



**URBACT EUniverCities**  
**LOCAL ACTION PLAN, GHENT**  
**-April 2015-**

*"Managing Ghent's growth  
as a student city"*



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	2
1.1. Context and the challenge.....	2
1.2. Focus and objectives: more intense and structured collaboration.....	4
1.3. A brief look at some of the current collaboration initiatives.....	4
<b>2. Local Support Group Ghent</b> .....	7
2.1. Composition and operation.....	7
2.2. Thematic demarcation.....	7
2.3. Geographical demaraction.....	8
2.4. The state of affairs in vision development.....	9
2.5. Incentives for a common vision.....	9
<b>3. Thematic working groups</b> .....	11
3.1. Methodology and dialogue structure.....	11
3.2. Shared use of space.....	14
3.3. Housing and student housing.....	17
3.4. Mobility.....	21
3.5. Student and image.....	23
3.6. Tourism and culture.....	26
<b>4. Appendices</b> .....	31
4.1. Facts & figures, useful links.....	31
4.2. Composition and data meetings LSG.....	33
4.3. Geographical demarcation: maps.....	35
4.4. Report results peer review meeting Gent door Lead Expert Willem van Winden.....	37

# 1. Introduction

*"Ghent is the largest student city in Flanders and has over 70,000 students. The role and importance of the two universities, four colleges of higher education and their students should not be underestimated. They have significant influence on the mobility, street life, domestic culture, night-life and cultural life of Ghent. They also stimulate the economy and creative life of the city enormously".*

**Elke Decruynaere, Alderman of Education, Training and Youth - (2014)**

## 1.1. Context and the challenge

### "Ghent, so much city"

Ghent is the second-largest city in Belgium with a population of about 250,000 inhabitants of no fewer 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 city consultant Charles Laundry, 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. It may seem strange for a city located inland to have an important sea port, but this has been accomplished thanks to an artificial canal joining Ghent to the sea. 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 has a scientific reputation, especially in the fields of biotechnology, bio-energy and ICT, and has become the driving force behind the 'Flanders Biotech Valley'. The 'Ghent Bio-Energy Valley' in the Port of Ghent emphasises its ambition to become an internationally recognised growth centre of renewable energy and industrial bio-energy projects.

Innovative entrepreneurship is central to the city, but Ghent is also a place of celebration throughout the year. It is also a shopping, dining and bar city as well as a city of music, events and expos. In short: the city cannot be reduced to one word; it is so much more than that. And that's why we say: **"Ghent, so much city"**.

### Ghent, student city

*"The ever increasing appeal of Ghent University on students and researchers from Belgium and abroad, is often attributed to the image of the City of Ghent. And that is partly true. But the reverse is also true: the hip, vibrant and creative image of the City of Ghent could not exist without the constant intake of smart young minds who come develop their talents at our university. It is clear that both the City of Ghent and Ghent University reinforce each other. A network as EUniverCities allows us to learn from others, and to get even stronger as a city and university."*

**Prof. Dr. Anne De Paepe, Ghent University Rector (2015)**

*"A brilliant future is ahead of doers. Everyone looks to the future in his own way, but always in an open, critical and creative manner. It is this assignment we put into daily practice. "*

**Bert Hoogewijs, CEO HoGent (2015)**

*"The Arteveldehogeschool and Ghent are closely linked to each other. Our campuses are dynamic places in this lively university city. Ghent is widely recognized as a center of knowledge and culture. Increasingly, this city is also a center of young and creative entrepreneurs. Our students love Ghent*

*and many of them stay after their studies. This also ensures that Ghent continuously renews itself and strengthens its authentic, critical and innovative profile. It is therefore a big opportunity to have unforgettable student days with us in Ghent. "*

**Prof. Dr. Johan Veeckman, CEO Arteveldehogeschool (2014)**

Ghent, with its 72,500 students, is not only the largest student city in Flanders, but has also experienced an almost exponential growth in the total number of students due to its unique combination of top class education and numerous leisure activities. The student population has grown by 10,000 in the last four years. Ghent has one of the highest ratios of students to locals in Flanders, second only to Leuven. Furthermore, Ghent is the only major city in Flanders that has approximately 30,000 students boarding in rooms during the week.

There is a vast array of study choice thanks to the two universities and four colleges of higher education. The campuses are spread out over the city, making students a daily part of Ghent's street life. Ghent is the place to be for many local and international students. They help boost the economy and strengthen the image of Ghent as a youthful city of creativity, knowledge and innovation. Many students remain in Ghent after their studies to work or in order start up their own businesses.

The role and importance of the two universities, four colleges of higher education and their students should not be underestimated. They have enormous influence over the city as we know it. They also stimulate the economy and the creative energy of the city. That does not mean, however, that we should ignore the negative aspects of their presence. The drafting of a student policy must necessarily balance the needs of the students against the needs of the city and its permanent inhabitants.

## **CHALLENGE**

It is important for Ghent, the city and its HEIs (higher education institutions), **to sustainably manage the challenge of expanding Ghent's role as a student, research and innovative city**<sup>1</sup>. There is a significant lack of space for research, student housing and innovative companies. And there are no indications that this will change in the near future. This important challenge requires an integral and long-term solution, joining collaborative efforts from all stakeholders.

One point must be made abundantly clear: the presence of HEIs is primarily and foremost a benefit to our city. The presence and growth of the number of students offers us enormous opportunities. At the same time, however, we cannot overlook the consequences that go hand in hand with these opportunities.

There is an undeniable lack of space. Even though the city of Ghent and the HEIs have quite a bit of both private and public land at their disposal, it is not always optimally used. Collaboration and focus on a unified management structure for the collective use of space is a vital first step. The challenge here lies with freeing up space for one person, while not taking any away from another. An analysis on the use of space should not only be based on availability, but rather on the different users and/or potential users of that space. The various functions of the space required must be taken into account when obtaining and maintaining the balance between these functions.

As we have previously mentioned, 30,000 students choose to reside in Ghent during the week. And for precisely this reason, an active student housing policy is needed within the general housing policy. After all, students do have very specific housing needs and requirements. In addition, they live amongst locals who themselves have specific expectations regarding their living environment, which will not always be conducive to that of the students. The city of Ghent is working on a citywide student housing plan, which is essential in expanding student housing prudently.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Baseline Study lead expert Willem van Winden, 'EUniverCities, City-University cooperation to the next level, A baseline study', p.44, [http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EUnivercities/outputs\\_media/Baseline\\_newcover\\_01.pdf](http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EUnivercities/outputs_media/Baseline_newcover_01.pdf)

Special ongoing attention must be paid to the mobility of students. Students are concentrated in large numbers in a range of locations and buildings. Safe pedestrian and cycle routes must be created between these locations and buildings. Pedestrian flow must be taken into account as well and the infrastructure adjusted where necessary to ensure for safety and convenience. The number of students travelling to Ghent by car has also become more noticeable. Some on a daily basis, and some weekly. This results in various parking issues which need to be resolved.

It is clear that the city of Ghent has chosen to grow and strengthen its role as a student city. Students are very welcome in Ghent. They are our youth, our ambassadors and in many cases, our future inhabitants, a point to be duly considered. Regardless, perception of students often differs and their presence can be seen as bothersome. Intensive communication is necessary in order to redefine 'the Ghentian' perception of 'the student'. Information regarding what the student population can offer the city as well as their social involvement is not generally available to the broader community.

*"All of these challenges mean that we should concern ourselves with the future of students in Ghent and how we deal with the situation".*

**Mayor Daniël Termont - LSG 7 June 2013**

## **1.2. Focus and objectives: more intense and structured collaboration**

Various shareholders share the vision that this collaboration will be mutually beneficial and should be further pursued. Although there are currently a number of fruitful collaborations concerning various area projects, the general consensus is that there is a lack of collaborative culture and structure. The city of Ghent and the HEIs will collaborate and work together on the prudent and mutually beneficial common objective of making the city more attractive and sustainable.

**Collaboration between the city and its HEIs** is the basis for creating the Ghent Local Action Plan (LAP), with a common vision and a sustainable, integral action plan.

A few of the most important action items on the Ghent LAP are:

- Bringing stakeholders together on a variety of issues,
- Informing each other of plans, aspirations, running projects, focus points, visions, options, etc.,
- Creating a network and relationships of trust between stakeholders,
- Searching together for opportunities and sustainable solutions for any challenges that may arise.

An important step was taken in 2012, when Ghent joined the EUniverCities project. In the first phase, a local structure was established with six sub-groups (see below). Its goal is to streamline collaboration between the City and the HEIs and to develop a long-term vision that should lead to concrete plans in support of these common visions.

## **1.3. A brief look at some of the current collaboration initiatives<sup>2</sup>**

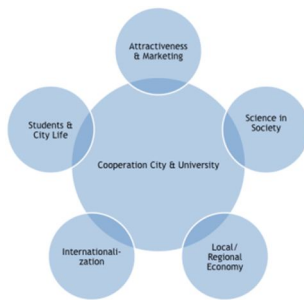
In Ghent, there is a widely-shared notion that city and university are strongly and positively interrelated, and are reliant on each other in a number of respects. Co-operation between the City and the HEIs runs deep and across a broad spectrum, and can be found at many levels. At the top level, the city and HEIs maintain excellent relationships, both formally and informally. Twice per year,

---

<sup>2</sup> Report results peer review meeting in Ghent (December 2014) by Lead Expert Willem van Winden (see attachment)

there is a formal meeting between the mayor/aldermen and the executive board of the university, where strategic issues are discussed. In addition, the mayor attends many university and higher education college conferences or events, stressing the significance of the links between HOIs and the city. Secondly, there is an abundance of collaboration in a number of specific domains as represented in the Flower model. There are a number of joint projects and initiatives with university research groups and individual professors.

Below is an overview detailing some of the current collaboration structures and initiatives in the domains as identified in the EUniverCities flower model:



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

- City, HEIs and other knowledge institutions are developing “the Krook” as a unique mix of media and information research facility, city library, art and culture and meeting areas. The Krook will give a run-down urban district a new lease of life, focusing on culture, economy and innovation (new media). It will become a hotspot for innovation and collaboration. The project includes a ‘Centre for new media’ and a ‘21st century library’.
- There is the ongoing growth of science parks and incubators such as the creation and expansion of Tech Lane Ghent Science Park.
- A pilot plant was created to bridge the ‘upscaling gap’ between academic research results and industrial use, such as Biobase Europe at the port of Ghent.
- 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 entrepreneurs by introducing the special student statute of ‘student-entrepreneur’. The city encourages (student) entrepreneurship and created a starters’ policy (entrepreneurship forum, 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 adaptation (example iMinds 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” organisation not owned by a particular university, it organises 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 aims to facilitate the commercial application of promising technologies developed within the Ghent University Association (UA). Key technology transfer activities include licensing, industrial collaboration programs, and spin-off creation. For its liaison with industry, UGent uses a network, currently 23, of specialised business development centres backed by a Central Technology Transfer Office.

