

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting held February 24, 2026**

A meeting of the International Relations Committee is held this day commencing at 3:30 o'clock p.m. in Room 522a, 350 City Hall Square West, there being present the following members:

Councillor Angelo Marignani, Chair  
Councillor Renaldo Agostino (arrives at 3:55 p.m.)  
Councillor Ed Sleiman  
Lubna Barakat (via Zoom video conference)  
Saiful Bhuiyan  
Ronnie Haidar  
L.T. Zhao (via Zoom video conference)  
William Ma (via Zoom video conference)

***Regrets received from:***

Councillor Fred Francis  
Jerry Barycki

***Guests in attendance:***

Uran Kuci, President, Albanian Association of Windsor  
Dr. Entela Bilali  
Professor Arti Tamburi  
Professor Jonia Tamburi  
Dr. Mirabela Hali, Medical Researcher

***Also present are the following resource personnel:***

Sandra Gebauer, Council Assistant  
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 3:30 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A, attached hereto matters which are dealt with as follows:

**2. Declaration of Conflict**

None disclosed.

### 3. Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by Ronnie Haidar,  
That the minutes of the International Relations Committee of its meeting held  
December 17, 2025, **BE ADOPTED** as presented.  
Carried.

### 4. Business Items

#### 4.1 Shkodra Twin Proposal – Presentation from Uran Kuci, President of the Albanian Windsor Association and members

The following representatives are present:

- Uran Kuci, President of the Albanian Association of Windsor
- Dr. Entela Bilali
- Professor Arti Tamburi
- Professor Jonia Tamburi
- Dr. Mirabela Hali, Medical Researcher

Mr. Uran Kuci along with the representatives of the Albanian Windsor Association introduce themselves. Mr. Kuci thanks the members of the International Relations Committee for the opportunity to meet and discuss the twinning initiative between the City of Windsor and Shkodra, a City in Albania. This potential partnership represents more than a formal agreement between two cities; it is a bridge of friendship, culture, education, and economy collaboration. Videos of beautiful Shkodra are provided.

A Presentation entitled “The Gateway to Northern Albania” is provided and includes the following topics:

- Historic Foundations, Cultural Preservation & Trade, Global Recognition, Beacon of Religious Harmony, Geography: Where the Alps meet the Adriatic, Economic Pillars and Development, Culture Insights and New Horizons: Canada-Albania Link Direct Flights.
- The similarities between Shkodra and Windsor are defined.

In response to a question from Ronnie Haidar regarding if Shkodra has any other twin cities, it is noted that Windsor would be the first Twin City in the Western Hemisphere.

Councillor Ed Sleiman asks for examples of what Shkodra is known for - tourism, fishing, textiles and trade is expressed.

Sandra Gebauer provides the following next steps as outlined in the Twin City/Friendship City policy:

- Discussion and recommendation from the IRC Committee
- Proposal for a twinning
- Take direction from the Mayor's Office.

Once the IRC Committee makes a recommendation, it will proceed to the Development & Heritage Standing Committee and City Council for approval.

Upon approval by the Mayor and City Council, the Mayor's Office will prepare a Letter of Intent to be sent to the Mayor of Shkodra.

In response to a question asked by Lubna Barakat regarding if the Shkodra Embassy and Consulate in Canada would be involved with this partnership, the response is affirmative.

The delegation representing Shkodra leave the meeting at 4:28 o'clock p.m.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman, That the Presentation provided by the City of Shkodra regarding the potential twinning relationship between the City of Shkodra and the City of Windsor **BE RECEIVED**.

Carried.

#### **4.2 Invitation from Lublin, Poland for the International Exhibition of Inventions and Technology – INNOWINGS 2026 to be held on June 18 & 19, 2026 in Lublin, Poland**

The Chair suggests directing this invitation to Invest WindsorEssex to determine if there is interest in this endeavour.

Moved by Ronnie Haidar, seconded by Saiful Bhuiyan, That Jerry Barycki **BE CONTACTED** regarding the invitation from Lublin, Poland for the International Exhibition of Inventions and Technology, and further, that Invest Windsor Essex **BE APPRISED** of this opportunity.

Carried.

