

Internationalization strategy Municipality of Maastricht

The internationalization strategy of the Municipality of Maastricht is based on the basis of the municipal ambitions as described in the *Stadsvisie 2030* (2030 City Vision) and further interpreted in the economic vision, structural vision, and social vision. The internationalization strategy therefore does not formulate any new policy objectives, but indicates how internationalization can contribute to the achievement of these already formulated ambitions.

In its general definition, internationalization means 'making connections with locations abroad.' That is what the internationalization strategy aims to promote: the making of connections (in the broadest sense of the word) with residents, government bodies, or institutions abroad, as well as with international companies in Maastricht, as a means of achieving the policy objectives as formulated in the municipal vision documents (and elaborated in the various budgetary programmes).

The *Stadsvisie 2030* (2030 City Vision), the *Economische Visie 2020* (Economic Vision 2020), the *Structuurvisie* (Structural Vision) and the *Sociale Visie* (Social Vision) represent an international ambition for Maastricht. The internationalization strategy sets out the course for the translation of this ambition into concrete lines of action that link up with these visions and their elaboration in the various municipal budgetary programmes. Maastricht has opted not to set up an independent internationalization programme. We will further interpret internationalization in a 'mainstream' manner via the budgetary programmes. This approach does require a coherent vision and steering towards internationalization. The internationalization strategy acts as a framework for the international ambitions in the various budgetary programmes and provides insight into the concrete results that we wish to achieve over the coming period.

The vision of Maastricht in 2020 as presented in the *Economische Visie Maastricht 2020* (Maastricht Economic Vision 2020) published earlier this year (and as previously also described in the *Stadsvisie 2030*) is key to Maastricht's internationalization strategy. This integrated vision focuses on three priority areas:

- Strengthening knowledge and innovation
- Strengthening the relationship between culture and the economy
- Strengthening Maastricht as a city where people gather together

A further aim is to improve a number of crucial preconditions, including creating a more attractive business environment and providing the necessary cross-border connections.

The prime strategic task in the field of internationalization is to connect Maastricht with - and anchor it within - the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, Europe as a whole, and the world, as well as to develop and promote a living environment in Maastricht itself within which international residents feel welcome and at home. This can be achieved for instance by participating in subsidized European projects, through city partnerships (twinning) or other cooperative partnerships with cities and regions in Europe, by influencing European policy, and by being active within a strong international network.

Maastricht is keen to actively give shape to internationalization. Internationalization is a tool in the achievement of our objectives. However, we cannot implement our internationalization activities without assistance. We will interpret and implement it jointly with our partners in the city and the surrounding area (the Euregio Meuse-Rhine): other government bodies, businesses, institutions, and residents. The Municipal Council of Maastricht can take on a connecting role, and facilitate the necessary dynamism: it needs to be possible for other partners to contribute, too. Maastricht cannot do this alone. To this end, they will always need to be able to act at the most appropriate and optimum level with different parties, on a local, regional, national, and international scale.

Maastricht is actively seeking partners in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, as well as in the city network of Maastricht, Aachen, Hasselt, Heerlen, and Liège (MAHHL). Maastricht works closely with the other two cities in the Dutch province of Limburg. Maastricht makes conscious efforts with regard to the interests of its neighbouring municipalities in the Limburg hills area, but also retains an open perspective due to its position close to the Belgian border by entering into cooperative agreements with neighbouring municipalities in Belgium such as Tongeren, Riemst, Lanaken, and Bilzen.