

EUBORDERREGIONS  
Working Papers Series 1

LABORATORIES  
OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:  
CITY-TWINNING  
IN NORTHERN EUROPE

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EUBORDERREGIONS

Working Papers Series 1

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# EUBORDERREGIONS

## Working Papers Series WP1

The present work by Pertti Joenniemi and Alexander Sergunin, the first in our working papers series, approaches the question of cohesion and cross-border co-operation in Europe through the lens of local actors – of communities. The concept of twin-cities as drivers of local economic and political integration is an intriguing one but has only sporadically been investigated in comparative terms. This EUBORDERREGIONS working paper offers a detailed discussion of local attempts to “reconstruct” local borders, including in areas located at the external borders of Schengen-Europe. Twin cities as co-operation partners also reflect wider geopolitical contexts that impact on local and regional development in border areas.

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# Acronyms

BaltMet	Baltic Metropolises network
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CTA	City Twins Association
EU	European Union
EUROCITIES	Network of major European cities
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
Interreg	EU's programme on inter-regional co-operation
KEIP	Key East Industrial Park
METREX	Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDI	Northern Dimension Initiative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SEZ	Special economic zone
SME	Small and medium size enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads
Tacis	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UBS	Union of Baltic Cities
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WWII	World War II

# Executive Summary

Over the last two decades city-twinning became quite popular in Northern Europe, including not only Nordic countries with their long-standing cooperative experience but also the post-Soviet states, such as the Baltic States and Russia. Twinning is viewed by many North European municipalities as an instrument available for both solving local problems and ensuring sustainable development.

This study probes the burgeoning phenomenon by exploring five city-pairs engaged in twinning (Tornio-Haparanda; Narva-Ivangorod; Imatra-Svetogorsk; Valga-Valka; Kirkenes-Nikel) as a way of bolstering their somewhat marginal position. It also aims at discussing the dynamics and meaning of twinning in a broader, more principal and critical perspective. It is argued that in Northern Europe twins became city-pairs that do not just aim at bridging and intensified international cooperation as 'border cities' or 'connected cities' but also at creating – in varying degrees – communality and joint space across national borders. In particular, the question is posed whether the transnationalisation on the level of cities is carried by the cities themselves linking up with various forms of regionalization, Europeanization as well as internationalization at large, or if it rather reflects the policies pursued by the states to which the cities belong.

As twinning has, despite a number of obstacles, more recently turned into an established form of overcoming of the divisive effects of borders, it has also turned into an important area to cover by research. The model of cities re-imagining their borders, activating them through increased cooperation and pooling resources not only impacts and changes the local landscapes but may also entail broader state-related and European consequences as well.

# Introduction

Regionalization has recently become a wide-spread phenomenon not only within the EU but also elsewhere in Europe, including former socialist countries. Regionalization is seen by local actors as an adequate and preferable response to numerous challenges that they face in their day-to-day life. Regionalization takes different forms and develops at various levels and city-twinning is one of them. Twinning is viewed by many European municipalities as an efficient instrument for both solving local problems and ensuring their sustainable development. Border-related resources can be utilized more effectively with cooperation extended beyond state borders, although the efficiency and scale of twinning projects varies across Europe to a considerable degree. However, according to both practitioners and experts, the bright side of twinning prevails. The following benefits from twinning, as a form of jumping scale, may be identified (Handley, 2006: 6–8):

- Bolstering economic and business development
- Improving service delivery and problem solving
- Improving transport infrastructure
- Promoting freedom of movement of people, goods, services and capital
- Accessing EU and other financial institutions in search for funding
- Promoting community well-being
- Promoting stronger community partnerships
- Increasing global and European awareness
- Yielding more intense local government staff development and training
- Providing resources for developing education and culture
- Promoting tolerance and increasing understanding
- Enhancing youth activities

Northern Europe is particularly distinct in regard to successful experimenting with twinning. In this region, twinning is one of the departures used by cities in aspiring for a distinct, visible and favourable profile and it is, in this sense, part and parcel of their policies of place-marketing and branding in the context of the increasingly intense and transnational regionalization.

Interestingly, city-twinning became popular not only in the Nordic countries<sup>1</sup> with their long-standing cooperative record but also in the post-Soviet states. Also the Baltic States and Russia have become actively involved in experimenting with twinning strategies to gain both domestic and international benefits from these cooperative schemes.

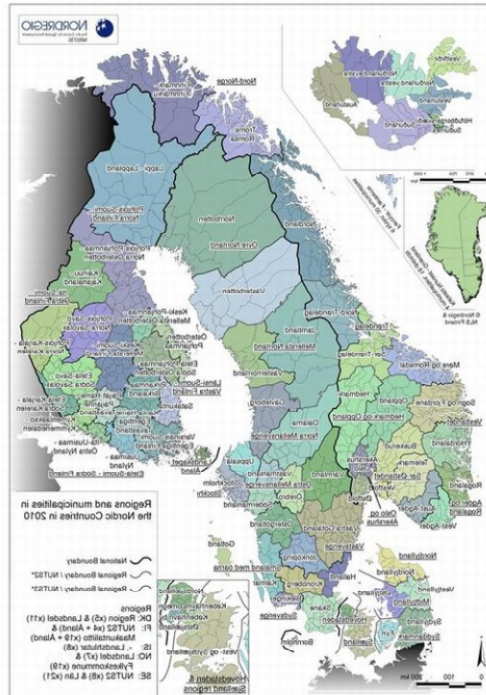
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<sup>1</sup> Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.



In order to pass judgement on the relationship between the concept of twinning and how city-twinning has fared in practice, we have chosen to probe some particular city-pairs that employ such a departure and engage in twinning across national borders. The key question asked consists of what contributes and provides substance to such a cooperation and what, in turn, detracts from it. Currently, there are four formally established city-pairs in Northern Europe: Tornio-Haparanda; Narva-Ivangorod; Imatra-Svetogorsk and Valga-Valka. In addition, there is also the Kirkenes/Nikel pair, albeit it is still somewhat embryonic in character.

Our interrogation is general in nature in the sense of being directed at probing the different conceptual departures used by the city-actors reaching out, although at the same time it remains limited in spatial terms in being focused on those cases of twinning located in Northern Europe that share a joint border. Arguably, a qualitatively new type of city-twinning is gradually emerging in the region. More specifically, the aim here is one of exploring critically five particular cases in which twinning consists of utilizing territorial proximity and escape spatial as well as political and administrative fixations through a reaching across statist borders in order to form a rather unified entity. Twinning may, in some cases, resonate with the policies of transnationalisation pursued by the respective states. However, it can also feed on other forms of transnationalisation such as Nordic cooperation, various forms of European integration or capitalize on options opened up by internationalization more generally. It does not, in the latter cases, have to unfold fully in harmony with the policies pursued by the states to which the cities engaged in twinning belong. Obviously, the driving logic may also vary to a considerable degree between the city-pairs explored here, this then indicating that twinning does not rest on a uniform driving logic. It is fully possible that the underlying logic changes from case to case, and hence a comparative perspective is of value in passing judgement on the nature of city-twinning and the way it contributes to the emergence of various forms of transnationalisation and internationalization unfolding in northern Europe.



Valga-Valka: Divided by Nationness

# The Concept of Twin Cities: Changing Meanings

It is to be noted, as to the terminology to be applied here, that the very concept of 'twin cities' figures as a rather vexed question in the research literature. Different schools suggest different interpretations and use various synonyms (often of a misleading character). To summarize the ongoing academic discussion the following definitions of the concept can be identified:

In the *domestic context*, twin cities are a special case of two cities or urban centres founded in close geographic proximity and then growing into each other over time (Twin cities, 2011). There are numerous examples of twin cities in the US (where the term, first of all, refers specifically to the cities Minneapolis and Saint Paul located in Minnesota), Europe (UK – Chatham and Rochester, Manchester and Salford, Raleigh-Durham; Germany – Ludwigshafen and Mannheim, Ulm and Neu-Ulm, Mainz and Wiesbaden, etc.) and Asia (China – Hong Kong and Shenzhen, Macau and Zhuhai; South Korea – Seoul and Incheon; India – Kolkata and Howrah; Israel – Tel Aviv and Jaffa, etc.). In some cases, twins can eventually lose their individual identity and fuse into a new and unified city. One famous example consists of Budapest, capital of Hungary. The city originated as two separate settlements (Buda and Pest) facing each other across the Danube river to merge over time into a single city.

It should be noted, however, that with some exception (e.g. Porsgrunn and Skien, Fredrikstad and Sarpsborg in Norway), Northern Europe lacks this kind of twin cities. Instead, there are a number of the so-called 'satellite' cities in the region that have emerged in order to 'groom' larger urban centres and/or fulfil specific functions (to host university campuses, techno-parks, industries, transport infrastructure, military bases, etc.): Sandnes-Stavanger (Norway), Severomorsk-Murmansk and Severodvinsk-Arkhangelsk (Russia) are cases in point. The craving for larger and more competitive entities is bound to increase pressures towards mergers.

On the *international sense*, there are two – broad and narrow – definitions of the concept 'twin cities/towns'. Under the *broader* understanding, the term 'twin cities' has been employed to connote cooperative agreements between cities, towns and even counties which are not neighbours but located at a considerable distance and even in separate countries to promote economic, commercial and cultural ties (Stephen, 2008). Most town twinning unfolds between cities facing similar social, economic and political situations or sharing historical links. In Europe, a variety of terms are used, although 'twin cities' appears as the most common one. However, also terms such as *sister*,

*connected, double, trans-border, bi-national, neighboured, coupled, partner and friendship* are utilized in naming the city-pairs (Buursink, 2001; Schultz, 2002; Town twinning, 2011). In the case of Russia (similar to the Soviet time), along with twin towns concept, the terms of *brother (pobratimy)* or *related (porodnennyye)* cities are used.

In the *narrow* sense, twin-cities are border towns adjacent to each other. According to Buursink (1994), there are two sub-categories of neighboured border towns: *double towns* that aim at cooperation and supplementing each other and *town couples* that often compete with each other.

Schultz (2002) asserts that only double towns can be seen as real twins and sets a number of criteria for selecting and pinpointing twin towns. They should not only consist, she claims, of border towns but also have the following characteristics:

- They should harbour a joint history as cities that have existed as administrative units in the past, prior to national borders separating them.
- Although previously separated by borders, this delimiting should have been traded for open borders.
- A preferable case consists of cities where a river both separates and connects the cities facing each other across the river (and, for this reason, they are called *bridge towns*).
- There should be connecting factors and features conducive to cooperation such as ethnic minorities as well as command of the neighbour's language.
- There should be a certain level of institutionalization of cooperation between the twins in terms of unified administrative structures and common urban planning. The most advanced twin towns purport themselves as 'Euro-cities' in emphasizing their European rather than national identity.

While agreeing with most of the above criteria, we nonetheless base our study on a somewhat different and more extensive definition of twin towns with adjacency and the breaking of spatial fixations in the form of national borders as our main point of departure. Whereas twinning has in most cases seen as residing in the application of a particular form of 'urban logic', our aim is to reach beyond such a departure in the sense that the rupture pertains, we stress, also to the underlying logic as twinning across borders inevitably provides the cities engaged in such activities with transnational and international features. It does so as they contribute, in varying degrees, to communality reaching beyond national configurations (cf. Joenniemi & Sergunin, 2008, 2009 and 2011).

It may further be noted that talking about twinning rather than utilizing some other conceptual departures and representations available stands out, in comparison, as

something particularly demanding and challenging. It is border-breaking as such in the sense that the resorting to the concept of twinning figures as a quite ambitious move. The concept has connotations of similitude, like-mindedness and pertains to claims of an almost identical nature of the two entities involved. In pointing to shared and rather unified space, the concept goes far beyond a mere functionalist strategy of reaching across borders. The parties involved in twinning do not just cooperate with each other while at the same time retaining their rather different being (cf. Arreola, 1996). Instead, they ride on notions pertaining to similarity from the very start and articulate, in terms of policies of representation and scale, their very being by (re)connecting the previously unconnected. Subsequently, they aim at reducing various functional restraints that tend to hide their rather identical nature and therewith the border located in-between the city-pair is narrated – instead of accepting its usual divisive impact and partitioning effects – as something to be downgraded if not abolished. The border is turned, in the context of twinning, into a connective factor and a resource for a rather unified agglomeration to emerge.

