

# EUniverCities

City & university in Ghent: students and public spaces



Results Peer Review Meeting Ghent (2-5 December 2014)  
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## 1. Introduction

Ghent is the second-largest city in Belgium with a population of about 250,000 inhabitants and no less than 159 different nationalities. It is a historical medieval city, yet contemporary and dazzling. Student numbers have grown very fast in the last decade. This brings many benefits to the city, but also puts pressure on some quarters of the city.

In the context of the EUniverCities programme<sup>1</sup>, Ghent hosted a three-day peer review meeting. The overall theme of the meeting in Ghent was 'students & public spaces'. The use and management of public and semi-public spaces is a particularly important issue in the Arts district, where the university has a big presence, and where so many students and others (like residents, tourists,...) use the public space.

The Ghent Local Support Group formulated three questions to be addressed during the peer review meeting:

1. How to set, with all the players, the level of ambition for the use of shared space?
2. How to go from ambition into implementation, and involve stakeholders in this stage as well? What forms and management tools can be used for this?
3. How to accommodate the different users in a balanced way in this area?

The session was intended to obtain views and inputs from "peers" from other cities, in order to learn from each other and help the stakeholders in Ghent to take next steps (see the full programme in annex 1).

During the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the meeting, the "peers" were informed in more detail about the state-of-the-art and current policies in Ghent, and the challenges the city and its university faces. A number of local stakeholders presented their views to the audience, and the participants experienced the issues through guided walks in the Arts area. The next day, in the morning, there were presentations and interactive sessions on 'student and image' – communication, student engagement and student participation, and about the co-creation of public spaces. After that, we worked in four groups (where each group contained a mix of foreign and local participants/stakeholders). Each group elaborated observations and produced a series of suggestions and ideas for the city and its universities, trying to answer the questions posed by the local support group. The groups focused on different sub-areas of the Arts district.

This report contains the outcomes and results of the meeting. First, it summarizes the basic features of the city, its economy, and the relevant policy context<sup>2</sup> (section 2). Next, section 3 gives an short overview of some current collaborative efforts of city & universities, and recent developments. Section 4, finally, summarizes the observations and recommendations made by the working groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The EUniverCities project unites 10 European cities and their universities that want to learn from each other in this respect: Delft, Tampere, Aachen, Aveiro, Ghent, Lecce, Linköping, Lublin, Magdeburg, Varna. The project addresses the issue how to frame co-operation between city and university, and arrive at smart, "next-generation" forms of city-university collaboration. The core idea is that more comprehensive types of collaboration and "co-creation" will bring significant benefits for both sides, and will strengthen the position of the city as knowledge-based city.

<sup>2</sup> This part is partly derived from the "Baseline Study" made for EUniverCities, for which the author interviewed a number of stakeholders in Ghent.

The results are the fruits of a combined effort of all the people who were involved in the group discussions and the presentations. The author is highly indebted to all the participants in these groups, and in particular to the workshop leaders, who did an excellent job in moderating the discussions. Also, we owe much to the members of the Ghent team led by Luc Rogiest and Inge Willemsen.

## 2.Context: City & University

### 2.1 City

Archeological research has proved that there was human settlement in Ghent during prehistoric times. Only later, in the Roman period, the nucleus of a city began to grow near the confluence of the two rivers Scheldt (Schelde) and Lys (Leie) (in Celtic 'Ganda'). Ghent nowadays is a historical medieval city with about 250,000 inhabitants, and 159 different nationalities. The city is the 2nd largest city of the Flemish Region and has the reputation of a city of knowledge and culture, accessible to anyone.

In 2008, the 'National Geographic Traveller Magazine' has ranked Ghent third (out of 109), in its ranking of the world's most authentic historic destinations. In 2009, the UNESCO has granted the city of Ghent the prestigious title of 'Creative city of music', as one of only 4 cities in the world and in 2010, the Lonely Planet has put Ghent in 7th place in its top 10 of 'must see destination'.

Thanks to its leading position in basic research and knowledge acquisition, Ghent is a strong economic growth engine in Flanders. Ghent has a strong scientific reputation in the field of biotechnology, bio-energy and ICT and has become the driving force behind 'Flanders Biotech Valley'. The 'Ghent Bio-Energy Valley' in the Port of Ghent emphasises the ambition to become an internationally recognized growth centre of renewable energy and industrial bio-energy projects.

During the last century, the port was a major economic hub for Belgium and Europe; it is now a vital link in the emerging knowledge industry. Port firms employ over 70,000 people, and the port handles around 48 million ton of freight annually.

### 2.2 Universities

Ghent offers a unique mixture of vibrant city life and higher education. An increasing number of students choose Ghent as study destination (2014: more than 70,000). The city hosts 1 university and 4 university colleges.