**Internationalisation:**

- The university of Ghent co-invested in an international primary school (together with the city and some other parties such as large companies). This helps to attract and retain international researchers and experts.
- 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 student life in the city: there is a working student group in and around Ghent, a student 'official' (link between policy and students and between the schools of higher education and the city council, ambassador for students, ombudsman function) and a student 'intermediary' (to initiate change, students and inconveniences, preventive measures). 'StuGent' is a consultative body for students. It helps to enhance the integration of students into the city.
- There is a special communication centre on student housing, kot@gent, stimulating cooperation between the city and all the HEIs.
- House of the student (communication centre), online information: [www.studentingent.be](http://www.studentingent.be)
- A training centre that facilitates the organisation of work placements for students in the city administration
- The city commissioned a large-scale study on the value of students for the city

**Science & society:**

- The city motivated students to consider urban planning. For example, 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. The 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 organisation of the Ghent Living Lab, creates an environment in which the city of tomorrow can take shape in a sustainable way.

## 2. Local Support Group Ghent

The Local Support Group (LSG) is **the vehicle through which integrated and participative approaches to urban policies are developed.**

### 2.1. Composition and operation<sup>3</sup>

From its inception, the Ghent LSG has been a vehicle for collaboration between the city and the HEIs. There was consensus amongst the **'core group'** during the first exploratory talks regarding the need for a sustainable strategy for the management of the growth of Ghent as a student city in all aspects, such as mobility, student housing, shared use of space, student, image, culture and tourism as well as taking into account the needs of the stakeholders.

The LSG was composed of and included qualified stakeholders in the matters at hand, both regarding the City as well as the HEIs. Students were also included at a later stage. This **'extended LSG'** met approximately every 4 months. The LSG operations were supported by Ms Elke Decruynaere, Alderman of Education, Training and Youth, who was present at a number of meetings, and initially by Mr Daniël Termont, mayor of the City of Ghent.

In contrast to most other partner cities, the Ghent LSG opted not to focus on one topic, but rather on multiple topics that required collective action. For that purpose, **6 thematic working groups** were created. Furthermore, it was decided to **demarcate geographically** a specific area within the city in which all these topics were found, in order to facilitate an integrated approach. The LSG monitors the integrated approach of the various thematic working groups and ensures that solutions for one topic do not create problems for another. The creation and operation of the LSG and its various thematic working groups may demonstrate one of the Ghent LAP's action points, namely the realisation and improvement of the collaboration between the City and the HEIs.

### 2.2. Thematic demarcation

After analysing the problem, various topics were prioritised according to specific challenges. The LSG decided to proceed with six action groups that regularly met amongst themselves and reported to the LSG:

1. **Methodology and consultation structures** (collaboration)
2. **Shared use of space** (use and management of public and semi-public spaces) (how to improve the use of available space)
3. **Housing and student housing**
4. **Student and image** (communicating and engaging with students, including co-creation, participation and neighbourhood involvement)
5. **Mobility**
6. **Tourism and Culture**

The six thematic working groups are each made up of representatives from different HEIs, students and other important stakeholders.

---

<sup>3</sup> See the attachment for the composition of the LSG as well as dates for core group meetings and extended LSG-meetings.

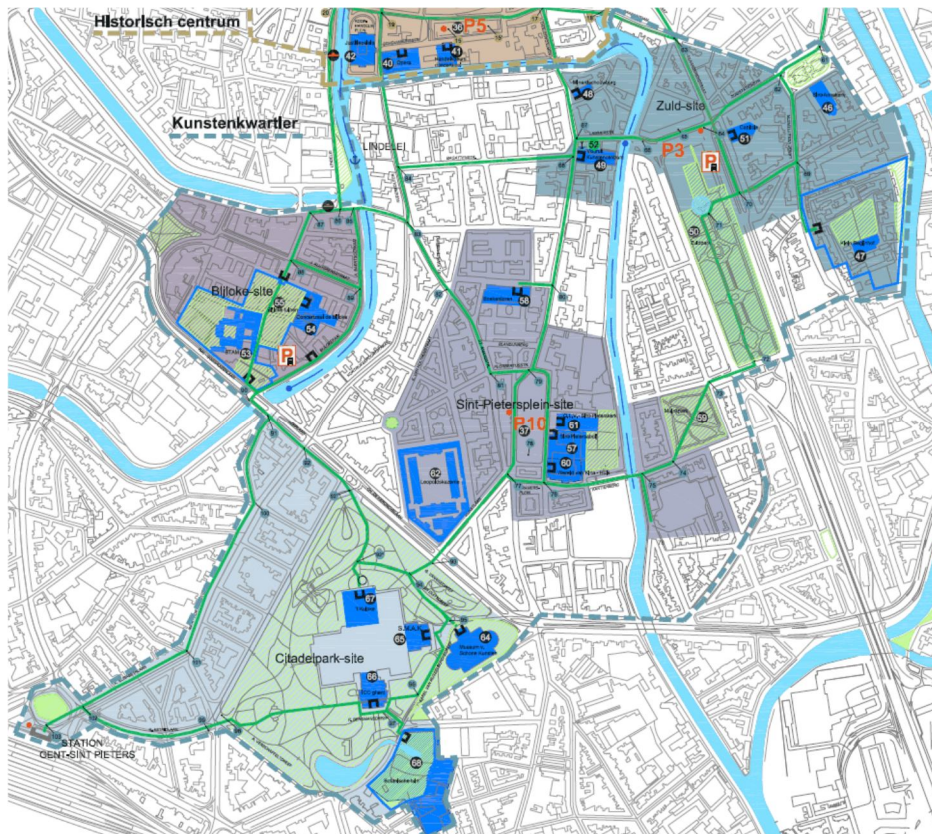


## 2.3. Geographical demarcation

An exploratory meeting between representatives from the city and UGent (core group) pointed out that when developing a vision for the management of the growth of Ghent as a student city, it would be prudent to experiment on one specific area within the city, a **'laboratory'** as it were. The proposed area was the **Arts District**, as it is located in the centre of the student area and as a result, experiences the related issues (challenges regarding housing, mobility, etc.).

### Map of Arts District

Source: "Vision of the future for the (tourist) development of the Arts District in Ghent" Vision design, June 2011, pg 6.



A large portion of the UGent and Colleges of higher education buildings can be found in the Arts District, an area stretching from the Kouter in the north to Sint-Pieters railway Station and Citadel Park in the south, and from the Bijloke in the west to the Klein Begijnhof in the east.

There are many properties belonging to the HEIs and the City of Ghent in these areas, as well as various cultural sites. There are also a number of current collaborative projects with various partners in the LSG (e.g.: The Krook, bicycle parking Vooruit, Technicumplein, Rozier restaurant, Vandenhove pavilion, Boekentoren (book tower) /Belvédère, museum site etc.). Furthermore, studies and detailed visions from a variety of city departments and the university in the field of Urban Development and Architecture already exist (even though they maintain a very specific perspective).

Another important fact is that citywide tensions exist within this part of the city in particular. The density of certain topics (students, economy, culture) is much higher in the Arts District than in other parts of Ghent. This district gives the best indication of what a large student population means to a city like Ghent, as well as highlighting the challenges that come along with it. The Arts District is a test case for the problems that may affect the greater whole. Solutions that present themselves in the Arts District can likewise be applied to other city districts. In other words, the vision developed in the Arts District can be exported to other areas. On the other hand, certain topics cannot simply be separated from the city completely. Topics such as student housing and student and image (including communication) are not limited to the Arts District but must be more expansive.

## 2.4. The state of affairs in vision development

What conclusions have we been able to draw from LSG meetings and various thematic working groups consultations regarding vision development?

- There is general agreement amongst stakeholders that a **'common vision' and an 'integrated approach'** are required. Independent campaigns, projects that have not been incorporated or that do not stem from a spirit of collaboration are simply not an option for approaching and properly managing the challenges.  
*Note: we have noticed that stakeholders at times fail to inform or collaborate with other stakeholders and often make decisions that impact other stakeholder without their prior consultation or agreement.*
- Although we have selected the geographic demarcation of the 'Arts District' as a 'laboratory', we maintain the vision that all must be seen in a broader context.
- A **sustainable approach** is necessary: It is important to think long-term, but to also take into account that the current state of affairs may not continue and that other events (economical/political/social etc.) may change the premise.
- It is vital to continue working on a **culture and structure of collaboration**.
- There must be continued work on building a broad support base and ensuring the **participation** of all stakeholders. Not only the HEIs and the City, but also the local inhabitants, students, etc.
- All proposed campaigns must **relate to the policy** as well as align with anticipated plans to be created (Ghent regional zoning plan, mobility plan, student policy plan, student housing plan, parking plan, etc.).

## 2.5. Incentives for a common vision

These thematic working groups represent the building blocks for the future formulation of a common vision for the area and the topic. These building blocks are the foundation for the next process, that of further expanding upon the common vision, delving deeper where necessary and finding an anchor in the various policies of the partners. Campaigns that are now being created by the various thematic working groups will feed vision development. Furthermore, a solid common vision would optimise the execution and implementation of these campaigns in terms of the area and the topics.

The following principles for the common vision have already been formulated:

- **Keep educational institutions, students and student housing in the city centre<sup>4</sup>**. No focus on campus creation outside of the city. Recent examples that support this principle include the

---

<sup>4</sup> See also the **Student Housing Plan**: <https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/page/documents/Studentenhuisvestingplan2015.pdf>, p.34, The City is working on a spatial consideration framework for student housing. Intention is to assess, on the basis of criteria, if it is desirable or

UFO building, the development of the Kantienberg, the renovation and additions of a hostel and student housing to the old editorial and printing offices of the Dagblad Vooruit as well as the development of student housing on the former university restaurant Overpoort.

- **Strive for less exclusive use of the limited space available.** It is important not to focus exclusively on students, inhabitants, or tourists, but rather to find a symbiosis in terms of living, studying, visiting, research etc. The first priority here is to focus on the outside spaces of buildings and their functions. Further analysis, details and internal consultation is still necessary regarding the scale and degree of usage exclusivity of certain buildings and locations. Above all, individual ambitions of various public and private partners must be ascertained. This principle is somewhat contrary to the following principle. Both are heavily reliant on each other.
- **Striving for improved interconnectedness of functions and more diverse usage.** The principle requires clarification regarding scale: it concerns interconnecting functions within the building itself and does not concern the land. The diverse use of the building area indicates the necessity of a better balance between housing, student housing, work related to education and research as well as other employment, such as tourist services and infrastructure which are presently focused on only one group (e.g. pubs for students). More 'meeting' opportunities must be created.
- **Striving for more involvement (policy participation)** and collaboration between locals, HEIs, students, cultural parties, traders, visitors, etc. There are a number of proposed specific plans such as the 200 years of collaboration between City and University exhibition in 2017, and neighbourhood of the Month 2015.
- **Striving toward a more approachable and attractive city** for its inhabitants, traders, companies, tourists etc., and a better quality of life, allowing the City of Ghent and the HEIs to strengthen one another.

