

# Twinning for tomorrow's world

Though bilateral relations between European towns date back to Ancient Greece, the concept of town twinning arises mainly from the experience of the two 20th century World Wars, when hundreds of European towns decided that developing grassroots, people to people, relations, across old national frontiers, was an essential way of building a peaceful Europe. And when the Council of European Municipalities and Regions was created in 1951, its members ensured that town twinning became a permanent, structured pan European movement. Later, in 1988, following CEMR's action, the European Union created the community programme for town twinning, thus providing financial support to twinning.

Today, some 30,000 twinings bring together towns from over 30 European countries, helping to create a Europe of citizens. Twinning gets citizens involved in concrete actions, and promotes the coming together of, and mutual respect between, the peoples of Europe.

In today's fast-changing world, much twinning action is based on exploring and exchanging ideas on specific themes and issues. Social inclusion, economic development, and the protection of our environment and cultural heritage are just a few of the areas in which twinning can play an important role. By establishing solid relationships of trust between towns and cities with diverse cultures and backgrounds, twinning provides an ideal framework for the exchange of experiences. These ties can thus make up a basis for the development of technical cooperation which allows for efficient responses to the problems faced by every European local government.

Twinning in the 21st century allows, thanks to new technologies, for networking and greater interaction between the citizens of Europe. These involve a broad base of actors from local life, the organisations of civil society, schools, universities and the private sector as well, involving citizens in their cities' projects. By promoting East-West links, as well as between the North and the South of Europe, twinning strengthens European cohesion. Twinning with partners in south-east Europe can help to develop peace and democracy in that region, paving the way for possible EU membership. Last but not least, by opening up to non-European countries, twinning contributes to peace and mutual understanding with our neighbours, particularly in the Mediterranean region, but also more broadly with our partners in developing countries.

The involvement of European cities and their citizens is crucial for a collective response to the new challenges of the day. This contribution will be made possible by innovative and ambitious twinning actions, responding to the major issues facing us all in tomorrow's world.

## The city of Rhodes



At the crossroads of three continents Rhodes has known many civilizations throughout its 3,000-year history - from the ancient Greeks and the Romans, followed by the Byzantines, the Knights of St. John, the Ottomans, and the Italians.

Many are the monuments in Rhodes which are evidence of its rich and varied past, the most well-known and best preserved of which is the Medieval Town. The seat of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in the 14th and 15th centuries, it is the largest walled Medieval Town in Europe and was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1988.

Rhodes has managed to combine its history and multicultural character with contemporary infrastructure in the modern urban center to become one of the most important tourist and conference destinations in Greece, having hosted major events including the EU Summit in 1988.



The Palace of the Grand Master will be the venue for the Closing Session.

## Registration

TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE, OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, EITHER:

- contact David Farge at CEMR (Rhodes.2007@ccre.org, tel. + 33 1 44 50 59 59)
- or download the registration form and details from CEMR website ([www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org))

There is a Conference registration fee of €200 or 250 depending on the national GDP.

*In addition, you can obtain the hotel booking form from David Farge or the CEMR website in order to book your room at the conference hotel (the Rodos Palace).*

## The organisers



The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) was founded in 1951. It brings together associations of local and regional governments from over 35 countries.



Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece



The Municipality of Rhodes is the capital city of the Prefecture of the Dodecanese. It has a population of approximately 60,000 inhabitants.



With the support of the European Commission



Twinning for tomorrow's world



10 - 12 May, 2007  
Rhodes, Greece

Conseil des Communes  
et Régions d'Europe  
Council of European  
Municipalities and Regions



# [ Welcome to a world of twinning ]

*It is with much pleasure that we invite you to the conference, Twinning for tomorrow's world, upon the kind invitation of the city of Rhodes and our Greek section KEDKE.*

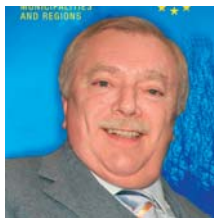
In the years following World War II, founding fathers of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) launched twinning to allow once-rival European peoples to come together and help build what became the European Union. As more and more European countries joined the EU, twinning helped strengthen the constantly evolving nature of European citizenship. These days CEMR, in close partnership with its members and the European Commission, remains the key actor bringing together thousands of towns across Europe.

With 27 member states and some 500 million citizens, the European Union is at a turning point. CEMR believes that the future of the EU depends on its capacity to involve its citizens in the "European project". Twinning, more than ever, remains the best way to bring together towns and their citizens from the whole of Europe, to translate the concept of European citizenship into reality.

The Rhodes conference therefore marks our commitment to the citizens of Europe, to unite them behind a common project: a Europe for peace, prosperity, understanding and equality; a Europe by and for its citizens.

Hundreds of elected representatives from all over Europe will have the opportunity to share information about twinning and to devise together ways to respond to the challenges that are to come. The Rhodes conference will be a key opportunity for the drawing up and promotion of innovative and efficient twinning actions, for Europe in the XXIst century.

We look forward to welcoming you to Rhodes.



**Michael Häupl**  
President of CEMR



**Anders Knappe**  
Chair of CEMR's twinning working group

*The city of Rhodes is pleased to host the conference, Twinning for tomorrow's world, from 10 to 12 May 2007.*

A jewel in the Mediterranean, the city of Rhodes lies at the cradle of Europe and of our civilisation. Its influence in ancient times demonstrates the leading role that cities have always played in commercial, political and cultural exchanges.

