

# International Relations

## Town twinning



© Stadt Bocholt

The European city of Bocholt is located in the Westmünsterland region and on the lower Lower Rhine and shares the national border with the neighbouring Netherlands. Bocholt is twinned in France with Aurillac and Arpajon-sur-Cère (since 1972), in Great Britain with Rossendale (since 1952 - exchange of twinning certificates in 1977) and with the Belgian municipality of the same name Bocholt (since 1952 - exchange of twinning certificates in 1980).

On **14 May 2022**, the City of Europe officially twinned with Akmene in Lithuania. A declaration of intent of friendship with the city of Vlora in Albania was signed on the same day during the European City Festival. There has also been a friendship with the Chinese city of Wuxi since 1985, which reached the next level with the signing of a declaration of friendship in 2003.

## City celebrates European city festival



### European City Festival

On the occasion of the **800th anniversary of the city**, the European City Festival was celebrated in May 2022. On our special page you can find pictures and a short report about it.

[TO THE SPECIAL PAGE >](#)

## Municipal foreign policy

Town twinning is thus an instrument of the "municipal foreign policy" of the towns and municipalities. Beyond the twinning of the two towns and their populations, the future town twinning should serve to improve understanding and peaceful coexistence and thereby create a lasting understanding between individual nations as a step towards the realisation of a united Europe.

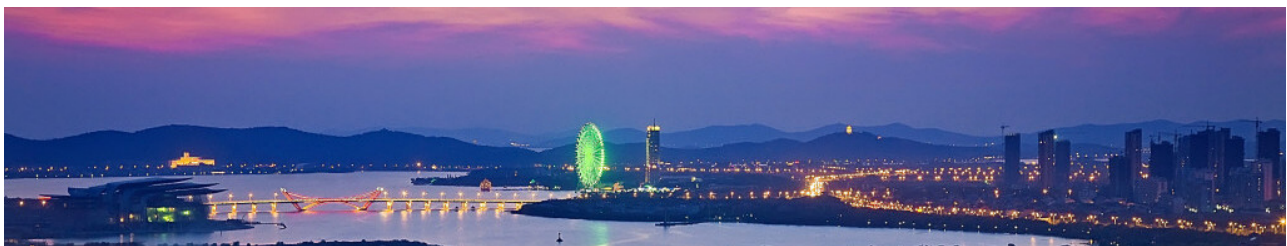
The European City of Bocholt still applies a three-stage system - the "Bocholt Model" - before entering into an official town twinning arrangement. In this way, it wants to ensure that the relationships prove themselves at the various levels, such as civil society, institutions, schools, politics and administration, etc. There are these stages:

- 1st stage: **Declaration of friendship**
- Stage 2: **Town twinning agreement**
- Stage 3: **Town twinning agreement**

Once you have seen that everything has grown and remained stable over a generation - about 25 years - the willingness of the European City of Bocholt to conclude an official town twinning agreement is there.

The conclusion of the latest town twinning with the Lithuanian town of Akmene in 2022, the year of the 800th anniversary of the European town of Bocholt, will open up synergy effects with the town twinning anniversaries of the other Bocholt twin towns in the future: Rossendale (GB) and Bocholt (B) in 1952 as well as Aurillac in 1972 (conclusion of this town twinning on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the town of Bocholt).

The town twinning and friendship projects are organised by the twinning officer of the town of Bocholt in the Sessional Services and International Affairs Division of the mayor's office. The corresponding human and financial resources are also made available there.



# Administration and politics - hand in hand



© Stadt Bocholt

The Committee for Culture and Town Twinning of the City of Bocholt currently provides political support for international relations. The town has maintained this committee since around 1975, when it was founded as the town twinning working group. This political commitment supports the visibility of town twinning in public as well as at state, federal and EU level.

The personal link between administration, politics and associations with regard to "good bridges" is important. The personal commitment in the cooperation with volunteers of the partnership work brings the European City of Bocholt further in this field. For example, the twinning officer of the city of Bocholt works on a voluntary basis as a board member in all German-foreign societies that have written the cultivation of town friendships and twinning into their statutes.

In this way she can contribute to steering and mediating between the societies and the municipal initiatives and to furthering the partnership commitment. For example, a representative of the citizenship takes part in six-member delegation trips to the friendly and partner cities. It is important to the European City of Bocholt that twinning visits and delegation trips are not perceived as political tourism.

