

To Ratzeburg's twin towns

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Christmas greetings to Ratzeburg's twin towns

Dear friends in Europe,

This year has continued to keep everyone on tenterhooks. Fortunately, coronavirus has not been as prevalent as in previous years, but there have been other pressing issues such as the ongoing war in Ukraine and the Middle East, the return of anti-Semitism, inflation, climate change and the energy crisis. But now, at Christmas, is the time to pause and reflect. It's also time to look back on the year with its wonderful, sometimes shared experiences and adventures.

Over the Whitsun holidays from 26 to 29 May, an „alumni reunion“ of the RSV and the Swedish football friends from **Strängnäs** took place in Ratzeburg, to which Hans-Walter Bludau had invited. In addition to numerous football matches, there was plenty of partying and dancing at the disco in the guild hall on Saturday evening.

In mid-April, Mayor Eckhard Graf was welcomed with great hospitality on his inaugural visit to the Polish twin town of **Sopot**. Accompanied by a small delegation from the Ratzeburg Youth Advisory Council, Mayor Graf made a short visit to hand over donations for Ukrainian war refugees. However, the visit also focussed on the meeting with Jacek Karnowski, who was now bidding farewell after many years of service as mayor. Thank you for the wonderful presentation of your Baltic city and your incredible hospitality!

Finally, a delegation from Ratzeburg was able to visit **Strängnäs** and accept the invitation to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the coronation at the beginning of June. The hospitable welcome, the great programme and the opportunity to make new and interesting contacts with delegates from the other twin towns of Strängnäs - and also to meet our familiar friends from **Ribe** - were a great pleasure for us Ratzeburgers. Thank you for a few stimulating, eventful and enjoyable days full of friendship. We hope very much to see you again soon!



Bankverbindungen:

Kreissparkasse Herzogtum Lauenburg	IBAN: DE76 2305 2750 0000 1163 00	BIC: NOLADE21RZB
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And you in France and Belgium, **Châtillon-sur-Seine**, **Esneux** and **Walcourt**. It was very unfortunate that we only found out about the plans and programme for the brotherhood reunion so late at the town hall and that we simply didn't have enough time to plan it. But at least some comrades from our volunteer fire brigade were able to attend the brotherhood meeting. As always, they were delighted with your hospitality in **Walcourt**. We very much hope that we will be able to welcome you again next year for the planned „working meeting“ in Ratzeburg.

During the summer holidays, the Youth Council invited young people to a „**Europe Camp**“ in Ratzeburg. Youth councils from **Sopot** and **Strängnäs** in Sweden accepted the invitation. The 15 young people, supervised by Ratzeburg's youth welfare organisation, spent a week getting to know each other and had plenty of time to exchange experiences and engage in discussions. The topic of „climate change“ took centre stage. Ultimately, a „European network of local youth councils“ was established.

The „Jazz in Ratzeburg Festival 2023“ brought big band sounds to Ratzeburg on the second weekend in September. The „**Big Band Ribe**“ played a real „world premiere“ at the opening, a concert with a selection of Bond film melodies under the title „The Best of Bond - James Bond“. Top-class music, thank you very much for your lively songs and the wonderful time over these three days!

Last but not least: On 14 May, the city representatives for the next five years were elected in Ratzeburg.

Above all, we wish **all our friends in our twin towns** good health and that you continue to have hope, but that you can also laugh about life's little difficulties - and that we hope to see you all again soon.

Merry Christmas to Strängnäs, to Ribe, to Sopot, to Schönberg, to Esneux, to Walcourt and to Châtillon-sur-Seine and we wish you all a healthy, carefree 2024 from Ratzeburg



Eckhard Graf
Bürgermeister



Petra Römer
Tourismus, Stadtmarketing & Städtepartnerschaften



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