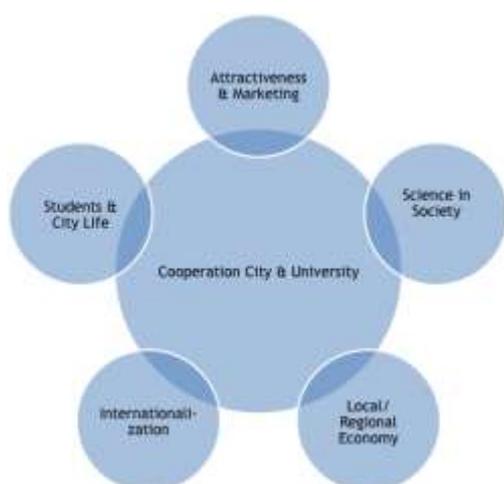
With 41,000 students (2014), Ghent University (UGent) is the largest HEI within the city of Ghent. Located in a historic, student-friendly city in the cultural and economic hub of Europe, Ghent University is an active partner in a wide variety of national and international educational, scientific and industrial cooperation networks. Ghent University's 11 faculties consist of more than 130 departments, offering high-quality, research-based courses in a wide range of academic disciplines. Faculty campuses are scattered throughout the historic centre creating unique city-university symbiosis. Yet Ghent University also expanded outside the city. Examples are the Faculty of Veterinary Science and multiple research departments located in the business parks of Ardoyen and Greenbridge (Ostend). Ghent University is the fastest-growing university in Flanders. Between 2001 and 2011, its student population increased by 53%.

The 4 university colleges are also important players in Ghent's higher education landscape, with about 29,000 students in total. The largest ones are The Artevelde University College Ghent and the University College Ghent; there are two smaller, more specialised institutions: the LUCA School of Arts and University College Odisee, Technology Campus Ghent.

### 3. City-university co-operation: an overview

In Ghent, there is a widely shared notion that city and university are strongly and positively interrelated, and need each in a number of respects. City-university co-operation is deep and broad, and can be found at many levels. At the top level, city and university maintain excellent relationships, expressed formally and informally. Twice per year, there is a formal meeting between the mayor/aldermen and the executive board of the university, where strategic issues are discussed. Also, the mayor shows up at many university conferences or events, stressing the significance of the university-city nexus. Second, there is a plethora of co-operations in a number of specific domains (as represented in the Flower model, see figure 1). On the level of university research groups or individual professors, there are a number of joint projects, and initiatives (below is a list of current collaboration structures and initiatives in the domains as identified in the flower model). An important step was taken in 2012, when Ghent joined the EUniverCities project. A local support group with six subgroups was created, to streamline the city-university partnership more, to develop an integrated and long term vision, and to engage more city and university departments in it (more on this in section 4).

Figure 1. The flower model of city-university co-operation



#### *Innovation/entrepreneurship/local economy:*

- City, university and other knowledge institutions are developing “the Krook” as a unique mixture of scientific research, a library, an incubator, service providers, and meeting rooms. The KROOK will give a dilapidated urban district a new function, focused on culture, economy and innovation (new media). It will become a hotspot for innovation and meeting. The project includes a ‘Centre for new media’ and a ‘Library of the 21st century’.
- There are science parks and incubators, such as the Ardoyen technology science park.
- A pilot plant was created to bridge the ‘upscaling gap’ between academic research results and industrial use, such as Biobase Europe at Ghent Harbour.
- The “Dare to Venture’ initiative of Ghent University seeks to integrate key entrepreneurial learning outcomes in the study programs of the university, supporting and coaching the students who want to create their own personal venture and facilitating students to become an entrepreneur by introducing the special student statute of ‘student-entrepreneur’. The city encourages/stimulates (student) entrepreneurship and created a starters’ policy

(entrepreneurshipforum, the Ghent (student) entrepreneur, free start opportunities, starters' event, starters' agreement and OOG (Support Office for Entrepreneurs in Ghent)).

- Collaboration of scientific research institutions and cultural centres: introducing new technologies to a broad audience in cultural scenes, development of new technologies e.g. usability, market research, user adaption (example IBBT and Arts Centre Vooruit)
- Gent BC (Big in Creativity) is an online and real life network fostering knowledge based industry, entrepreneurship and innovation in the region of Ghent. As a "neutral" organization not owned by a particular university, it organizes all sorts of meetings where researchers (from all Ghent HEIs) and businesses meet, and may develop new co-operations and ventures. ([www.gentbc.be](http://www.gentbc.be))
- Technology Transfer at Ghent University wants to facilitate the commercial application of promising technologies developed within the Ghent University Association. Key technology transfer activities include licensing, industrial collaboration programs, and spin-off creation. For its liaison with industry, UGent uses a network of, currently 23, specialized business development centres backed by a Central Technology Transfer Office.