---

appropriate to provide student housing at a particular location. This will involve attention to the proximity of student services, diversification, sustainable mobility, ... so that the implantation is appropriate for both the student and the city. A consideration framework is rather an advisory tool with search criteria for suitable sites, it is not intended to define zones reserved for student housing or zones prohibited for student housing. The basic premise is that students are welcome everywhere, but for large-scale student housing there are places which are more suitable than others. The framework can be an objective guide to find those places.

### 3. Thematic working groups

One specific approach was adopted by each of the thematic working groups:

- Defining context and problems/challenges: *Where are we now?*
- Formulating a vision: *Where would we like to be?*
- Key aspects specify: *what is the focus and what challenges are priorities?*
- Mapping out opportunities
- Deciding on definitive campaigns (including ongoing campaigns and projects): *what are we already doing together?*
- Approach for actions to be taken: *how, who, when, budget?*

#### 3.1. Methodology and dialogue structure

##### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

A number of reliable consultation structures and collaborations exist.

The major structures include:

##### **1. Committee consultation between the board of Aldermen and UGent as well as consultations between UGent and officials of various municipal services.**

- Frequency: 4 to 5 times per year
- Organised by: Department for Spatial Planning, Mobility and Public Areas
- The following services are represented: Management Support Service, Tourism Service, Building Maintenance Service, Economy Service, Roads Service, Housing Service, Coordination Service, Service of Community Based Planning, City Development and Spatial Planning Service, Mobility Company, Parks and Public Gardens Service.

Key Issue: Other HEIs are not represented (Hogeschool Gent, Arteveldehogeschool, Odissee and Luca School of Arts) (see also conclusion of baseline study by Willem Van Winden). The question of whether or not it is better to work on a topic-based principle arises.

##### **2. StuGent: student discussions:**

- Frequency: 4 to 5 times per year
- Organised by: Youth Service/student officer
- Regarding student facilities and personal student affairs
- Student affairs representatives from UGent and the Colleges of Higher Education, representatives from student councils and associations, Department for Education, other city of Ghent departments as well as the police or IVAGO, the student prevention coach
- It is chaired by an alderman, and the student officer acts as secretary and prepares the meetings.
- Bottom up feedback (students to city) and top down (city to students), big student events

Key Issue: Too little bottom up. The question arises how we can address more the voice of the student councils.

##### **3. International students work group:**

- Frequency: 4 times per year
- Representatives from international services educational institutions, Civil Affairs Service and the student officer
- Enrolment - registration of international students via the migration counter, Civil Affairs Service
- Student officer acts as chair and secretary

Key Issue: The student officer acts as chair but this is an unbalanced collaborative structure and the student officer cannot take responsibility for everything. It would make more sense to create direct logical links between the city departments and their department counterparts at the HEIs.

#### **4. Kot@Gent: student housing (steering group and work group):**

- Frequency: 2 times per year
- Housing representatives from various HEIs, student representatives, alderman for housing and/or Housing Service, student officer and student prevention coach
- Chair: director of Housing Service

#### **5. Work group concerning student cultural experience:**

- Frequency: 4 times per year
- Student facility representatives from various HEIs, chairperson of the Ghent student council, TUMULT FM (media platform for culture and education partners for the city of Ghent) and student officer
- Organised by: Department for Culture

#### **6. Ad Hoc discussion groups:**

- General meeting Student Kick Off
  - SKO representatives, HEI representatives and student officer.
- General Meeting studentENmobiliteit (student bike rental and repair)
  - Mobility Company of the City of Ghent, HEI representatives, student representatives and student officer.

#### **7. Other discussion forums, student officer & student prevention coach:**

##### **Student officer:**

- All meetings ensuing from StuGent, depending on the agenda items
- Coordination and evaluation meetings of large student events: student kick-off meeting, 12-hour run, Gravensteen party, Massacantus, Beiaardcantus and any other new projects
- Meetings with IVAGO (waste management), the police and potentially De Lijn (public transport provider) and other external partners regarding student events

##### **Student prevention coach:**

- Steering group, umbrella issues
- Chair: student prevention coach
- Frequency: 2 times per year

#### **8. Allocation key for financial contributions HEIs - City of Ghent:**

The City of Ghent enters into a number of partnerships with HEIs and city departments. The financial contributions from various HEIs are determined differently each time and are therefore requested from HEIs individually by the City of Ghent. This occurs at different times and by different departments throughout the course of the academic year. All parties have agreed that a system with a uniform allocation key would be far more efficient. This allocation key could be applicable to four different collaborations:

- Collaboration protocol student housing - kot@Gent (alderman Tom Balthazar)
- Collaboration agreement regarding cultural participation of students (alderman Annelies Storms)
- StudentENmobiliteit (alderman Filip Watteeuw)
- Collaboration agreement Student Kick Off (alderman Elke Decruynaere)

The student officer submitted a proposal in March 2015, which was approved by the various aldermen (see action items).

## VISION

The following can be found in the baseline study: *“Currently, top-level relations (between mayor/aldermen and university board) are excellent, and there is also considerable collaboration in specific fields and on a project basis. However, some stakeholders express the opinion that a more structured type of dialogue is necessary to have a more long-term horizon rather than an ad-hoc and project-based approach. This type of collaboration should take place between heads of faculties/research groups and leaders of city departments”. Later on it says: “Currently, there is a lack of space for research, for student housing, and for innovative business, and there is no reason to believe that the pressure will decrease in the (near) future. This problem cannot be solved in an integrated and sustainable way when each party (university departments, housing corporations, city departments) tries to solve their individual problems individually, or on an ad-hoc basis. It is strongly felt that a long-term shared vision is needed, taking into account the interrelationships between institutions and policy domains. The EUniverCities project is regarded as a catalyst for this vision development”.*

In order to address the challenges of housing, mobility and coexistence as well as the opportunities for innovation and research as efficiently and effectively as possible, a more structured collaboration between stakeholders is required.

The connection between HEIs and the City has considerable potential economically, culturally as well as scientifically. How can we improve collaboration on topics regarding space, community and society as well as focus the expertise of our knowledge institutes on concrete coexistence problems? Harnessing this potential to its fullest requires structured collaboration forged by means of a shared vision and strategy.

## FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES

Investigate how topic-based discussions between the City and all HEIs can be structurally organised.

## ACTION POINTS

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate new potential collaboration structures between the city and HEIs</li></ul>	April 2015: discussion with stakeholders June 2015: discussion of proposals with stakeholders	City of Ghent Alderman of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate how we can work together more closely with the Ghent student council representative</li></ul>	June 2015: student policy plan proposals at first GAST (collective student councils of AU Gent) + student councils of Odisee and Sint Lucas	Alderman of Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Drafting and distribution of allocation key collaborations to the city and HEIs</li></ul>	HEIs can give feedback until 24/04/2015 The allocation key will be finalised in May 2015	Student officer/cabinet alderman of Education



### FOR INSPIRATION FROM PARTNER CITIES

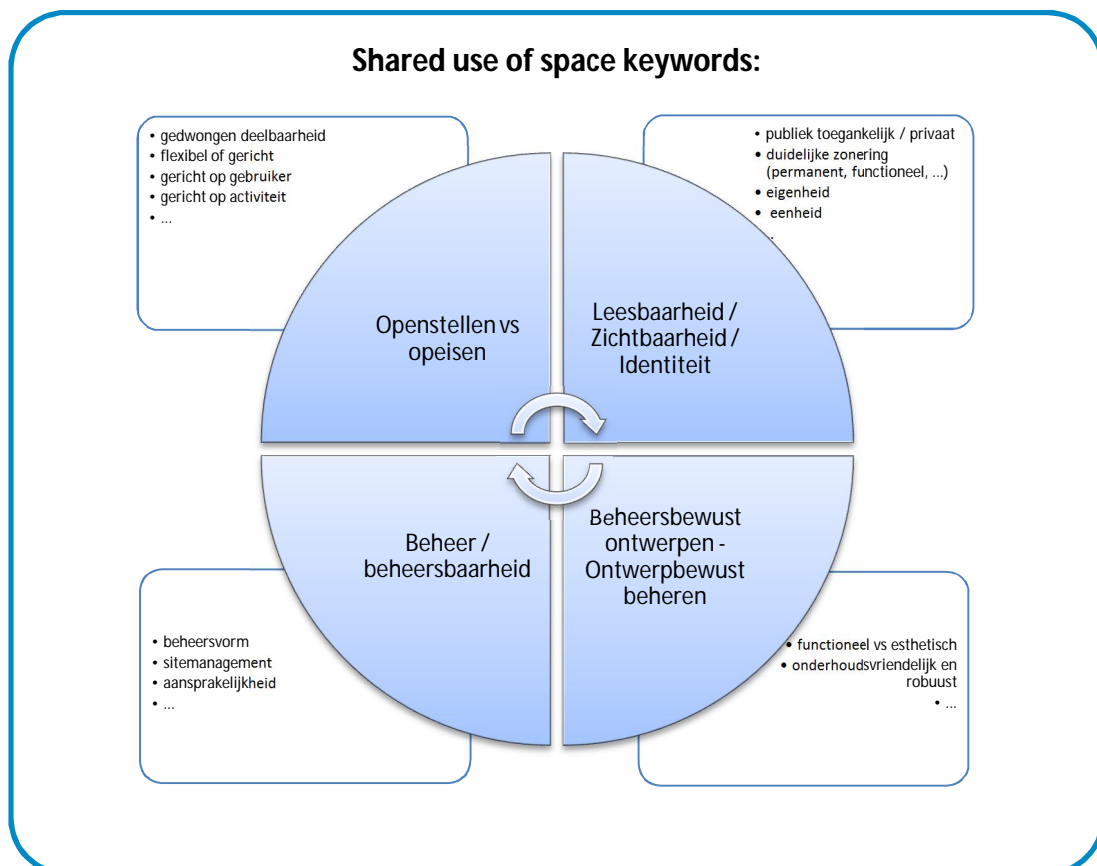
- Many partner cities have an official 'intermediary' who is responsible for communicating between the city and the HEIs at a strategic level.
- Some cities offer research grants in association with local city challenges
- Community service learning: students are inspired to engage on a local level.

## 3.2. Shared use of space

### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The shared use of space in the Arts District, as well as other districts, faces the problems of split use between private and public space as well as the extent of appropriation of space by students, tourists, inhabitants and/or users (including employees of the education institutes).