This then also implies that being engaged in twinning challenges quite sharply the traditional comprehensions of borders between national states, the way borders are assumed to unfold and function as well as established identities. This type of twinning actually boils down, in one of its aspects, to a strategy employed by border-related cities in their efforts of restraining and reversing the impact of border-drawing and more generally the centripetal forces of modern nation-building. It amounts, as noted above, to efforts of circumventing and undermining the logic that has usually deprived border-related cities of any standing of their own in a transnational context. Instead of being recognized as interesting, legitimate and to some extent also important actors, they have more often than not been marginalized and seen as being located at the fringes of their respective states and subsequently also the state-dominated system of international relations. As argued by Jan Buursink (2001: 7), they have been seen as ‘pitiful’. Cities located at borders have been relatively rare to start with, and if nonetheless there, they have been depicted as subordinate actors and – owing to their location in the vicinity of national borders – perceived as end stations, i.e. void of any contacts across the border. Having a twin on the other side of the border has in this context figured as something inconceivable as no conceptual and mental space has been available for any border-transcending projections premised on difference within alleged national similarity and unity.

Overall, cities located at the vicinity of the national border have, rather than coming together, been expected to stay aloof from each other and turn their back towards those on the opposite side of the border. The psychological and identity-related distance – with the construction of political space being premised on clear-cut self/other

distinctions – has, in actual fact, been so wide that concepts such as twinning have been void of any credibility.

Twinning thus amounts, once utilized as a departure for locally based cross-border cooperation, to a kind of emancipation if not mutiny, and it entails element of a ‘laboratory’ or an ‘experiment’. It does so from the very start in being transnational and not just bi-national in character. It is, in being transnational in character, very much at odds with the standard formula of nation-state building that is with similarity located inside and difference placed on the outside. The degree of alleged similarity in the context of twinning may vary – consisting either of being alike in the sense of shared citiness or having some specific bonds and ‘natural’ properties supporting claims pertaining to far-reaching unity – but it amounts in both cases to a breach in the standard state-related discourse. It does so in boiling down to benign and complementary forms of difference, i.e. difference within similarity in having connotations of considerable unity and intimate connectedness reaching across national borders. It exhibits, if viewed in a traditional perspective, more strongly than some of the other concepts employed by cities reaching across national borders that the logic undergirding cities coming together in the context of their border-crossing activities may to a large degree conflict considerably with the way states usually outline and constitute their borders and border-related regions.

One may thus suspect – and do so precisely because of the inherently offensive connotations inherent in the concept – that the city-pairs employing twinning as their departure amount to political dreamscapes. They stand for visions rather than exemplify cases of strong and concrete transnational integration. Arguably, they have adopted evocative names and coined tempting visions of togetherness but the energy created and released through the use of such narratives and imagineering tend in the end to boil down to very little. Notably, the obstacles may also reside with the cities themselves due to a lack of transformative potential and preparedness to challenge their own cultural horizon and territorial belonging. In sum, naming does not automatically translate to tangible togetherness and concrete integration. Twinning may hence, due to its rather challenging nature as a cross-border endeavour, be too demanding to start with and actually belong – together with a considerable number of other proposals and visions launched since the end of the Cold War (cf. O’Dowd, 2003) – to dreams and visions almost impossible to implement in terms of actual togetherness and unification.

# Cities as New International Actors

Looking back, the principles underpinning the Westphalian order provided little space for other actors other than states in the sphere of international relations and entities such as cities were expected to remain exclusively within the sphere of the 'domestic'. However, the prerogative of states to insert divisive borders has gradually eroded and consequently various sub-statist entities – including cities – have been able to establish relations of their own and to do so even without any decisive supervision exercised by their respective states.

As to Europe, the post-WWII logic of integration and interdependence provided the ground also for cities to aspire for togetherness breaching previous divides. They could participate in and join the endeavours of reconciliation, and did so particularly across the French-German border (cf. Wagner, 1995). It then turned out that the experiences gained in that context were equally applicable in the sphere of the East-West conflict as the Cold War was not just conducive to the emergence of a strict hierarchy, one premised on the primacy of states in the sphere of international relations. It did not merely contribute to the constitution of strictly divided and bordered political space but also allowed – towards the end of that period – cities to establish town-to-town relations. Cities could thereby contribute to the emergence of transnational spaces, although they had to do so under conditions rather strictly controlled and supervised by states. Their motivations were in the first place idealistic with cities aiming at de-polarization, the bolstering of mutual understanding and the creation of ties of friendship between people across the East-West barrier. Cooperation itself was in the first place symbolic in character and rarely driven by any pragmatic concerns and interests. In remaining primarily symbolic in essence, the contacts established amounting to meetings between local leaders, the shaking of hands, cultural events and organizing festivals but they could, in a few cases, also consist of deliveries of aid and the establishment of somewhat more permanent ties.

The contacts created and the networks brought about could be seen as representing a kind of 'diplomacy'. This is also evidenced by that concepts such as 'paradiplomacy' or 'city diplomacy' (van der Pluijm, 2007) have been coined in order to account for the relations established. It is, however, worthwhile to note that cities do in general not aim at applying and copying the principles and characteristic to state-to-state relations. They do not reach out on behalf of the state but do usually do so for reasons of their own. This is to say that they do not regard the relations established as an integral aspect of more formal 'foreign' policies. As noted by Beate Wagner, (1998: 42), if cities try to copy the political type of relations that exist between states, they are most of the times unable to

develop the necessary plurality or bring about the trans-national quality of their relations. Upholding the distinction between the statist and the local, city-related departures conceptually as well as a sphere of practice also entails that states can for their part remain quite lenient *vis-à-vis* cooperation between city-pairs. They may view the relations established as being in the first place societal and pragmatic in nature (rather than pertaining to various spheres of 'high-policy' or security-related concerns), this then allowing them to stay aloof from any references to 'diplomacy' in the context of their quite non-politicized city-to-city relations.

It may also be noted that it has become easier to distinguish between the societal and more statist departures in the sphere city-based relations straddling borders. Whereas the previous and more idealistically premised relations remained in some sense statist and political in nature – the aim of contacts between cities being one of contributing to statist policies in a constructive manner and to complement and reproduce the conciliatory endeavours part of statist policies on a local level – the idealist features have over time basically disappeared. They have changed with economic and growth-oriented issues coming to the fore. Cities coalesce across borders in order to solve concrete and shared problems and this is done for reasons of their own and by employing the competence that they themselves harbour. They aim at adding to their strength by transgressing various borders – be they conceptual, identity-related or spatial – and do so by joining forces in the context of various regional endeavours, or for that matter, through lobbying in various broader contexts. What used to be idealistically motivated and mainly citizen-driven endeavours with issues such as peace, friendship and mutual understanding high on the agenda has more recently turned into something far more mundane and elite-oriented. In essence, the driving force, one spurred by various economic, social, cultural as well as environmental concerns, amounts increasingly to that of self-interest.

Furthermore, the logic has turned EU-related rather than remained statist. With some of the financial means available for twinning and other forms of cooperation coming from the European Union and related funds, the profile of the cities involved has become quite Europe-oriented. Previously closed and barred spaces – with cities at the edge of statist space being unavoidably seen as peripheral – are opened up as these border-regional entities aim at benefiting from cross-border networking. It may, more generally, be observed that cities have, for a variety of reasons, become part of an increasingly competitive logic, and they have been compelled to devise active strategies of their own. However, and significantly, they also seem to have the self-confidence required to do so and act in this context according to their own self-understanding and specific needs.

It may also be noted that the constitutive principles and departures undergirding citiness have some specific features. As claimed by James Donald (1999), the essence of being a

city consists of the art of immediance. It is premised on the ability of the citizens to be present among strangers, as us among non-us. Zygmund Bauman (1995), for his part, speaks of fellow-citizens as 'inside-strangers'. Difference is taken to complement similarity and it is furnished with rather benign if not distinctly positive readings. There exists, as to social distance, both a familiar presence and an anonymous absence in the city. It should hence be relative easy, owing to these inherent properties, to push the encounter further out without bringing arguments pertaining to statist concerns and security into the discourse. Or to state it differently: the established link between space and identity may be ruptured and the essence of the city reproduced in a somewhat broader and differently bordered scalar context through processes such as city twinning. Arguably, those properties ground the competence and ability of cities to take stock of the various opportunities opening up with the changing nature of Europe's state-related borders.

At large, although the networking of cities is in the first place underpinned by the logic of competition and carried by an interest in conducting a kind of local 'foreign economic policies' (cf. Wellmann, 1998: 11) the consequences of such moves reach far beyond the economic sphere. The currently ongoing economisation of inter-city relations implies, in one of its aspects, that cities now basically follow a rationale of their own in linking in and networking with each other. They seem, in fact, to submit themselves less than used to be the case to departures that are in essence statist and aim instead, through new forms of signification and imagining space, at bolstering their own subjectivity also in the sphere of transnational relations.

This 'liberation' and reification is also very much visible in the form of various international town associations that have over the recent years experienced a boom in membership. Cities part of Central Europe used to spear-head this trend (cf. Wagner, 1995 and 1998), although those located in Northern Europe have been very quick over the last two decades to catch up and join the trend (Johansson and Stålvant, 1998). They have coalesced through the Union of Baltic Cities (UBS), projects such as the Baltic Palette or by joining some other networks of twinning, i.e. a rather extensive network of 'sister' cities.



# Institutionalization of City-Twinning

Twinning has, from the very beginning, been associated with various forms of institutionalization. In the first place, the latter has been there in order to find sources of financing but also in order to coordinate various activities (on twinning arrangements in Northern Europe see appendix 1) and to gain recognition. Within Europe, town twinning (in the broader sense) is supported by the *European Union*, i.e. twinning has a recognized position as part of European integration. In fact, the European Commission has since 1989 provided financial support for activities pertaining to twinning. The current EU support of twinning is channelled for the period 2007–2013 through the program “*Europe for Citizens*”, which aims to support a broad range of activities and organizations in the pursuit of “active European citizenship” (<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/>). The overall budget of the program is of €215 million and €11 to €14 million is set aside each year, i.e. specifically earmarked for purposes of twinning (Twinning for tomorrow's world, 2007: 28).

Five permanent priorities to be taken into account are outlined in the program in connecting twinning to European integration:

- The future of the European Union and its basic values
- Active European Citizenship: participation and democracy in Europe
- The inter-cultural dialogue
- People's wellbeing in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development
- The impact of EU policies in societies

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (the European section of the United Cities and Local Governments, the world organization of local authorities) also endeavours at promoting twinning initiatives and exchanges between European towns and communities (<http://www.ccre.org>). According to the CEMR paper, twinning does not merely stand out as a tool to promote peace and stability in the region but is also depicted as a way enhancing a single European identity and citizenship (Twinning for tomorrow's world, 2007: 3). In addition to the promotion of cooperative links between the EU member states at the local level, the CEMR perceives twinning as providing a vital instrument in bringing non-EU countries closer to the EU. In general, co-financing is seen as conducive to municipalities preparing themselves to face various challenges of European integration, in particular in the context of their pre-accession to the

Union. Twinning is also noted and recognized in the sense that a website dedicated to town twinning has been launched (<http://www.twinning.org>).

*EUROCITIES* constitutes a network consisting of major European cities. It brings together the local governments of 134 large cities in 34 European countries (<http://www.eurocities.eu/main.php>). The network's activities address a wide range of policies concerning economic development and cohesion policy, the provision of public services, climate change, energy and environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society as well as governance and international cooperation (EUROCITIES Strategic Objectives, 2004). A considerable number of North European municipalities partake in the network: Aarhus and Copenhagen (Denmark); Tallinn (Estonia); Espoo, Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere, Turku and Vantaa (Finland); Riga (Latvia); Vilnius (Lithuania); Bergen and Oslo (Norway); Gothenburg, Malmo and Stockholm (Sweden).

*METREX (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas)* offers a platform for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience regarding metropolitan affairs. The network has members from some 50 metropolitan regions and areas as well as partners in many others. METREX is a partner of European institutions, the research community, governmental organisations and other networks (<http://www.eurometrex.org/EN/index.asp>).

Also the *Douzelage* movement is connected to twinning in the sense of being the brainchild of the Granville and Sherborne Twinning Associations in 1989. Delegates of the twelve founder members, one for each European Community member state, met in 1991 in Granville to sign the charter formally bringing Douzelage into existence. The name is a combination of *douze* for twelve and *jumelage* for twinning in French. Several towns from Northern Europe – Holstebro (Denmark), Türi (Estonia), Karkkila (Finland), Sigulda (Latvia), Prienai (Lithuania) and Oxelösund (Sweden) – are members of the Douzelsge (<http://www.douzelage.org/index.php?id=4>).

In a somewhat broader and different context, the *Baltic Metropolises network* (BaltMet) represents 11 capitals and metropolitan cities around the Baltic Sea: Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Malmö, Oslo, Riga, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Vilnius and Warsaw (<http://www.baltmet.org>). One of the BaltMet's key priorities consists of the implementation of the recent EU Strategy and Action Plan for the Baltic Sea region in areas such as growth, employment, environment, education, competitiveness, innovation and change (Baltic Metropolises Ready to Implement the EU Strategy, 2009).