### *Internationalization*

- The university of Ghent co-invested in an international primary school (together with the city and some other actors like big companies). This helps to attract and retain international researchers and knowledge workers
- The municipality makes efforts to make life easier for foreign students and expats concerning legal and bureaucratic procedures.

### *Student life*

- There is deep and structured cooperation between city and university to facilitate the students life in the city: there is a working group student in/and Ghent, a 'Student official' (link between policy and students and between the schools of higher education and the city council, ambassador for students, ombuds function) and a 'student prevention coach' (sensibilize, students and inconveniences, preventive measures). 'StuGent' is a consultative body for students. It helps to enhance integration of students in the city.
- There is a special communication centre on student housing, [kot@gent](mailto:kot@gent), cooperation between the city and all the HEIs.
- House of the Student (communication centre), a practical guide for international students in the city of Ghent, [www.studentingent.be](http://www.studentingent.be)
- A training centre that facilitates the organization of work placements of students in the city administration
- The city commissioned a large study on the value of students for the city

### *Science & society*

- The city lets students think about urban planning. E.g. in the PORTICO project (Interreg), six interdisciplinary student teams from different universities and university colleges in the partner cities (all five Ghent schools of higher education participated) were asked to develop, in collaboration with the city councils, different business cases linked to the project investments in urban heritage presentation.
- Science kits for teachers: VIB developed a toolkit for teachers as an overview of biotechnology. Toolkit can be used in class to educate students about new technology
- Ghent Living Lab. Based on the principles of open knowledge sharing and co-creation, a living lab creates a platform on which users / citizens, (digital) creative forces, experts,

entrepreneurs and researchers are brought together to stimulate 'smart city innovative developments'. This way, the City of Ghent, as host organization of the Ghent Living Lab, creates an environment in which the city of tomorrow can take shape in a sustainable way.

## 4. Results of the peer review

### 4.1 Introduction

Ghent considers it as a major challenge for the city and its HEI's to manage the growth of Ghent as a city of students, research and innovation. Within the city borders, there is only limited space available for research, for student housing, and for innovative business. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the pressure will decrease in the (near) future. This challenge requires an integrated and sustainable approach and joint efforts involving all stakeholders. In the framework of the EUniverCities URBACT-project, a Local Support Group (LSG) was set up, that is charged with elaborating a long-term shared vision and a strategy for managing growth in a sustainable way. It goes without saying that the availability, today and in the future, of space is a crucial element for a city that embraces the knowledge economy. In addition, it is a specific challenge in the cooperation between the city and its HEI's. During the LSG meetings many themes have emerged that urgently require a joint vision, such as the management of semi-public and public spaces, mobility and parking policy, touristic and cultural upgrading. Because of the wide range of themes the LSG decided to establish 6 working groups: (1) use and management of public and semi-public spaces, (2) student and image (including communication and co-creation), (3) student housing, (4) mobility, (5) culture and tourism and (6) structural cooperation between city and HEI's. The LSG monitors the integrated approach of all these different themes and ensures that a solution in one field will not create a problem in another one.

In defining an integrated and efficient approach the core team of the LSG decided to focus on one city area in particular: the 'Arts district'. This is a district in the city centre where most of the students are living and where most of the university buildings and schools are located. As a cross-section of the wider city the district forms an excellent "laboratory" for elaborating a vision on how to manage the growth of Ghent as a city of students. In the district you can really sense what kind of city Ghent is due to the presence of so many students and you can also experience the challenges that a large student population entails.

### 4.2 Observations

This section contains some observations made by the European partners who attended the meeting. The observations -and some questions- listed below are based on inputs and impressions of the city, the university, and initiatives regarding city-university partnerships, as they were presented during the various sessions and during guided walks in the area.

#### On governance and participation

- The topic of the peer review meeting was students and public spaces. But to what extent do students have a say in what happens in Ghent? Most students are, for financial reasons, not formally registered as citizens of Ghent, hence they cannot vote in Ghent<sup>3</sup>. This holds back their influence, and the city might ignore their worries without consequences. Their participation in the political process is very limited. There is a student council, but it has no

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<sup>3</sup> note that this is the general situation in Flanders/Belgium and not only in Ghent; Students are still generally on the account of their parents (for better tax regime) and are hence still formally registered at their home town, although they spend most of their time elsewhere)

formal power. Relations between students and politicians are indirect, “channelled” through a civil officer. Thus, there is a problem with legitimacy of the student voice.

- There were also some questions: do students and citizens share the same identity? Are students merely “users” of the city, rather than citizens and co-creators? If it’s two tribes: do they want a mix?

