how important it is to be good neighbors." The meeting also included the latest project from the two twin cities, a German-French youth council promoting the participation of young people in municipal issues. During their visit, the delegation discussed other current priorities of the cooperation, such as the collaboration with Next Mannheim in the area of start-up funding and the creative economy, and the German Federal Garden Show (BUGA), where Toulon was actively involved in the design of the 'Garden of Twin Cities.'

Meeting of the Youth Advisory Councils

An eight-member group from the newly established Toulon Youth Advisory Council (CVEJ – Conseil de la Vie Étudiante et de la Jeunesse) visited Mannheim at the end of May 2022 and met with representatives from the Mannheim Youth Council. The young people discussed participation structures in both cities. In these discussions, it became clear that there are many common issues affecting the future of young people in our cities. The French group positively noted how Mannheim involves all age groups – children, adolescents, and young adults – in political participation processes. They were also impressed by the structures around the open youth houses and youth centers. The German group was especially excited to hear about a project by the student organization FEDET (Fédération des Étudiants Toulonnais) in Toulon, which provides food to students in precarious financial situations. This is an act of solidarity by students for students. On their last day in Mannheim, the delegation from Toulon took part in the Youth Council meeting in Stadthaus N1 and discussed a concrete project proposal.

// mannheim.de/toulon



Place Victor-Hugo by the opera in Toulon



Deputy Mayor Laurent Jerome, Deputy Mayor Magali Turbatte, both from Toulon, with Mannheim's Mayor Specht at the French Market in Mannheim



Exchange between the youth councils from Mannheim and Toulon in Mannheim's Council Chamber

// >>GARDEN OF TWIN CITIES<< /

During the German Federal Garden Show (BUGA) 2023, Mannheim will demonstrate its status as an international city alongside its twelve twin cities. The Garden of Twin Cities was created as an international project and will remain part of Luisenpark after BUGA Mannheim 2023 closes. This means it will remain a visible symbol of the close connection between Mannheim and its twin cities around the world.

In October 2021, an expert group met for a virtual colloquium to discuss how the garden should look. Under the auspices of the Luisenpark's horticultural specialists, garden experts from eight of Mannheim's twin cities, spanning four time zones and three continents, worked together virtually for almost two weeks to design the Garden of Twin Cities. The garden covers an area of approximately 800m² in the Luisenpark. The colloquium was organized by Mannheim's Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol in cooperation with the BUGA Association (Bundesgartenschau-Gesellschaft Mannheim 2023 GmbH) and the Mannheim City Twinning Association (Förderverein Städtepartnerschaften Mannheim e.V.).

The experts worked intensively, sharing creative design ideas, which they wove together into a joint horticultural concept. The results were presented during a virtual event, and the draft design was then officially handed over to the BUGA Association and the City of Mannheim. The international group of experts successfully met the challenge of planning a garden that includes typical design elements from each twin city in one coherent public space.

A journey around the world in one garden

The final design of the garden provides a wide array of impressive perspectives, beginning with a tall group of willows from Bydgoszcz and a Chinese-inspired stream, which was based on a design from Zhenjiang. The path then leads you to the Riesa Monastery garden, with a view across a dune landscape that evokes Klaipėda and the Curonian Spit in Lithuania. A babbling brook is not too far away, reminding the visitor of a park in Windsor, Canada. Another path leads to a Jewish sukkah – a hut made from branches – based on a design from Haifa, Israel. Here you can sit and rest, taking a moment to direct your gaze to a stone garden with Canadian and Israeli design elements. The garden includes elaborately woven willow fences from Moldova and grape vines typical for the region around Chişinău. The garden ends with Mediterranean vegetation from Toulon in the south of France.



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In 2022, Mannheim's international department organized an international summer camp with a focus on practical horticultural work. Young people from Mannheim and its twin cities implemented some of the individual elements of the designs under the supervision of the Luisenpark team. The City of Mannheim organized the summer camp in close cooperation with Luisenpark, and the endeavor was funded by the BUGA Association.

**>>THE GARDEN OF TWIN CITIES IS
A VISIBLE SYMBOL OF THE CLOSE
CONNECTION BETWEEN MANNHEIM
AND ITS TWIN CITIES ACROSS
THE GLOBE.<<**

A real highlight at the German Federal Garden Show

"The special thing about this garden is that it was designed as an international project from the beginning," said Mayor Kurz at the summer camp's closing event. "The Garden of Twin Cities is a visible symbol of the close connection between Mannheim and its twin cities around the world and will be a real highlight at next year's German National Garden Show."

The Garden of Twin Cities will officially open during the German Federal Garden Show Mannheim 2023. The garden will also remain part of Luisenpark and continue to be maintained after the end of BUGA 23. The Garden of Twin Cities aims to become a place that represents Mannheim's partner cities and makes them visible, allowing them to be experienced over the years to come.



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- 1 A highlight of the Garden of Twin Cities: a sukkah based on a design from Haifa as der Partnerstadt Haifa
- 2 Conclusion of the international summer camp with Mannheim's twin cities
- 3 Exchange between horticulture specialists during the BUGA expert colloquium
- 4 Young participants from eight Mannheim twin cities gardening together

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SUMMER CAMP

In July 2022, young people from Mannheim and eight of its twin cities came together in the Luisenpark to implement the plans for the Garden of Twin Cities. A total of 24 volunteers from Bydgoszcz (Poland), Chişinău (Moldova), Haifa (Israel), Klaipeda (Lithuania), Swansea (Wales/ United Kingdom), Windsor (Canada) and the German cities of Berlin Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Riesa, and Mannheim participated in the week-long international exchange. Additionally, two horticulture students from the Chinese twin cities Qingdao and Zhenjiang, who could not travel due to coronavirus travel restrictions, participated in the preparations virtually.

Apprentices from the City of Mannheim and the BUGA also collaborated intensively in the summer camp preparation and independently organized various elements of the international encounter. In addition to gardening, intercultural exchange was also a central focus of the gathering. The eventful week included a diverse program with tours in Mannheim and the surrounding area.

The Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol organized and funded the summer camp. Additional financial support was provided by the foundation West-Oestliche Begegnungen.

// mannheim.de/garten-partnerstaedte

// VISITING FRIENDS /

City partnerships thrive when their residents meet together. The City of Mannheim supports schools, clubs, and other institutions with travel subsidies for meeting citizens from our twin and friendship cities.

Making music together – choir groups

To celebrate the 70th jubilee of the Seckenheimer Singing Circle, in fall 2022, the group spent almost a week in Mannheim with the À Coeur Joie Clair Matin choir from our twin city, Toulon. The two choirs have maintained a partnership since 1966. The highlight of the meeting was their joint performance of 'The Creation' by Joseph Haydn with the Kurpfalz Chamber Orchestra at the packed St. Aegidius Church in Seckenheim. At the champagne reception that followed, Mayor Specht impressed the guests from France with a speech in their language. They also visited the Luisenpark, as well as the memorial to victims of the helicopter crash on September 11, 1982 (as 23 of the 46 victims were from Toulon), and enjoyed a tour of various churches and the Mannheim Synagogue.

'Hard Times' – an exchange of art and artists

'Harte Zeiten/Cieikie Cząsy' (Hard Times) is the title of an exhibition and exchange project between Port25 – a contemporary art space in Mannheim – and Galeria Miejska bwa in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Ten artists from Germany and Poland presented work for the project, which was exhibited in the two galleries. Additionally, workshops and a weekend of performances were organized, along with readings in cooperation with the Cultural Office in Mannheim and the association KulturQuer QuerKultur Rhine-Neckar. Exhibition tours were offered in German, Turkish, and Polish, in partnership with the German-Polish Society Mannheim-Ludwigshafen. The Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol organized the engagement with the Polish partners. After the initial meeting, there was an intensive exchange between Port25 and Galeria Miejska bwa, which jointly developed the project. 'Hard Times/Cieikie Cząsy' was originally a working title, hinting at the wave of right-wing populism and the changing social climate. The organizers decided to stick with this title because it conjured further associations with the pandemic. A joint jury selected the artists in both countries after a public call for submissions. Rafał Bruski, City President of Bydgoszcz, and Dr. Peter Kurz, Mayor of Mannheim, served as patrons for the event.