A number of other organisations are helpful in developing twinning projects in the region – Union of the Baltic Cities, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, Baltic Ports Organisation, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, "The Islands of the Baltic Sea",

International Association of Cities and Ports, European Association of Historic Towns and Regions, The International Network for Urban Development, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Energy Cities, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office, etc.

In Russia, the *Twin Cities International Association* aims at promoting sister relations with foreign municipalities. It was established in 1991. and consists of 320 cities and regions from Russia and CIS countries (<http://www.twin-cities.ru>).

As far as twinning in narrow sense is concerned, the twin cities proper have established an organization of their own. Hence *the City Twins Association* (CTA) was established in December 2006 as a result of a City Twins Cooperation Network project (2004–2006). It is co-financed by the EU's Interreg IIIC Programme (<http://www.citytwins.org>) and altogether 14 cities are associated with the CTA, including four pairs located in Northern Europe: Valka-Valga (Latvia–Estonia), Imatra-Svetogorsk (Finland-Russia), Narva-Ivangorod (Estonia-Russia) and Tornio-Haparanda (Finland-Sweden).

According to the CTA Strategy for 2010–2020, the association is concentrated on developing cooperation between the bordering twinning cities in the following sectors:

- Co-operation between the city administrations
- Local industrial development
- Promotion of labour mobility
- Social and health issues
- Border crossing
- Education and training
- Cultural co-operation
- Co-operation of the third sector/citizens
- Promotion of interests of the city twins at different political levels (national, EU) (City Twin Association Strategy 2010–2020, 2009; see also appendix 2).

With the implementation of the Schengen system since late 2007 and with the system also covering the new EU member states, the statist features of the transcended borders have lost much of their restrictive meaning. Instead of remaining divisive, they increasingly amounting to frontiers and shared border-spaces. Crucially, border-regions have turned much more open and fluid in spatial terms thereby also facilitating cross-border integration such as twinning.

Some of the city-pairs using the option have been more successful than others, and the association itself views Tornio-Haparanda and Imatra-Svetogorsk as belonging to the more advanced cases whereas Narva-Ivangorod is thought of as a 'rather loose' city pair. Some stand out as established and well-functioning whilst others represent more efforts

of purporting themselves as attractive and visible, i.e. political dreamscapes rather than realities. Kirkenes in northern Norway and Nikel on the Russian side of the Norwegian-Russian border constitute the latest case of city twinning with an agreement signed in June 2008 between the two communities. Quite probably the Kirkenes-Nikel pair also joins, in due time, the CTA and it remains to be seen how the newcomers then succeed in making use of their recently declared connectedness across the Norwegian-Russian border. In any case, their decision to become city twins seems to indicate that the concept of twinning has retained its attractiveness (especially in Northern Europe).

Interestingly, some of the CTA's expressed aims still carry an echo of the previous ideologically loaded period of city twinning. They do so in pointing to aspirations such as those of promoting mutual respect, cohesion and understanding among the member-cities. Similarly, there are references to the advancement of neighbourliness and multiculturalism, although in the first place the aim is to share experiences in the sphere of problem-solving. Basically the aim is one of converting their border-related location usually associated with peripherality into an asset. This is to say that a rather self-centred and functionalist approach prevails with the logic outlined also pointing in general more to diversity than far-reaching unity and similarity. Thus the levelling down of differences in living standards is mentioned as one of the more concrete and mundane tasks and the broader aims consist of contributing to a 'Wider Europe' on a local scale, although in practice the cities have to struggle with quite concrete issues. They do so above all by aiming at bolstering their share of the benefits originating with cross-border activities, i.e. activities which usually tend to serve non-local rather than local purposes.

Coming together undoubtedly adds to their visibility as local actors linked in a specific way to each other in the context of Europeanness. Moreover, it helps to anchor the concept of twinning in the public discourse by furnishing it with a distinct structural and organizational background, although the efforts of branding and networking across the border do not imply that the twin city concept would then also become more authoritative or established in legal terms.

In addition to local, regional and national (with states supporting the establishment and utilization of cross-border contacts) financing, EU's Tacis and Interreg programs have been key sources utilized in the activities of the CTA and the cooperation that takes place between the twin cities more generally. Occasionally financing has been received from various international financing institutes such as the Nordic Investment Bank and the European Investment Bank.

# Tornio-Haparanda: a Success Story?



Bothnian Arc map

Although operating within a rather well-established setting and regime of European cross-border co-operation, the interest in projecting oneself as a twin city as well as the symmetries, competence, interests, problems and relevant infrastructures of the cities taking part vary considerably. They seem, in fact, to represent rather diverse patterns of co-operation. In some cases similarity is indeed present and the conceptual umbrella of twinning has really developed into an asset – as in the case of Tornio and Haparanda, two cities connected across the Finnish-Swedish border by a bridge. They are

situated on either side of the border consisting of the Torne River in the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea region.

The town of Tornio was initially established by the Swedish King in 1621 on the western side of the Torne River, to become part of the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1809 (after the Russian-Swedish war). On the Swedish side a new town, Haparanda, was established in 1821 as a replacement of the loss of Tornio. In this sense Haparanda came into being precisely because of the appearance of the border. It is also to be noted that in terms of historical memory the Tornio-Haparanda configuration stands out as a case of ‘duplicated cities’ (Buursink, 2001; Ehlers, 2001). They do not have a joint history in the sense of having been part of a unified whole – except that prior to Finnish and Swedish state-building the region was a rather unified one consisting of Finnish-speakers and a Saami population – and, over time, they have also varied in size as well as wealth, although more recently the differences in living standard have been levelled out.

Tornio with its 25.000 inhabitants is larger than Haparanda which has some 10.000 inhabitants, although the relationship is in most respect quite symmetric. Tornio also has a rather coherent Finnish-speaking population with almost no Swedes living on the Finnish side of the border (some 20 percent speak good or very good Swedish (Zalamans, 2001) whereas the population is more mixed in Haparanda with three different language-groups basically of similar size. There are the ‘Tornedalians’ who are the native population with Swedish citizenship, albeit with Finnish or ‘Meänkieli’ (usually seen as a particular dialect of Finnish) as their language, the purely Swedish-speaking Swedes, and then the native Finns with Finnish as their language, although with a competence in Swedish and perhaps also ‘Meänkieli’ (cf. Lunden and Zalamans, 2001; Zalamans, 2003). Tornio-Haparanda is hence, in being culturally quite diversified, more than just a ‘bi-

national city' premised on Finnishness and Swedishness. Overall, cultural differences transcending nationally premised unity have been there already for a considerable period of time, and have constituted – particularly in the case of Haparanda – an integral part of the essence of the cities from the very start.

Similarly, the exploitation of vicinity and borders as a resource is not a new phenomenon in the case of Tornio-Haparanda. Their northern peripherality has according to Riitta Kosonen and K Loikkanen (2008) been conducive to a “need to unite”, this then pointing to a distinct and city-related driving logic. Being divided only by a stretch of wetland, and with a tradition of many informal contacts on the level of the inhabitants reaching far back in history, the two cities started formal cooperation already in the 1960's through the common use of a swimming pool (Jussila, 1997: 58). A bilingual paper, *Kranni* (Neighbour), saw the light of the day and was distributed to all households with information on common development in both towns several times a year (Brańka, 2009: 191). Since then inter-



Tornio-Haparanda (aerial photo)

est in cooperation has gradually amounted to developing a very explicit strategy of transboundary cooperation, including joint planning and organization (*Provincia Bothniensis*) in 1985 (Kujala, 2000). This is to say that a twin city strategy was coined in a top-down manner and has been implemented from 1987 onwards, and it has over time brought about a considerable degree of mutual trust and well-functioning relations of cooperation. These have been conducive both to the identity of the entity created as well as the solving of a considerable number of rather practical problems. The latter range from a joint rescue and ambulance service, a tourist service, employment information agencies, joint schools such as the common comprehensive school opened in 1989, educational facilities such as a language school and a Eurocollege established in 1998, a common library with citizens also provided with the choice of picking the facility to their liking and joint garbage collection dump (Jussila, 1997: 58; Schultz et al., 2002: 55).

The cooperation is structured by the city councils having a joint meeting each year whereas the city boards have common meetings twice a year. The more concrete cooperation has been managed by a cooperation board consisting of ten members and assisted by a cooperation secretary. The board has established working groups to deal with questions of education, technical services, tourism, social services and health, city planning, border-related business issues, culture and youth as well questions pertaining to sports and leisure (Nousiainen, 2007).

In particular, the parties pride themselves of a hotel complex with a bar table stretching across the national border and on a local golf course straddling not just the national boundaries but also the difference consisting of Finland and Sweden belonging to different time zones (the story being that “even the shortest putt may take an hour to complete”). These properties have often been viewed as the very expression of the common space created through endeavours of city-twinning.

The more recent developments pertain to a new and shared city core that bridges the two cities in a very concrete fashion. Significantly, the two towns have gradually succeeded in attracting a considerable amount of investments and businesses. The newly established IKEA furniture mall as part of the city core is a case in point in testifying not just adjacency but the existence of shared space. It is worth noting that IKEA is attracting, for commercial reasons, customers from northern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden but to some extent even Russia, i.e. the aspirations reach far beyond city-twinning.

On a very concrete plan, a unified area and a joint core have been created by constructing unifying roads and connecting pathways as well the establishment of a common circle bus line. A further example of cooperation of a rather practical and functional kind consists of the instalment of letterboxes of the neighbouring postal administration with letters consequently being treated as domestic mail (and therefore not circulated by sending them first to the capitals to be delivered according to the usual border-dependent rules). The establishment of such a short-cut through moves of re-scaling and de-bordering is, of course – in addition to the more practical gains – loaded with considerable symbolic significance in pointing to the far-reaching unity. In other words, the divisive effects of national borders have been radically circumvented as a consequence of twinning.

In short, by lowering the impact of borders and utilizing the border-transcending approach as a joint resource, the two cities have succeeded in creating the image of a rather broad and unified area of marketing (see [www.pagransen.com](http://www.pagransen.com)). Their competitiveness and attractiveness has also increased with access to a broader variety of various labour skills and other competences.

It should be noted, however, that some broader developments have in the first place facilitated a lowering of the border. In fact, the border has not been much of an obstacle since the 1960's owing to intense Nordic cooperation. It has been quite easy for Nordic citizens to transgress, and with Finland and Sweden joining the EU in 1995 the border became almost invisible. EU-membership has further spurred cooperation by labelling various endeavours as European rather than local. Likewise, increased EU financial means have been available to promote twinning.



EuroCity shopping centre

Yet it is also to be noted that the locally premised togetherness of Tornio-Haparanda has grown so intense that it actually challenges various forms of administrative and legal departures premised on nationness. Finnishness and Swedishness have, in the case of Tornio-Haparanda, to compete seriously implying that it then also tests the ability of the locals to project themselves beyond their usual linguistic, cultural and political borders.

In fact, the preparedness has varied as indicated by that the epithet of a 'twin city' has on occasions been substituted by the one of 'EuroCity' pointing to europeanization as the driving logic with the latter being employed for a while since the beginning of the 1990s. The usage of such an alternative marker quite obviously points to efforts of developing an alternative to the concept of twinning as the latter seemed at least initially to meet considerable local resistance particularly on the Swedish side. Commonality could hence be purported in less site-specific terms and presented instead as part and parcel of a broader Europeanness. This approach was in particular applied by *Provincia Bothniensis* (with the term pointing to a regional driving logic) as a marketing strategy in aspiring for added visibility and closer commercial ties and the efforts of anchoring oneself in Europeanness rather than nationness, nordicity or just pointing to detached local entities coming together as city twins. For example, the electronic newspaper informing about developments in the Tornio-Haparanda region was for some years to be found by looking up [www.eurocitynet.nu](http://www.eurocitynet.nu). It may be noted, however, that the concept of twinning has returned as a key marker. It has again become dominant over the recent years as the initial resistance to togetherness in the form of twinning has by and large faded away.

The efforts of creating a far-reaching commonality have also been restricted by that Finland has gone over to the Euro whereas Sweden has stayed with its national currency.