Below you will find a number of keywords that identify and/or influence the shared use of space, to a greater or lesser degree.



By means of a SWOT analysis, indicate strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats concerning the use of space. These offer important perspective and focus points for the formulation of a vision for the shared use of space.

#	Strengths	#	Opportunities
<b>S1</b>	Integrated policy	<b>K1</b>	Gain international expertise
<b>S2</b>	Extra space made available for all parties	<b>K2</b>	Unified management of students
<b>S3</b>	Increase the quality of life for all stakeholders/parties	<b>K3</b>	Conservation role/buildings
<b>S4</b>	More specific opportunities for events	<b>K4</b>	Development of new areas
<b>S5</b>	Adjust environment to the needs	<b>K5</b>	Increased satisfaction of inhabitants/users, etc.
#	Weaknesses	#	Threats
<b>Z1</b>	Difficulty in finding management structure	<b>B1</b>	Loss of decision-making rights differences in 'daily rhythms' between various users (e.g. working rhythm - night-life, school holidays - permanent residence, etc.)  Mobility/parking (e.g. students travelling weekly or daily by car = more housing or more parking?)  Demarcation of responsibility/vague accountability
		<b>B2</b>	
		<b>B3</b>	
		<b>B4</b>	

## VISION

The approach to a communal vision as formulated above requires more concrete details and further analysis if we wish to come to an integrated communal framework policy for this district and other districts. In regards to details and further analysis, the following principles concerning spatial issues are essential:

- Opting for access to areas by bicycle or on foot regardless of time of day, ...
- Design of spaces from a multidimensional viewpoint; as functional spaces (e.g. for events, catering, ...), meeting areas, traffic areas, lodgings or 'white space' in order to create distance from the private areas
- Make maximum use of multi-functionality (for catering, events, recreation, education, research, etc.)
- Strive for innovation of the space with regard to use, design, material use and management
- Respect and creation of different qualities as well as for many different groups: respect and attention to heritage quality, spatial/scenic quality, natural/green quality, visual quality, environmental quality
- Attention to spatial dimensions: height of buildings, with regard to the distance, spatial proportions, thinking in vertical and horizontal dimensions
- Pay attention to the harmony and diversity of spaces: unity in diversity
- Use of current/historical space patterns, reinterpreted for the future
- Allow space for creativity and time factors (= slow urbanisation)
- ...

## FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES

The following questions are relevant in working towards the shared use of space. These questions<sup>5</sup> focus on the correlation between conceptual aspects, implementation aspects and management aspects of the shared use of space.

<sup>5</sup> These questions form the basis for the peer review meeting in Ghent regarding the topic of 'students and public spaces' (December 2014). See results of the peer review meeting report in Ghent (December 2014) by Lead Expert Willem van Winden, attached.



1. How do we determine the aims for the shared use of space together with the parties involved? Which social and physical factors play a role in ensuring good/optimal division of space? Which conditions encourage shared use and which discourage it? How can we achieve our goals regarding the greenification of communal areas?
2. How do we stay true to the goal throughout implementation? How do we ensure that the parties involved stay engaged in accomplishing the goals? How do we involve parties in implementation (and future management)?
3. How do we protect the aims of the shared use of space after realisation, and in the longer term? How do we prevent an appropriation imbalance with regard to private space for public use or public space for private use by one of the groups? What management practices can we implement in this regard?

## ACTION POINTS

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Initiate shared use of space with partners thematic working group</b></li> <li>• <b>Collaboration between the city and HEIs for the initiation/realisation of this topic</b></li> </ul>	<p>Realised (28/11/2013, 30/01/2014, 14/03/2014, ...)</p> <p>Realised (primarily between the City and UGent)</p>	<p>LSG UGent</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inventory creation of spaces</b> in the city which can still be used communally</li> <li>• <b>Creation of maps</b></li> </ul>	<p>Partially complete, but not yet integrated</p>	<p>Thematic working group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Formulating issues and prospects for the different spaces:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of issues</li> <li>• Proposed action to be taken regarding issues</li> <li>• Overview of prospects/opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Partially developed in different documents</p>	<p>Thematic working group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Further investigation of opportunities for laying out green areas for communal use</b></li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Formulation of building blocks of a (spatially-oriented) vision</b> of public and private spaces, including MuinkSchelde</li> </ul>	<p>Partially developed (see above)</p>	<p>Thematic working group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create a spatial translation</b> for the Sint Pietersnieuwstraat – Sint Pietersplein – Overpoortstaat car free zone as laid out in the Ghent mobility plan.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create a definitive vision within a number of spatial guidelines for the layout and management</b> of communal use spaces.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Involve inhabitants and other stakeholders in the creation of a vision for the shared use of space</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Summary stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Contact stakeholders</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Some HEIs and the city of Ghent</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Investigate possibilities for temporary (shared) use</b></li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore <b>local and overseas management type</b></li> </ul>	<p>Partially developed</p>	

<b>examples</b> for this type of space use.	(Bijloke, Tuin Farmacie, Rozier, Veergrep, etc.)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate what the <b>aims/feasibility</b> of this shared space use are. How to determine the aims? How to maintain these aims after realisation?</li> </ul>		Thematic working group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Investigate management options/tools:</b> find answers to the question: how will the limited spaces in the Arts District be managed collectively.</li> </ul>	Partially developed in investigation documents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Draft policy framework for shared use of space</b></li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Design research and vision forming of the layout and spatial relationships between Sint Pietersnieuwstraat – Kerkwegel – Muinschelderoute – Muinschelde - Muinkkaai</b></li> </ul>	Impetus given in the city of Ghent investigation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Based on design research and vision forming, implement designs in two areas based on shared use of space</b>  <b>Technicumplein case study</b>  <b>Technical Scheldekaai green zone case study</b></li> </ul>	impetus given impetus given	City of Ghent UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Application for concept funding by Flemish City Renewal Fund 2015 (Agency for Local Government) for the project 'University in the city'</b></li> </ul>	Approved by board of alderman, applied on 4/5/2015	City of Ghent UGent



#### FOR INSPIRATION FROM PARTNER CITIES

See Report results peer review meeting in Ghent by Lead Expert Willem van Winden attached.

### 3.3. Housing and student housing

#### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The city of Ghent has 250,000 inhabitants. This number increases by 70,000 when you factor in higher education students on school days. An estimated 30,000 of them live in Ghent during the week and travel back and forth on weekends. An equally large number commute daily. That requires an active student housing policy within the general housing policy. Space is becoming more limited and cannot be used by multiple groups simultaneously. Of note is the fact that students who board in Ghent would rather stay in the centre of the city and amongst families than stay in remote 'student campuses'. Living in the city centre is viewed as a positive experience and students enjoy living near various neighbourhood shops, restaurants, cultural centres, libraries, cinemas, sport facilities, parks and squares in the city.

Students have very specific housing needs and wishes due to their budget requirements, temporary nature of stay, and so on. An increasing number of student boarders are opting to share family homes, putting additional pressure on the housing market. This is due to the current market not

meeting the need for adequate, affordable, sustainable and quality housing. Furthermore, the need for new additional forms (typologies) of student housing is growing. It is important that these new forms of housing are versatile, in case the need for student housing decreases over time. Student learn to co-exist with others. They provide diversity and energy, generally in a positive manner, but sometimes disruptively, too. In drafting its policies, the City sets the balance of the needs of the students against the needs of the city and its permanent inhabitants into account as much as possible. Not insignificant, as many students remain as inhabitants in Ghent after their studies. They transition from boarder to inhabitant. Their expectations of our city change from one year to the next. What is apparent to the student may not be so to the inhabitant, and vice versa. We simply do not know how large the student population will become in Ghent. What we should anticipate, however, is the increasing internationalisation of higher education. Europe intends for 20 to 30% of students attending an HEI to take part in an exchange programme in another country. How and where do these foreign students find a room for their limited stay? How do we engage them in daily community life? Foreign students are not just students, but also ambassadors for our city.

**VISION**

We welcome the students who stay in Ghent as valued guests and potential inhabitants of our city. Not unlike our permanent inhabitants, we want students to enjoy a safe, good quality and affordable place to stay in a decent neighbourhood. We welcome our international students as future ambassadors. We strive to ensure that they can stay in Ghent without unnecessary hindrances, regardless of where they come from or how long they will stay. We are working to create a harmonious society of inhabitants and students living together in pleasant neighbourhoods. We see the classic small room (permit-bearing or permit-worthy) as an ideal solution for student housing. We monitor whether groups of students stay in rooms or in large-scale student complexes managed as a whole compliant with current legislation. We exclude as much low quality or unsafe student housing from the market as possible. At the same time, we are expanding the range of quality student housing in order to meet the requirement, making other forms of housing available under certain conditions, such as renting a room from a family. We are helping to ensure a future of balanced student housing spread throughout the city.

**FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES**

Better solutions must be found for the increasing number of students and the housing available as well as the increasing number of families in search of housing. Because student housing facilities are not ideally priced or of sufficient quality, students are now renting family homes, to the detriment of families. In addition, student living expectations change over time, as they get to know the city better and progress with their studies. Some simply want higher quality accommodation, or would like to share a space with their partner. All of this requires new, affordable forms of living space as well as an adjusted legislative framework. Further to that, we must commit to improvements, inspections and enforcement of existing rooms, in order to protect students from unsafe housing or housing of a substandard quality. We must also prepare for an increase in international students who will come here to study for short or extended periods.

The student housing policy is being drafted and will be implemented **together with all the partners involved**. The City of Ghent's Housing Department can **direct** and facilitate this policy and keep it on track.