### **On public spaces, green zones & mobility**

- A lot off students come by car. (*“For parents, it is often cheaper to buy a car for their children than to let their children stay in Ghent”*) . That creates a big traffic problem during rush hour, that becomes worse every year, and they use also a lot of parking places in the area. (that is one of the reasons why Ghent wants to implement a new mobility plan that aims to keep cars out of the city centre an create parking facilities at the outside of the city).
- It’s great to see that car traffic is reduced in favour of slow mobility (walking/cycling). But cycling in Ghent is quite chaotic, and cyclists do not carry helmets. In the Arts district, the traffic is dense; cars, cyclists and pedestrians share small streets; the boardwalks are too narrow.
- There is a lack of accessible and visible green zones in the Arts district; concrete and bricks dominate the area. Many existing green zones are private, or difficult to access. The green zones that belong to the University’s premises are hardly used and are difficult to access. Between Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat and the river there are many buildings owned by university. How can the river be better accessed and made useful, for citizens or any bypassers? Moreover, open squares are hardly used during winter, probably because they are so stony.
- Many cities have built campuses outside the city, but regret that and strive for a better integration in the city and have a nice mix. Here you are lucky to have the mix, but where is the added value? Where are the shared spaces, where is the co- creativity?

### **On image**

- From the way many presenters talked about students, many participants in the peer review got the impression that students have an ambiguous image in Ghent, among citizens and policy makers. On the one hand, they are seen as an important group that contributes to the liveliness and dynamics of the city, and also to the city’s culture and economy. But at the same time, students are seen as a separate group that causes many problems; negative connotations are associated with the behaviour of a part of the student population.
- Some participants noticed that there were very few – if any- companies during the presentations. Probably this is due to the theme “students and public space”.

### **Other**

- How to deal with the growth of the university? Is it necessary and desirable to keep growing, and do city and university have a vision on how to accommodate that? The question becomes more urgent as more students stay after graduation.
- A lot of students stay in Ghent after graduation, for several reasons (they established a network, found a job, they like the city ...). That’s great, but it also creates pressure on the

housing market. It becomes more difficult for young couples and families to stay in Ghent because housing prices are so high.

- There is also the tendency to transform family houses into student apartments: many students live next to families, but their lifestyles are rather different, which causes tensions at times. The university and the city work together to improve and expand dedicated student housing, also hoping to prevent family houses to become too expensive.
- The relations between students and citizens are not always smooth. Ghent is a different city during the weekends, when most students leave. This makes it more difficult to strengthen the connection between students and citizens.

### **4.3 Some suggestions and ideas**

Below are a number of ideas and suggestions for improvement developed in the groups.

#### **On governance and participation**

1. The pressure on the city is growing, with student numbers still rising, a growing flow of tourists, and an increasing popularity of Ghent as a place to live. There is limited room for physical expansion. Thus, Ghent needs innovative initiatives and investments. Solutions cannot come from one actor: they need to be developed in co-creation, by students, citizens, the university, and the city together. This requires financial resources, but perhaps even more importantly, a “model” to organise the co-creation, and both seem to be lacking so far.

2. The city -especially the Arts area- needs and deserves better public spaces and more green. In realising this, the university is a key player and stakeholder, but its investment program is focused on academic needs, less on these kinds of need. Here, the university must change its perspective.

3. Students should have more influence on city politics than now, and relations between the student community and the city’s decision makers must become more direct rather than intermediated/filtered by a student official. Various ideas were suggested in this respect:

- The city might give the student council a more important role (and say) in city politics. If a high official would be present at the meeting between students and the student officer, it would give the student council more legitimacy.
- A “student mayor” could be installed, or students could create a political party of their own (like in Delft).
- Political parties could reach out more to students, listen to them, and involve them.

4. Efforts are needed to reduce tensions between students and inhabitants. “Co-creation” is the keyword here. Several options are open: the joint organisation of a street party; mixing student housing more with citizens (avoid segregation); develop new concepts, such as combining an elderly home with housing for medical/care students (live together, work together). Let student organisations do more volunteer work in the neighbourhood. Develop ‘Landlady living’: students live with older people, helping each other.

5. It would help if the city creates a platform that “collects” the challenges and helps with the implementation and organisation. Or the city might give grants to support initiatives from students and citizens to improve the city. Or develop places where integration and communication happens

in a natural way. This could be achieved by opening up student workplaces in the offices of local organisations and firms, in book stores etc.

6. Another suggestion is to set up a mixed management team, consisting of representatives from the university, the city, and citizens. This team could oversee the transformation of the Arts district into a more accessible, permeable and attractive area.

### **On communication**

1. The positive side of the presence of students is rarely shown in the media. There are a lot of positive initiatives (student entrepreneurship, when students participate in local committees ...) that do not appear in the media. On the other hand, small negative incidents are often blown up in the press. Students bring a lot of value to the city. The city and the university could try together to bring positive news from students in the press.

### **On public spaces, mobility and green**

1. When you go from the city centre to the museums, the route doesn't look attractive or inviting. It should be made clear that you don't go into the 'suburbs' when you leave the city centre. More signposting along the route would help, with descriptions of interesting sites, and showing the direction to the interesting places.