This state of affairs implies that Tornio and Haparanda remain divided due to the existence of different national currencies. However, considerable efforts to bridging this divide have taken place as the Euro seems to have turned into a valid currency also on the Swedish side of the national borders and the Swedish crown is equally a valid currency on the side of Tornio. Moreover, Haparanda has locally made the decision to use Euros extensively in its calculations and budgeting, among other things in order to facilitate the planning and implementation of joint projects with Tornio (Brańka, 2009: 195; see also the special report on city-twinning by Christopher Brown-Humes in *Financial Times*, December 4, 2001). The measures have been portrayed in manner indicating that the driving force of twinning consists of the cities themselves leaning on europeanisation, and if need be they are also prepared to challenge the policies of their respective states. In any case, both issues – the toning down of the label of a EuroCity and the bolstering of the position of the Euro as a joint currency – have profound symbolic importance in allowing the re-imagined cities to be increasingly seen as being integrated and unified along the lines of broader a European development.

Obviously, the projecting of oneself into a new and far-reaching unity has not been easy and the problems seem mostly to have been discernible among the Swedish-speaking inhabitants of Haparanda. They tend to feel that the down-playing of differences favours too much the Finnish-speakers on both sides of the border. Lundén and Zalamans (2001: 36) also point out that there is a legacy on the Swedish side to view Finland as “poor, dangerous or irredentist”. To re-read the previous otherness and to incorporate it into a joint we-ness in the context of twinning is thus a demanding challenge.

The adaptation on the Swedish side has been somewhat slow as indicated by a local referendum organized in Haparanda in September 2002 concerning the construction of a joint city core. The result turned out to be negative with a slight majority of those participating voting against the plan (Lunden, 2007: 26; Pikner, 2008b: 11). The suggested form of unity was rejected, although the plan has nonetheless been implemented and a joint core has been constructed. Moreover, it also appears that public opinion has later turned more approving of border-transcending cooperation between the two cities (Heliste et.al., 2004: 24; Ekberg and Kvist, 2004: 5).

It may be noted, though, that a part of Swedish-speaking youth in Haparanda remains quite sceptical about twinning as such. Haparanda is hence perceived as a border-located city in a traditional sense, and one considerably different from the neighbouring Tornio (Jukarainen, 2000).

In other words, although the whole trend is positive, the twin city does not fully function – at least not yet – as a unified city in a proper sense of the word. Accepting that the previously divisive border now predominantly connects and facilitates cooperation and hence invites for a projection into the we-ness on which twinning is to some extent also

met with resistance. The cooperative potential has in the first place been activated on local level by the respective city administrations. They have, in imaging and representing themselves differently, prioritized their mutual relations over separateness and difference. Activity has been preferred over passivity. They have done so in a process-driven manner, although the frame conducive to such endeavours has been brought into being by broader Nordic and Europe-related forces and developments. In any case, and due to the positive experiences gained, people, goods as well as ideas increasingly flow across the border, and do so almost without restrictions. The two cities involved in twinning have increasingly become to be defined not by separation as has traditionally been the case but through their interrelated being and far-reaching connectedness, albeit the blending and accompanying re-construction of the local identities seems to be a somewhat slower and constitute a quite demanding process.

# Narva-Ivangorod: A Case of Partition



Narva and Ivangorod fortresses

Among the various paired cities, Narva and Ivangorod have either been part of a joint configuration or have stood opposite to each other. Their histories as border-related sites where a major connective route has crossed a river tend to be complex as well as tragic. They experienced periods of rule by Denmark, Livonia, Russia, Sweden and again

Russia. The collision of broader interests is well exemplified by the two fortresses, Long Hermann (the Narva Castle) and that of Ivangorod, facing each other across the Narva River. The city-sites have functioned as a single composite settlement for nearly three and a half centuries, first under Swedish rule in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and then later during the tsarist period with Moscow having conquered Narva during the Livonian Wars. They were then incorporated, with Estonia's first period of independence, into the eastern county of Virumaa. After a brief period of Bolshevik control during late 1918 to early 1919 both towns were incorporated into Estonia under the terms of the 1920 Treaty of Tartu.

Their togetherness in the context of Estonia was altered by the outbreak of WWII. As a result of the war the Estonian population was either evacuated from the Narva region by the Nazi army or deported to Siberia by the Soviet authorities and an immigration of Russian-speakers followed. Administratively, the conjoined status of the two cities changed in 1945 with Ivangorod becoming part of a Russian Republic, although they continued to form a rather closely connected functional and cultural space despite the drawing of an administrative border.

In the post-war period the two towns had their respective city administrations, but figured again as a rather integrated economic, social and cultural space. This commonality changed considerably in 1991 with the Narva River now delimiting a *de facto* state border. The two entities can thus – with the new border being institutionalized and an international border-crossing set up on the bridge connecting the two towns – be analytically slotted in the category of ‘partitioned cities’ (Buursink, 2001: 8).

The divorce between the two cities was in many ways, in view of their previously far-reaching togetherness, quite drastic as well as contentious. Most of the previously jointly managed infrastructure was disconnected starting with public transportation in 1992, the telephone service in 1994 and in 1996 the slate-oil powered Baltic Electricity plant

near Narva stopped providing Ivangorod with heat. (Lundén, 2009: 144). In addition, the border was initially quite controversial in a statist sense. The new post-Soviet border did not correspond to the Estonian-Russian border as defined in the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920, and the *de facto* border – which also left the eastern bank of the Narva River and the town of Ivangorod outside the independent Estonia – thus remained a bone of contention for quite some time between Estonia and Russia. The question was, however, settled in the end by deciding that the “temporary control line” also stood for the final *de jure* border. An agreement, premised on the existing border, was reached between the Russian and Estonian governments, although not finally approved with Russia reacting negatively to efforts by the Estonian Parliament to add a reference to past injustices to the preamble of the agreement. In any case, the border now works in a rather normal manner despite of that the delineation still lacks ratification due to disagreements related mainly to politics of memory and interpretations of historical events (cf. Joenniemi, 2008: 139–142).

The quarrelling and the appearance of a rather divisive border have in the local discourse strengthened contrasting notions such as ‘we’ and ‘they’. Neighbours are ‘there, over the bridge’ and ‘on the other side of the border’. At large, and despite the broadly shared ethnic and linguistic background of the inhabitants, there was at least initially a growing orientation on both sides away from the border to be detected (Berg et.al., 2006: 8; Brednikova, 2007: 60). It also appears that the Estonian membership in the EU and NATO as forms of Europeanness have, instead of bridging the gap as might perhaps be expected, further accentuated the split.

However, the various adverse features part of the new constellation have also implied that attention has been devoted to the problems caused by the re-appearance of the border and resources have constantly been mobilized in order to find solutions. For example, the “Narva Forum” organized in 1997 on the initiative of the OSCE with both Russian and Estonian authorities participating, is a case in point ([www.ctc.ee/narva\\_forum\\_report.pdf](http://www.ctc.ee/narva_forum_report.pdf)). The themes discussed at the forum included suggestions concerning a closer cooperation between Narva and Ivangorod in order for the new border not to turn into a distinctly dividing line. Therefore, representations depicting the border as a resource and a unifying factor were constructed and implemented during the years to follow.

At large, a dialogue has been re-established in order for adjacency to work more positively and provide ground for the formation of a connected borderland. The vocabularies employed at least immediately after the re-appearance of the state border have been about “the strengthening and restoration of dialogue between communities”. This was also the approach applied for example by the Council of Europe once Narva was included on its list of cases to be explored (together with other cases such as Belfast,

Mitrovitsa and Nicosia) in the context of a project focusing on 'Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention' (Susi and Roll, 2003). Yet, and despite increasing togetherness, the problems to be remedied remain numerous. In addition to the various contested issues that originated with the severing of the previously integrated infrastructure, both Narva and Ivangorod have been for a considerable period of time known for a considerable level of unemployment and various social ills such as drugs, crime and HIV. Both cities seem to have gained a negative reputation in terms of urban degeneration (Lundén, 2002: 142–144). However, it may also be noted that the situation of employment seems to have improved at least in Ivangorod with a new car assembling factory being located there. It consequently also impact Narva in the sense of bolstering the local economies by providing some persons from Narva with employment.

The deterioration of a rather connected city space into two different ones created feelings of a loss and a variety of plans and projects were proposed primarily by the leadership of Narva for togetherness to be bolstered. For example, in 1993 the citizens of Narva – consisting up to 96 percent of Russian-speakers – voted by an overwhelming majority for a more autonomous position (*samostoiatel'nost'*) and a kind of 'special status'. Subsequently, a declaration was issued to that effect, although the question – generating fears of secession – was soon settled with the help the OSCE ([www.netuni.nl/courses/conflict1/week2/2.4\\_week.html](http://www.netuni.nl/courses/conflict1/week2/2.4_week.html)).

As far as the water drainage and sewage systems (after much quarrelling about the debts caused by the services provided by Narva), Ivangorod had in the end to construct systems of its own (see Tüür et al., 1999; Pikner, 2008a; Waack, 2000: 187). Some common activities and projects have appeared specifically under the heading of 'twin cities' inspired by cooperation with Tornio-Haparanda (Höhn, 2003: 58; Heliste et al., 2004: 16), although the label seems to have been used somewhat sparsely. Notably, joint appearances have also seen the light of the day in the spheres of culture, tourism, employment policies, facilitation of border-crossing, coordination of spatial planning and improvements in infrastructure. There were plans to establish a joint tourist route covering the two fortresses on their respective side of the river, development of a historical promenade along the both sides of the Narva River and construction of an aqua park in the border area. These plans, however, were hindered by the global crisis-related troubles, but have nonetheless been implemented to a degree. It appears, at large, that twinning rests as to Narva and Ivangorod on local initiatives with little, if any support from the respective states, Russia and Estonia, although support from the EU in terms of funding has contributed to keeping twinning alive.

Being part of the CTA has been quite conducive to the process of Narva and Ivangorod coming together. The brand of twin cities increasingly conveys an innovative and open image that is very different from the one which prevailed in early of the 1990s.

Cooperation has been facilitated within a broader frame part of EU-Russia relations in the sense that a specific visa-exchange arrangement has come into being between Narva and Ivangorod. In 1992 and the years to follow up to 2.000 local residents have been annually able to cross the river visa-free on the basis of a special permit (Smith, 2002: 104). This changed with Estonia deciding in line with the Schengen requirements to implement a full visa regime with Russia. However, in order to compensate for the loss of privileges for local residents at the border, a new agreement between Estonia and Russia stipulated that both sides can issue up to 4.000 multi-entry visas annually to border residents having compelling needs to cross the border regularly (Joenniemi, 2008: 11).

Yet, the main obstacle to the emergence of communality seems to consist of the existence of a considerable mental and identity-related distance. The gap premised on the two cities turning their back on each other rather than opting for togetherness has not necessarily been shrinking. Julia Boman and Eiki Berg (2007: 206) note that there is no perception of local cross-border historical-cultural identity: "People in Narva possess some kind of 'Narvian' identity which is not Russian anymore, but has not become Estonian either". Rather than meeting each other, the opposite seems to be true. There have, in fact, been scant opportunities for border-transcending identities premised on closeness between the two adjacent cities to emerge. Narva, for its part, has showed signs of turning increasing inwards – with the struggle being about how much space there is both in regard to specific Narvanness in relation to an Estonian national identity as well as Europeaness and being part of the West more generally.

The inclusion of Narvanness into Estonianness has in this context called for quite sharp delineations in regard to Russianness, or to put it differently, opening up *vis-à-vis* the difference seen to be embedded in the inhabitants of Ivangorod would be a risky and contested move. This is so as it could be seen as adding further to the perceived strangeness of the inhabitants of Narva themselves in the sphere of Estonianness. Their Estonianness, to some extent questioned from the very start owing to historical and cultural reasons, would remain in doubt and they would continue to be categorized as almost a 'non-us' within a political and cultural landscape premised on a relative clear nation-building formula of similarity inside and difference outside the borders of the state.

Twinning thus unavoidably turns into a rather requiring and loaded theme. This fact and the sensitivity entailed in the issue might also account for why the label of twin city has predominantly gained connotations of de-politicization and interest-oriented cooperation of a very practical and mundane kind. It has been deliberately narrowed down to apply to explicitly functional issues such as city planning and various interest-related contacts between the respective administrations, and has not been brought to any major extent into the public sphere. Interestingly, if linked to various broader discourses

on Europeanization, it would be conducive to a transcending of the various local and national dead-locks and tensions. To some extent this appears to have taken place and the concept hence appears to enjoy sufficient legitimacy in the overall discourse. The very concrete problems that both Narva and Ivangorod have encountered and have to deal with in being located at the border have clearly contributed to this. Twinning thus seems, in appearing as a kind of 'third' and Europe-related option, to have been able over the recent years to generate some – albeit limited – features of communality across the border (cf. Brednikova, 2007: 62).

