

## BART SOMERS



Born 12 May 1964 in Mechelen (Belgium), Bart Somers was awarded in February 2017 the prize for **World Mayor in 2016** as recognition for his outstanding achievements in **welcoming refugees** during recent years and for the **long-term integration** of immigrants from different cultures, religions and social backgrounds. His story has featured in [The New York Times](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Wall Street Journal](#)<sup>2</sup>, [BBC](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Politico Europe](#)<sup>4</sup>, and other major media outlets from around Europe, and the world, including Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, China and the Middle East.

### Political Career

- 2001 to present: Mayor of Mechelen (Belgium)
- 2014 to present: Leader of the Liberal group in the Flemish Parliament
- Since October 2016: President of the Liberal Group in the European Committee of the Regions and Chair of the Liberal Mayors Network
- 2003-2004: Minister-President of the region of Flanders (Belgium)
- 2004-2009: Chairman of the Flemish Liberals and Democrats

### Publications

Bart Somers is author of "*Living Together: A strategy of hope against ISIS*" (currently in Dutch). He is also author of the report by the European Committee of the Regions: "*Combatting radicalization and violent extremism: Prevention mechanisms at local and regional level*".

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<sup>1</sup> Where Refugees Can Come Home – NYT Dec 3, 2016

<sup>2</sup> How Mechelen Managed to Stay Off Belgium's Terror Map – WSJ Oct 10, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Brussels attacks: Belgium's 'zero tolerance' mayor – BBC Television, 25 March 2016

<sup>4</sup> Liberal mayors launch fightback against populism – Politico, Dec 2, 2016