**ACTION POINTS**

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparatory topic sessions for the <b>drafting of a student housing plan</b>: "Ghent: residential city - Space for</li> </ul>	Realised	Housing Service

<p>students, the student housing plan 2014-2019 for the City of Ghent".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create support and obtain information via plenary discussions with a broad group of <b>stakeholders</b> followed by two, two-topic sessions.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft plan: Space for students, the student housing plan</b></li> </ul>	Realised, approved by city council in Sept. 2014, the translation to a multi-annual action plan with a corresponding communication plan is under way	Housing Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign <b>Collaboration Protocol Kotatgent</b>, a formal engagement from the City of Ghent and the HEIs to work together on student housing.</li> <li>• Facilitate and coordinate the collaboration</li> </ul>	Realised	Housing Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent will take a <b>baseline reading and periodic inventories of relevant data</b> regarding student housing in Ghent in order to evaluate and adjust the policy.</li> </ul>	Annually	Housing Service and Data Analysis and GIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent is <b>investigating the need for student housing</b> if students are only to stay in regulated and compliant student housing, keeping in mind the housing wishes of the students.</li> </ul>	Subject to available budget	Housing Service and Data Analysis and GIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent is taking the lead regarding the <b>founding of a Flemish consultation platform</b> between student cities that work towards a clear student - living - policy in alignment with legislation.</li> </ul>	2015-2016	Housing Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent is striving to ensure <b>accurate information, good advice and efficient service delivery</b> regarding student housing. We are doing this, for example, via the Kotatgent contact point and the Kotatgent.be website, where owners can advertise their rooms for let at no cost.</li> </ul>	Permanent	Housing Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent, in collaboration with the fire department, is responsible for the <b>enforcement of quality and safety</b> and will carry out inspections, proactively as well as complaint-driven.</li> </ul>	Permanent	The Building and Housing Inspectorate in collaboration with the Fire Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ghent is creating a <b>framework for new types of student housing</b> including collective student complexes and student apartments/houses.</li> </ul>	2016-2017	The Housing Service in collaboration with the City Development and Spatial Planning Service, and the Building and Housing Inspectorate, Kotatgent

		partners and private developers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and enable the <b>renting of rooms in private homes</b>.</li> </ul>	General building regulations have been amended in order to allow for this. There is currently a project running.	Housing Service in collaboration with the OCMW (Social Services), Province of East Flanders, City Development and Spatial Planning Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City is developing a <b>spatial assessment recommendations framework</b> with search criteria for suitable student housing locations, with a consideration given to student facilities, mobility, dispersal, etc.</li> </ul>	2016	City Development and Spatial Planning Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City is taking steps to <b>promote affordable</b> student housing, and, amongst other initiatives, mediating a collaboration agreement between HEIs and developers regarding realisation, management and fees.</li> </ul>	2017	Housing Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Ghent is encouraging property owners to have the quality of their rooms assessed based on a <b>conformity test</b> and is investigating the possibility of making this mandatory.</li> </ul>	2017	The Housing Service and Building and Housing Inspectorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Ghent is developing an objective and comparable <b>quality badge for student rooms</b> based on the type of housing and the scale of the building.</li> </ul>	2016	The Housing Service and Building and Housing Inspectorate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Ghent will <b>determine which students may register at an address in the city</b> and under what conditions this is possible, taking into account higher legislation requirements.</li> </ul>	2015	Housing Service in collaboration with the Civil Affairs Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Ghent, together with the HEI's, is creating a <b>plan of action</b> to ensure that the rising number of <b>international students</b> can stay in Ghent without unnecessary hindrances, regardless of where they come from and how long they will be studying in Ghent. This includes also investigation in how the HEI's can provide support with regard to the administrative processes that international students have to go through.</li> </ul>	2018	The Civil Affairs Service



### FOR INSPIRATION FROM PARTNER CITIES

'Renting a room in a private home' in Aachen

Knowledge exchange with Delft

- How has the student housing market evolved in other cities: are there changes in what the students want, are there new requirements, and so on.
- Does the student housing market accommodate these changes? Is this purely government-driven or driven by the private sector?
- Is there any collaboration between the private market and HEIs regarding student housing?

## 3.4. Mobility

### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The number of students in Ghent has grown from 20,000 to 70,000 in the last 25 years. This increase in the student population is extremely noticeable in a number of spheres within the city, especially in terms of mobility. Almost half of students commute daily from their rooms/residence to campus by bicycle (47.5%). Only 8% of students use a car for this commute. The weekly commute of boarding students between their place of residence and Ghent is primarily by train (66%); 25.5% travel using their own vehicle or are dropped off.

This relatively small portion of vehicle users does represent a few thousand extra cars on the road, and that can be felt in the city (traffic jams, lack of parking). The increased number of cyclists also requires attention (insufficient bicycle parking, overcrowded cycle routes).

The environmental issues surrounding mobility are equally as pressing as the space problem. Public spaces on and around campuses are stretched to capacity. **What should we do with all the cars and bicycles?** Bicycle racks, parking spots, environmentally conscious or new constructions? There simply is no room for 'everything' any more.

### VISION

Striving toward a more approachable and attractive city and a better quality of life for its inhabitants, traders, companies, tourists etc. The City of Ghent and the HEIs are working together to create a sustainable transport system that offers opportunities for public spaces. Less road traffic means that more can be done on squares, streets and campus car parks.

### FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES

The following priority challenges are being worked on in order to give shape to this vision:

- Constructive cooperation regarding the details of mobility plans from various partners ([Ghent mobility plan](#), institute transport plan UGent, etc.). Part of this will be working on reducing the need for transport, adapting the modal split in the interests of sustainability, making the mobility system more efficient, increasing transport safety, and so on.
- Inform, raise awareness and involve students.

- Stimulate and develop co-creation projects in order to create better and more sustainable solutions for the street, neighbourhood and student neighbourhood traffic problems.

A reduction of cars will free up space, space that can be used for safer car-free zones, green areas, sports fields and bicycle racks. We can head towards a sustainable mobility plan through co-creation with locals and stakeholders

## ACTION POINTS

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<b>Developing a constructive cooperation for mobility plans</b>	Ongoing	City of Ghent and HEIs
• Representation from the City of Ghent in institute transport plan	September 2014	UGent
• Representation from the City of Ghent in advisory council sustainability UGent	February 2015	UGent
• Development of mobility plan	Approval 2015 - development for subsequent years	City of Ghent, UGent
• Increasing the number of bicycle racks on campuses and in public areas		All partners
<b>Working together to raise student awareness, increase student information and involvement</b>		
• Setting up of a joint 'mobility' information booth during the <b>Student Kick Off</b> , a welcoming event at the start of the academic year organised for and by students. All information regarding mobility will be consolidated and made available at this one location	Annually in September	City of Ghent, UGent
• Seek <b>more opportunities</b> to inform students about the coordinated mobility plan, such as registration days and student events as well as <b>via social media and apps</b> .	April - ...	All partners
• Launching of an <b>awareness campaign with short films regarding courtesy and traffic safety</b> , making students aware of rules in pedestrian areas.	Autumn 2014	City of Ghent
• Introduction of a <b>bicycle lights campaign 'Flikker op met je fiets'</b> , whereby extra checks are conducted around school and student areas.	Winter period	City of Ghent
• Development of action plan and 'bicycle theft' prevention campaign	2015	City of Ghent
• Pursue campaigns that focus on sustainable mobility: promotion of STOP principles with students.	2015	All partners
• The continued collaboration of StudentENmobilititeit and the cooperation with the transformation to 'Huis van de Fiets' (Home of the Bike).		City of Ghent
<b>Stimulating and developing co-creation projects</b>		
• Seek partnership with the <b>'Urban Development and Architecture department'</b> and the institute for sustainable mobility, ...		City of Ghent, UGent, ...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the concept of 'green office' as a hub for student jobs, thesis design and sustainable research projects proposals (spatial planning and mobility)</li> </ul>	2015	UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate options for a car free zone between Muinkschelde and Kortrijksepoorstraat-Nederkouter, develop a co-creation route.</li> </ul>		City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joker week, for students of Architecture and Spatial Planning, can be focused on designing and developing temporary installations that highlight sustainable mobility and efficient use of space in the area between Muinkschelde and Kortrijksepoorstraat-Nederkouter.</li> </ul>	March 2015	UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the options for creating a car free student square and an extended flexible parking zone on the K.L.Ledeganckstraat as a solution for the inconvenience caused by poorly parked bicycles.</li> </ul>	March 2015	City of Ghent



### FOR INSPIRATION FROM PARTNER CITIES

How do other cities manage the mobility pressure that goes hand in hand with the growing number HEI students and personnel?

- Too often, bicycle parking problems are forced onto the City. Shouldn't the HEIs play a bigger role? How does this work in other cities?
- Boarding regulations (kamerreglement), points system (puntenquotering) should carry more weight for bicycle racks. Do other cities have something similar?
- There is significant commuting due to the distances between various campuses throughout the city. What is the dispersal of campuses like in other cities? More centralised? Inside the city centre or directly outside of the city?

## 3.5. Student and image

### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Students live, study and relax amongst the inhabitants of Ghent. Neighbours often have little contact with students and vice versa. Students also spend less time in the neighbourhood, changing the way they engage compared to those who live there permanently. Due to the fact that students are in a different phase of their lives and generally enjoy a different daily rhythm than the other inhabitants of Ghent, some cohabitation issues can ensue.

The role and importance of the two universities, four colleges of higher education and their students should not be underestimated. They have enormous influence over the city as we know it. They also stimulate the economy and the creative energy of the city. That does not mean, however, that we should ignore the negative aspects of their presence. The drafting of a student policy must



necessarily balance the needs of the students against the needs of the city and its permanent inhabitants.

#### Observations:

- Stereotypes of students are often undeserved and are generally only true for a small minority of students. These lead to incorrect or negative depictions of students amongst the locals of Ghent and the media.
- The benefits of the students and the various initiatives they undertake in Ghent do not receive the attention they are due; a case of 'unknown is unloved'.
- Students are not always involved in a city which is only a temporary home. There is significant potential for them to be a positive force in Ghent (society) and they should get more involved in the operational side of Ghent. This is potentially not being addressed enough at present.
- The City of Ghent, the various HEIs and the students each have their separate channels of communication. At present, they decide independently when, how and what is communicated. They are asked to share specific messages through their networks on an ad hoc basis. There is no structured collaboration.
- Initiatives exist that attempt to improve the image of students. The 'Student of the year' elections and the Student Ghentrepreneur are used to raise role models from the student community, creating a positive and praiseworthy image of students.

#### VISION

A minority of students sometimes causing problems negatively influences the image of 'the student'. We are convinced that students have added value to the city and we would like to highlight this more than it has been done.

We want to improve the image of students in Ghent through unified communication and other initiatives, showing off their added value to the city and involving them to a greater degree.

#### FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES

- Bringing relevant parties together: City of Ghent, HEI representatives and students.
- Take on the challenge together by means of campaigns aimed at creating a positive image of students amongst the local and supra-local population.
- Campaigns will focus on student engagement and involvement in his/her neighbourhood.

The challenges and action items that ensue should lead to: better communication over current projects, start up of better projects in order to be able to communicate more positively. It is important to bring across our concept systematically, for all topics: to analyse which best practices are already in place, to find out where improvements can be made or where there are gaps, and use the existing expertise innovatively.