# Imatra-Svetogorsk: Driven by Pragmatism?

For quite some time Imatra and Svetogorsk occupied the standing of a rather special case in the sphere of EU-Russia relations. The two cities, located on their respective sides of the Finnish-Russian border, were as such unique in terms of their location in constituting the only place on the EU-Russia border where both rail and automobile border crossings existed. Prior to the EU enlargement of 2004 – with Narva-Ivangorod now forming a similar case – they stood out as the only region located immediately at the EU-Russian frontier with the boundary separating two adjacent urban settlements from each other.

In the context of the classification regarding ‘partitioned’ and ‘duplicated’ cities, the case of Imatra-Svetogorsk contains elements of both. It used to be an integrated entity both within the Russian Empire and then in the independent Finland after 1917. However, as a result of, first, Soviet-Finnish ‘Winter war’ of 1939–1940 and then WWII, the Finnish-Russian border was re-drawn and the previously coherent industrial centre of Enso was split by the new border. In that context the main part of the area remained on the Finnish side, although a large pulp and paper factory stayed on the Soviet side. With the previous population having moved over to the Finnish side, it took some time before the area was re-populated. In January 1949 the city of Svetogorsk (i.e. *the City of Light Hills*) came into being. Similarly, Imatra evolved into a more coherent municipal entity.

As a consequence, for a long time the two cities had the character of ‘border cities’ with very little if any contacts between them. Yet it may be noted that some cooperation gradually emerged even in the Soviet period. It started in 1972 when a large construction project was launched as a joint Finnish-Russian endeavour in order to reconstruct the Svetogorsk paper combine. The arrangements took place on the level of states but did not involve Imatra in any particular manner, although a temporary border crossing was opened thus extending and facilitating local contacts. Importantly, it remained in use and served special arrangements even after the completion of the project in the 1980s (Eskelinen and Kotilainen, 2005: 37).

In the early 1990s – after the demise of the Soviet Union – local level cooperation took quite spontaneous and sometimes also quite chaotic forms. Entrepreneurial individuals as well as various organizations utilized the opportunity to visit the other side of the border launching occasionally also small-scale collaborative activities.



These quite sporadic contacts then paved a way to the first formal agreement between Imatra and Svetogorsk on cross-border cooperation in 1993. The document envisaged cooperation in areas such as economy, trade, education, culture, sport, etc. The specific content of the various cooperative projects premised on togetherness were clarified by signing annual protocols.

The next important step on the road towards increased contacts consisted of the “Imsveto” project. It aspired at developing an industrial park in Svetogorsk. This project, prepared by the Imatra Regional Development Company, aimed at being a pilot phase for a zone of joint entrepreneurship. However, the unifying endeavour never really materialized in the turbulent circumstances of that time. Yet it is to be noted that the driving logic underlying twinning has developed locally with Imatra and Svetogorsk using the opening provided by the increased transborder interaction unfolding between Finland and Russia.

The idea of a creation of the Russian-Finnish Key East Industrial Park (KEIP) in the neutral zone in the border-area was reanimated in 1999. An area spanning 136 hectares was designed for the project and Russian and Finnish experts prepared a draft intergovernmental agreement on the KEIP. The model applied in this context drew upon the Russian-Korean special economic zone (SEZ) in Nakhodka, i.e. Russian experiences related to another border area. Potential investors were to gain tax and customs exemptions and a visa-free regime was proposed and also a single KEIP management system was suggested. In 2003, a tender for development of the park was announced and the Finnish investment company Skanska stood out as the prospective winner.

However, economic development in Russia at large and locally in Svetogorsk undermined the project. It may also be noted that the passing of two new Russian laws in 2006 altered the circumstances. The new law on local government transferred issues related to industrial development, social security and education from municipalities up to the regional level. Moreover, the new Russian law on SEZ has downplayed the municipal competences and transferred them largely back to the regional and federal levels thereby impeding the competence of local actors such as cities. Currently municipalities have the authority to coin and operate in areas up to three hectares and hence it appears that their competence in creating and catering for the appearance of space straddling divisive borders has been seriously curtailed leaving the idea of a joint industrial park basically in the sphere of visions and representations of potential space.

This is, however, to some extent contrasted by the joint twin city strategy covering the years 2007–2013. The strategy informs that “the first companies have started their operations in the park” (consisting of a Russian company in the field of road-construction) and that a larger business park project has been launched. In order to

bolster entrepreneurship, the plans also include items such as establishing a common labour register.

The twin city concept appeared into the vocabularies in the late 1990s, mainly due to advice provided by various consultants. The logic suggested in terms of re-branding and bolstering the rather peripheral image of the two cities was embedded in Europeanness and this was also conducive to the appearance of the idea of twinning as one form of unified space. In any case, in 2001 Imatra and Svetogorsk signed a cooperation agreement and decided to opt – based on EU-related financing – for a common development strategy, although it appears that the two cities have never declared themselves formally as constituting a twin city. In 2000, a pilot project to develop the twin-cities strategy for the short-term (2002–2003) and long-term (2006–2010) periods was started under the aegis of the EU's Tacis program. The SWOT-analysis for the development of the Imatra-Svetogorsk region and recommendations for practical implementation of the twin-cities concept were produced (<http://svetogorsk.ru/>).

The initiative was, as noted, very much a local one (although also an offspring of the construction projects previously initiated by the states) in character. Yet the actual practices proceeded quite slowly and remained rather fragmentary in the early years. One concrete aspect of togetherness consisted of the interaction created by a paper factory with some of the employees commuting daily across the border. This implies that Svetogorsk is a border-dependent city. The stream has continued, and according to available information, currently some 60 (of those living on the Finnish side) persons commute regularly across the border. In commuting, they have to travel in a vehicle, although bikes are included in that category. Recently, one joint project in the sphere of twinning has consisted of constructing biking lanes available for those commuting across the border.

Finland's accession to the EU in the mid-1990's then opened up new options for twinning. In particular, the various EU funds became available for the regional cross-border cooperation. Of the EU financial instruments, Imatra and Svetogorsk have utilized both Interreg and Tacis to fund various joint projects. For example, construction of the cross-border point between Imatra and Svetogorsk (launched in July 2002) was one of the largest cooperative projects funded by Tacis (€6.75 million) ([http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/ru/news\\_231.htm](http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/ru/news_231.htm)).

Moreover, cooperative projects pertaining to energy services in Svetogorsk, improving waste water treatment systems, checking as well as measuring the quality of water and fish stocks in the Vuoksi River have been launched. Likewise, various educational projects have been coined and there have been efforts to improve the tourism infrastructure and bolster the competence of the municipal governments. The

international arts festival 'Vuoksa', pointing to efforts of creating joint lived space, is held annually in Imatra (May) and Svetogorsk (<http://www.lenobl.ru/>).

More recently, increased cooperation has taken place in the sphere of health and social security issues. There are also some new plans (under the EU-Russian 'neighbourhood partnership' program) to build a free-way that bypasses Svetogorsk and Imatra to eliminate the bottle-neck on the Russian-Finnish border and improve the transport communication system between the two countries. The governments of the Leningrad Region and South-East Finland are seen as principal partners. The Lappeenranta University of Technology and the Svetogorsk municipality and enterprises are planned to be co-partners of the project worth of some €5–6 million (<http://asninfo.ru/asn/57/13792>).

The general aim of twinning has been that of "improving the welfare of the inhabitants of the both towns" (Hurskainen, 2005: 132), i.e. facilitate border-crossing and communality in order to bolster the use of the resources available to the two increasingly conjoined urban settlements.

The visa regime on the Finnish-Russian border is an important issue in the context of the twin city arrangement. Despite some difficulties in this area for common Russian citizens, the system has in the case of the Imatra-Svetogorsk border been flexible enough to allow people commuting frequently across the border. Multiple visas for a year are easily available. There is also flexibility in the sense that in the context of the Summer Festivals organized in 2008, some 300 visas were available for free to the inhabitants of Imatra wanting to use the opportunity to visit Svetogorsk. Yet it would signal considerable progress in unity if the twin-city arrangement could, as such, become conducive for a more flexible visa regime allowing also for more intensive people-to-people contacts to develop.

The key decision-making body of twinning has consisted of a steering group with key members of respective administrations of the two towns onboard. In addition to the local input, the institutional setup includes a commission with representatives of various ministries in Finland and Russia taking part (although in practice the latter body has yielded very little and has in reality been abandoned). As to the organizational structures, it may also be noted that the Russo-Finnish centres for small and medium size enterprises (SME) support operations exist both in Imatra and Svetogorsk.

It should be noted that there was an idea of creating an inter-linked and broader area which consists not only of twins but several cities and other locations. The revision of the EU's Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) in 2007 and the efforts to utilize the options opening up on regional level seem to testify to this. With the NDI as a broader frame of transnationalisation increasingly turning into a concrete frame of cooperation, also other

cities located in the same border region together with Imatra and Svetogorsk have been tempted to pool their resources under the umbrella of the NDI. This might then imply that the twin city consisting of Imatra and Svetogorsk is on its way of becoming an integral part of a broader constellation called the Northern Dimension of Cross Border Cities, a coalescing amounting to a urban area of some 250.000 inhabitants with other cities such as Vyborg, Lappeenranta and Primorsk participating. One might expect that the concept and the twin city pattern do not disappear due to such a turn and broadening, albeit they change in being attached to a broader regional 'corridor' of 'border cities' reaching across the border.

More generally, the overall setting impacting the city-pair of Imatra-Svetogorsk has on the one hand turned increasingly conducive to cooperation but it has on the other hand not turned so close that distinct issues pertaining to local identities would have been raised to any major degree. This would, with history dividing rather than unifying and with the border still separating Imatra and Svetogorsk rather forcefully from each other, be a problematic issue. However, changes have taken place also at the local level that the other on their respective side of the border are increasingly noted, and regarded as an asset for peripheral cities to bolster their relative positions. This is a change as such in view of the long post-war period with the border being seen in rather divisive terms and the considerable dose of otherness projected into the neighbours.

# Valga-Valka: Divided by Nationness



Border between Valga and Valka

The Estonian town of Valga (situated in Southern Estonia; 15.300 inhabitants) and the Latvian one of Valka (located in Northern Latvia; 7.100 inhabitants) joined the chain of twin cities in April 2005 through an agreement to launch a project called “Valga-Valka: One City – Two States”. The word ‘joining’ is justified in this context also because their cooperation with Tornio-Haparanda contributed to the usage and spreading

of a twin city formula. There are, in this sense, signs of a particular pattern of the concept’s Europeanization to be detected in the case of Valga-Valka.

As such, the two cities have a long history of togetherness and connectedness. They left a mark in the historical records already in 1286 with the appearance of the German-sounding name of Walk. The Polish rule amounted to city rights being achieved in 1584, for this then to be followed in 1626 by the city becoming part of Estonia during Swedish rule. Some 100 years later it became integrated into the Russian Empire. Throughout this part of its history the city, while carrying the name Walk, was for the most part united and inhabited by both Estonians and Latvians. During the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became an important railway-knot, and a number of factories and workshops related to this function were established (Kant, 1932).

Estonia and Latvia both gained independence in 1918, although they were unable to agree upon a joint border and in this context the belongingness of the city. The international arbitrage, headed by the British envoy S. G. Talents, conclusively established the border between Estonia and Latvia. In the case of what was now comprehended as Valga-Valka, the border was drawn by staking out a line along a stream running through the city with ethnicity as the main criteria for dividing the previously rather unified city. Estonia got the railway station (a junction on the Tallinn-Riga and Pskov-Riga railway lines) and the main part of the commercial district whereas a minor part of the inner city and a main part of the suburbs were handed over to Latvia.

The two towns remained divided for two decades until the Second World War with Germany taking over, for this then to be substituted by Soviet annexation in 1945. The previous barriers were taken down as part of Sovietization, although a variety of ethnical and cultural lines of division prevailed. The only concrete border remaining was

administrative in character with the two cities belonging to different Soviet republics. Thus, in reality the two parts were again merged with the city functioning as a coherent space with much interaction and movement across the previous divides. Particularly the new Slavic population, consisting mainly of ethnic Russians, disregarded and pushed aside the various restrictions. Valga/Valka was in their view first and foremost a Soviet town, and one furnished with a unified administration, joint educational facilities, common healthcare and a system of transport.

In 1991, the largely unified entity was once again divided into two separate towns. The dividing line was re-installed, difference fenced outside a nationally premised border and the cities were, much to their own surprise, obliged to build up their respective and separate administrations. A joint urban planning project was shelved (Waack, 2000: 185). In this context, as part of nation-building and a delimitation of the Estonian and Latvian nation-states, also a considerable number of restrictions to the free movement across the border were introduced. The restoration of the national border of the two now independent states made it difficult and quite complicated – with customs, border-guards, passports and various forms of paperwork in place – for people and goods to cross the frontier. However, both of them have had problems with the quality of drinking water and had to construct their own sewage-treatment plants (Lundén, 2007: 28). It should be noted that particularly Valka suffered economically from the changes among other reasons because the industry of the town lost its previous markets.