To this day, the content of town twinning and friendship visits has mainly come from these areas:

- **Culture and history**

**Stadt Bocholt - Der Bürgermeister**

Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße 52-58, 46395 Bocholt

www.bocholt.de

Instagram: @stadt.bocholt | Facebook: fb.com/stadt.bocholt

- Youth
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## Bocholt (Belgium)

© Bocholt



*St Laurentius Church in Bocholt, Belgium*

**Bocholt** - the Belgian twin town in Flanders is located in the province of Limburg on the Belgian-Dutch border. Bocholt has 13,500 inhabitants, of whom 11,460 are Belgian and 2,040 have other nationalities.

Of these, 90 percent come from the neighbouring Netherlands. The rural twin town has an area of 5,934 hectares. It was first mentioned in 1162 and has been called Bucolt, Bouckhout, Bocholz and Bocholt in recent centuries.

Friendly relations with the city of Bocholt officially began in 1952 - even though there had already been earlier contacts between the two Bocholts due to the war. The town twinning certificates were exchanged in 1980.



**HOMEPAGE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOCHOLT** [↗](#)

## Rossendale (Great Britain)

© Rossendale



*Rossendale is set in the beautiful mountainous landscape of the Pennines with mountainous rises and moorland.*

**Rossendale** - the English twin town is a district with borough status in Lancashire, England. It comprises a number of former mill communities located in the valley of the River Irwell in the industrial north-west of England.

The borough was formed on 1 April 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972 from the boroughs of Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, part of the borough of Ramsbottom and the borough of Whitworth. Rossendale borders Greater Manchester and Calderdale. Rossendale ward covers 138 square kilometres and has a population of 71,432.

The impetus for Bocholt's twinning with Rossendale came from British soldiers immediately after the Second World War. The first official youth exchange between the two twin towns took place in 1952. In 1977, the long-standing, close friendly relations between the two towns were sealed with the exchange of twinning certificates.



**Homepage of the Town of Rossendale** [↗](#)

## Aurillac (France)

© Stadt Bocholt



*The town of Aurillac in France*

**Aurillac** - the French twin town in the green heart of France has 26,876 inhabitants. It is located in the heart of Europe's largest volcano, which offers breathtaking landscapes. The city is the seat of the prefecture of the Cantal département with a central function. A large part of the administrative and services, shops and cultural and sports facilities are concentrated here.

The town of Aurillac is known for its quality of life, gastronomy, cultural offer, nature sports, festivals and architectural charm. Aurillac is the European capital of the umbrella. The twinning of Bocholt and Aurillac was sealed in 1972, when Aurillac celebrated its 1,000th anniversary and Bocholt its 750th.



**HOMEPAGE OF THE CITY OF AURILLAC** 

## Arpajon-sur-Cère (France)



© Petra Taubach

**Arpajon-sur-Cère** - is a neighbour of Aurillac and is located in the south of the Cantal department in the Auvergne Massif Central. This geographical location and the green surroundings near the mountains make it a place where people like to live, pass through and spend their holidays.

In 1974, Arpajon-sur-Cère joined the partnership with Bocholt. At that time, Aurillac and Arpajon came together in an inter-communal working group and fulfilled a number of communal tasks in community. Today Arpajon-sur-Cère is independent and thus the second French twin town of the city of Bocholt.



**HOMEPAGE OF THE TOWN OF ARPAJON-SUR-CÈRE** [↗](#)



## Akmene (Lithuania)

© A. Vasiliunas



*The House of Culture in Akmene*

**Akmenė** - the rayon (cf. county) of Akmenė was established in 1949 in the north of Lithuania. Its area is 84 square kilometres. Akmenė has about 21,000 inhabitants and is located on the Latvian border. There are three towns: Naujoji Akmenė, Akmenė and Venta. In addition, the municipality of Papilė, the municipality of Kruopiai and more than 160 villages belong to the rayon.

The town of Naujoji Akmenė is the administrative centre of the region. The total area of the rayon is 105,600 hectares. As the soil in the district is very fertile, it offers favourable conditions for agriculture and livestock breeding. Akmenė Rajon is a place of discovery at every turn, both in terms of the natural history and legends of the district. In the mid-90s, the city of Bocholt and the Rajon Akmenė signed a declaration of friendship.