2. Along the way, the university could become more of a "tourist attraction" itself: its many cultural and scientific exhibitions could attract more people, but only with improved communication in the public spaces, and with more external promotion.

3. It might also be considered making a green path running from the centre to the museums; that could make the axis attractive for strolling tourists and citizens alike.

### **On Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat**

- Make Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat car-free, permanently or during some time slots
- Improve bike parkings; underground, or floating parkings
- Green zones must not necessarily be parks. More trees or green walls also help. Existing unused or closed green zones (mostly owned by the university) must be opened up. The UFO-square can be made more green, and may benefit from additional functions.
- On process: start with the possibilities, not the rules and restrictions. Allow for more experimentation; temporary solutions should be considered as well.
- A coherent and "permeable" connection is needed between the many university buildings. These could function as public spaces. That would also help to enhance safety, especially in narrow corridors.

### **On Sint-Pietersplein**

The square is currently used for large events, not small ones. Some options were developed to make it function better:

- Insert moveable trees, that make it possible to divide the square into smaller spaces
- Allow inhabitants to use the square as they like
- Install playgrounds

- Let students manage the square
- Put an artificial river in the square to make it more lively; a fountain could work as well
- Invite more café and bars to locate there

### **On Overpoortstraat**

This is a rather monofunctional street: it 'lives' during the night, when students go out, but is rather repelling during the day. This is not an interesting street for citizens. Tourists avoid this street, limiting the potential of the cultural institutions nearby. The parties held in Overpoort create negative issues (waste, drunk people, etc.). Also, the street is sometimes overwhelmed with bicycles. A lot of cars pass through this street, and it is also an important corridor for buses.

Something is being done about it already: 'Overpoortoverleg' (consultation) is a committee that wants to improve the street. Its members are mostly owners of the bars. Students do not take part in this committee.

Here are some suggestions for improvement:

On process: Start an open process with all the stakeholders and start the journey to develop a vision together. Several scenarios could be elaborated, but it is key to involve students in the management of the street, but also call in their help and ideas to make the street more attractive. Students of architecture, design etc. can bring many good ideas on the table. Let expert groups elaborate scenario's, and install a supervisory board to oversee the work. Design together, program it together and manage it together with all the stakeholders. Invite also the future stakeholders, pub owners, tenants, private investors, residents, university and the students. It could help to set up a real life platform, a website where people can see what happens and co-design their own street. "Sharing is caring": if you involve people from the beginning, they feel more committed. Take into account that this is a long-term project, whereas students stay in Ghent for only a shorter time. The city must play the role of facilitator, not "big boss", and must use new interactive communication tools.

Specifically:

- Try to add functions to the street, make it less monofunctional. Overpoort should be more than pubs. Create places to sit (and have a drink, an ice cream)
- Make the bars more attractive. Change the design of the bars so other people also are attracted.
- Make the street car-free; install street furniture. Put garbage containers under the street
- Involve students in a funny way: Let them paint the street in one day, each year.
- Enable co-sharing of the shops. Use the same shop for activities during day (ex: restaurant) and during night (ex: bar)
- Make efforts to make Overpoort safe (camera's ...)

There was no full unanimity on these solutions. Some questioned whether the mono-functional character is really a problem. Maybe it permits multifunctional spaces elsewhere in the city. As there are not many citizens living in Overpoort, there is little protest when there are parties.

## Annex 1: Programme of the meeting

### Introduction

[Ghent](#) is the second-largest city in Belgium with a population of about 250 000 inhabitants of no less than 159 different nationalities. It is a historical medieval city, yet contemporary and dazzling, presenting art and culture of the highest quality. When describing our city we like to use the words of the city consultant Charles Landry, who invented the concept of the Creative City: *'Ghent is a "pocket sized metropolis", combining the intimacy of a small city with the openness of a metropolis'*.

The city of Ghent has an excellent reputation as a *'city of knowledge and culture, accessible to anyone'*. The city has an important sea port and the largest Flemish [student community](#), thus offering an ideal environment for the creation of innovative technology. Though it may be strange for a city located inland but due to an artificial canal Ghent has an important sea port. The economic structure of the city is largely determined by the Port of Ghent, providing almost 30,000 direct and 40,000 indirect jobs. Ghent holds a strong scientific reputation in the field of biotechnology, bio-energy and ICT and has become the driving force behind 'Flanders Biotech Valley'. The 'Ghent Bio-Energy Valley' in the Port of Ghent emphasises the ambition to become an internationally recognized growth centre of renewable energy and industrial bio-energy projects. Many Belgian and foreign students rightly consider Ghent as the place to be! More than 70,000 students are registered at Ghent University and the university colleges of Ghent. This amazing knowledge activity is a major source of economic growth.