With the local perspective of being a cities now strictly subordinated to their respective states, there was scant if any space available for cooperation between the two towns during the first years of separation. The togetherness of the past had evaporated and the spatial strategy pursued remained a passive one keeping previous borders in place. As noted by Dennis Zalamans (2008), no talks aspiring for an active and more cooperative to be enacted were allowed. The local authorities were by and large content with their posture as a 'border city' and did not view – in sharing the perspective of their respective national centres – cross-border cooperation as belonging to their sphere of competences. Instead they regarded it as part of 'foreign' policy belonging to the prerogatives of the state authorities or the EU and also the populations at large seem to have turned away from each other rather than aspired for a reproduction of the previous and lost unity.

In addition, the Russian population or the 'Aliens', i.e. people without citizenship (some 35 per cent of the population in Valga, while the respective figure is 25 per cent in the case of Valka), had to apply for a visa (Zalamans, 2008: 5).

The situation changed only gradually towards the mid-1990s. Contacts were then intensified, a cooperation agreement was signed and contacts emerged particularly in the context of an Interreg-financed project aiming at developing cross-border activities and cooperation. New educational institutes were established, Latvians may use the sport

arena and swimming pool located on the Estonian side of the border (Lundén, 2009: 148). Moreover, a Latvian-Estonian institute was established in Valga in 1999 and similarly a Estonian-Latvian Institute has been erected in Valga in 2001 (Schultz et al., 2002: 59). Overall, both sides revised their views on urban differences and re-conceptualized their cities in terms of increased local communality as expressed through the officially accepted unitary logo “one city, two countries”, one developed jointly in 2005.

Subsequently, relatively strong cross-border networks have developed in areas such as spatial planning, tourism, education, healthcare, culture and sports. Economic cooperation has, however, evolved rather slowly owing to problems related to border-crossing. Yet the aim has increasingly become one of contributing to economic development and raising the visibility and competitiveness of Valga-Valka as a common endeavour. A joint secretariat has emerged and a cross-border bus line was established as a rather concrete sign of the formation of common space, although it was short-lived due to a lack of passengers interested in taking a cross-border ride.

Estonia's and Latvia's EU membership (2004) did not immediately change things as both countries still remained outside Schengen. Under the impact of Europeaness the border has in the new context been increasingly conceptualized as a resource. It has been depicted as a unifying factor for example in the sense that twinning has provided the ground for applying for some EU-related grants. Moreover, Europeaness had quite concrete and drastic effects towards the end of 2007 with both Estonia and Latvia finally joining Schengen.

The change in the character of the border implies that in principle Valga-Valka has more recently become comparable to the case of Tornio-Haparanda. This is so as state-formation has declined in importance as a core constitutive departure, although it remains there in an administrative sense. Now culture and language seem to divide rather than unite as Estonian and Latvian are quite different as languages, and mostly the joint language employed consists of Russian with the older and English in case of the younger generation (Zalamans, 2008). Thomas Lundén (2009: 149) notes that in many cases local intentions clash with state legislation, and he adds “...with the ‘estonification’ or ‘latvification’ policy of each country”. Obviously, the urban logic appears to be subordinated to a rather statist one in the case of Valka/Valga.

In any case, city twinning stands potentially to gain from the almost complete demise of the border and there might consequently be increased emphasis on local departures connected – as to the policies of scale – to Europeaness. Whether this is the way developments unfold is still to be seen, and clearly some obstacles appear to remain. The cultural and identity-related resources for increased togetherness remain scarce, although also some progress can be noted with the concept of the twin city now increasingly

including previous strangers. In this vein, the symbolic space of “one city and two countries” remains in place and now the question is to what extent the two adjacent urban configurations are willing and able to make use of the options opening up in the pursuance of concrete city-policies.



# Kirkenes-Nikel: Catching a Second Wind of Twinning?

In the case of Kirkenes and Nickel, twinning takes place across a border that has been in place since 1944 and almost entirely closed up to the beginning of the 1990s. The border was, prior to 1944 one between Norway and Finland, with the Petsamo/Pechenga region and adjacent territories becoming part of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of WWII. The border was for a long comprehended as “a symbolic end of the world for people living on the two sides of it” as noted by Anastasia Rogova (2009: 33) and imagining it as part of a shared borderland has been possible only since the beginning of the 1990s.

Twinning entered the agenda as part and parcel of such imagining. It is, in the case of Kirkenes (northern Norway, Sør-Varanger region) and Nickel (Murmansk region, Russia), premised both on local and predominantly cultural initiatives as well some state-related and economic endeavours. It is not just there in order to compensate locally for the northern peripherality of the two cities involved in reaching across a previously rather divisive border; it also reflects the desire expressed by Oslo as well as Moscow to contribute to such a process.

The first twinning agreement between Kirkenes and Nickel was signed in the Cold War era (1973). At that time the collaborative ties between two towns consisted mostly of irregular cultural contacts and reflected a local interest in reaching across the then rather divisive and by and large closed border (Brednikova and Voronkov, 1999). The opening up has since the initial period been taken much further in the post-Soviet era with both the Norwegian and Russian sides expressing interest in reinvigorating their city-to-city relations on a principally new and more pragmatic basis. The mutual interest and intensified contacts between the towns have more recently resulted in an agreement on cooperation between the Sør-Varanger community and the Pechenga district (part of the Murmansk Region), including a special Kirkenes-Nikel twin city project. An agreement to that effect was signed by the leaders of Sør-Varanger and Pechenga district on 28 March 2008. The agreement and twin city project were approved by the Norwegian and Russian foreign ministers at their meeting in Kirkenes (9 June 2008) (Pogoretskaya 2008).

The cooperative arrangements under the project cover areas, such as:

- Support for small and medium-size business
- Establishment of a joint Business Cooperation Centre in Nickel
- Environment protection

- Health care (including direct cooperative schemes between municipal hospitals)
- Education (direct links between elementary and secondary schools)
- Training programs for municipal officials
- Tourism
- Cultural festivals and exhibitions
- Library and museum cooperation
- Mass media cooperation
- Women and youth cooperation
- Sports (Smirnova, 2008; <http://www.b-port.com/news/archive/2009-09-23-33/full.jpg>)

The agreement does not stand out as something isolated and rest on a specific logic of citiness but is instead part and parcel of a broader Norwegian-Russian strategy of cooperation in the North. For Norway, the North has been a strategic priority area in the sphere of the country's foreign policy as articulated for example in the Government's High North Strategy issued in 2006 ([www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/vedlegg/strategier.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/vedlegg/strategier.pdf)). The treaty signed in September 2010 between Norway and Russia on the delimitation of maritime areas in the North has further added to the interest for as well as prospects of cooperation.

As to twinning, there is still considerable emphasis on cultural contacts, although cultural bonds have been increasingly related to more pragmatic and interest-driven forms of cooperation. The case of Kirkenes-Nikel is hence clearly to be understood as a laboratory introduced in order to explore and test the prospects for cooperation in a broader context. It is, more particularly, connected to the Norwegian Pomor Plan, i.e. a plan initiated by Norwegian experts in 2006 and aiming at the establishment of a Pomor Special Industrial Zone in the Sør-Varanger/Petchanga districts on the border region but potentially also transcending the Norwegian-Russian border (Cherednichenko, 2008). The plans to building a metallurgy plant on the coast of the Pechenga Bay were mentioned. One of the prime aims of establishing such a zone consists of facilitating the developing and use of the Shtokman gas field in the Barents Sea among other things by providing a major bulk of the required regional transport infrastructure and construction of a plant for production of liquid gas. Russia and Norway have also decided to connect some of their gas pipelines in the Barents Sea area, and in bringing the pipeline on land, an appendage might also reach Nickel (so the nickel depositories could be processed on spot rather than traded on the world market as raw material as has been the case so far). This opens up some interesting prospects also for the part of twinning.

The broader background also implies that over time the twinning between Kirkenes-Nikel might be integrated into a broader pattern of transborder cooperation between

Norway and Russia with several other cities and regional actors as a part of the configuration.

Crucially, the Russian authorities have been prepared to consider such a broader plan of extensive transborder cooperation, although there also seem to be competitive aspects at stake. For example, the Murmansk regional authorities have been reserved about a project launched in order to build a 40-km railroad from Nikel to Kirkenes. Such a connection would be needed in order to switch a part of a broader flow of goods (coming from Far East and Russia's High North to Europe and North America *via* Murmansk) to Kirkenes. Owing to competitive interests, the railway project has made little progress and instead, Oslo has been pushing for the exploring of the viability of a railroad from Rovaniemi (Finland) to Tromsø or Finnmark county in order to develop an alternative version of the transport corridor ([www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1174685.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1174685.html)). According to the Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre (2010), the plan is being assessed "on a serious basis".

Cooperation with Russians is, as such, nothing new for Kirkenes. The town, consisting of some 7.000 inhabitants but growing, has in fact been a major meeting-point for Russian-Norwegian contacts since the 1990's on a variety of levels. It is multicultural in the sense that in addition to a Norwegian majority, there is a Sàmi population in the region, a considerable number of Finnish-speakers around as well as an increasing number of Russians and Russian-speakers in the city and its vicinity. The latter group amounts to some ten per cent of the city's population (Rogova 2008: 29).

As noted by Anastasia Rogova (2009), also a considerable number of Russians living in the Murmansk region nowadays view the Norwegian-Russian border in terms of a shared borderland. The border has turned far less divisive not just politically and in administrative terms, but also culturally and identity-wise. Rogova (2009: 31) claims that a borderland has emerged "which is neither Russia, nor Norway to the full extent". Russians visiting Kirkenes do not have the feeling of being abroad, as also indicated by Kirkenes being named 'Kirsanovka' or 'Kirik' with connotations of a small local and nearby entity/village in the language used in the Murmansk region. Visits have become frequent for reasons of shopping or, for that matter, using the Kirkenes airport for flights abroad.

In one of its aspects, the Norwegian-Russian cross-border cooperation can draw upon the somewhat idealised legacy of so-called Pomor trade. These coastal trade contacts, which lasted for nearly three centuries before dwindling out after the Russian revolution in 1917, were quite important for the development of the northern areas. The legacy is frequently referred to and activated with the current-day cooperation and border-crossing seen as a return to traditional constellations. Still another memory impacting in particular the local attitudes consists of that a considerable number of German troops

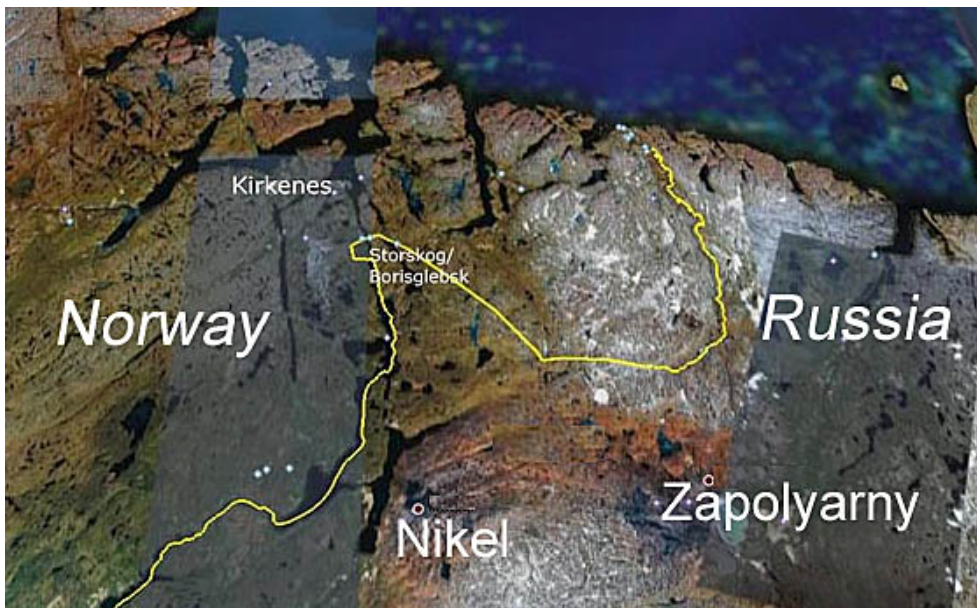
were stationed in the region, pursuing quite repressive policies, and it was freed by the Soviet Army in 1944. For sure, the Cold War period, with perceptions of enmity as the prevalent approach, impacted the views on Russians. The negative views have, however, gradually changed and normalized. In addition to a growing number of Russian and Russian-speaking inhabitants in Kirkenes, there is a considerable number of Russians arriving from the Murmansk region for shopping as well as sailors visiting the town. The latter group is there because Russian fishing vessels frequently visit the port of Kirkenes (with some 30–50 ships at port any time) (Rogova, 2008: 15). A shopping mall has been recently built in the city with visiting Russians seen as an essential part of the customers. Overall, various forms of cooperation across the border have turned rather significant for the economy of the town as well as Sør-Varanger at large.