Contacts and friendships between the Lithuanian and German people have developed from these aid transports. On 16 June 2000, the Rajon Akmenė and the city of Bocholt concluded an official friendship treaty to reaffirm and further promote the good relations between the two cities. On 14 May 2022, the official twinning between Bocholt and the Rajon Akmene was sealed by the exchange of documents.



**HOMEPAGE OF THE AKMENĖ RAJON** [↗](#)

# Wuxi



© Wuxi

**Wuxi** - the megacity of Wuxi "Xi" for short, was called Xinwu, Laiangxi and Jinjui in ancient times. The city is located in eastern China, south of Jiangsu Province and on the plain of the Yangtze River Delta. It has a population of around 7.5 million and an area of 4,787.6 square kilometres.

It consists of seven urban districts and two independent cities. Wuxi is mentioned in written records dating back more than 3,000 years and has more than 2,500 years of urban history. In 1949, Wuxi City and Wuxi County were established. To date, the city has received national awards, such as Environmental Protection, Culture and Happiest City in the People's Republic of China.

Wuxi combines the beauty of rivers, lakes, rocks and caves and is one of the top 50 tourist cities in China, easily accessible by road and rail from all directions and all major Chinese cities. The friendship between the Chinese city of Wuxi and the city of Bocholt began in 1985 with the visit of the then Chinese ambassador to Germany. In October 2003, the city of Bocholt and the city of Wuxi concluded a declaration of intent for friendly exchange.



## INFORMATION ABOUT WUXI

### Stadt Bocholt - Der Bürgermeister

Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße 52-58, 46395 Bocholt

www.bocholt.de

Instagram: @stadt.bocholt | Facebook: fb.com/stadt.bocholt

# Vlora



© Vlora

**Vlora** is a coastal city and municipality in southern Albania. It was here that the Albanian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on 28 November 1912. Founded as an ancient Greek colony in the 6th century BC under the name of Aulon and continuously inhabited for some 26 centuries, the city houses the Port of Vlora, the University of Vlora and is the most important economic and cultural city in southwestern Albania.

The distance to the capital Tirana is 135 km, while it is only 72 km from Italy and 77 km from Greece. The total population is 205,000 inhabitants in a total area of 616.85 square kilometres. More than 5,500 businesses operate in the municipality of Vlora, providing services to more than 150,000 inhabitants in winter and more than 300,000 inhabitants in summer. The city of Bocholt and the municipality of Vlora signed a declaration of friendship on 14 May 2022.



**HOMEPAGE OF THE CITY OF VLORA** [↗](#)

## Hartelijk Welkom! Bocholt's Dutch neighbours

A trip to the neighbouring Dutch cities and regions is worthwhile:



## Aalten ►



## Doetinchem ►



## Oost Gelre ►



## Oude IJsselstreek ►



**Winterswijk** ►



**Berkelland** ►

## – Did you know?

### Bocholt also exists above the clouds!

Anyone on a Lufthansa flight from Munich to London, Madrid, Athens and other European airports often only knows at second glance that they are on board the "Bocholt. Since January 2010, the Airbus A 321-200 has been in service as the successor to the previous A 300-600 airbus under the name "Bocholt".

After years of efforts by the city of Bocholt to sponsor an aircraft of Deutsche Lufthansa AG, the predecessor model, the Airbus A 300-600, was christened "Bocholt" by an official delegation of the city at the Lufthansa base in Frankfurt on 4 November 1992. The old "Bocholt" was withdrawn from service by Lufthansa in August 2009.

The first citizen of Bocholt who flew with the "Bocholt" was honoured with a travel bag by the then city director Hans-Josef Dahlen.

Data of the current sponsor aircraft A 321-200:

- Registration number **D-AISO**
- Wing span: 34.09 m
- Length: 44.51 m
- Height: 11.76 m
- wing area: 122,600 sqm
- max. take-off weight: 89 t
- empty weight: 48,6 t
- cruising speed: 844 km/h
- max. range: 4,350 km
- Passengers: 200

## Contact



**Petra Taubach**

## Sitzungsdienst und Internationales

### Büro des Bürgermeisters



[Send e-mail](#)



[+49 2871 953-1286](tel:+4928719531286)

## About travel grants

You would like to visit one of the twin towns of the city of Bocholt? You may be able to get financial grants for this. Here you will find an **overview of the valid grant guidelines** for trips to Bocholt's twin towns.

## Applications



PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL



GROUP TOUR

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