FUNDED INTERACTIONS WITH MANNHEIM'S TWIN AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES IN 2021/2022

Very few in-person meetings took place during the coronavirus pandemic in 2021. During that time, the focus shifted to online formats. Virtual meetings will also continue to receive funding thanks to a City Council resolution passed on 22/06/2021. In 2022, it was possible for many international events to take place in person again.

Bydgoszcz Poland

// Funding for a virtual meeting with twin city Bydgoszcz as part of opening the 'Hard Times/Cieikie Cząsy' exhibitions in Mannheim and Bydgoszcz (July 2021).

Haifa Israel

// Lessing Secondary School, school exchange with the Leo Baeck Education Centre – visit from Haifa (December 2022)

Swansea United Kingdom

// Mannheim University of Applied Sciences, meeting with students from the Swansea College of Art (May 2022)

Toulon France

// Organization of a reception as part of the Lessing Forum to celebrate the 50th anniversary of school exchanges between Lycée Dumont d'Urville (Toulon) and Lessing Secondary School in Mannheim (December 2021)

// Lessing Secondary School, meeting and a celebration of 50 years of partnership with the Lycée Dumont d'Urville (Toulon) – trip to Toulon (April 2022)

// Seckenheimer Singing Circle, meeting with À Coeur Joie Clair Matin Choir – visiting from Toulon (September 2022)

// Geschwister-Scholl Secondary School, school exchange with Collège Bon Accueil – a trip to Toulon (September 2022)

// Ludwig-Frank Secondary School, school exchange with Collège Maurice Ravel – visiting from Toulon (October 2022)

// Geschwister-Scholl Secondary School, school exchange with Collège Bon Accueil – visiting from Toulon (December 2022)

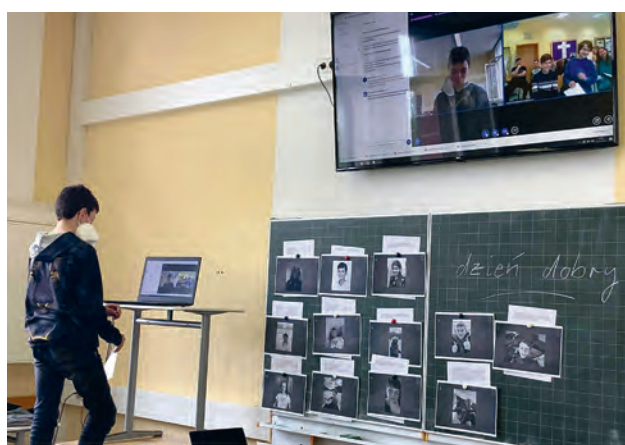
// YOUTH EXCHANGE WITH BYDGOSZCZ //

In 2021 and 2022, Bydgoszcz und Mannheim participated in a program called 'Bei dir und bei mir' (Where you live and where I live), run by the German-Polish Youth Office to promote interaction between young people in Germany and Poland. Numerous projects were also initiated thanks to the German-Polish Society Mannheim-Ludwigshafen.

How can relationships be built between young people from Mannheim and its Polish twin city, Bydgoszcz? What connects us when we live over 1,000 km apart? This was the question posed by around 30 people actively involved and interested in German-Polish youth exchange during an online meeting in April 2022. Representatives from 14 schools, extracurricular educational institutions, and associations accepted invitations from the City of Mannheim's Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol in cooperation with the twin city of Bydgoszcz. During two sessions, moderated and interpreted by the German-Polish Youth Office, the participants got to know each other and worked on ideas for youth exchange projects.

The list of scheduled activities and connections speaks for itself: A series of joint workshops by the Mannheim film project GIRLS GO MOVIE and the Bydgoszcz Youth Palace to produce a documentary film; initial contact between the Friedrichsfeld handball club and its counterpart in Bydgoszcz; as well as exchange between representatives of the environmental project 'BeepathNet' in Bydgoszcz and members of the Mannheim Young Beekeepers group and 'Green School' (Luisenpark). Lessing Secondary School is already working together successfully with two secondary schools in Bydgoszcz (see the interview on this page). Sandhofen Middle School and the Bertha-Hirsch Primary School also took initial steps toward an exchange with two schools in Bydgoszcz.

The partnership between Mannheim and Bydgoszcz has a long history. Even as early as the 1980s, the Stadtjugendring Mannheim (Youth Council) was involved in building relationships with Poland. Now, the German-Polish Society Mannheim-Ludwigshafen and the Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol initiate and promote youth exchange projects.



Year 7 students from Lessing Secondary School meeting online with students from Bydgoszcz



Concluding conference with the German-Polish Youth Office with the participation of the cities of Mannheim and Bydgoszcz

>>We were very touched<<

Lessing Secondary School started an exchange program with schools in Bydgoszcz. Teacher Anna-Maria Klingmann explains how it all happened and what experiences she and her students had during the exchange.

>> Ms. Klingmann, where did the idea of an exchange with Bydgoszcz come from?

<< We already have an active exchange program with our partner school in Toulon, so we were really interested when the city asked us if we could imagine an exchange with Bydgoszcz.

>> What were the first steps?

<< The Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol gave us the contact details of two Polish colleagues, with whom we quickly had a very fruitful exchange of information. This led to the development of ideas for initial interaction between our students.

>> How were the first meetings?

<< Due to the pandemic, we initially had to limit ourselves to online formats with games to get to know one another, exercises, and small joint projects – all of which worked very well. We were delighted with how it went and hadn't planned an exchange visit.

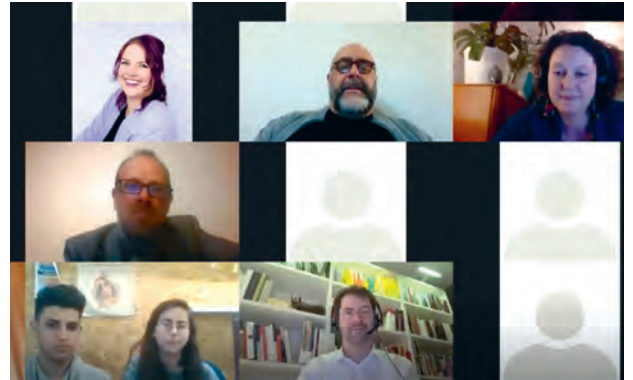
>> Then this all changed ...

<< Yes, the German-Polish Youth Office provided the impetus by inviting all the initiatives and teams cooperating with Poland to a big meeting. This meeting really inspired us. We were very touched by the feeling of closeness conveyed and by the wish from the Polish side that we Germans should look toward Eastern Europe. So in light of this, my colleague Benedikt Eisele and I began planning an in-person exchange visit as soon as we got back. Our students visited Bydgoszcz in May and were utterly thrilled, with the return visit to Mannheim taking place in the fall. We're delighted that it worked out and hope this exchange develops into a permanent fixture.

// QUEER EXCHANGE //

In January 2021, as part of the event series 'QZM meets...' there was an initial meeting between the Queer Center Mannheim (QZM) and Communities House for Pride and Tolerance in Haifa, Israel, which was established in 2017. The head of the center, Arnon Allouche, presented the work of Communities House, and participants discussed the similarities and differences between the queer communities in Mannheim and Haifa, as well as the difficulties and opportunities they each experience. Representing the City of Mannheim, Deputy Mayor Dirk Grunert welcomed the participants. "The diversity of sexual and gender identities is a fundamental and enriching aspect of the Mannheim urban community," stressed Deputy Mayor Grunert. The 'QZM meets...' format was developed by the Queer Center Mannheim with support from the Department for International and European Affairs and Protocol and the Commission for Equal Opportunities for People of Diverse Sexual and Gender Identities in the City of Mannheim.