One aspect of twinning consists of relations in the sphere of work. There is a considerable shortage of skilled labour force in Sør-Varanger and Finnmark more generally, and this has become more acute with the re-opening of iron mines in the vicinity of Kirkenes. Efforts have been taken to improve the flow of labour in the Barents region between Norway and Russia. For example, by providing training for jobs in the offshore sector and by changing experience in the promotion of an inclusive labour market (Støre, 2010: 10).

In that context, agreement has been reached on a local border traffic zone and the introduction of a border resident ID card (2 November 2010). Those who live within the 30 km border area on the Norwegian side and 30–50 km area on the Russian side will be able to cross the border without a visa and stay on the other side up to 15 days each time (<http://www.barentsobserver.com/first-opening-in-the-Schengen-regime-with-Russia.4838145-16149.html>). Kirkenes as well as Nikel will be covered by the arrangements, as will Zapolyarny, also a nearby city. Temporary work permits can be issued to unskilled Russian workers from the Barents region up to three years for work in any sector in the three northernmost Norwegian counties. The agreement was ratified by both the Norwegian and Russian sides in early 2011.

The increase in contacts implies that the number of border crossings has grown considerably. The border crossing at Storskog at the Norwegian-Russian border close to Kirkenes was reopened in 1991 but initially the number of border-crossings remained low with only a few thousand crossings a year. Nowadays the figure is more than 100,000 crossings a year (Støre, 2010: 9).

It appears, in general, that in spite of the bureaucratic obstacles the twinning project has reasonably good prospects of growth for the foreseeable future as part of increased cooperation between Norway and Russia. As mentioned, the Kirkenes-Nikel pair plans to join the CTA if the project succeeds. In any case, their decision to become city twins seems to indicate that the concept of twinning has retained its attractiveness in northern Europe, and has also become interesting for some of the states of the region to advance and support.



The area map

# Conclusions

It should be noted that in all the five cases probed considerable elements of twinning present in the sense that the city-pairs present in Northern Europe do not just aim for bridging and intensified cooperation as 'border cities'. They also display efforts of creating – in varying degrees – communality and joint space, this then providing the ground for the usage of the concept of a 'twin city'. A rather broad repertoire of other representations remain available as well but it seems that there exists increased space and interest in employing precisely that conceptual departure, and to do so despite the various quite demanding and challenging connotations attached to the one of 'twinning'.

Overall, the experiences gained in Northern Europe of twinning can be assessed as being positive. The introduction of the concept – one allowing for the difference of the other to be viewed as benign and complementary in nature and positioned within a broader sphere of commonality – has enabled several cities to use their location at contiguous borders in order to opt for new forms of being and acting. The providing of a new and broader twist to the concept of the twin city and reproducing it in a trans-border context constitutes one specific aspect of a changing and an increasingly integrated political landscape. The coalescing of cities adds, in a form of its own, to the strengthening of communality, mutual trust and cooperation in the region and provides border-related cities as relative small entities with the option of impacting a broader setting. There is increased stress on similarity rather than difference across borders, distances appear shorter and conducive for cooperation rather than staying aloof, confidence is bolstered and new channels for togetherness are being opened up.

More broadly, twinning adds, in view of the more recent experiences, an interesting notion to the understanding of 'Europe', and it does so as one way of extending EU-related Europeanness beyond the borders of the EU. It also testifies to the potential inherent in the concept of city-ness, owing to the specific logic underlying such a departure, as particularly prone to cooperation transcending statist borders.

It may also be noted that twinning remains something of a conceptual battle-field. It is loaded with different interpretations as the comprehensions underpinning the unity to be found for the part of Tornio-Haparanda – with strong emphasis on unification, commonality, like-mindedness and feeling of belonging together – are not present to a similar degree in the cases of Imatra-Svetogorsk, Narva-Ivangorod and Kirkenes-Nikel. Notably, also Valka-Valga stands – despite the slogan of 'one city, two nations' – basically for intensified cooperation between separate entities rather than constituting a twin city in any deeper sense. The priority given to state-belonging and nationness seems to stand in the way of preventing any profound leaning on the similarity embedded in the concept of twinning of concepts or, on the level of practice, the establishment of a firm and far-

reaching joint core that straddles the essence of the participants as two distinct entities. There is adjacency as to location, a considerable amount of cooperation but not enough mental proximity for real unity to appear.

In comparison, the case of Tornio-Haparanda appears first and foremost to rest on initiatives taken by the two adjacent cities themselves in order to counteract their rather northern and peripheral position. Initially they could draw upon Nordic cooperation in the efforts of transcending national borders whereas European integration and the EU-membership of Finland and Sweden have later offered opportunities to provide twinning with further substance. Common space has been created at the border, for this then to function as a regional magnet in terms of employment, shopping, leisure and similar activities. In the case of Imatra and Svetogorsk, their cooperation took off as one aspect of state-to-state related integration and trans-border cooperation, albeit has later gained more autonomous city-to-city based forms of transnational integration. The twinning between Narva and Ivangorod appears to have a somewhat similar background with emphasis on initiatives taken by the two cities themselves. However, in the latter case the policies of Estonia and Russia have been quite passive if not a hindrance to twinning across national borders. This has implied that the cities themselves have been compelled to stand out as the driving force, and have been able to do so by leaning to some extent on European integration, in particular in the form of EU-related funding. The city-pair of Valka-Valga could potentially also hook up with European integration with both Estonia and Latvia being EU-members. However, they have exploited that option rather cautiously in remaining quite attached and loyal to the national aspirations of their respective states. These aspirations have in general not been geared towards facilitating trans-border contacts, this then implying that twinning has remained relatively modest between Valka and Valga despite the almost total disappearance of obstacles formed by national borders. Kirkenes and Nikel appear, in turn, to be in category of their own in the sense that their twinning is integrally part of state-related experimentation with trans-border integration. The driving force consists of Norway and Russia rather than the two cities themselves, although particularly Kirkenes has been able accommodate and easily exploit the opening provided by the cooperative relationship between Norway and Russia.

In any case, it seems obvious that the conceptualization of a twin city, one postulating far-reaching unity and like-mindedness, remains quite challenging also for the cities involved. It does so among other reasons as the conceptualizations add new aspects and dimensions to what cities basically are about and how they are lived. Yet it may be concluded that the city-pairs and the cities involved seem to be relatively well equipped, due to their inherent qualities, to make use of the changing nature of state borders in Northern Europe. The ensuing encounters with previous otherness seem gradually to be on their way of being turned into a resource, and one may hence on good ground assume

that twinning – or far-reaching togetherness and companionship under some other but related label – is there to stay. It will presumably even proliferate in being bolstered by various broader trends of trans-border regionalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation at large. Twinning is perhaps still in its infancy and often oriented towards the short rather than the long term perspectives but will probably get more established and stronger over time thus also calling for added theoretical insight as well as further empirical enquiry as local experimenting in testing the fixity of identities and questioning the divisive effects of borders may potentially have some quite far-reaching consequences.



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# Web-resources on twinning in Europe

- Baltic Metropolises network (BaltMet): <http://www.baltmet.org>
- Baltic Ports Organisation: <http://www.bpoports.com>
- Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office: [www.marebalticum.org](http://www.marebalticum.org)
- Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation: <http://www.bsssc.com>
- City Twin Association: <http://www.citytwins.org>
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe: <http://www.cpmr.org>
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: <http://www.coe.int>
- The Council of European Municipalities and Regions: <http://www.cemr@ccre.org>
- CEMR's special web-site on twinning: <http://www.twinning.org>
- Douzelage: <http://www.douzelage.org>
- Energy Cities: [www.energy-cities.eu](http://www.energy-cities.eu)
- EUROCITIES: <http://www.eurocities.eu>
- The "Europe for citizens" programme:  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme\\_guide\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme_guide_en.php)
- Europe for Citizens Points: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php)
- European Association Historic Towns and Regions: [www.historic-towns.org](http://www.historic-towns.org)
- International Association Cities and Ports: <http://www.aivp.org>
- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives: <http://www.iclei.org>
- The International Network for Urban Development: [www.inta-aivn.org](http://www.inta-aivn.org)
- "The Islands of the Baltic Sea": <http://www.b7.org>
- Local Government International Bureau: <http://www.lga.gov.uk>
- METREX (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas):  
<http://www.eurometrex.org>
- Twin Cities International Association (Russia): <http://www.twin-cities.ru>
- Union of the Baltic Cities: <http://www.ubc.net>

# Appendices

## 1. Twinning in Northern Europe

City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Ålesund (Norway)-Västerås (Sweden)	1947		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Alta (Norway)- Apatity (Russia, Murmansk Region)			Economic development, environment, culture
Alta (Norway)- Boden (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Apatity (Russia, Murmansk Region)- Boden Municipality (Sweden)			Economic development, environment, culture
Apatity (Russia, Murmansk Region)- Keminmaa (Finland)			Economic development, environment, culture
Arendal (Norway)- Savonlinna (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Arkhangelsk (Russia)-Kiruna (Sweden)			Economic development, environment, culture
Arkhangelsk (Russia)-Ljusdal (Sweden)			Economic development, environment, culture
Arkhangelsk (Russia)-Vardø (Norway)			Economic development, environment, culture
Bamble (Norway)- Närpes (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Bamble (Norway)- Västervik (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Belozersk (Russia, Vologda Region)-Skien (Norway)			Culture
Bergen (Norway)- Gothenburg (Sweden)		EURO-CITIES (both)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Bårum (Norway)- Hämeenlinna (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Bårum (Norway)- Uppsala (Sweden)	1947		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
<b>Bodø (Norway)-Vyborg (Russia)</b>			Culture
Cherepovets (Russia, Vologda Region)-Raahе (Finland)			Environment, culture
Espoo (Finland)- Kristianstad (Sweden)		EURO-CITIES	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Fredrikstad (Norway)-Karlskoga (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Fredrikstad (Norway)-Kotka (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Hamar (Norway)- Lund (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society



City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Hamar (Norway)- Porvoo (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Hamina (Finland)-Falun (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Hamina (Finland)- Roros (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Hammerfest (Norway)-Trelleborg (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Hammerfest (Norway)-Tornio (Finland)		City Twins Association (Tornio, 2006)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
<b>Hayanger (Norway)-Ronneby (Sweden)</b>			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Jakobstad (Pietarsaari) (Finland)-Asker (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Jakobstad (Pietarsaari) (Finland)-Eslöv (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Jakobstad (Pietarsaari) (Finland)- Söderhamn (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

<b>City pair</b>	<b>Year of est.</b>	<b>Membership in twin towns association</b>	<b>Most successful areas of cooperation</b>
Jyväskylä (Finland)- Eskilstuna Municipality (Sweden)	1947		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Jyväskylä (Finland)- Stavanger (Norway)	1947		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kandalaksha (Russia, Murmansk Region)-Kemijärvi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kandalaksha (Russia, Murmansk Region)-Piteå (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Karikkila (Finland)- Oxelösund (Sweden)	1998	Douzelage (both, 1997-1998)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kemi (Finland)- Tromsø (Norway)	1940		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kemi (Finland)- Luleå (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kemijärvi (Finland)- Vardø (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kirkenes (Norway)-Nikel (Russia)	1973		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, tourism, women and youth cooperation
Kirovsk (Russia)-Gällivare (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kirovsk (Russia)- Harstad (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education

<b>City pair</b>	<b>Year of est.</b>	<b>Membership in twin towns association</b>	<b>Most successful areas of cooperation</b>
Kirovsk (Russia)- Tornio (Finland)		City Twins Association (Tornio, 2006)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kiruna (Sweden)-Rovaniemi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kongsberg (Norway)-Espoo (Finland)		EURO-CITIES (Espoo)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kongsberg (Norway)-Karlstad (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kostomuksha (Russia)-Kuhmo (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kouvola (Finland)-Vologda (Russia)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kovdor (Russia)-Haparanda (Sweden)		City Twin Association (Haparanda, 2006)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kovdor (Russia)-Salla (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kristiansand (Norway)-Kerava (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Kristiansand (Norway)-Trollhättan (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