The unique combination of first-class education and many leisure activities makes that the student population is still growing every year. With the presence of two universities and four university colleges, Ghent is able to offer a wide range of study opportunities. The university campuses have historically emerged across the city, which is known to be an important asset of the student life in Ghent. The students live all over the city and hence enliven the atmosphere. The role and significance of the presence of these HEI's and their students is not to be underestimated. They influence in a great way the life in the city: housing culture, mobility, night life, cultural life, street image... However, besides this they also give a huge boost to the economic and creative life in the city. Many students stay in Ghent after their studies and many of them also start their own creative business.

As stated in the Baseline Study, Ghent considers it as a major challenge for the city and its HEI's to manage the growth of Ghent as a city of students, research and innovation. Currently, there is a lack of space for research, for student housing, and for innovative business. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the pressure will decrease in the (near) future. This challenge requires an integrated and sustainable approach and joint efforts involving all stakeholders. In the framework of

the EUniverCities URBACT-project, the Local Support Group (LSG) intends to elaborate a long-term shared vision and a strategy for managing growth in a sustainable way. It goes without saying that the availability, today and in the future, of space is a crucial element for a city that embraces the knowledge economy. In addition, it is a specific challenge in the cooperation between the city and its HEI's. During the LSG meetings many themes have emerged that urgently require a joint vision, such as the management of semi-public and public spaces, mobility and parking policy, touristic and cultural upgrading. Because of the wide range of themes the LSG decided to establish 6 working groups: (1) use and management of public and semi-public spaces, (2) student and image (including communication and co-creation), (3) student housing, (4) mobility, (5) culture and tourism and (6) structural cooperation between city and HEI's. The LSG monitors the integrated approach of all these different themes and ensures that a solution in one field will not create a problem in another one.

In defining an integrated and efficient approach the core team of the LSG decided to choose for a geographic delineation to work on a joint vision and a local action plan with actions emerging from the working groups. The '**Arts district**' is a district in the city center where most of the students are living and where most of the campuses are located. As a cross-section of the wider city the district forms an excellent laboratory for elaborating a vision on how to manage the growth of Ghent as a city of students. In the district you can really sense what kind of city Ghent is due to the presence of so many students and you can also experience the challenges that a large student population entails.

### **Programme URBACT-meeting and questions for peer review**

The overall theme of the meeting in Ghent is '**students & public spaces**'. On Wednesday we will start with an opening session with general facts & figures and introduce the local challenges in Ghent and the approach and work of the LSG. During the programme we will walk through the 'Arts district' and we will stop at several locations where some themes of the working groups of the LSG will be introduced, such as student housing, mobility and student and image. During every interactive session we will provide some time for questions and answers.

During the **peer review session** on Thursday afternoon we want to discuss into detail the challenges and questions where one of the working groups is confronted with and that have connections with the other themes of the different working groups. The '**use and management of public and semi-public spaces**' is a very important issue in a district where there is a lack of space and where so many students and others (like residents, tourists,...) use the scarce public spaces.

The shared use of space in the Arts district includes two aspects:

1. The problem of dichotomy between private space and public space (private space of the HEI's that can be opened for public use or public space that can be transformed into public space for some groups only e.g. car free area for students and residents),
2. The degree of appropriation of space by different groups (students, residents, tourists, users,...)

The questions to the experts deal with both design, implementation and management of shared/jointly space. In addition, the City of Ghent has high ambitions for greening in terms of climate adaptation and for creating a pleasant microclimate in this urban environment.

We want to apply the questions on a number of interesting cases that we will visit during our walk through the Arts district. (e.g. The '*Overpoortstraat*' is a street with many bars that is only used by students but this street is also the connection between the museum site and the city center).

#### **Concrete questions peer review:**

1. How do we determine with all the players the level of ambition for the use of shared space? What social and physical factors play a role in ensuring a good / optimal division of space. What conditions play a stimulatory or inhibitory role? How can we reach our goals for greening in these shared spaces?
2. How do we maintain the stated ambition in the implementation? How do we ensure that those involved are committed to also realize the ambition in the implementation? How do we involve stakeholders in the implementation (and later management)? What forms and management tools can we use for this?
3. How do we monitor the ambitions of shared / jointly space after the realization and after a somewhat longer term? How do we avoid a too strong appropriation by one of the user groups? Or how do we avoid that the public space becomes too strong privatized and that the private space becomes too public? In other words, how can we search for 'balance' and an interweaving of functions for the different users?

We look forward to welcoming experts from the cities and educational institutions who want to share their knowledge and expertise on urban planning and design and management of public, semi-public and private space for public use.

## Programme

### Tuesday, 2 December      **Arrival of European guests**

When you will check-in in one of the hotels that are recommended (see practical information) you will receive an information package with all relevant material that you will need during the meeting (programme, maps, groups peer review sessions,...).

