

Dear Friends,

Already 40 years ago Saint Cyr sur Mer and Denzlingen supported a twinning, which many of the people present can testify. The anniversary is an indication for the intensity of the exchanges, a sign for the liveliness of the relations, but also a proof that our local administrations cooperate well in accordance with the German-French friendship.

Together with Denzlingen we have entered into a twinning with Città della Pieve, and since then alternate meetings have been taking place in our three towns.

40 years ago Europe was still young, it was the Europe of the nine nations. Today we are the Europe of 25 nations and further nations wish to belong to the restricted circle of candidates for a membership.

40 years ago, the Mayors of Saint Cyr and Denzlingen, Auguste Amic and Wolfram Dennig, were the first to make use of the new possibilities set up by the Elysée Treaty in order to move the reconciliation of our two countries into the centre of our twinning. We owe them recognition and admiration.

40 Years ago travelling from Saint Cyr to Denzlingen was not at all an easy venture. Many sections of the motorway had not yet been built.

40 Years ago there were no computers, no mobile phones, no internet and we paid in French Francs, German Marks, or Italian Lira.

This acceleration in the course of historical events and in the modern means of communication have certainly made our exchanges easier, but they have not changed what is essential: our personal relations.

Our meetings, which always proceed in a hearty, friendly and enjoyable atmosphere, are characterized by our wish to share, to exchange thoughts, to get to know each other better, and to value each other more.

At our meetings we can now and then enjoy a glass of beer or a glass of Bandol in convivial company.

Yet, when we meet the focus is also on the exchange of experience. Yesterday, for example, we talked about water supply, and earlier on about energy supply, the course of a school year, long-term development, about all cross-border topics, where the exchange of personal experiences counts more than technical progress.

When we meet, we have the opportunity to show our musical and choir associations how much we appreciate their activities and applaud them, when they perform together. Music as well as art, sports and the landscape do not know frontiers.

When we meet we form lasting friendships and sometimes even more develops from them. And I will not forget that, some years ago, a resident of Saint Cyr got married to a lady from Denzlingen.

Our meetings demonstrate concretely and impressively that Europe is not only a unique market with many norms, but that Europe is a place for living, where the same values of

freedom, solidarity, equality and mutual respect apply, where the painful history of our two countries more and more becomes the fundament of our unity and the fertile soil for peace, peace to which our twinnings contribute day by day and by small things.

40 years would be a worthy occasion to take stock, but I would rather use this occasion to further pursue our relations, to deepen and expand them, in particular with regard to our youth. It makes me very happy, when young people engage themselves. We have to fill them with enthusiasm for our twinnings, but it is their job to extend and cultivate the relations. We have to pass on our experiences to them, but they have to develop their own ideas about the future. We have the duty to remind them of the shared history, but they have to draw the necessary conclusions from it in order to preserve peace.

My friends, I combine all this with today's anniversary. 40 years ago a twinning contract was signed. So let us honour those who have drawn it up. In the same way but beyond our anniversary, this European festival may be a special opportunity for our communities to open up new perspectives, to develop new exchange programmes, and to strengthen our friendship.

Philippe Barthélemy
Mayor of Saint Cyr sur Mer