<b>City pair</b>	<b>Year of est.</b>	<b>Membership in twin towns association</b>	<b>Most successful areas of cooperation</b>
Kristiansund (Norway)-Härnösand (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kristiansund (Norway)-Kokkola (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kuopio (Finland) - Bodø (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kuopio (Finland) - Jönköping (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Kuopio (Finland)-Pitkyaranta (Russia)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Lahti (Finland)-Ålesund (Norway)	1947		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Lahti (Finland) - Västerås (Sweden)	1940		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Lillehammer (Norway)-Leksand (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Molde (Norway) - Borås (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Molde (Norway) - Mikkeli (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Moss (Norway)- Karlstad (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Murmansk (Russia)- Luleå (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Murmansk (Russia)- Rovaniemi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Nadym (Russia, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District)- Tromsø (Norway)	2008		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Narvik (Norway)-Rovaniemi			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Narvik (Norway)-Kiruna (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Naryan-Mar (Russia, Nenets Autonomous District)- Trondheim (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Olonets (Russia, Karelia)-Hyrynsalmi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Olonets (Russia, Karelia)-Mikkeli (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Olonets (Russia, Karelia)-Puolanka (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Olonets (Russia, Karelia)-Ristijärvi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Oslo (Norway)-Stockholm (Sweden)		EURO-CITIES (both) BaltMet (both)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Oslo (Norway)- Helsinki (Finland)		EURO-CITIES (both) BaltMet (both)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Oslo (Norway)- Gothenburg (Sweden)		EURO-CITIES (both) BaltMet (Oslo)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Oulu (Finland)-Alta (Norway)	1948	EURO-CITIES (Oulu)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Oulu (Finland)-Arkhangelsk (Russia)	1993	EURO-CITIES (Oulu)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Oulu (Finland)-Boden (Sweden)	1948	EUROCITIES (Oulu)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Pargas (Finland)- Haninge (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Pargas (Finland)- Ulstein (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Petrozavodsk (Russia, Karelia)- Joensuu (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Petrozavodsk (Russia, Karelia)- Mo i Rana (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Petrozavodsk (Russia, Karelia)- Umeå (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Petrozavodsk (Russia, Karelia)- Varkaus (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education

City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Pori (Finland) - Porsgrunn (Norway)	1956		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Pori (Finland) - Sundsvall (Sweden)	1940		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Sandnes (Norway) - Mariestad (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Sandnes (Norway) - Perniö (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Skien (Norway) - Uddevalla (Västra Götaland County, Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Sortavala (Russia, Karelia) - Joensuu (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Suoyarvi (Russia, Karelia) - Joensuu (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Svetogorsk (Russia, Leningrad Region) - Imatra (Finland)		City Twin Association	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, tourism, women and youth cooperation
Tampere (Finland) - Norrköping (Sweden)		EURO-CITIES (Tampere)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Tampere (Finland) - Trondheim (Norway)	1946	EURO-CITIES (Tampere)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society

<b>City pair</b>	<b>Year of est.</b>	<b>Membership in twin towns association</b>	<b>Most successful areas of cooperation</b>
Tornio (Finland)-Haparanda (Sweden)	1987	City Twin Association (2006)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Tornio (Finland)- Vetlanda, Sweden		City Twin Association (Tornio, 2006)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Tromsø (Norway)- Luleå (Sweden)	1950		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Tromsø (Norway)- Murmansk (Russia)	1972		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Tromsø (Norway)- Kemi (Finland)	1940		Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Turku (Finland)- Bergen (Norway)	1946	EURO-CITIES (both)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Turku (Finland)- Gothenborg (Sweden)	1946	EURO-CITIES (both)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vadsø (Norway)- Karkkila (Finland)		Douzelage (Karkkila)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vadsø (Norway)- Kemijärvi (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vadsø (Norway)- Murmansk (Russia)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education



City pair	Year of est.	Membership in twin towns association	Most successful areas of cooperation
Vadsø (Norway)- Oxelösund (Sweden)		Douzelage (Oxelösund, 1998)	Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vennesla (Norway)- Katrineholm (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vennesla (Norway)- Salo (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society
Vyborg (Russia, Leningrad Region)-Bodø (Norway)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Vyborg (Russia, Leningrad Region)- Lappeenranta (Finland)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education
Vyborg (Russia, Leningrad Region)- Nyköping (Sweden)			Economic development, the provision of public services, environment, culture, education

## 2. The City Twins Association strategy 2010–2020 (excerpts)

### 2.1. General information about the CTA

The CTA was established in 2006 and it is domiciled in Imatra, Finland. At present there are 10 members of the CTA or 5 pairs of the twinning cities. Despite the nearness, there's always a border between them that affects the relations between the cities.

**The purposes of the association are the following:**

- to promote an awareness of members
- to raise problems typical of members on national and international level
- to promote interregional cooperation in Europe
- to level down differences in standards of living of the members
- to promote the active citizenship of members
- to promote neighbourliness and multiculturalism between members
- to remove the barriers to cross-border cooperation between member associations
- to promote the international aspects of cooperation amongst members and other interest groups
- to pay particular attention to the interaction between members during its activities
- to combine the resources of its members in order to carry out its activities
- to create networks between parties related to the association's activities
- to create and maintain good and close relationships between members
- to encourage youth, student, culture and other exchanges between member associations
- to promote mutual respect, cohesion and understanding amongst members and member associations.
- to strengthen local identity of the members
- to lobby best practices of the members for different kinds of interesting groups
- to promote exchange of experiences, new ideas and views

The main document regulating the CTA activity is the bylaws of the CTA. According to it the members of the association can be only the cities divided by the border.

Every member city has to pay the membership fee, the amount of which is decided during the annual meeting of the CTA. At present the membership fee for the year 2009 makes 1000 euro/year.

The CTA activity is managed by the Board of Directors, which consists of a chairperson elected during the Annual Meeting and 7 to 9 ordinary members, responsible for taking care of the association's activity.

A representative (usually the city mayor) of each member city acts as chairperson for one year at a time.

The chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer, any two together, are authorized to sign for and on behalf of the association...

... The CTA is the only organization of its kind in the North East Europe, as it is concentrated just on the cooperation development between cities divided by the border. Most of the cities – members of the CTA – used to be the one city, which was later divided into two separate for some reasons.

Particularly important role in the CTA activity plays the close relations between the twin cities authorities, who has the possibility to exchange the experience and information, discuss mutual cooperation matters and ways of further development of the cities.

*SWOT-analysis of the CTA*

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CTA has best practice and experience in solving the common problems of the border cities</li> <li>2. CTA members can use the best examples of the CTA for more beneficial and effective consumption of financial and human resources</li> <li>3. Close connection and cooperation of border cities governments and personal contacts of cities' key actors</li> <li>4. Clearly defined aims, objectives and structure of the CTA</li> <li>5. Existence of the CTA bylaw, regulating the activity of the association</li> <li>6. Efficient and timely information exchange between the CTA members</li> <li>7. Visual symbolic, making the CTA recognizable</li> <li>8. Networking with strong cross-border associations like MOT, Eixo Atlantico and AEBR</li> <li>9. Skilled and qualified personal within the CTA members</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small number of the CTA members</li> <li>2. Lack of PR activities</li> <li>3. Low publicity and insufficient awareness about the association and its activities in the border regions and Europe as a whole</li> <li>4. Insufficient financing for implementation of the activities</li> <li>5. Association is not active enough to develop and increase its activities</li> <li>6. Lack of the clear strategy for the nearest years</li> <li>7. Low number of events, arranged for the purpose of experience and best practices exchange among CTA members</li> <li>8. Lack of clear cooperation strategy with similar associations</li> </ol>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CTA members has opportunity to achieve the most favourable development conditions for its cities by means of mutually beneficial cooperation between its members and combined forces, influencing to the border regions policy</li> <li>2. European Union Policy, targeted to the development of cooperation between the border regions.</li> <li>3. Existence of funds, financing the development of cross-border cooperation. There are 52 cross-border co-operation Programmes along internal EU borders and 13 transnational co-operation Programmes.</li> <li>4. The CTA is the only association in its kind in the North East Europe – no competitors</li> <li>5. Opportunity of networking with similar organization in Europe and other countries</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Other border cities could not be interested in the membership</li> <li>2. Projects, submitted by the CTA, might be not approved by the Programmes</li> <li>3. Low initiative of cross border citizens</li> <li>4. Sharp gap in the level of living of the border cities' citizens</li> <li>5. Political and economic barriers for cross-border cooperation</li> <li>6. Unstable economic situation in Europe</li> <li>7. Economic crisis and therefore tough financial situation in border cities – members of the CTA</li> <li>8. Different conditions and the ways of action on social, health and safety matters in border cities</li> <li>9. Problems in the issues concerning free movement of goods and labour force, especially on the eastern border of the EU</li> </ol>

## 3. Strategy

### 3.1. The vision

By the year 2020 the City Twins Association is stably developing organization attractive and efficient both for existing and potential members, acting as the important and influential player for the purpose of the balanced development of the border areas.

### 3.2. The mission

The mission of the City Twins Association is to facilitate fruitful and stable cooperation between its members to enhance sustainable and balanced development of the member cities with the help of combined efforts, facilitating cross border cooperation in general.

### 3.3. Strategic aims, objectives and tasks

<b>Strategic aims</b>	1. The CTA is the key player in the process of the balanced development and cooperation between border cities, first of all between the CTA member cities	2. The border regions is stably developing in all fields thanks to the mutually beneficial cooperation of the border cities – the CTA members
<b>Objec-tives</b>	<b>1.1</b> The CTA has influence and necessary contacts on national and European levels to ensure the lobbying of the border cities interests and raising their problems	<b>2.1</b> The membership in the CTA is appeared to be effective for the member cities, contributing to the sustainable development of CTA member cities and strengthen the cooperation links between the CTA members
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> To establish contacts with national and European authorities	<b>2.1.1</b> To develop strong system for regular exchange of information between the network members
	<b>1.1.2</b> To participate in international and national events, dedicated to the cross-border relations	<b>2.1.2</b> To provide timely the CTA members with the relevant information, influencing to cities' economy and social environment development
	<b>1.1.3</b> To take active part in policy making process, by contributing to the White Papers and other policy documents	
	<b>1.1.4</b> Initiation of problems typical for the border cities on national and international level	

<b>Objec- tives</b>	<b>1.2</b> The CTA activities are concentrated on the balanced development of border areas and levelling down the differences in the border cities development	<b>2.2</b> The financial situation of the CTA is stable and ensures the implementation of the planned activities for the period 2010–2020
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>1.2.1</b> To attract the investments to the border cities	<b>2.2.1</b> To search for alternative sources of financing of the CTA activities
	<b>1.2.2</b> To exchange the know-how and best practices between the CTA members to find solution to the common concerns on the cities and ways of their cooperation governments level	<b>1.2.2</b> To develop the projects to facilitate the CTA activities
	<b>1.2.3</b> To initiate the events, combining border cities and contributing to their common	
	<b>1.2.4</b> To raise the problem of working mobility to the European level	
	<b>1.2.5</b> Promote active citizenship position by initiating common events and initiatives	
<b>Objec- tives</b>		<b>2.3</b> The CTA has reliable contacts and long-term cooperation with at least 2 similar organizations and networks
<b>Tasks</b>		<b>2.3.1</b> To establish and maintain contact with similar organizations and networks
		<b>2.3.2</b> To develop clear cooperation strategy with similar organizations and networks
		<b>2.3.3</b> To participate in common projects to facilitate cooperation within the network
		<b>2.3.4</b> To exchange the experience and know-how in the daily work organization
<b>Objec- tives</b>		<b>2.4</b> The number of the CTA member within the period 2010–2020 has been increased for 50%
<b>Tasks</b>		<b>2.4.1</b> To attract new border cities to join the CTA network
		<b>2.4.2</b> To raise awareness about the CTA and its activities

### 3.4. Mechanism for the implementation of the strategy

Strategic Plans cannot succeed without people, time, money, and other key resources. Thus, for the successful and effective implementation of the strategy, the following main attributes are essential:

- Qualified management
- Sufficient financial resources
- Sufficient human resources
- Sufficient time resources

To manage the strategy implementation the Steering Group is proposed to be established. The Steering Group will consist of 8 people, including the CTA chairperson and the members of the CTA Board.

The tasks of the Steering Group are the following:

1. Coordinate the work of the Working Group since they will execute the Action Plan in the form of specific work plans
2. Assign people, responsible for implementation of the selected actions, monitoring
3. Develop working plans and schedules that have specific action steps
4. Resource the initiatives in the form of detail budgets
5. Monitor progress by the end of each year
6. Correct and revise action plans per comparison of actual results against original action plan

To implement specific activities within the Action Plan, the Working Group shall be established. The Working Group, consisting at least of 18 persons, will be divided into two directions according to the planned strategic aims, and will be responsible for the specific actions implementation. The Working Group will be guided by specially developed work plans.

*Source: <http://www.citytwins.org/en/page/5/>*