// mannheim.de/haifa



Virtual exchange meeting of the Queer Center Mannheim (QZM) and Communities House for Pride and Tolerance in Haifa

// CHILDREN PAINT THE WORLD //

'We are 1 world' was the motto for this year's International Children's Art Exhibition in Windsor, Mannheim's twin city in Canada. Children between six and twelve years of age were asked to submit artwork based on the theme. Mannheim took part in the creative challenge along with Windsor's other twin cities in Japan, South Korea, China, the United Kingdom, and Mexico. Again, due to the pandemic, the organizers shifted the exhibition to a virtual format – a YouTube video of the submitted pictures with video addresses by the mayors of the twinned cities. In his message, Dr. Peter Kurz highlighted the exhibition's motto: "The exhibition offers an excellent opportunity to think about ourselves and the world we live in." Kurz appealed to the young artists to respect and protect our 'one world' and stand up for equal rights and possibilities around the world. Twenty-four children from various institutions in Mannheim participated, including children from Neckarstadt Kids, Kleine Riedstrasse Children's House, Rheinau School Nursery and Friedrich-Ebert School Nursery.

// mannheim.de/windsor



A picture submitted for the exhibition in Windsor by Yousra, age nine, from Mannheim

All works from Mannheim submitted for the Children's Art Exhibition in Windsor >>



// GOLD AND SILVER FOR RIESA //

Eleven athletes with disabilities travelled from Riesa, Saxony, to its twin city, Mannheim, to participate in the Baden-Württemberg Special Olympics State Summer Games. Over the course of the three-day event, the Saxon swimmers competed in the initial and final heats of two individual events and one relay event with great success: They took home 14 gold, seven silver, and five bronze medals. Alongside the sporting competition, the delegation from Riesa also used the time to get to know their twin city. The athletes also had the opportunity to participate in a Special Olympics Health and Prevention Program.

// mannheim.de/riesa



Athletes from Riesa on the podium at the 2022 Special Olympics in Mannheim

Mannheim is committed to Europe and benefits from the European Union in many ways. The Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability drives commitment to European networks, promotes EU project work by securing funding, and makes municipal concerns visible in Brussels.

In 2021 and 2022, some of the focuses of the City of Mannheim's commitment to Europe included sustainable and climate neutral transformation, urban safety, cooperation with African cities, promoting exchange on the handling of cultural assets in the colonial context, and strengthening the social economy in Europe. The City of Mannheim and the European Commission organized the digital European Social Economy Summit (EUSES) in Mannheim, with prominent international attendees. It defined the EU's objectives for the social economy in the Mannheim Declaration of Social Economy.

The City of Mannheim also organized the virtual Economic Development Forum, together with the European city network EUROCITIES, under the slogan 'Cities as the focus of economic reconstruction.'

To react early to European legislative initiatives and co-design the political agendas of the EU, the municipal administration must have a high level of competency in all things EU. The City of Mannheim recognizes this and developed and successfully implemented the employee training program 'Strengthening European Capabilities.'

// EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES /





A Brussels landmark – the Atomium

// KNOWING HOW EUROPE WORKS /

As part of a professional education program, 14 municipal employees travelled to Brussels in July 2022. They saw firsthand how closely European politics and municipal actions are interlinked.



Municipal employees visiting the European Parliament



Insights into the European Commission during the study trip to Brussels

The provision of public services, European state aid law, Local Green Deals – these and many more municipal responsibilities have something in common: they are used to implement European legislation at the municipal level. Approximately 70 percent of decisions made at the EU level influence municipal interests. In recognition of this, the Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability responded by offering a seminar series on the theme of ‘Strengthening European Capabilities.’ Municipal employees were able to enhance their knowledge of Europe and the EU.

In 2021, municipal employees were able to attend a series of three seminars on the fundamentals of European politics and the working methods of European institutions. Furthermore, the participants benefitted from in-depth insights into the EU funding programs relevant to Mannheim. The theoretical seminars were complemented by a study trip to Brussels from July 13-15, 2022.

The trip focused on institutions and bodies representing municipalities in the EU, including the European Office of Baden-Württemberg Municipalities, the European Committee of Regions, and the network EUROCITIES. Participants were also able to build contacts for future exchanges. During a visit, for example, to the European Parliament, they gained insight into how European institutions function and the role played by cities in this context. In addition to direct interactions with representatives of European institutions, individual expert discussions with the relevant Directorate-Generals of the European Commission were also part of the program. As a result of the positive feedback from the participants, the city plans to offer the training events again in 2023.

// mannheim.de/europa

A visit to the Parlamentarium, the largest parliamentary visitor's center in Europe





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- 1 First working meeting of the Rhizomatic Cities Network in Montpellier
- 2 Exchange of expertise on the topics of decolonization, restitution, and citizens' engagement
- 3 Exchange with experts from municipal energy supplier MVV about sustainable energy generation
- 4 Tour of the Franklin neighborhood with municipal experts from Windsor



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// CONNECTED TO AFRICA //

The Rhizomatic Cities Network (RCN) is an EU-funded project aiming to improve dialogue between African and European cities and achieve concrete objectives in socio-political spheres. The City of Palermo and Fondazione Studio Rizoma coordinate the project, which runs from May 2022 until October 2023. It is organized in cooperation with the cities of Mannheim, Athens, Bergamo, Braga, Düsseldorf, Marseille, Montpellier and Reggio Calabria. The agenda includes five international meetings. After an opening meeting, there will be three working meetings: in Montpellier in December 2022, Athens in March 2023 and Braga in May 2023, with a concluding summit taking place in Palermo in October 2023. The meetings focus on three themes: new models of cooperation, political networks, and restitution. The work on restitution focuses on the handling of colonial legacy by creating and adopting a municipal charter for decolonization, restitution, and new citizens' engagement. For the meeting in Montpellier, all project partners were asked to invite representatives of African cities with whom they are already in close contact. The City of Mannheim used contacts made during a delegation visit to Windhoek, Namibia, in November 2022 and invited a cultural expert to Montpellier. The Namibian expert spent three days in Mannheim after the meeting, deepening contacts at the local museums. Upon conclusion of the project, the municipal charter will be developed into a network, the Decolonial Cities Network – the first of its kind in Europe. The network aims to consolidate cooperation between European and African cities in academic, cultural, and civil society spheres.

// GREEN EXCHANGE //

For the first time, the European Commission is funding administrative exchange between Mannheim and Windsor, its twin city in Canada, as part of the International Urban and Regional Cooperation programme. This is the world's largest cooperation program between European and non-European cities. It offers decision makers the chance to work out solutions together for sustainable city development. After several virtual meetings and an expert exchange session in Windsor, a return visit to Mannheim took place in October 2022. The guests from Windsor learned about sustainable energy projects. For example, during a visit to Mannheim's municipal wastewater facility, the experts gained insights into the functioning of the almost fully energy self-sufficient sewage treatment facility. Meetings related to environmental energy from waste with representatives from the energy company MMV also took place. During a visit to Rhein-Neckar-Verkehr GmbH (rnv), e-mobility projects for local public transport were presented. The Canadian guests experienced the housing of the future during a visit to the new neighborhood of FRANKLIN. Windsor and Mannheim are both cities with a strong industrial tradition, aiming to advance green structural change and transform into climate neutral and sustainable cities.

// mannheim.de/iurc

// STRIVING FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY /

The European Union has set the ambitious goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 55 percent by 2030. By 2050, the EU plans to be fully climate neutral. The European Commission presented the 'Fit for 55' package encompassing various legislative proposals to reach this objective.

For two of the proposals, the expansion of the European Emissions Trading System and the introduction of a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, Mayor Peter Kurz played a key role in the European legislative process as rapporteur for the European Committee of the Regions. Mayor Kurz explained: "As the Committee of the Regions, it is our job to ensure that the emissions trading and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism work for our cities and regions as well as our citizens. The response to the war in Ukraine cannot be to question effective, transformative instruments, especially carbon pricing." He stated that the war in Ukraine instead confirmed the long-held belief that we must stop using fossil fuels. He recognized, "At the same time, we must ensure that the transformation doesn't leave anyone or any regions behind."

By implementing the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, the European Commission aims to guarantee that European companies are not disadvantaged if companies outside the EU pay less for their emissions. "The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is essential," stressed Kurz. "We must ensure carbon-neutral production in Europe without industry being moved abroad." Kurz also explained that this aspect is especially significant for an industrial city like Mannheim.