#### ACTION POINTS

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<b>Network start-up</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have put together a network of a range of parties who can assist in improving the image of students.</li> </ul>	2014 – realised	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing this network together and informing them as to what we would like to achieve with this work group: to support and help the network. We're searching for real interest.</li> </ul>	Started in 2014 - ongoing process	City of Ghent

<b>Improving the image of the student - sub work group organisation communication &amp; marketing</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the very beginning, we decided to focus on communication in order to improve the image of the student. HEIs and the City of Ghent decided to work together on a unified communication strategy. Those responsible for marketing and communication within the City of Ghent and the HEIs meet regularly. A basic network is being built up. In neighbourhoods with nuisance due to the nightlife of students, attention is paid to sensitizing and sanctioning actions, in cooperation with the neighbourhood and the HEI's.</li> </ul>	2014 - start. The work group can be expanded in the future. The work group wants to involve students in 2015. Other experts in other topics, such as social engagement, can also be included.	City of Ghent/HEIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each member of the sub work group communication and marketing updates the group as to what is happening (inventory of initiatives), what is missing, how we can strengthen each other (sharing best practices) and where opportunities for closer collaboration are. Create a guideline with tips and tricks in order to ensure the success of new initiatives.</li> </ul>	Started in 2014 - ongoing process	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of communication channels - city of Ghent and HEIs</li> </ul>	2014 – realised	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of student communication channels</li> </ul>	To be realised 2015	
<b>Improving the image of the student - substantive actions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining topics for joint communication at arranged times.</li> </ul>	First step realised, ongoing process	City of Ghent/HEIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unified communication regarding the 'doopdecreet' (initiation decree) as well as the signing of the decree by representatives of the various student associations.</li> </ul>	29/09/2014 – realised	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint communication regarding 'bloklocaties' (study halls)</li> </ul>	December 2014 – realised	City of Ghent/HEIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of thematic working group. Development of joint communication strategies and actions. Attention to joint (press) communication regarding topics that strengthen the positive image and to developing joint campaigns for students and getting them engaged.</li> </ul>	Ongoing. Development of campaigns planned for 2015-2016. Possible link to election of 'Strafste student' (best student).	City of Ghent/HEIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idea: Create a database as a tool to stimulate volunteer work</li> </ul>	TBC. The City Council is investigating the possibility of creating one volunteer contact point to be used by various target groups.	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain open to developing initiatives that stimulate the involvement of students with the city.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All partners
<b>Knowledge sharing and other projects regarding communication and profiling</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge exchange, best practices components, organisation of moments of intervision based on topics raised during meetings.</li> </ul>	Ongoing. In Nov 2014, intervision on crisis communication. In Jan 2015, on social media.	All partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate on the realisation of collaboration within the LSG and the actions of LAP.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article in the Ghent city magazine and the internal</li> </ul>	October 2015	

city magazine Gent & Co.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies and actions in terms of hospitality/welcoming of (international) students and to advertise Ghent overseas as the largest student city in Flanders.</li> </ul>	Ongoing. Start united operations in 2016	



### FOR INSPIRATION FROM PARTNER CITIES

- **Communication:** how can the HEIs and the city communicate the added value of students in the city? How do other cities - HEIs deal with negative coverage?

Delft (NL): Press: the local newspaper publishes a special edition focused on student work/projects.

- **Co-creation – neighbourhood involvement:** how do other cities try and involve students in their neighbourhoods, how do they stimulate a sense of belonging/involvement in the city's students? How do they access student potential in order to actively engage them in the city? Do they even attempt this?

Aalborg (DK): The rector and the mayor speak to all students on the first day of the academic year.

Tampere (FI), Delft (NL): events for students and locals: carnival, festivals.

Delft (NL): students are involved in projects that benefit the community such as technological improvements in the city.

- **Participation – voice:** how do other cities enable students to have a say in policy making?

Lausanne (CH): student representatives get to sit around a table with the city council once a year and debate important topics with them. This ensures that student participation and interests are known by the city council.

## 3.6. Tourism and culture

### CONTEXT AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

#### SWOT analysis

##### Strengths:

- Ghent is diverse: not merely a student or tourist city.
- The development of pleasant accommodation: Vooruit Terrace, opening of the Sint Pieter's Abbey gardens, reconstruction of Kramersplein

- Collaboration between the City of Ghent and the University + between UGent and culture: student target group in Vooruit, in the Sint Pieter's Abbey (study halls, garden, student four-hour slots), number of students at public museum night, student rates at museums
- Sunday discounts and special events ensure that neighbourhoods are not desolate on the weekends

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Unattractive links between Arts District and the historical city centre: bleak and busy (Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat: buses, fast moving traffic, architecture)
- 'Islands' within the Arts district: the challenge is doubled: 1. create a link between the various 'islands' 2. create a link between the Arts District and the historical town centre
- Lack of decent accommodation in Arts District
- Sint Pieter's square is not designed for relaxation
- Parking is limited
- Due to facilities being used for only one purpose, there is little to do on weekends (Restaurants/pubs are predominantly open on weekdays, almost no activity in the weekend)
- The perception that the 'distance to the city centre' is too far
- Ongoing problems with litter

#### **Opportunities:**

- Keep increasing the number of students and cultural offer in the city centre.
- The Krook as connection/meeting point
- Cycle and/or pedestrian route along the water between Vooruit and Kantienberg
- 2017-2018: opening of new science museum UGent: bringing together 7 collections with greater accessibility than previously possible: Ledeganck complex (3 levels: temporary and permanent collections)
- Book Tower: will be difficult to access from 2014-2018, but Belvedere access will improve afterwards (action item linking city centre and Arts District)
- The Charles Vandenhove building on the corner of Rozier: exhibitions, art & architecture (action item linking city centre and Arts District)
- Cycle route along water's edge
- Make Sint Pieter's square livelier and more attractive: terrace? greenery?
- Create an entrance in the long-since closed façade of Sint Pieter's Abbey (disabled access)
- Leopold Barracks Second largest square in Ghent: literally open the square up, make it accessible + add extra possibilities aside from the Provincial House (exhibitions, conference facilities, restaurants/bars?)
- Blandijnberg: reconstruction as a square with restaurants and bars?
- Reintroduce tram line 7 Dampoort-Zuid-Sint-Pietersstation: via Museum square and past Citadelpark
- Complete reconstruction of Citadelpark
- Waterways: make the Arts District accessible by boat (opinion is that it is too slow)
- Hostel Backstay and Sint Anna (action item linking city centre and Arts District)
- Kramer's square has been reconstructed: has become a rest point, there is still space for further development (attract other target groups aside from students)
- Locals are interested in city development: amazement and enthusiasm
- More and/or better communication with students
- Expand Sint Pieter's square parking, facilities for this are available
- Young families living in the city are an interesting target group for the Arts District
- New information points at Sint-Pieters railway station: growth possibility for communication with tourists. Guidance to the Arts District

### Threats:

- Departure of young families from the city: housing prices too high. Due in part to students renting family homes
- The use of facilities for only one purpose in the Arts District: little to no activity during the weekend and during holidays
- Overpoortstraat is in the centre of the Arts District and that will not change. Students are its major target group. General disturbances due to the nature of the businesses.

### VISION

#### Upgrading the Arts District

The city of Ghent already has a large and varied offer in terms of culture. The museums around Citadelpark, and the houses of culture near Sint Pieter's square and the Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat are well known. Amongst others, the Sint Pieter's Abbey is actively busy broadening its public to include students, opening up its house, restaurant and garden to countless students in the area, but while maintaining a good mix and allowing for exchanges between cultural visitors, tourists, families and the youth. Other cultural events happening at different locations throughout the city, such as the light festival and the new photo festival can focus on the link between the Arts District and the city centre as well as help redefine the public image of the distance in between.

UGent would like to further contribute to the university museum project in the Ledeganck, amongst others. This museum links through to the botanical gardens. This can certainly enhance the area for tourists visiting the museum square area. The infrastructure of the Book Tower will also be adjusted, making it more appealing to tourists. The Book Tower and the Vanden Hove Foundation fill the gap culturally between the Sint Pieter site and Voortuit/Krook.

### FOCUS AND KEY CHALLENGES

- Upgrading the Arts District: attract other target groups + bars & restaurants that can survive without student business as well as on weekends/holidays (problematic for tourists)
- Krook, Winter Circus, Vooruit terrace: Interesting, but how to extend their appeal to the rest of the Arts District?
- Realise links or create more appealing links between the historical city centre and the Arts District + between the various 'islands' within the Arts District
- Performance/topic-based presentation/meeting day regarding current work and future plans in the Arts District. Ideas for the future: create awareness, provoke interest in different target groups (sector, locals, students): propose options: invest energy in progress
- Change the feeling/perception with tourists and locals: approaching the Sint Pieter's square area should create the feeling that this is the beginning of the city centre
- Focus weekend activities on families
- Create appealing walking routes + combined with a boat crossing to Bijlokesite, for example
- Rubbish is an eyesore, problematic on the route city centre from Arts District
- Inform students regarding rubbish, cultural activities through UGent: how can we communicate with them, develop an app
- Link different cultural institutes, e.g. culture market, events in the Leopold Barracks: broader public, event-oriented and/or informative activities
- Is there data about the different types of students? Who lives in the vicinity of Overpoort? What is the percentage of students enrolled at University Hospital/Sterre, but who actually boards in the centre and commutes?

## ACTION POINTS

Action points (priority/short-term/long-term)	Timing/state of affairs	Initiator/Owner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ghent University Museum – Ledeganck: bringing collections from universities together in a new museum in the Arts District</li> </ul>	Work on architecture plans ~9/2015 Start of construction ~9/2017 Handover of building ~9/2018 Furnish deadline ~3/2019 Open museum ~3/2019	UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book Tower Ghent: central landmark in Arts District</li> </ul>	Opening of the Book Tower: The architects foresee two public spaces in the Book Tower complex. One the one hand the Belvedere, with a separate entrance and presumably operated independently. Target date in 2017-2018. On the other hand the reading café (the former art history library) with an entrance on the Sint Hubertusstraat and a canopy on the roof. target date - same year	UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Charles Vandenhoeve Foundation building corner of Rozier: new house of culture</li> </ul>	Project planning: currently in the building approval application phase. Financing can be considered complete.	UGent and Van denhoeve Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Krook, Winter Circus, Vooruit terrace: Interesting, but how to extend their appeal to the rest of the Arts District?</li> </ul>	Opening of the Krook anticipated for 2016	City + UGent participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sint Pieter's Abbey</li> </ul>	Accessible in the middle of the long façade of Sint Pieter's Abbey, with a link to the reading corridor and terrace in the quadrangle (linked to the Sint Pieter's Abbey café). Dossier is launched (expected realisation in May 2016).	City of Ghent (IVA Historische Huizen and FM construction projects)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sint Pieter's Abbey</li> </ul>	Refocusing the café for students (along with visitors and families, especially on weekends): mixed meeting point September 2015	City of Ghent (IVA Historische Huizen and catering coach) and private partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use events like the Light Festival to focus on the link between the Arts District and the city centre</li> </ul>	January 2015	City of Ghent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sint Pieter's Abbey Photography festival '80 Days of Summer' also working as a bridge between the Arts District and the city centre</li> </ul>	12/06 – 30/08/2015: first edition Locations: Sint Pieter's Abbey and casemate, AMSAB, Library Zuid, Lakenhal, Sint Baaf's Monastery, City Palaces Veldstraat, STAM	City of Ghent (IVA Historische Huizen)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint promotion of cultural institutions like museums</li> </ul>	In preparation	City + UGent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education collaboration between UGent and city museums (amongst others, World of Kina and Ghent University Museum)</li> </ul>	In preparation	City + UGent