It was in Greece that the notion of citizenship was born, developed first by philosophers to then serve as the functioning basis of the ancient Republic. Now that Europe finds itself at a crucial moment in its construction, it is vital that all Europeans take up the democratic heritage of ancient Greece in the context of a new governance. The city of Rhodes and CEMR's Greek section, KEDKE, are proud to host a conference whose content will highlight the modernity of concepts that were discovered in ancient Greece.

The main aim of the EU programme Europe for Citizens, covering the period 2007-2013, is to promote the active participation of European citizens in public decision-making, the development of common values, and mutual knowledge of our history and culture, for the construction of a more democratic and universally oriented Europe.

European towns and cities are invited to play an important role in the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme. By coming together in Rhodes for the Conference Twinning for tomorrow's world, they can reaffirm their collective commitment to cohesion and dialogue in Europe. A crossroads for cultures and peoples over the ages, Rhodes is the ideal place to promote an EU which encourages into culture dialogue and shared citizenship and respects its linguistic and cultural diversity.

We look forward to welcoming you to Rhodes to demonstrate our common commitment.



**Hatjis Hatjiefthimiou**  
Mayor of Rhodes



**Paris Koukoulopoulos**  
President of KEDKE

## [ Twinning for tomorrow's world Draft programme ]

**THURSDAY 10 MAY**, Rodos Palace Hotel

12:00 - 18:00	Registration of the participants
18:00	<b>Opening of the Conference, "Twinning for tomorrow's world" Plenary Session</b>
19:30	Cocktail, upon the invitation of the European Commission

**FRIDAY 11 MAY**, Rodos Palace Hotel

09:30	<b>Plenary Session:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the new programme "Europe for citizens" (2007-2013), and in particular the section on twinning</li> <li>• Discussion with the delegates: questions and answers on the new guidelines concerning twinning actions</li> </ul> <b>Parallel working groups: A European citizenship for living together in Europe</b> <i>Workshop 1:</i> active participation in twinning: a tool for social inclusion <i>Workshop 2:</i> youth and twinning: an initiation to public life <b>Lunch</b>
11:30	<b>Parallel working groups: Facing the challenges</b> <i>Workshop 1:</i> preserving cultural heritage through twinning <i>Workshop 2:</i> twinning: a forum for economic and social Europe
13:00	<b>Parallel working groups: Europe in the world</b> <i>Workshop 1:</i> twinning: bridges for dialogue and peace around the Mediterranean <i>Workshop 2:</i> for a better world: from twinning to development cooperation
14:30	<b>End of second day of the meeting</b> <i>Conference Dinner, upon the invitation of the City of Rhodes</i>

**SATURDAY 12 MAY**, Palace of the Grand Master

09:30	<b>Plenary Session</b> What future for twinning? The stakes and priority action areas
11:30	<b>Plenary Session</b> CEMR tools at work for tomorrow's twinning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Conclusions</li> </ul> <b>Closing Session</b> <b>End of Conference</b>
12:30	
13:30	

Afternoon: Two choices of study visits:  
Half day to Lindos or half day visit to medieval town

- A programme will be offered for accompanying persons
- An exhibition will be organised of twinning images throughout Europe since the beginning of the movement
- A special welcome corner will be set up by CEMR to receive specific requests concerning twinning exchanges

## [ EU Commission and twinning ]

*The same way European Union brought nations of Europe together in peaceful co-operation, it now needs to bring European citizens into the centre of the European integration by encouraging their active participation in this process in other words encouraging active European citizenship.*

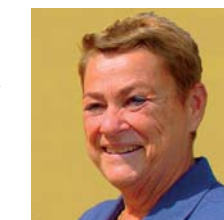
It is therefore with a deep satisfaction that I take the liberty to draw your attention to the conference "Twinning in tomorrow's world" which will be held in Rhodes from 10 to 12 May 2007 by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in co-operation with the City of Rhodes and KEDKE.

It is not just because this event is financially supported by the European Commission but most of all, because it will give an opportunity to the elected representatives of local communities and regions to discuss issues critical to European citizens today. These will amongst others include citizens' participation in the public life, social cohesion and cultural heritage.

There is a long history of support to the town-twinning activities by the European Commission. This support now reaches a new stage as a community action programme "Europe for Citizens" is to be launched in 2007 to cover the period until 2013. In this programme town-twinning will find its place alongside the activities of non-governmental organisations, think tanks, trade unions, citizens groups and other agents in the field of active European citizenship. Town-twinning has made an important contribution towards strengthening of the sense of European identity in the past fifty years. As Europe is now facing new challenges there is an opportunity for town-twinning to come with innovative solutions and to further engage in co-operation with other constituent elements of active European citizenship.

I believe that the conference in Rhodes will be one of the key events igniting the debate over the future course of the European Union and that it will highlight the crucial place of European citizens in this very important debate.

I look forward to hearing back from the many discussions which will take place in Rhodes in May next year and I would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance and high value of your feedback for European Commission.



**Odile Quintin**  
Director general, EU Commission's DG Education & Culture