The European Commission proposed expanding the carbon trading system to include building and road traffic. "The revenue from the intended social funds must be used to provide relief to low-income households and those regions particularly affected," said the mayor during the Committee of the Regions hybrid meeting, adding that social acceptance would otherwise be undermined and climate goals put at risk. "In my opinion, 'Fit for 55' cannot be viewed separately from European Cohesion Policy and Local Green Deals. It must be developed as an instrument to implement a just and effective local transformation."



Meeting of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels



We must ensure carbon-neutral production in Europe without industry being moved abroad. <<

Mayor Peter Kurz,
Mayor of the City of Mannheim

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an important body in the European Union. For European legislation, especially regulations and guidelines that directly impact municipalities and regions, the CoR must be bindingly consulted during the legislative process and can propose changes. This makes the CoR the only EU body that gives cities and regions a formal voice in European legislative proceedings. Between 2018 and 2023, Mayor Kurz represented the member cities of the Association of German Cities as an alternate member of the Committee of Regions.



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// A LOOK AT SOCIAL ISSUES //

Strengthening Europe's social economy and contributing to economic development, social integration, and sustainable and digital transformation were the stated aims of the European Social Economy Summit (EUSES), held in May 2021 in Mannheim. The summit was organized by the City of Mannheim and the European Commission, with the support of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs. More than 6,000 attendees from over 100 nations registered for the EUSES to discuss the role of the social economy in Europe. More than 300 organizations from Germany and other EU members participated in the summit, with over 500 speakers across 80 sessions. The agenda included topics ranging from digitalization of the social economy and social innovation to cross-sector and transnational cooperation. The results of the summit flowed into the subsequent 'Mannheim Declaration on Social Economy,' which was presented to the European Commission. This input to the Social Action Plan laid the foundation for the economic future of the EU at the end of 2021.

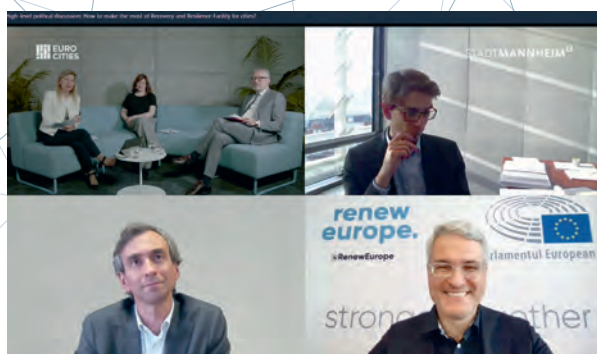


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// CONFERENCE ON SECURITY //

In October 2021, the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) took place in Nice, France. The deputy mayor responsible for security, Christian Specht, who was named EFUS Vice-President in April 2021, represented the City of Mannheim. The European city leaders discussed the theme of 'Cities of Security, Innovation, and Solidarity.' Specht emphasized that a more significant focus must be placed on migration, but that it cannot be dealt with by the cities alone. "Instead, cooperative efforts between cities, like EFUS, can be key to preventing conflict," said Specht. EFUS is a European network of cities, which includes more than 250 municipal administrations. It deals with central aspects of urban crime prevention and supports exchange between European cities via networking, training, and cooperation.

- 1 Mayor Kurz at the opening of EUSES
- 2 Deputy Mayor Specht on a panel at the European Forum for Urban Security in Nice
- 3 Hybrid event at the EUROCITIES Economic Development Forum



3

// EUROCITIES FORUM //

'Cities at the Heart of Economic Reconstruction' was the theme of the EUROCITIES Economic Development Forum, which took place in Mannheim in 2022. The City of Mannheim joined with the EURO-CITIES network and the chair of the Economic Development Forum, Anni Sinnemäki (deputy mayor of Helsinki), to extend an invitation to a virtual exchange. The effects of the coronavirus crisis for European municipalities were the focus of the forum. The EU launched the program NextGenerationEU to rebuild the European economy. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the key instrument that has made more than 670 billion euros of investment and reform assistance available. During a high-level roundtable, national and European representatives joined representatives from various European cities, including Mannheim's mayor, Peter Kurz. The leaders discussed to what extent European crisis assistance reaches cities and provides the help needed to enable them to recover from the economic consequences of the coronavirus crisis.

// GLOBAL NETWORK /

The City of Mannheim maintains relationships with twelve twin cities, two friendship cities, and six additional cooperation partners across four continents. In recent years, development cooperation partnerships with cities in the Global South have complemented the longstanding twin city programs with cities in countries like France and the United Kingdom. In 2022, in the face of the illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, Mannheim established a relationship with its newest twin city, Chernivtsi.

/ TWIN CITIES

**BERLIN
CHARLOTTENBURG-
WILMERSDORF**
Germany
341,155 inhabitants
Twinned since 1962

BYDGOSZCZ
Poland
339,053 inhabitants
Twinned since 1991

CHISINAU
Republic of Moldova
493,645 inhabitants
Twinned since 1989

CHERNIVTSI
Ukraine
264,298 inhabitants
Twinned since 2022

HAIFA
Israel
282,832 inhabitants
Twinned since 2009

KLAIPEDA
Lithuania
172,292 inhabitants
Twinned since 2002

QINGDAO
China
10,071,722 inhabitants
Twinned since 2016

RIESA
Germany
29,785 inhabitants
Twinned since 1988

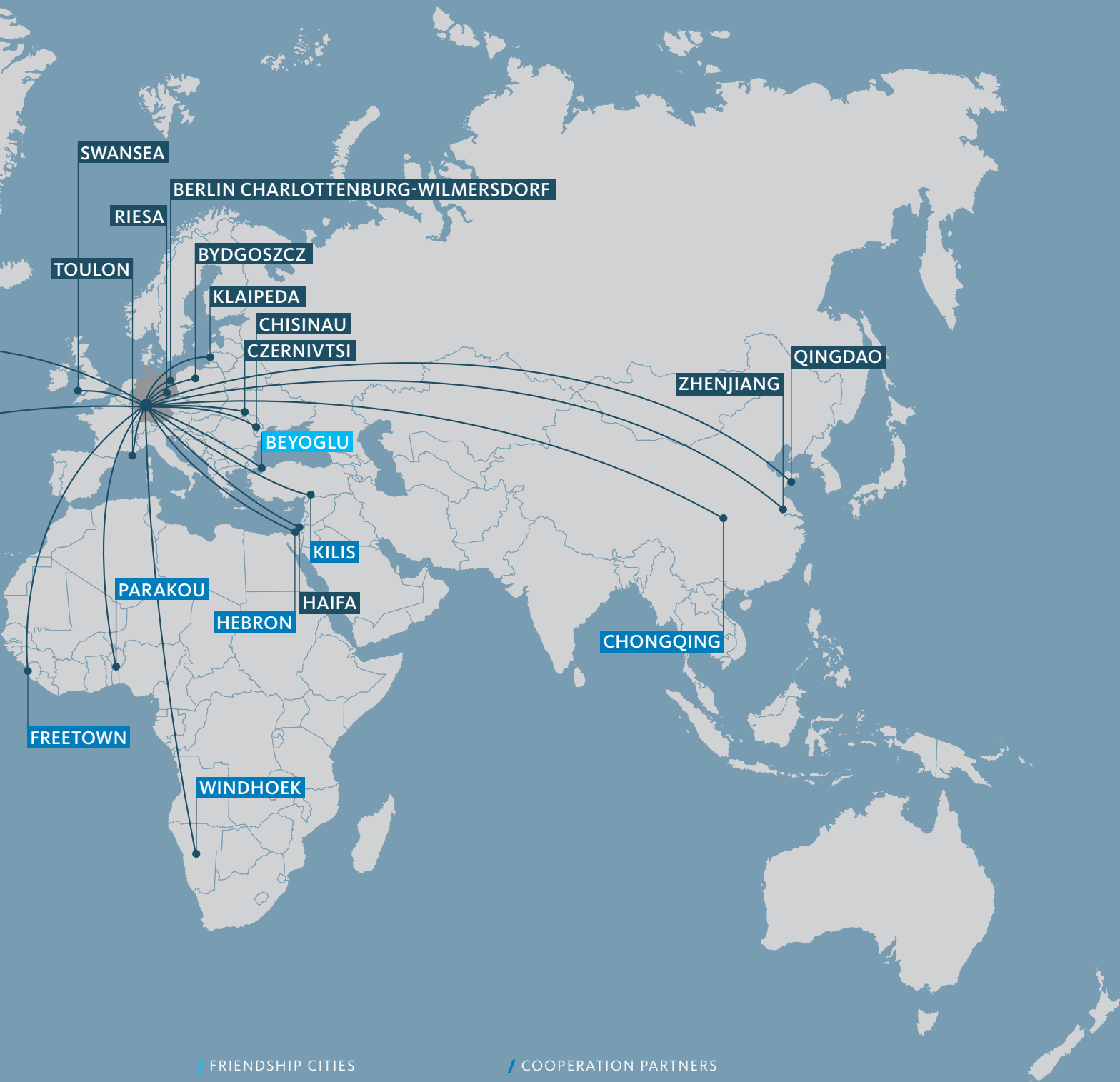
SWANSEA
United Kingdom
237,800 inhabitants
Twinned since 1957

