



TCTWA Workshop January 18th 2019

Town and city partnerships in our present digital world

International partnership relations between towns and cities have a long tradition. Twin City relations did experience a veritable boom after WWII. In Europe, twin city partnerships experienced a second boom when the „iron curtain” fell in the 1990ies. One of the reasons for the success of these relations between towns and cities was the awareness that knowledge about each other could be achieved by direct contact and that this contact would lead to a friendly and peaceful co-existence. In both periods twin city relations contributed in an inconspicuous but nevertheless very important way to retain peace in international relations.

But the world has changed a lot. We now are living in a globalized world. Countries and even continents have moved much closer to each other. But even though it is much easier today to communicate with people from all over the world, serious exchanges of ideas and concepts do not happen too frequently. In contrary, we are witnessing strong movements aiming at withdrawal from a globalized world in order to concentrate on the needs and interests of their own nation. The variety and diversity of our globalized world frightens many people who look at the plurality of cultures, nations and continents as a threat. This development is dangerous, as it increases the risk of conflicts. Thus communication and positive interaction between different nations is very important, and partnership relations between towns and cities are a very good opportunity to develop the contacts necessary in reaching this goal.

Along with these developments digitalization also poses new challenges. Our live and our jobs are changing and will go on changing drastically. We are experiencing a fundamental transformation which we have to accept as a chance to advance and reinvent ourselves. As far as global effects are concerned the digital era has at least the same impact as the industrial revolution did have. Digitalization also shows how important it is to find common solutions and to implement them as partners – world wide. Some ambitious projects in this context may challenge single towns and cities in organisational, technical and also financial aspects. This is another reason to help and support each other, because solutions to some

problems could be shared. This is another reason for international exchange of ideas and concepts is of extreme importance.

The Twin Cities World Tourism Association (TCWTA) wants to be a bridge builder between countries and nations but most of all between towns and cities from different nations and cultures. TCWTA wants to support the establishment and maintenance of partnerships of this kind.

In collaboration with tourism experts from all over the world we plan to look for solutions to make town and city partnerships attractive in our present digital world – thus obtaining advantages for all partners involved. With this final objective in mind we invite all interested parties to exchange information, ideas and concepts on January 18th 2019 in Zürich. We will discuss the advantages of twin city relations and opportunities to realize these advantages in a target-oriented and economic way. Scientific input will help us to obtain a rational view towards this objective.

We would be very glad to see as many mayors and tourism experts as possible participate at our workshop, because:

“We should always seek conversation.

Communication is the only bridge existing between people.”

(Albert Camus, French philosopher)

Or, and even more to the point:

“Most problems would cease to exist

If people talked more with each other than about each other.”

(Isaak Öztürk, Turkish writer)

Keeping these insights in mind we believe that our workshop on January 18th 2019 in Zürich will be a success. After the workshop we invite all participants to a stroll in the wonderful old quarter of Zürich.

Thomas-Peter Binder
President TCWTA