

Dear friends of Efforts,

I am honoured to welcome you today at the EFFORTS Congress. Oudenaarde accepted with pleasure to be the host city of the event. Unfortunately due to the circumstances we can not show you around in real time. **However, we are happy to show you in a couple of minutes a short video about Oudenaarde.**

Oudenaarde is internationally best known for our impressive collection of historic tapestries and as city of cycling. Since many years the finishing line of the most famous one day cycling race, the Tour of Flanders is situated here.

But our city has much more to offer. We are also a 'fortified city'. Oudenaarde is since a long time interested in its fortification history. Still a lot needs to be done.

In the past years, we have renovated our still existing ravelin, remains of the Vauban fortifications going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

From 1830 to the mid-19th century, Oudenaarde was one of the twenty fortified cities of the Wellington Barrier. A defensive structure, called Kezelfort, was built as part of a triple line of defence of fortifications, after the fall of Napoleon, in the south of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands to protect against France.

We are therefore interested in further cooperation with other fortified cities in Belgium.

We believe that fortified heritage, with its importance for city and regional development, for touristic and city marketing can make a difference in how we and our visitors perceive our city.

We are very happy to belong to the EFFORTS community. We want to continue to actively participate in its actions and events and we are convinced that European cooperation is the way forward.

I wish you all a nice and unforgettable congress and look forward to meet again en hopefully welcome you any other time in Oudenaarde

Thank you  
Marnic De Meulemeester

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92nUIV\\_2\\_E4&gl=BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92nUIV_2_E4&gl=BE)