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Europe/EDI

## On the trail of strong women in Europe

### **47 women from Bocholt discover female perspectives in Aachen, Brussels, Ghent and the Netherlands**

47 women from Bocholt explored historical and current female perspectives in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands as part of a four-day women's education seminar. The trip under the motto "Strong Women in Europe" took the delegation from Aachen to the political centre in Brussels and on to places steeped in history in the border triangle.

The aim of the programme was to make the diverse contributions of women to European development visible and to strengthen cross-border exchange.

The seminar was realised in cooperation between the Equal Opportunities Officer of the City of Bocholt, the EUROPE DIRECT Bocholt office and the NRW Political Education Forum of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. To kick off the seminar in Aachen, the participants visited the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum and took part in a themed city tour to learn about important women in Aachen's history. A subsequent visit to Aachen Cathedral rounded off the historical introduction.

The focus on the current role of women in politics and society characterised the rest of the trip. In Aachen, the Bocholt group discussed the opportunities and current challenges of gender equality in Germany and Europe with Catarina dos Santos, a member of the Bundestag. The participants also learnt about the history of the International Charlemagne Prize. A key highlight was the subsequent visit to the European Parliament in Brussels, where MEP Alexandra Mehnert provided insights into parliamentary work at European level and current political issues were discussed.

Via the Belgian city of Ghent, where the focus was also on the traces of remarkable women in the city's history, the route led to the Netherlands on the last day of the trip. In the "Museum van de Vrouw" in Echt, the group visited the current art exhibition of the cross-border women artists' association "dreieck.triangle.driehoek". The project combines female perspectives from three nations; a further exchange with this association has already been planned for next year's International Women's Day. The educational trip ended in the historic town of Thorn, which has been shaped by women from various European countries over the centuries.

Sonja Wießmeier from EUROPE DIRECT Bocholt draws a positive conclusion: "The trip showed how important it is to make the achievements of women visible. Their stories are part of European history and provide important impetus for the future of Europe."



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