TOULON
France
181,506 inhabitants
Twinned since 1959

WINDSOR
Canada
229,660 inhabitants
Twinned since 1980

ZHENJIANG
China
3,210,418 inhabitants
Twinned since 2004





/ FRIENDSHIP CITIES

BEYOGLU
Turkey
246,152 inhabitants
Friendship city since 2011

EL VIEJO
Nicaragua
90,459 inhabitants
Friendship city since 1989

/ COOPERATION PARTNERS

CHONGQING
China
32,054,159 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2017

FREETOWN
Sierra Leone
1,100,000 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2021

HEBRON
Palestinian Territories
160,470 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2013

KILIS
Turkey
145,826 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2017

PARAKOU
Benin
386,676 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2021

WINDHOEK
Namibia
477,000 inhabitants
Cooperation partner since 2022

// FOR A FAIRER WORLD //



The global challenges of our times – climate protection, migration and pandemics – are especially relevant in the places where most people live: cities. This means that municipalities must find local solutions for these global challenges, contributing to a fairer and more sustainable world.

The development cooperation policy of the City of Mannheim is anchored in a strategic goal of the Mannheim 2030 Mission Statement, which was adopted by the City Council in 2019: “Mannheim is a model of international cooperation between cities. Local development policy and responsible consumption contribute to global justice and sustainable international policies.”

In recent years, through many concrete projects, Mannheim has shown how international cooperation between cities can contribute to solving global problems. These projects focus on current challenges, such as climate change, refugee integration, and improving educational opportunities.

However, our consumer behavior also directly affects the living conditions and employment situation in the Global South. For this reason, the City of Mannheim is working on realigning public procurement. The objective is to ensure social and ecological criteria are anchored in global supply chains. Campaigns to promote fair trade in Mannheim help citizens become more aware of global justice issues.

// FLOOD PROTECTION /

Sustainable commitment: the City of Mannheim is working with the Nicaraguan city El Viejo to construct a rainwater infiltration basin – supporting our friendship city in the fight against the devastating consequences of climate change.

It's a paradox: the rich countries in the Global North are responsible for more than two-thirds of all greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is predominantly countries in the Global South that suffer from the effects of climate change. The Global North has a special responsibility to help its partners in the Global South to cope with the consequences of climate change.

The City of Mannheim takes this responsibility seriously, which led to the development of a project with El Viejo. Since December 2020, Mannheim has been working with the Nicaraguan municipality, located approximately 120 kilometers from the capital city of Managua, to build a rainwater infiltration basin. This basin protects the city from flooding during the rainy season. The extent and frequency of the flooding have increased due to climate change. Year after year, the severe rainfall causes damage to streets and buildings and poses health-related risks for the 90,000 inhabitants.

The project was implemented with 160,000 euros from the German federal government, acquired by the City of Mannheim. The basin, completed at the end of 2022, protects around 30,000 of El Viejo's residents from flooding and helps raise groundwater levels. This benefits the farmers in the areas surrounding the basin, who suffer from water shortages during the summer months and in some places could previously only reach groundwater at a depth of 30 meters. The municipal administration of El Viejo has also employed a cleaning team to regularly clean and maintain the basin and the surrounding drainage pipes.

To assess the project's success, the evaluation will continue until 2023 with data collection in October, which is the month with the heaviest rainfall. The water level will be measured in an area of the city exposed regularly to severe flooding. This level should be significantly lower than the levels measured before the construction of the rainwater infiltration basin. In addition to financial support, a vital component of the project was the intensive exchange between experts from the Mannheim water company and the project team from El Viejo during project trips and workshops.



Preparatory work for the construction of the infiltration basin in El Viejo

Long-standing friendship between cities

The contact between Mannheim and the Nicaraguan city of El Viejo stretches back to the 1980s. Since 1986, the Association to Promote City Friendship Between Mannheim and the El Viejo Region in Nicaragua (Verein zur Förderung der Städtepartnerschaft Mannheim / El Viejo und Region in Nicaragua e.V.), known as the Nicaragua Association, has been providing information about the situation in El Viejo, collecting donations, and promoting specific projects. As a result of this civic initiative, Mannheim's City Council named El Viejo a friendship city in 1989.

The municipal cooperation project with El Viejo is funded by the program Sustainable Municipal Development via Partnership Projects (Nachhaltige Kommunalentwicklung durch Partnerschaftsprojekte) from Engagement Global and the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW), with funding from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The initiative for the project stems from a local council presentation in 2016. At the time, it was decided to contribute to implementing Agenda 2030 via a joint project with the Nicaraguan friendship city.

// mannheim.de/el-viejo



Municipal experts from Mannheim and El Viejo

// >>WE ALSO BENEFIT FROM GLOBAL JUSTICE<< //

Since September 2019, Stephanie Oechsner has been the coordinator for municipal development policy (KEpol) for the City of Mannheim. In this interview, she explains why municipal development policy is essential for the city, what her role involves, and the goals she has already reached through her work.

>> Ms. Oechsner, why is municipal development policy important? And how does Mannheim benefit as a city?

<< Municipal development policy aims to contribute to global sustainability, especially the relationship between the Global North and Global South. The idea is that everything we do or don't do here impacts the Global South and global justice. For example, due to international markets and supply chains, the products we consume here directly impact the ecological situation in countries in the Global South or the working conditions of the people who live there. The City of Mannheim is a supporter of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its 17 goals, almost all of which relate to the issue of global justice. There is one thing we cannot forget given the significant challenges we face: Only when we ensure global justice will we be able to keep climate change in check. This will benefit not only the countries of the Global South, but also us here in the Global North.

>> You've been the coordinator for municipal development policy (KEpol) for the City of Mannheim since September 2019. What was the idea behind the City Council's decision to create this position?

<< The City Council's Green Party group had previously proposed that the City of Mannheim apply to the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) for a federally funded project. It is important to note that the City of Mannheim was very engaged in development policy issues well before I assumed this role. My job was and is to improve how this commitment is coordinated and align the various initiatives and measures from civil society and City Hall, creating synergies between the individual initiatives.

>> What do you do specifically to fulfil this task?

<< The initial focus was raising awareness of the position throughout the city. As I mentioned before, many individual initiatives and projects existed, but without a central structure. Given the breadth



A tram with fair trade banners – an awareness-raising campaign for Mannheim's 10th anniversary as a Fairtrade City

of the topic, we began by creating a plan of action for municipal development policy to establish some guidelines. We identified four areas of action: promoting fair trade, international development partnerships, global learning, and – an issue for internal administration – sustainable procurement. We then established the Round Table on Municipal Development Policy in October 2021.

>> What does the Round Table do?

<< Well, it brings together all key players involved with this issue. Alongside representatives from City Hall, the political parties from the City Council, and the Migration Advisory Board, there are stakeholders from civil society. These stakeholders include representatives from associations, organizations and initiatives who are active in one way or another in the areas mentioned above.

>> That is a very diverse mix ...