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch for participants sub-thematic network meeting, Restaurant Keizershof, <i>Vrijdagmarkt 47 (at own costs)</i>
14:00 – 18:00	Sub-thematic network meeting, Youth Service, <i>Kiosk room, Kammerstraat 10</i>
18:30 – 18:40	Guided walk from hotels to Korenlei
18:40 – 19:00	Boat trip from Korenlei to Bijlokesite
19:00 – 20:00	Welcome reception, STA.M, Ghent city museum, <i>Bijlokesite, Godshuizenlaan 2</i> Host: Deputy Mayor City of Ghent, Ms Elke Decruynaere
20:00 – 22:30	Welcome dinner, Bistro Bijloke, <i>Bijlokesite, Bijlokekaai 7</i>
22:30 – 22:45	Guided walk to city center

### Wednesday, 3 December      **Presentations and Site Visits**

On the first day of the Peer Review & Network Meeting the City of Ghent, together with Ghent University, the University Colleges Arteveldehogeschool and Hogeschool Ghent and the Vooruit Arts Centre will present the problem statement through various presentations and site visits.

08:30 – 08:45/09:00      Guided walk from hotels to Vooruit Arts Centre, *Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23*

TIME	ACTIVITY	SPEAKER / LOCATION
08:45 – 09:05	Registration and coffee	Vooruit Arts Centre, foyer theatre room
09:05 – 09:15	Opening and Welcome	<b>Mr Jeroen Vanden Berghe</b> , Chief Logistics Administrator, Ghent University
09:15 – 09:25	EUniverCities: expectations for the meeting	<b>Mr Patrick van Geel</b> , Advisor, European Affairs, City of Delft <b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ
09:25 – 10:15	<b>Opening session – Introduction LSG Ghent</b> Cooperation within LSG Ghent With time for Q&A	<b>Mr Luc Rogiest</b> , Local Support Group coordinator, City of Ghent <b>Mr Gijs Coucke</b> , International Relations Office, Ghent University <b>Ms Inge Willemsen</b> , International Cooperation, City of Ghent
10:15 – 10:30	Testimonial ‘ <b>student life in Ghent</b> ’	<b>Ms Donikë Qerimi</b> , PhD Candidate in Private International Law, Ghent University
10:30 – 10:50	Coffee break	Vooruit Arts Centre, foyer theatre room
10:50 – 11:10	Presentation <b>unique collaboration project</b>	<b>Mr Stefaan De Ruyck</b> , General Manager Vooruit Arts Centre, Secretary of the SCRL

	<b>between different levels of government</b>	Board of Directors of 'De Krook'	
11:10 – 11:15	Walk from Vooruit Arts Centre to winter circus Mahy		
11:15 – 11:55	<b>Visit winter circus Mahy</b> with view on the construction yard of 'De Krook'		
11:55 – 12:00	Walk from winter circus Mahy to Vooruit Arts Centre		
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch	Vooruit Arts Centre, foyer theatre room	
13:00 – 13:30	Guided walk through Arts district		
13:35 – 13:45	Presentation <b>Booktower</b>	<b>Ms Sylvia Van Peteghem</b> , Chief librarian Ghent University	The Booktower, University Library Ghent, Rozier 9
13:45 – 15:00	Presentation <b>case street 'Rozier'</b> : cooperation within working groups 'shared space' and 'mobility' Student contest With time for Q&A	<b>Mr Michiel Dehaene</b> , professor Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department Architecture and Urban Planning, Ghent University <b>Ms Loesje Van Damme</b> , Mobility Department, City of Ghent <b>Mr Tobias Van Speybroeck, Mr Bram Denkens</b> and <b>Mr Thomas Mertens</b> , all three graduated as engineer-architect from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of Ghent University	
15:00 – 15:30	Guided walk through Arts district		
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	Artevelde University College, Campus Kantienberg, Voetweg 66	
16:00 – 17:00	Presentation cooperation within working group ' <b>student housing</b> ' With time for Q&A	<b>Ms Hilde Reynvoet</b> , Head of the Housing Service, City of Ghent	
17:00 – 17:10	<b>Reflection</b> on first day	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ	
17:10 – 17:40	Guided walk through Arts district, end point City Hall		

### Start programme Politicians Meeting, 3 – 5 December

Combined programme with participants Peer Review & Network Meeting, only separate programme on Thursday afternoon.

18:45 – 19:00

Guided walk from hotels to City Hall

19:00 – 19:45

Welcome Reception, City Hall, *Botermarkt 1*

Hosts: Mayor City of Ghent, Mr Daniël Termont and Rector Ghent University, Prof. Dr. Anne De Paepe

19:45 – 20:00

Guided walk to dinner location

20:00 – 22:30

Dinner, Restaurant Salons Carlos Quinto, *Kammerstraat 20*

Hosts: Mayor City of Ghent, Mr Daniël Termont and Rector Ghent University, Prof. Dr. Anne De Paepe

**Thursday, 4 December****Presentations and Peer Review Sessions**

On the second day of the Peer Review & Network Meeting all the participants will follow an interactive session from the working group 'student and image'. After the lunch the participants of the Politicians Meeting will move to the City Hall to have the 'network politicians meeting' and all the other participants will stay in 'Het Pand' and will work into detail on the questions mentioned in the introduction of this programme during the Peer Review sessions.

