

Franco-Irish Twinning – Catherine Gagneux, French Honorary Consul for Connacht and Donegal

What is twinning? What does it mean in 2022 for EU twin cities?

Above anything else, twinning is about people. It is about people that mutually promote cultural tourism and raise awareness among citizens about the cultural heritage that they share and celebrate.

There are about 150 twinings between France and Ireland and some, like the Galway-Lorient one, are almost 50 years old. Most of the French committees are based in Brittany but there is also a widespread representation in the rest of France

Over the years and decades, the exchanges have evolved and faced various challenges to keep groups motivated and connected.

Though the main interests of linguistic and sport exchanges remain popular, the committees are seeking to go beyond those activities and connect towns through various social, cultural and academic and economic sectors and add a European exposure and dimension.

Those connections define them as who they are as individuals, as communities, as regions, as nations, as Europeans and they contribute to what shapes Europe today and for future generations.

Since BREXIT, France has become Ireland's closest EU neighbour and the twinning activities and initiatives are and will certainly strengthen those relations.