<< You're not wrong! So during our first meeting, the question of what we as a city mean by the term development policy was raised almost immediately. There were a wide range of views and intensive discussions. By the end, however, we agreed on a common definition of the term, which has laid the groundwork for our cooperation. This was a particularly sweet success and the first important step for building future projects and measures. In Ghana, the Round Table has already initiated its first project.

>> What is the aim of the project?

<< It's a reforestation initiative in a rural community. This project developed from a suggestion of the Ghana Union Mannheim/Ludwigshafen e.V., with whom we will implement the project as partners. Here at the coordination office, we acquired the necessary funds for the project from the state government. So we've already achieved one of the goals of the Round Table – supporting the engagement of people with immigrant backgrounds in their home countries and jointly initiating projects in these countries.



Only when we ensure global justice will we be able to keep climate change in check. This will benefit not only the countries of the Global South, but also us here in the Global North. <<

Stephanie Oechsner,
Coordinator for Municipal Development
Policy for the City of Mannheim

>> Apart from coordination and networking, what else do you deal with?

<< Well, we also look at the awareness of specific development policy themes in the city. This means that communication is a central aspect of the work. For example, did you know Mannheim has been a Fairtrade City for over ten years? Fairtrade Germany e.V. awards this title to cities and towns demonstrating exceptional commitment to fair trade. This is precisely the type of issue we aim to highlight in our efforts to raise awareness about the importance of municipal development policy with our residents.



Stephanie Oechsner (left) during an exchange of expertise with municipal experts as part of a development cooperation project with El Viejo

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY – WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO

Municipal development policy is the sum of all resources and measures that municipal administrations and political bodies use and implement to promote sustainable global development locally and in partner municipalities in the Global South. This encompasses local measures, such as promoting fair trade, as well as development cooperation overseas. Municipal development policy always targets the Global South and aims to improve economic and social development in these regions.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PLAN OF ACTION

The foundation for anchoring this theme across the city administration is provided by the plan of action created by the coordinator for municipal development policy and adopted by the City Council in July 2021. As part of the plan, four areas of action for development policy were initially derived from the Mannheim 2030 mission statement. This work focuses specifically on the strategic goal of promoting international cooperation, which includes global learning, fair procurement, responsible consumption, and municipal development cooperation. It also describes the structures required to achieve these goals. These structures include existing committees and bodies, such as the Fair Trade Supervisory Committee, as well as newly established structures, such as the Round Table on Municipal Development Policy and local advocates for municipal development policy in various departments. Furthermore, the action plan defined criteria according to which municipal development cooperation projects should be developed and implemented in the future. This ensures greater transparency in relation to the City of Mannheim's international projects, while boosting legitimacy with local residents.

ROUND TABLE ON MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Established in 2021, the Round Table on Municipal Development Policy includes representatives of civil society, city hall officials, and political representatives. They come together regularly to exchange ideas and actively participate in developing and implementing activities and measures related to municipal development policy. There are typically between 15 and 20 participants at the meetings, including representatives from organizations, initiatives and associations. These organizations include the Colonial History Working Group, the One World Forum Mannheim e.V., the Centre for Global Learning, the Black Academy, Goethe Institute, Mannheim Helps without Borders e.V., the Association for the Promotion of City Partnerships Mannheim e.V., and the Islamic Communities Working Group. Despite coming from different perspectives, the members agreed on a shared understanding of the term municipal development policy, which the Round Table adopted at the start of 2023 to reflect its core values.

// LOOKING SOUTH //

In previous years, the City of Mannheim's international commitment has concentrated on Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and China. However, recently, the city has increasingly put Africa in focus, initiating new projects and exchanges. A cooperation project with Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone, and the visit of an official delegation from Windhoek, Namibia, mark a new chapter in the City of Mannheim's international commitment.



Exchange between a specialist from Mannheim and the resident advisor from Namibia



Mayor Kurz and Mayor Gawanas of Windhoek after signing the memorandum of understanding

FREETOWN – for sustainable urban development

The City of Mannheim has supported Freetown, the capital city of the West African country of Sierra Leone with the development of municipal structures for sustainable urban development. Both cities participated in the development policy program 'Specialists for Municipal Partnerships Worldwide,' which is funded by Germany's federal government and run by the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) and the German Society for International Development Cooperation (GIZ). The project began with a comprehensive consultation process, which led to the funding and establishment of a new staff position within the Freetown Municipal Administration. A specialist in urban planning filled the newly created resident advisor role. He began the two-year position in November 2022, after an intensive period as an observer with City of Mannheim in the Department for Geoinformation and City Planning. The resident advisor will help to intensify the partnership between Mannheim and Freetown.

The cooperation between the cities of Mannheim and Freetown stems from the joint commitment of the mayors of both cities in the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM). The GPM is an association and exchange platform for mayors around the world. The GPM's regular activities have established a strong partnership between the mayors and municipal employees of Mannheim and Freetown. Both cities are connected by their extensive commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations at the local level.

WINDHOEK – the beginning of a partnership

In April 2022, an official delegation from the Namibian capital city of Windhoek visited Mannheim for the first time. Mayor Peter Kurz and the mayor of Windhoek, Cllr. Sade Gawanas used the visit to sign a memorandum of understanding to deepen their cooperation. "Especially during times of global political instability, we realize the importance of international cooperation and direct cooperation between cities," said Kurz. The mayor also explained that the State of Baden-Württemberg is already involved in intensive cooperation in Namibia via its Namibia Initiative. Through this program, the state is working to confront its historical responsibility for German colonialism while funding multiple projects dealing with the consequences of colonialism.

Mayor Gawanas stressed that signing the memorandum of understanding between Windhoek and Mannheim marked a historic moment because it was the first agreement that Mannheim had signed with an African city. "In today's globalized world characterized by numerous socioeconomic challenges at the local level, we must accept that no city can exist in isolation," explained Gawanas. "Today's municipal challenges require us first to think globally, then locally." The visit of the mayor and her delegation included workshops on the theme of climate protection and colonial legacy, as well as a visit to the Pop Academy, which cooperates with the College of the Arts of the University of Namibia and the Goethe Institute in Namibia, supported by the state of Baden-Württemberg.



Advanced professional development course in Mannheim for the training staff from the new education center in Kilis



The new vocational training center in Kilis shortly after its opening in September 2021

// PROSPECTS FOR REFUGEES /

Since 2017, the City of Mannheim has been actively involved in a development cooperation partnership with the Turkish city of Kilis. The cooperation led to the opening of a new training center in Kilis in September 2021, which was built with funding from the German federal government. Annually, more than 440 Syrian refugees and Turkish women are now able to obtain basic vocational training and receive psychosocial support. As part of the cooperation, 13 Turkish instructors, who teach courses on childcare and eldercare, attended an advanced training course at the Mannheim Academy for Social Professions. The aim was professional development and to exchange ideas and experiences with their colleagues in Mannheim. At the end of the project, Mayor Peter Kurz met with the official delegation, which was headed by Servet Ramazan, Lord Mayor of Kilis. "The development policy project with Kilis is a unique example of the concrete contribution made by municipal cooperation at the local level in dealing with global challenges like the refugee crisis," said Kurz. Kilis is located on Turkey's border with Syria and is particularly affected by the conflicts in the region. Today 114,000 refugees from Syria are living in Kilis – a city with approx. 101,000 local inhabitants. The city's aim is to offer the refugees economic prospects to enable them to remain in Kilis.

// mannheim.de/partnerschaftsprojekte

// GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY /

In November 2021, a total of 18 cities from eight countries across four continents accepted an invitation from the Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region and the City of Mannheim to participate in the virtual SDG Partnership Conference. The aim of the conference was to promote partnership-based cooperation and dialogue around Agenda 2030 and develop ideas and activities to help implement the Sustainable Development Goals. "The conference sends a strong signal that in these challenging times, our cities continue to pursue the UN's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals," said Mayor Peter Kurz. "This decade will show if we succeed in radically transforming society to achieve sustainability." The main event of the conference was the adoption of the joint declaration 'Model Regions for Global Sustainability' by the metropolitan region together with the City of Mannheim and the other participating municipalities. With the declaration, the municipalities aim to demonstrate the potential of development cooperation between regions and establish new structures to promote exchange between cities in the field of development policy beyond the conference. Alongside the City of Mannheim and its twin city Chişinău, representatives from Hasloch, Heidelberg, Ladenburg, Landau, Ludwigshafen, Neustadt, Speyer and Viernheim also participated in the conference, accompanied by their partners from the Global South.



