

**Diary Transnational meeting Ghent 27-28 of may 2019**  
Fokke Veldstra, Amsterdam



For the city of Amsterdam, I was one of their six participants in a two day meeting in Ghent about urban commons. Amsterdam is part of a network with six other cities: Napels (IT), Barcelona (ES), Gdansk (PL), Ghent (BE), Amsterdam (NL), Iasi (RO) and Presov (SK). There were no representatives of Iasi, all other cities were present.

The presentations and visits to projects in Ghent gave all sort of food for thought on the topic of commons, amongst many others: what can be a good legal definition of a common? How to organize the common in a sustainable way? How to give commons a position in existing or new legislation? And what role can local government play?

For me, the key questions were those of ownership and of property. Ownership within the common of its objective: how do you realize a common-structure that is sustainable and provides maximum ownership for the participants in that common? Secondly, property: on ground, of housing for example, rest property-rights. How to create contracts or agreements with those owners, be it corporations, local government or private citizens, that ensure a good position for the common, and are not contrary to (e.g.) public or procurement rules?

It seems to me that there is a road ahead with lots of speed-bumps, but it could be an interesting ride. Thanks to the city of Ghent that did a great job organising the meeting!