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade the art platform for interactive art - scientific collections</li> </ul>	In preparation	UGent - Ghent art museums
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition 200 years of collaboration between city and university</li> </ul>	Autumn 2017, in preparation	UGent (department of History and department of Architecture and Urban development) STAM

## 4. Appendices

### 4.1. Facts & figures, useful links



#### **CITY of GHENT**

Number of inhabitants: 250,151 (January 2014)

Surface Area: 156.2 km<sup>2</sup>

Number of students: about 72,500 in total  
(+ 10,000 students in 4 years)

11% of the students are domiciled in Ghent

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

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

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



#### **GHENT UNIVERSITY**

Number of students: 41,000

11 faculties, 117 departments, 225 programmes

Staff: 9,000

<http://www.ugent.be/en>



#### **ARTEVELDE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHENT**

Number of students: 13,000

33 programmes

Staff: 1,200

<http://www.arteveldehogeschool.be/en>

# HoGent

#### **UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHENT**

Number of students: 15,500

3 faculties, 1 school of arts, 67 programmes

Staff: 1,800

<http://english.hogent.be/>



#### **UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LUCA SCHOOL OF ARTS**

Number of students: 1,000

<http://www.luca-arts.be/international/about-luca>



#### **UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ODISEE**

##### **TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS GHENT**

Number of students: 2,000

[http://www.odisee.be/Odisee/Technologiecampus  
---Ghent](http://www.odisee.be/Odisee/Technologiecampus---Ghent)



The evolution of the number of unique students in Ghent (source Databank Hoger Onderwijs):

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Number of unique students in Ghent</b>
2008-2009	<b>60,127</b>
2009-2010	<b>63,714</b>
2010-2011	<b>66,714</b>
2011-2012	<b>68,671</b>
2012-2013	<b>70,262</b>
2013-2014	<b>71,485</b>

Indication of the evolution of international students in Ghent (2010-2011 till 2013-2014) source HEI:

<b>Exchange students higher education Ghent</b>					
	<b>EU Ndl</b>	<b>EU - niet Ndl</b>	<b>TOT. EU</b>	<b>buiten EU</b>	<b>Totaal</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>1.224</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1.004</b>	<b>1.059</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>1.331</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1.057</b>	<b>1.118</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>1.404</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>1.411</b>

<b>Regular students higher education Ghent</b>					
	<b>EU Ndl</b>	<b>EU - niet Ndl</b>	<b>TOT. EU</b>	<b>buiten EU</b>	<b>Totaal</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>1.140</b>	<b>1.333</b>	<b>2.473</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>1.179</b>	<b>1.535</b>	<b>2.714</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>1.356</b>	<b>1.657</b>	<b>3.013</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>1.585</b>	<b>1.762</b>	<b>3.347</b>

## Useful links

- **Presentations, pictures and film: URBACT peer review meeting, network meeting and politicians meeting in Ghent, December 2014:**  
<http://eunivercitiesnetwork.com/presentations-ghent-eunivercities-network-urbact-politicians-decision-makers-meeting-december-2014/>
- **Mobility Plan City of Ghent:**  
[http://www.mobiliteitgent.be/sites/default/files/media/20150223\\_Ontwerp%20Mobiliteitsplan%20Gent.pdf](http://www.mobiliteitgent.be/sites/default/files/media/20150223_Ontwerp%20Mobiliteitsplan%20Gent.pdf)
- **Parking Plan City of Ghent:**  
[http://www.mobiliteitgent.be/sites/default/files/media/20141022\\_Parkeerplan\\_Strategische%20nota.pdf](http://www.mobiliteitgent.be/sites/default/files/media/20141022_Parkeerplan_Strategische%20nota.pdf)
- **Student Housing Plan:**  
<https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/page/documents/Studentenhuisvestingplan2015.pdf>

## 4.2. Composition and data meetings LSG

### Composition extended LSG

#### City of Ghent:

- **Elke Decruynaere, Alderman of Education, Training and Youth** - (2014) 09/266.50.78, [Elke.Decruynaere@gent.be](mailto:Elke.Decruynaere@gent.be)
- **Daniël Termont**, mayor, tel. 09/266.50.00 (present at first LSG), [Daniel.Termont@Gent.be](mailto:Daniel.Termont@Gent.be)
- **Pieter De Wilde**, cabinet attaché alderman Elke Decruynaere, tel. 09/266.50.80, [Pieter.DEWILDE@gent.be](mailto:Pieter.DEWILDE@gent.be)
- **Liselotte Mortier**, cabinet attaché alderman Tom Balthazar, tel. 09/266.50.40, [liselotte.mortier@gent.be](mailto:liselotte.mortier@gent.be)
- **Philippe Van Wesenbeeck**, director of City Development and Spatial Planning Service tel. 09/266.78.89, [Philippe.VanWesenbeeck@gent.be](mailto:Philippe.VanWesenbeeck@gent.be)
- **Johan Van de Wiele**, Head of department Culture, Sport and Leisure, tel. 09/269.84.60, [Johan.Vandewiele@gent.be](mailto:Johan.Vandewiele@gent.be)
- **Kurt Van Belle**, coordinator-expert Tourist Service, tel. 09/266.56.84, [Kurt.Vanbelle@gent.be](mailto:Kurt.Vanbelle@gent.be)
- **Doreen Gaublonne**, director and head of IVA Historische Huizen Gent, tel. 09/243.97.40, [Doreen.Gaublonne@Gent.be](mailto:Doreen.Gaublonne@Gent.be)
- **Filip Van de Velde**, coordinator-expert Coordination Service, tel. 09/266.84.42, [Filip.VanDeVelde1@gent.be](mailto:Filip.VanDeVelde1@gent.be)
- **Jan Gheldof**, coordinator-expert Mobility Company, tel. 09/266.29.94, [Jan.Gheldof@gent.be](mailto:Jan.Gheldof@gent.be)
- **Loesje Van Damme**, co-creation consultant traffic, Mobility Company, tel. 09 266 29 89, [Loesje.VanDamme@gent.be](mailto:Loesje.VanDamme@gent.be)
- **Annemie De Tremerie**, deputy director Economy Service, tel. 09/266.84.14, [Annemie.DeTremerie@gent.be](mailto:Annemie.DeTremerie@gent.be)
- **Daan Vander Steene**, interim Managing Director Economy Service, tel. 09/266.84.01, [Daan.vandersteene@gent.be](mailto:Daan.vandersteene@gent.be)
- **Kris Van der Haegen**, deputy director Housing Service, tel. 09/266.76.81, [kris.vanderhaegen@gent.be](mailto:kris.vanderhaegen@gent.be)
- **Hilde Reynvoet**, Director Housing Service, replaced by **Vanderbauwhede Patricia**, deputy director Housing Service, [patricia.vanderbauwhede@Gent.be](mailto:patricia.vanderbauwhede@Gent.be)
- **Anneke Vanden Bulcke**, student officer, Youth Service, tel. 09/268.21.16, [Anneke.Vandenbulcke@gent.be](mailto:Anneke.Vandenbulcke@gent.be)
- **Els Uytterhoeven**, deputy director Service Ghent International and Citymarketing, , tel. 0476/465.280, [Els.Uytterhoeven@gent.be](mailto:Els.Uytterhoeven@gent.be)
- **Inge Willemsen**, coordinator-expert international cooperation, Service Ghent International and Citymarketing, tel. 09/266.56.26, [Inge.Willemsen@gent.be](mailto:Inge.Willemsen@gent.be) (coordinator URBACT-project EUniverCities)
- **Luc Rogiest**, coordinator-expert Policy Participation Service, tel. 09/266.82.58, [luc.rogiest@gent.be](mailto:luc.rogiest@gent.be) (LSG URBACT project coordinator EUniverCities)

#### Ghent University:

- **Jeroen Vanden Berghe**, Chief Logistics Administrator, tel. 09/264.31.07, [jeroen.vandenbergh@ugent.be](mailto:jeroen.vandenbergh@ugent.be)
- **Gijs Coucke**, International Relations Office, tel. 09/264.70.19, [Gijs.coucke@Ugent.be](mailto:Gijs.coucke@Ugent.be)
- **Els Van Damme**, Director Department of Infrastructure and Facility Management, tel. 09/264.31.82, [els.vandamme@ugent.be](mailto:els.vandamme@ugent.be)
- **Marc Bracke**, Director Department of Student Facilities, tel. 09/264.70.77, [Marc.bracke@ugent.be](mailto:Marc.bracke@ugent.be)
- **Kristof De Moor**, Director Department of Administrative Affairs, tel. 09/264.89.38,

[Kristof.DeMoor@UGent.be](mailto:Kristof.DeMoor@UGent.be)

- **Danny Segers**, Director Museum of the History of Science, tel. 09/264.49.30, [Danny.Segers@UGent.be](mailto:Danny.Segers@UGent.be)
- **Sylvia Van Peteghem**, University Library, Chief Librarian, tel. 09/264.38.50, [Sylvia.VanPeteghem@UGent.be](mailto:Sylvia.VanPeteghem@UGent.be)
- **Riet Van de Velde**, Office of Environment, Head of Office, tel. 09/264.79.24, [riet.vandevelde@ugent.be](mailto:riet.vandevelde@ugent.be)
- **Michiel Dehaene**, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, tel. 09/264.41.85, [Michiel.Dehaene@UGent.be](mailto:Michiel.Dehaene@UGent.be)
- **Johan Bil**, Office for Technology Transfer, tel. 09/264.30.40, [Johan.Bil@UGent.be](mailto:Johan.Bil@UGent.be)
- **Pieter Uyttenhove**, Head of Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, tel. 09/264.37.42, [Pieter.Uyttenhove@UGent.be](mailto:Pieter.Uyttenhove@UGent.be) (involved with LSG-operations)

#### **Hogeschool Gent:**

- **Rita Van Snick**, Head of Housing Department, tel. 09/243.37.10, [Rita.Vansnick@hogent.be](mailto:Rita.Vansnick@hogent.be)
- **Kathleen Van Heule**, Head of Internationalisation, tel. 0486/63.79.35, [Kathleen.Vanheule@hogent.be](mailto:Kathleen.Vanheule@hogent.be)
- Replacement: [Jeanmarie.werrebrouck@hogent.be](mailto:Jeanmarie.werrebrouck@hogent.be)