Virtual SDG Partnership Conference of the Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region and the City of Mannheim

// FACING THE CRISIS TOGETHER //



Russia's war against Ukraine is a disaster of historic magnitude. At the same time, it demonstrates the significance of international solidarity between cities and the importance of offering support during times of crisis. Since February 2022, the City of Mannheim has been providing humanitarian aid to its Ukrainian twin city Chernivtsi and its other twin cities directly affected by the war: Chişinău (Republic of Moldova) and Bydgoszcz (Poland). The aid provides support to the people in these cities during their time of acute crisis. The long-term goal is also to support Ukraine with reconstruction after the war and to accompany Ukrainian municipalities on the path toward EU accession.

In October 2022, the presidents of both countries, Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Frank-Walter Steinmeier assumed the symbolic patronage of the Network of German-Ukrainian Municipal Partnership and called on German municipalities to establish city partnerships with Ukraine. The City of Mannheim was already working closely with the City of Chernivtsi before the war, and it was officially adopted as a twin city following a unanimous resolution of the City Council in April 2022.

// A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY /

Chernivtsi, in western Ukraine, has become an important safe haven for people escaping war in other parts of the country. Mannheim has had a close relationship with the city for several years, and since April 2022 – as a reaction to the Russian war of aggression – it is an official twin city of Mannheim.



The pedestrian zone in Chernivtsi – the city has become an important place of refuge for internally displaced persons

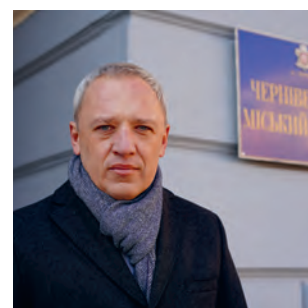
Chernivtsi and its 260,000 inhabitants have been spared direct military attacks, but have felt the war's full effects. Many of Chernivtsi's citizens fighting with the Ukrainian Army against the Russian invaders. Furthermore, by the end of 2022, more than 50,000 people, mainly from eastern Ukraine, had sought refuge in the city.

Mannheim has maintained a close relationship with the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi for several years. The cities have implemented various municipal cooperation projects together. In light of the war of aggression against Ukraine, Mannheim's City Council decided to show its solidarity. In April 2022, the councilors unanimously adopted a resolution to establish a twin cities agreement with Chernivtsi. The agreement was signed by Mayor Kurz and Roman Klichuk, Mayor of Chernivtsi, during an official ceremony at the World Urban Forum in Katowice.

"This partnership agreement is a statement of mutual solidarity. We stand with the citizens of Chernivtsi – and with all those forced to flee their homes due to the war against Ukraine, especially those who have sought refuge in Chernivtsi and Mannheim," explained the mayor of Mannheim during the signing ceremony. "Our agreement is based on our mutual conviction that Ukraine is a European country whose citizens have the inalienable right to freely decide on the future of their country."

The mayor stated that although the partnership agreement was signed during a time of great uncertainty, it represents a long-term commitment. "When the war is over, and reconstruction can finally begin, Mannheim will be there for Chernivtsi. We will also continue to work together during peacetime. I know that both cities will benefit greatly from this agreement."

// mannheim.de/czernowitz



Within a short time, the City of Chernivtsi has become a safe haven for internally displaced people from the war zones inside Ukraine. From the beginning, we could count on the support of our partners from our twin city. Our partners in Mannheim stand with us during this war and will continue to do so. That gives us hope and optimism. <<

Roman Klichuk,
Mayor of Chernivtsi

// HELP IN TIMES OF NEED /

Real friendship proves itself in times of crisis. The City of Mannheim supports its Ukrainian twin city, Chernivtsi, with a wide range of initiatives and aid to improve the precarious situation in the city.

Directly after the outbreak of the war against Ukraine, the City of Mannheim, together with Mannheim hilft ohne Grenzen e.V. (Mannheim Helping without Borders), started a fundraising campaign for Chernivtsi. The city and the charity used the donations to help the Ukrainian twin city procure desperately needed humanitarian assistance to serve refugees. The partners regularly organized aid convoys to supply Chernivtsi with basic foodstuffs, medical devices and materials, and hygiene products.

The City of Mannheim is also involved in the project 'Kommunale Direkthilfe im Rahmen der deutsch-ukrainischen Solidarpartnerschaften' (Municipal Direct Aid as part of the German-Ukrainian Solidarity Partnership) from the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) and German Society for International Development Cooperation (GIZ), initiated by the Association of German Cities (DST). The project aims to strengthen the protection of the municipal populations in Ukraine as part of municipal partnerships

MANNHEIM HILFT OHNE GRENZEN E.V.

The non-profit organization 'Mannheim hilft ohne Grenzen e.V.' (Mannheim Helping without Borders) was founded in 2020. Here, citizens of Mannheim from around the world initiate international aid projects. The organization came out of the municipal development cooperation project that Mannheim and its immigrant community implemented with the Turkish city of Kilis.

// mannheimohnegrenzen.de



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between German and Ukrainian cities. Through this federal support, 74 appliances for heating and cooking, six generators, and school equipment were sent to Mannheim's twin city.

"The massive influx of refugees presented Chernivtsi with enormous infrastructural challenges. Mannheim demonstrates solidarity with Ukraine by sending aid convoys as a tangible display of support," explains Mayor Peter Kurz. "We are in contact almost daily with Chernivtsi's municipal administration, allowing us to use donations to send targeted financial help to Ukraine."

Vehicles and financial aid

In April 2023, Mannheim's City Council unanimously agreed to provide 1 million euros in direct aid to its twin cities Chernivtsi, Chişinău, and Bydgoszcz. The city uses this special budget to provide additional humanitarian assistance to its twin cities. An urgent issue for the City of Chernivtsi is providing public services under the challenging conditions of ongoing war. For this reason, the City of Mannheim donated seven municipal vehicles and two city buses to the City of Chernivtsi. All of the vehicles were from Mannheim's own municipal fleet or Rhein-Neckar-Verkehr GmbH (rnv) and underwent a general overhaul before being sent to Ukraine. This donation is an important symbol of support for the municipal fleet in Chernivtsi, which is already working beyond its capacity.



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- 1 An aid convoy leaving for Chernivtsi with support from the non-profit 'Mannheim hilft ohne Grenzen'
- 2 Unloading aid supplies in Chernivtsi
- 3 Arrival of an aid convoy in the twin city of Chişinău
- 4 Mayor Kurz handing over electricity generators to Roman Klichuk, Mayor of Chernivtsi
- 5 Donated municipal vehicles for Chernivtsi
- 6 Equipping school classes in Bydgoszcz to create additional space for teaching



6

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO OUR NEIGHBOURS

The devastating war in Ukraine has a direct effect on its neighbor countries. The Republic of Moldova and Poland are particularly impacted by the refugee crisis. Both countries are confronted with logistical and humanitarian challenges due to the many Ukrainian refugees.

The situation is especially precarious in the Republic of Moldova, which has accepted more Ukrainian refugees per inhabitant than any other country. The municipal administration in Chişinău hands out more than 500 aid packages every day, with each person receiving one parcel per week. These aid packages support Ukrainian families with food and hygiene items, as well as winter clothing and blankets during the colder months. To support the City of Chişinău, the City of Mannheim has donated around 73 tons of aid supplies worth approximately 270,000 euros, which were delivered directly to the municipal distribution center in Chişinău.

The aid was funded using the special budget provided by the City of Mannheim for municipal direct assistance. To provide additional winter clothing and transport of relief supplies, the City of Mannheim was able to apply for supplementary funding from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW). This enables the city to ensure that the special budget was fully invested in relief supplies for Chişinău.