#### **4.3 Gunsan Brews & Blues Festival – 2026**

It is noted that the importing of the beer to Gunsan will be paid for, and the Chair suggests this may be worthwhile event for a Windsor brewery.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino proposes that this information be provided to Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI). Sandra Gebauer notes that only one brewery is being invited to attend the Festival.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to direct the matter relating to the 2026 Gunsan  
Brews & Blues Festival to Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI) to decide which  
brewery will attend the event in Gunsan.

Carried.

#### **4.4 Verbal Report regarding the June 14-16, 2025, Visit to Arlington, Texas**

Highlights of the visit to Arlington, Texas by some members of the IRC and  
Administration are as follows:

- The Chair remarks that the city is very “sports centric”, very much like downtown Detroit.
- They met the Mayor of Arlington along with other delegates of Arlington.
- Also met the Provost of Arlington, Texas University along with representatives from the social work, nursing, and education faculty. The Provost advised that this is a university not of Arlington, Texas but for Arlington, Texas which is the spirit of the University of Windsor.
- The University of Arlington Texas has a multi-cultural campus with diverse events.
- A walking tour of the downtown area was conducted.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Sleiman,  
That the verbal update regarding the January 14–16, 2026 visit to Arlington, Texas  
**BE RECEIVED.**

Carried.

#### **4.5 Arlington, Texas Visit to the City of Windsor**

Sandra Gebauer advises that the delegation from Arlington, Texas has asked that  
their visit to Windsor be deferred until after their municipal election, scheduled for May 2,  
2026.

The Committee members provide the following suggestions in terms of possible  
dates for the Arlington delegation’s visit to Windsor:

- During the Multicultural Carrousel of Nations (June 12-14, 2026, and June 19-21, 2026).
- Canada Day Weekend.
- During the Windsor/Detroit Fireworks to be held on June 22, 2026.

The Committee agrees that the invitation will consist of a 2-3 day visit to Windsor and  
will include a tour of the Windsor/Detroit Tunnel.

Councillor Agostino indicates that the final dates for this visit should be coordinated through the Mayor's office so the Mayor's availability can be confirmed.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That a suggestion by the International Relations Committee to invite a delegation from Arlington, Texas for a two-to-three-day visit to the City of Windsor, during the month of June 2026 **BE FORWARDED** to the Mayor's Office for approval.  
Carried.

#### **4.6 Children's Art Exhibit 2026**

The Chair remarks that the Children's Art Exhibit traditionally has been held at Devonshire Mall and asks if there is a suggestion for another venue. Councillor Renaldo Agostino proposes that City Hall Square Park be considered as an additional location.

Lubna Barakat suggests that a "theme" for the Children's Art Exhibit be determined.

Sandra Gebauer proposes that the Twin Cities be invited along with local children to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Children's Art Exhibit and that details including dates and venues be finalized at a later date.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino recommends that the event be incorporated into the esplanade in the summer months.

Discussion ensues regarding the date of the 2026 Children's Art Exhibit.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That it is generally agreed that the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 2026 Children's Art Exhibit **BE HELD** in the summer at City Hall Square Park with a Theme entitled: "10 Year Anniversary".  
Carried.

#### **4.7 Best Western Plus Waterfront Hotel and the Holiday Inn Express Windsor Waterfront Hotel**

Sandra Gebauer states that while making hotel reservations for the delegates from Lublin, Poland and Gunsan, South Korea during October and November 2025, management from the Holiday Inn Express Windsor Waterfront offered contracts with preferred rates for the Holiday Inn Express Windsor Waterfront Hotel and the Best Western Plus Waterfront Hotel for future booking. A CAO report is currently being prepared for approval by the City Clerk and Chief Administrative Officer.

**5. Communications**

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That the Pictorial Report from the 30<sup>Th</sup> Polish Canadian business Professional  
Association **BE RECEIVED**.  
Carried.

**6. New Business**

Sandra Gebauer advises that her contact from our twin city of Changchun, China  
has requested information regarding conferences to be held in the Fall 2026 in Windsor.  
Invest Windsor Essex, has confirmed that they are hosting an “Emerging Technologies  
and Automation and Mobility Transformation Conference and Trade Show at Caesars  
Windsor on November 19, 2026. This information has been shared with the contact in  
Changchun, who has indicated that a delegation would be very interested in attending.  
Further information will be provided to them once registration for the event opens.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. in a room to be  
determined.

**8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 5:15 o'clock p.m.