#### **Artevelde Hogeschool:**

- **Ruben Dobbelaere**, head of student facilities, tel. 09/269.60.65, [ruben.dobbelaere@arteveldehs.be](mailto:ruben.dobbelaere@arteveldehs.be)
- **Guido Galle**, director of education and student policies, [guido.galle@arteveldehs.be](mailto:guido.galle@arteveldehs.be)

#### **Students (Ghent University)** (change every academic year)

- **Betty Borgers**, Chairperson of Ghent student council 2013-2014, [voorzitter@gsr.ugent.be](mailto:voorzitter@gsr.ugent.be)
- **Jelle Heyvaert**, Chairperson of Ghent student council 2014-2015, [Jelle.Heyvaert@UGent.be](mailto:Jelle.Heyvaert@UGent.be) or [voorzitter@gsr.ugent.be](mailto:voorzitter@gsr.ugent.be)
- **Joachim Lommelen**, student moderator 2013-2014, [Joachimlommelen@gmail.com](mailto:Joachimlommelen@gmail.com)
- **Joyce Albrecht**, student moderator 2014-2015, [joyce.albrecht@ugent.be](mailto:joyce.albrecht@ugent.be)

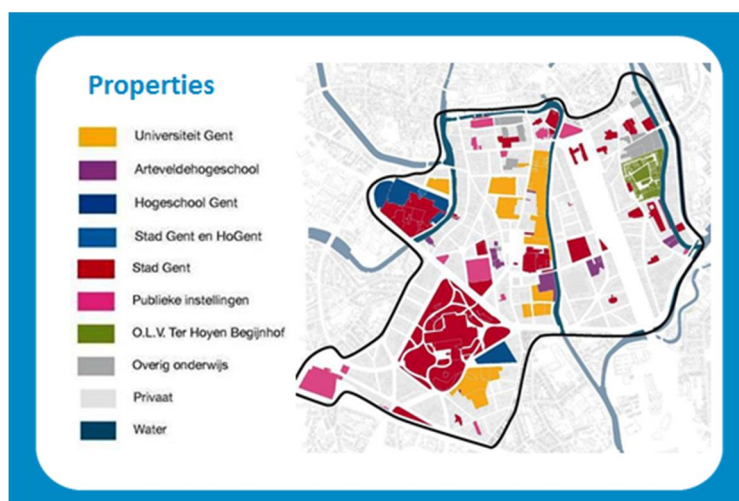
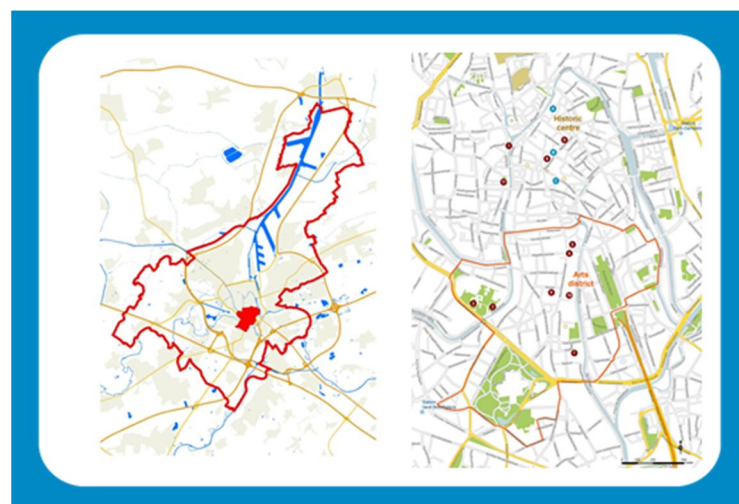
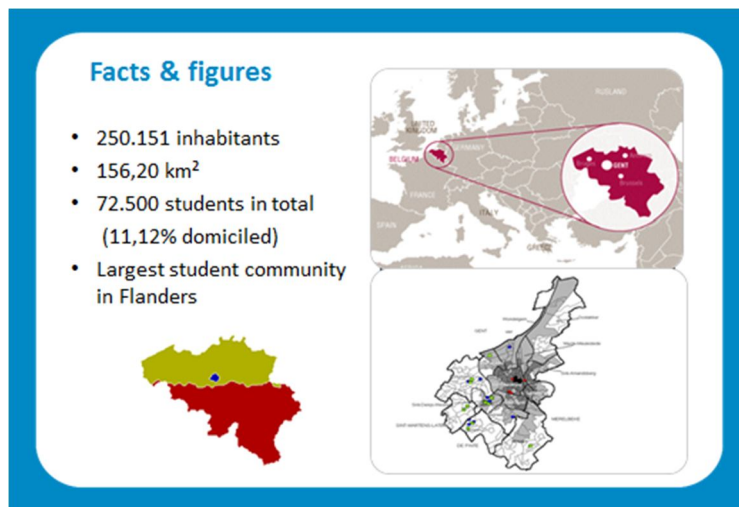
#### **Involved 'External Parties' in LSG**

- **Stefaan De Ruyc**, General Manager Arts Centre Vooruit, tel. 09/267.28.24 [Stefaan@vooruit.be](mailto:Stefaan@vooruit.be) (included in LSG since February 2014).

#### **Data meetings extended LSG and core group:**

- First preliminary discussions with UGent with policy (meetings before starting LSG: 23 Oct 2012, 18 Feb 2013, 28 Feb 2013, 6 May 2013)
- LSG core group: 2 Sept 2013, 23 Jan 2014, 20 March 2014, 24 and 29 April 2014, 7 and 28 May 2014, 9 Sept. 2014 (with alderman), 23 Oct. 2014, 21 Nov. 2014, 16 April 2015, various meetings in preparation of peer review meeting in Dec. 2014
- LSG extended group 7 June 2013
- LSG extended group 27 September 2013
- LSG extended group 06 December 2013
- LSG extended group 28 May 2014
- LSG extended group 17 September 2014
- LSG extended group 12 November 2014
- LSG extended group 04 February 2015
- LSG extended group 30 April 2015

### 4.3. Geographical demarcation: maps<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Source first 2 maps: City of Ghent  
Source last 4 maps: Research into use of public space in the Ghent Art Quarter, April 2014.  
Stage assignment commissioned by City of Ghent, City and Urban Planning Department  
Interns Timon Bulten and Lennaert Laning, students of Urban Planning from  
Saxion Hogescholen in Deventer

## Shared use of space

- Gezamenlijk ruimtegebruik
- Wegen
- Water



## Public, semi-public, private

- Openbaar
- Semi-openbaar
- Privé



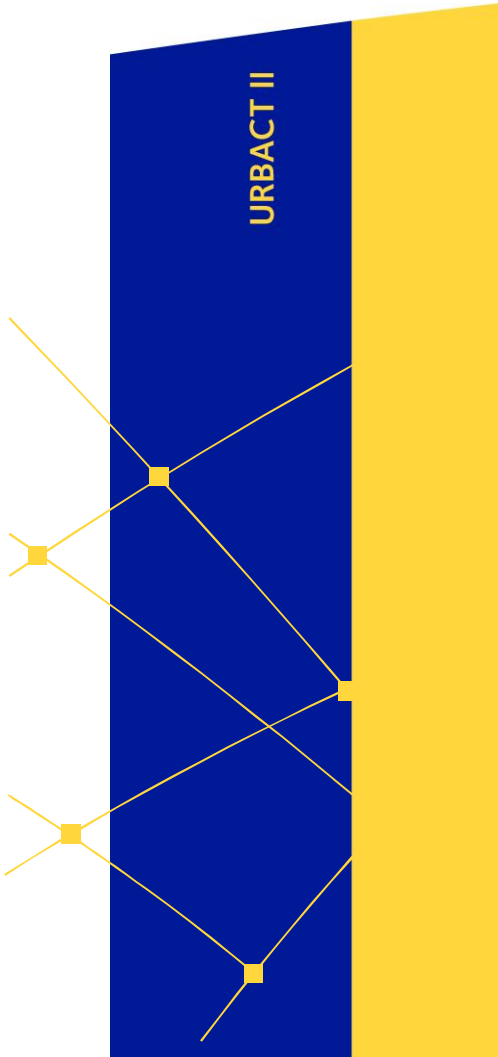
## Functions

- Onderwijs
- Studentenhomes
- Administratief
- Handel en horeca
- Kunst en cultuur
- Sport
- Religie
- Leisure
- Overige
- Wegen
- Water



# EUniverCities

## City & university in Ghent: students and public spaces



Results Peer Review Meeting Ghent (2-5 December 2014)

By Dr. Willem van Winden, Lead Expert EUniverCities

[w.van.winden@urbaniq.nl](mailto:w.van.winden@urbaniq.nl)

Connecting cities  
Building successes



urbaniq



EUniverCities



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2. Context: City &amp; University .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3. City-university co-operation: an overview.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4. Results of the peer review .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Annex 1 Programme of the meeting.....</b>	<b>48</b>

## 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>7</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>8</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.

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.

---

<sup>7</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>8</sup> This part is partly derived from the “Baseline Study” made for EUniverCities, for which the author interviewed a number of stakeholders in Ghent.



## 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.

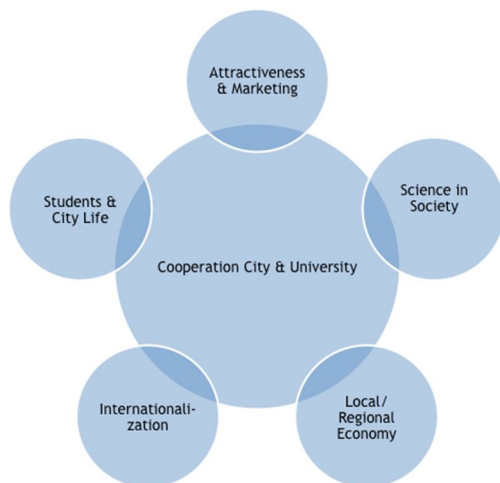
With 41,000 students (2014), Ghent University (UGent) is the largest HEI within the city of Ghent. Located in a historic, student-friendly city in the cultural and economic hub of Europe, Ghent University is an active partner in a wide variety of national and international educational, scientific and 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 Harbor.
- 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>9</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 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.

---

<sup>9</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)

- 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 of 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 and 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.



## 5. 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, <i>Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23</i>
---------------------	---

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 Oerimi</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 between different levels of government</b>	<b>Mr Stefaan De Ruyck</b> , General Manager Vooruit Arts Centre, Secretary of the SCRL 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, <i>Botermarkt 1</i> 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, <i>Kammerstraat 20</i> 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', <i>Hoveniersberg 24</i>
---------------------	--

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 Evelyne 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 <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	

Coordinators EUniverCities network		
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.

TIME	ACTIVITY	SPEAKER / LOCATION
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