08:30 – 08:45/09:00

Guided walk from hotels to student house 'De Thermanal',  
Hoveniersberg 24

TIME	ACTIVITY	SPEAKER / LOCATION
<b>Participants Peer Review &amp; Network meeting and participants Politicians Meeting</b>		
08:45 – 09:05	Registration and coffee	De Thermanal, plenary room
09:05 – 09:15	<b>Introduction</b> – reflection on first day	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ
09:15 – 10:30	Presentation and interactive session on ' <b>student and image</b> ' – communication, student engagement and student participation	<b>Ms Anneke Vanden Bulcke</b> , Student Officer, City of Ghent <b>Ms Els Uytterhoeven</b> , Officer City Marketing, City of Ghent <b>Mr Ruben Dobbelaere</b> , Head Office of Student Support and Office of Study and Career Guidance, Artevelde University College <b>Mr Jelle Heyvaert</b> , President of Ghent Student Council
10:30 – 10:50	Coffee break	
10:50 – 11:20	Presentation ' <b>co-creation in public spaces</b> '	<b>Ms Evelynne Deceur</b> , PhD candidate, Department of Social Welfare Studies, Ghent University
11:20 – 11:40	<b>Wrap-up</b> Time for Q&A	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ
11:40 – 12:15	Boat trip to lunch location via historic part of the city	
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch	Ghent University, Het Pand, Onderbergen 1
<b>Participants Politicians Meeting</b>		
13:30 – 14:00	Guided walk to City Hall, Austrian room	
14:00 – 14:10	Welcome	<b>Mr Daniël Termont</b> , Mayor City of Ghent <b>Mr Bas Verkerk</b> , Mayor City of Delft-tbc
14:10 – 15:30	<b>Politicians meeting</b> part 1	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ <b>Mr Luis de Carvalho</b> , PhD Erasmus University Rotterdam. Urban IQ
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	
16:00 – 17:30	<b>Politicians meeting</b> part 2	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ and <b>Mr Luis de Carvalho</b> , PhD Erasmus University Rotterdam. Urban IQ

<b>Participants Peer Review &amp; Network meeting</b>			
13:30 – 14:00	<b>Peer Review Session</b> Plenary session: information on cases and questions With time for Q&A	<b>Mr Philippe Van Wesenbeeck</b> , Head of the City Development and Spatial Planning Service, City of Ghent	Het Pand, Priorzaal
14:00 – 15:10	<b>Peer Review Session</b> in small groups – observations		Het Pand, Persconferentiezaal, Sacristies, Rector Gillis
15:10 – 15:30	Coffee break		
15:30 – 17:00	<b>Peer Review Session</b> in small groups – suggestions and recommendations concerning the 3 questions		Het Pand, Persconferentiezaal, Sacristies, Rector Gillis
<b>Coordinators EUniverCities network</b>			
17:00 – 18:30	<b>Plenary meeting EUniverCities Network</b>		Het Pand, Persconferentiezaal

19.30 – 22:30

Dinner, Het Pand, *Onderbergen 1*

Hosts: Deputy Mayor City of Ghent, Ms Elke Decruynaere and Vice-rector Ghent University, Prof. Dr. Freddy Mortier

**Museum Night**, free access to all the museums in Ghent between 18:00 and 01:00 with after party in Cafe Vooruit Arts Centre.

### **Friday, 5 December**

### **Conclusions**

On the last day the results of the peer review sessions and of the politicians' meeting will be presented. The programme will end with a speed dating session in which participants will have the opportunity to reflect on what they take home or to have a last exchange of ideas in real life with representatives of the City of Ghent, the Ghent University and the University Colleges.

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>SPEAKER / LOCATION</b>
09:00 – 09:20	Coffee	City Hall, Council Room
09:20 – 09:30	Welcome	<b>Deputy Mayor Ms Elke Decruynaere</b>
09:30 – 10:00	<b>Presentation results peer review session</b>	<b>Mr Frédéric Piccavet</b> , Editor in chief of the student magazine 'Schamper', Ghent University
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Presentation results politicians meeting</b>	<b>Mr Willem van Winden</b> , Lead Expert, Urban IQ
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break	City Hall, Austrian room
11:00 – 12:00	<b>Speed dating</b> – reflection on 'what I take home' and last exchange of ideas in real life	City Hall, Austrian room
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch or take away lunch packages	City Hall, Austrian room

URBACT II

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