Bydgoszcz, Mannheim's twin city in Poland, took in almost 50,000 Ukrainian refugees in 2022. The City of Mannheim directly assisted the refugees, sending a total of approximately 257,000 euros in supplies. Since the outbreak of war, more than 2,500 refugee children have been attending local schools and Ukrainian lessons online. For this reason, the City of Bydgoszcz requested help with technical equipment for schools to help the Ukrainian children with their studies. Financial support from the City of Mannheim enabled additional classrooms to be equipped with interactive boards at several schools. The funds were also used to purchase textbooks and school materials for the Ukrainian children.

// mannheim.de/ukraine-hilfe

// HELPING TO SHAPE GLOBAL POLICY //



Cities are playing an increasingly pivotal role in addressing global challenges. Municipalities must react locally to the consequences of climate change. They are the point of contact for refugees and migrants and must develop innovative mobility concepts.

Against this backdrop, city diplomacy will become more critical. Cities must work together in international networks and seek cooperation with international organizations. And vice versa, organizations such as the EU or OECD increasingly see cities as crucial partners in addressing global challenges. Through international city networks, municipalities around the world draw attention to their priorities and help shape the international political agenda. City networks are much more than the sum of their parts and can drive significant changes at the national and international levels.

The City of Mannheim has assumed a leading role in these international processes for many years. It actively participates in international politics through its involvement with global city networks and supranational organizations. Its aim is to represent the municipal perspective and the interests of cities on the international stage.



Mayor Kurz with the national ministers and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz during the G7 Ministers Meeting in Potsdam

// SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE //

Global challenges can only be solved by working with the cities – this was the message conveyed at the virtual ‘U7 Mayors Summit,’ during which the ‘Urban7 Mayors Declaration’ was adopted and presented to the German G7 presidency.

Under the slogan ‘Engaging the Urban World – Cities as Engines of Change for Peace, Democracy and Sustainability,’ the Urban7 Alliance, comprising the Association of German Cities, ICLEI, and the Global Parliament of Mayors, invited local leaders to a virtual gathering. During the meeting, the mayors, representing city associations from the G7 members, debated topics including the war in Ukraine, the inclusion of cities in multi-level governance, and the global challenges facing cities as a result of climate change. Other issues on the agenda included the status of democracy, sustainable urban development and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

In the jointly adopted ‘U7 Mayors Declaration,’ local leaders from the USA, Canada, Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany stressed that global challenges can only be solved when all levels work together. Cities are ready to play their part. However, their full potential can only be unlocked if they are structurally included as partners.

Mayor Peter Kurz, Chair of the Global Parliament of Mayors and Special Representative of the Association of German Cities for the Urban7 Process, emphasized: “The transformative power of cities to address major global challenges, as invoked in the G7 Programme, can only be harnessed if the global political system changes to truly include cities, viewing them not primarily as an administrative implementation level, but as a political level in their own right, co-developing policy programs on an equal footing.”

The ‘U7 Virtual Mayors Summit’ was the most important event for cities during the German G7 presidency. The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and Service Agency Communities in One World from Engagement Global support the Urban7 Alliance.

»»The local level is closest to the people««

Until 2023, Mayor Peter Kurz was Chair of the Global Parliament of Mayors and Special Representative of the Association of German Cities for the Urban7 process. In this interview, he explains how the global political process can benefit from the inclusion of cities.

»» Why are cities involved in the G7 process?

«« The local level is the governmental level closest to the people. Therefore, local leaders need to participate in determining international agendas and priorities. In this way, we can ensure that the people’s needs and priorities are considered. The G7 is particularly important because the member states are united by shared values and their commitment to democracy. Furthermore, the decisions made by the group can have a global impact due to the economic strength of its members. In these processes, cities can provide important perspectives on issues such as urban development, climate change, and the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities. We are convinced that this engagement will lead to better policies – and consequently better results.

»» What did the cities achieve during the German G7 presidency in 2022?

«« I see three key successes from Urban7 during Germany’s G7 presidency. First, the cities were represented during a G7 ministerial meeting for the first time and were given a seat at the table in the G7 process. Second, several important groups of G7 ministers made written commitments to cooperate with cities and to include them as partners in coping with global challenges. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we now have a model for how cities can be included as part of international processes in the future. This will likely produce better results.

»» What is the benefit for Mannheim?

«« The Urban7 allows me to advocate for the needs and interests of our city – and its citizens. In 2022, I represented the cities at the G7 Ministers Meeting for Sustainable Urban Development. This allowed me to discuss issues, such as the housing crisis and the effects of climate change on our city, with the German chancellor as well as the federal minister responsible for building and urban development. In light of the global challenges we face locally, I view this as an important opportunity to press for change.

// FOR AN URBAN FUTURE /

It is the most important international gathering of mayors, government representatives, international organizations, and urban development experts in the world: the World Urban Forum (WUF). The event is organized every two years by UN-HABITAT. In June 2022, around 17,000 attendees from 166 countries discussed how the transformation of cities can result in a better urban future. The event was held in Katowice, Poland. This was the first time an Eastern European city has hosted the event. The agenda included a presentation by Mayor Kurz of the U7 Mayors Declaration, which was adopted the previous month. The World Urban Forum is the most important global conference focusing on issues related to urbanization. The Forum aims to examine the effects of rapid urbanization on municipalities, economies, climate change, and policymaking.

// mannheim.de/wuf11



Panel discussion at the World Urban Forum in Katowice with Mayor Kurz

// LOCAL GREEN DEAL /

The UN Climate Conference COP (Conference of the Parties) is the most important global meeting of representatives from the world of politics, science and civil society to implement the aims of the Paris Agreement. COP26 took place in autumn 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland. At the conference, Mayor Kurz presented Mannheim's Local Green Deal, highlighting the exceptional role played by cities around the world in combatting climate change. "The Local Green Deal provides a blueprint for cities to achieve climate neutrality by 2030," explained Kurz, who spoke at multiple other events during his two-day stay in Glasgow. He was an invited speaker at the German Pavilion and participated in several bilateral talks, including with the mayor of Paris, Anna Hidalgo. He also participated in an expert discussion with other mayors, as well as Sir Norman Foster and John Kerry, the U.S. special presidential envoy for climate.



Mayor Kurz presents the Local Green Deal at the UN Climate Conference COP26

// INSPIRATION FOR MANNHEIM /

The World Urban Campaign (WUC) is a global platform coordinated by UN-HABITAT that aims to create awareness for a positive urban shift and promote the transformation of cities. In December 2022, Mannheim's City Council adopted a resolution to apply for membership in the WUC. As part of the platform, since 2016 the City of Mannheim has hosted regular Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) events. The format facilitates exchange between municipal stakeholders, experts, and citizens. Topics of recent UTCs have included the climate action plan, gender equality, and international municipal cooperation. The result has been an array of valuable findings and inspiration for the City of Mannheim. "UTCs are the perfect tool to promote political dialogue, discuss urban problems, find solutions, and initiate appropriate measures," said Mayor Kurz. "For this reason, the UTC is anchored in the City of Mannheim's urban society and strategy."

// utc-mannheim.de



Expert exchange during the Urban Thinkers Campus 2022

OFFICE FOR EU AFFAIRS AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Mannheim aims to be a role model for international cooperation between cities and, for this reason, to promote exchange between cities and people in civil society, the private sector, and government. Furthermore, the city seeks engagement in development policy projects around the world and works to participate in European and international political decision-making processes. The City of Mannheim Office for EU Affairs and Global Sustainability is the central coordination office for all EU-related topics, international cooperation, and municipal development policy.

The work of the City of Mannheim International Office is divided into the following central fields of activity:

// EU policy matters and projects with EU countries

// Municipal development policy

// Management of city partnerships and cooperation with civil society organizations

// Promotion of international intercity diplomacy and participation in global networks

Do you have any questions about the office's work or ongoing projects? Our team is happy to help you. You can find all contact information under the following link:

// mannheim.de/internationales-team

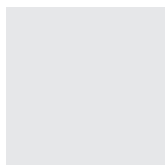


Would you like to be informed of upcoming events and projects? Then join our email mailing list: internationales@mannheim.de

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