

Report Activities Etiopia Witten e.V.

Deacon Jürgen Jeremia Lechelt (EFT/OFS) - Member of the Board -

Dear friends in Mekelle!

In September, together with the Witten City Society, we thought of you in a special way.

1. September Anti-War Day 2022

Together with the partnership association and the other town twinning associations, we have written a joint declaration and read it out on Anti-War Day 2022 at the rally on Witten's Rathausplatz.



“Joint speech of the town twinning associations for the Anti-War Day
2022 in Witten on 1st September 2022

With this joint statement to the Anti-War-Day the associations in Witten, which are committed to the town twinning of the city of Witten, would like to emphasize the importance of the town twinning in the international relations of the cities.

The associations are committed to twinning with the cities:

- Mekelle in Ethiopia
- Bitterfeld-Wolfen in Saxony-Anhalt in Germany
- Barking and Dagenham in England
- Beauvais in France
- Lev Hasharon in Israel
- San Carlos in Nicaragua [has been wound up / disbanded]
- Mallnitz in Austria
- Tczew in Poland
- Kursk in Russia

Despite all the differences between our twin cities and countries, we are united by the idea of international understanding and peace. The importance of this also gets clear with a look at individual cities.

With great concern we have to perceive that the contacts to our twin town San Carlos in Nicaragua have become practically impossible today, because the government of Nicaragua hinders the international contacts and the non-governmental organizations in the country. Also supports of projects in the twin town by money transfers have become impossible.

Our twin city Mekelle is confronted with the civil war in Ethiopia. We have not been able to continue our work there for more than two years and have great difficulties in providing humanitarian aid to our friends there.

Our Russian twin town Kursk is a historical garrison town with the facilities of the military and thus since 24.02.2022 also directly affected by the Russian attack on Ukraine. This war, which is against international law, has made some people doubt the sense of town twinning. Despite this, contacts with the circle of friends and citizens there are maintained. Above all, the exchange of perspectives is essential here.

We are convinced that peace is far more than just the absence of war. Wars can neither be prevented nor ended with armaments and weapons alone. Peace can only be achieved through talks and diplomatic exchange. This is where town twinning plays its role for civil societies, a role that should not be underestimated.

Town twinning, as "diplomacy from below," arisen especially after World War II to heal the wounds of two global wars and reconcile people. They have also been called the largest peace movement in the world. Germany alone, for example, has more than 5,000 international city partnerships. But even they could not prevent further acts of violence between peoples, as history shows in Europe and also globally. Nevertheless, the statement that "there is no alternative to peace" is still correct and important. Where would we be if these kinds of national and international friendships did not exist?

Peace is a state achieved through the just reconciliation of interests, which is only possible on the basis of mutual trust. Town twinning aims to help make this trust possible. How long ago was it that hostility to France, England and Russia was a broad consensus in Germany's political culture? Town twinning can build new bridges and bring people closer together again.

Town twinning does not have the power to prevent or end a war. However, they bring the citizens of the cities into direct personal contact and can counteract enemy images and propaganda in direct dialogue.

In the twinning contacts, people meet as citizens of their cities, where they are busy with the concrete shaping of living conditions. Here, homes must be built, kindergartens, schools and universities must exist and function. Questions of education, health care and culture are questions must be answered in all cities in all countries.

The humanity issues of war and peace and dealing with human-made climate change, as well as global issues such as migration and preserving our natural livelihoods, preoccupy people in all cities. Here there are points of connection and linkage to come to an exchange of opinions and cooperation despite different views, opinions and visions for a good living together.

Here, at the level of the citizens of the cities, we can meet in solidarity and provide mutual assistance, like we have been doing for years with the Ethiopian twin city of

Mekelle and, since this year, in cooperation with the people of Tczew, also to support refugees in and from Ukraine.

Through practical work, town twinning contributes to the realization of a world in which war is outlawed and the focus is on solving urgent tasks and respectful exchange between cultures.”

The district administrator (Ennepe Ruhr Kreis), Olaf Schade, also explicitly referred in his welcoming address to the still current war situation in Tigray, Mekelle and promised us his further support and that of the district of Ennepe Ruhr.

Antikriegstag 2022



Viele Teilnehmer bei Antikriegstag

Den Antikriegstag haben mehrere Vereine und Verbände zum Anlass für eine Kundgebung auf dem Rathausplatz genommen. IG Metall, DGB, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Arbeitskreis christlicher Kirchen oder „attac“ warnen vor einer „Militarisierung der Debatte“. Zudem sorgen sich Verbände wie die Awo um den Sozialstaat. Sie bemängeln, dass pro Jahr rund 20 Milliarden Euro mehr für Rüstung ausgegeben werden soll.

Witten

Donnerstag, den 1. September – 17:00 Uhr
Rathausplatz

- Begrüßung durch Mathias Hillbrandt, DGB Kreis Ennepe-Ruhr, IG Metall Ennepe-Ruhr-Wupper
- Grußwort: Olaf Schade, Landrat
- Wortbeiträge der Wittener Zivilgesellschaft
- Nadine Schröer-Krug, Jugendsekretärin der IG Metall Ennepe-Ruhr-Wupper
- Musikalische Begleitung mit Simon Sandmann

17:45 Uhr Gemeinsamer Gang zum Mahnmal im Lutherpark

- Mahn- und Gedenkveranstaltung
 - Kranzniederlegung und Gedenken
 - Begrüßung durch Mathias Hillbrandt
 - Rede von Rene Röspel, AWO Ennepe-Ruhr

Musikatischer Ausklang mit Simon Sandmann

WAZ 3.9.2022

Proteste gegen Ukraine-Krieg

Bürgerinnen und Bürger hatten sich auf dem Rathausplatz versammelt, um gegen Putins Angriffskrieg auf die Ukraine zu protestieren. Bei der Veranstaltung von DGB, Wittener Friedensforum, den Partnerschaftsvereinen und anderen Organisationen und Verbänden wurden Verhandlungen zur Beendigung des Krieges gefordert. Außerdem wurde an die Bedeutung von Städtepartnerschaften erinnert.



WAZ 7.9.2022

2 to 4 September Partnership Meeting 2022

The representatives of the town twinning company (Bitterfeld-Wolfen in Saxony-Anhalt in Germany, Barking and Dagenham in England, Beauvais in France, Lev Hasharon in Israel, Mallnitz in Austria, Tczew in Poland) have arrived.



Together with the partnership association and the Witten town twinning associations, a lively exchange was held on the town twinning relations and their importance for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.

On September 2, the official reception by the city of Witten took place with the presentation of the partnership prize.



On September 3, the festive partnership evening with representatives of the city society and the political parties took place.

At the reception and at the partnership evening, Mrs. Sonja Leidemann (former mayor, chairwoman of the partnership association) and Mr. Lars König (mayor) referred to the current war situation in Tigray, Mekelle. They praised the commitment of Etiopia Witten, the organization of donations for humanitarian aid and the public relations work in the city society.



Lars König (Mayor)

At the partnership evening on 3 September, I was allowed to address the city society on behalf of Etiopia Witten:

(The spoken word applies)

"I, Jürgen Jeremia Lechelt, stand here with Theo Püplichhuisen on behalf of Ahmedin Idris, Etiopia Witten and (all) people in Ethiopia, especially for the people in Tigray, Mekelle.

Ahmedin Idris wrote in his last email: "I am very desperate. For two weeks there have been acts of war again."

My thanks go to Lars König (Mayor), Olaf Schade (District Administrator), Axel Echeverria (Member of the Bundestag), the political parties, civil society, Sonja Leidemann (former Mayor), the Partnership Association, the Town Partnerships, and the Staff Unit (Integration, International Relations and Town Twinning) for the cohesion even in difficult situations and the solidarity of the people in Tigray, Mekelle.

At the partnership meeting in 2018, Daniel Asefa (Mayor Mekelle) was still in our midst. In the spring of 2021, he was shot during the war. The war in Tigray, Mekelle has a face for Witten.

Lars König said that he was born in 1971 and has followed and accompanied the development of town twinning for a long time.

I was born in 1959 and I (we) took to the streets in the 70s and 80s, for

1. Peace, justice, and integrity of creation
2. Never again war
3. Building peace without weapons
4. Nuclear power No thanks
- 5.

And today, where do we stand?

In the Middle Ages, people spoke of the Apocalyptic Horsemen:
Epidemics, War, Inflation, Hunger

They are back (were never gone) and the climate has been added.

Today we have war zones in 35 countries of the world; most of them are not perceived by the world public.

May we resist the apocalyptic horsemen and may the announced turning point begin and become reality.

We feel that we are in good hands as Ethiopia Witten here in Witten and that includes the people in Tigray, Mekelle. As an association, we were able to acquire €240,000 in donations and transfer them to Mekelle to the Ayder Hospital for food, for the survival of employees and patients. Further donations are to follow.

We remain active and when peace comes, we will be back on the ground, in Tigray, in Mekelle and start all over again.

Thank you for everything and we will tell the people of Mekelle about this weekend!

"They are not forgotten! You are not forgotten!"

Let me, as a Franciscan, end with a Franciscan greeting.

Pax et bonum - Peace and all the best!"

4. September "Tree planting campaign" - Tree of town twinning



Lars König (Mayor), Sonja Leidemann (Chairwoman of the Partnership Association)

24. September Festival "Colorful diversity in Witten"

Namen & Nachrichten



Ein Zeichen für „Bunte Vielfalt“

Der Partnerschaftsverein Witten setzt am 24. September ab elf Uhr auf dem Rathausplatz ein Zeichen für „Bunte Vielfalt“. Dann soll gezeigt werden, wie friedlich Menschen unterschiedlicher Gruppen, ob mit oder ohne Migrationshintergrund, miteinander leben können. Auf dem Bild (v.l.): Kirsten Schäfer, Nina Leuschner, Lilly Lennardt, Jürgen Jeremia Lechelt, Lilo Dannert, Detlef Steinert und Lale Arslanbenzer.

NAZ 7.9.2022







MdB Axel Echeverria Visited stand of Etiopia Witten e.V.

At the festival Colorful in Witten on Saturday, MdB Axel Echeverria visited the stand of Etiopia Witten e.V. and informed himself about the still current war situation Ethiopia, in the region of Tigray and Mekelle, in which Etiopia Witten has been active since 2009. He assured the association that he wanted to enable members of the association to visit Berlin to hand over the signatures collected in the meantime in 1192 against the war in Tigray.

29. September Meeting of the Witten International Network
50 associations, initiatives and organizations of the Witten city society are represented in the network. At the meeting, on behalf of Etiopia Witten, I will give an up-to-date report on the war in Tigray, Mekelle and our humanitarian aid.

Dear friends in Mekelle!

This concludes my report.

And in the end, there remains the wish that there will be peace in Ethiopia, Tigray, Mekelle and that we will soon be able to see each other again in order to be able to resume our joint work for the people.

May there be peace in this world, our earth, for the benefit of all people.

Mine, our thoughts accompany you every day and we pray to God, to Allah, to the Eternal, that he does not stand idly by as we humans destroy ourselves.

Peace Justice and Integrity of Creation
Pax et bonum - Peace and all the best!

Witten, 25 September 2022
for Etiopia Witten

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jürgen Jeremia Lechelt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Deacon Jürgen Jeremia Lechelt (EFT/OFS)