



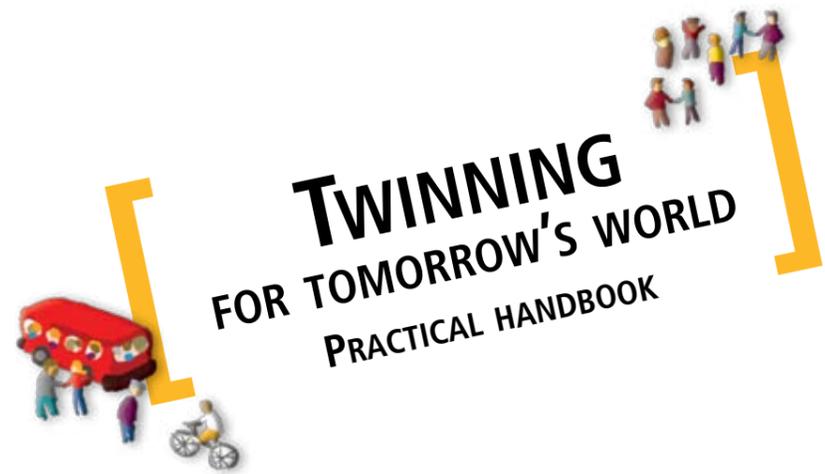
CCRE CEMR

Conseil des Communes
et Régions d'Europe
Council of European
Municipalities and Regions

**TWINNING
FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD**
PRACTICAL HANDBOOK



October 2007



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1 Introduction

Twinning lies at the heart of the founding aims and activities of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) which, since its creation in 1951, has promoted links of exchange and co-operation between towns and communities as a driving force in the growth and development of the European Union.

By bringing citizens from different countries and cultures closer together, and by fostering co-operation between local elected representatives – the closest sphere of government to the citizens – the twinning movement is characterised by an originality and strength that are all its own. Twinning in Europe today has created a dense network of some seventeen thousand links between small, medium-sized and large towns and cities.

Now, more than fifty years since the first steps were taken towards forging a true European Union, twinning remains a unique method for involving the citizens directly in this major undertaking. In a Europe which has expanded through a series of "enlargements", twinning can promote mutual awareness and dialogue, and thereby strengthen feelings of a common European identity and sense of belonging, and respect for the great diversity that this implies.

Thanks to support from the European Parliament and the European Commission, the twinning movement has grown significantly over the past two decades. We are delighted that the Institutions reaffirmed this support when drawing up the new programme, "Europe for Citizens" which covers the period 2007-2013, in which it reserves a primary role for twinning.

In these early years of the XXIst century, in a world that is constantly changing, CEMR is confident that twinning will continue to constitute an appropriate instrument with which current day issues can be tackled, and which can be responsive to our rapidly evolving environment.

This underlies the goal of the major conference "Twinning for Tomorrow's World", which CEMR organised in May 2007 at the invitation of the city of Rhodes and the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece (KEDKE), CEMR's Greek section. The Conference was organised with the support and close co-operation of the European Commission, which chose to launch the new EU programme simultaneously with a videoconference linking Brussels and Rhodes. In Rhodes, elected representatives and twinning practitioners from 29 countries (from Europe and beyond), debated how twinings today can provide an excellent framework in which to tackle issues such as social inclusion, youth participation in public life, sustainable development and economic co-operation, the preservation of cultural heritage, dialogue for peace in the Mediterranean region and development aid.

We hope that questions raised during these debates will find answers in this publication, which aims to offer a concrete instrument to help all those working at the local level to find – through co-operation and exchange – solutions to the numerous challenges they face, and to build together a better world for all.



Dr. Michael Häupl
President of CEMR
Mayor and Governor of Vienna



Anders Knappe
Chair of CEMR's working group on twinning
President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

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[Twinning: a tool for living together]

WHAT IS TWINNING?

A friendship between citizens of European towns

"A twinning is the coming together of two communities seeking, in this way, to take action with a European perspective in the aim of facing their problems and developing between themselves closer and closer ties of friendship." In pronouncing this message, Jean Bareth – one of CEMR's founding members – clearly laid out the primary values inherent to twinning: friendship, cooperation and mutual awareness among the peoples of Europe.

An instrument for peace and stability in the European Union...

At every step in the process of European construction, twinning has had a fundamental role to play. For reconciling peoples in the days following the Second World War, and then at each successive EU enlargement, twinning has facilitated the integration of new member countries and their populations. Today, twinning is deeply rooted in the cultures of Europe's citizens, and can help the people – particularly the youth – to come together, to build lasting friendships, and to better understand their common European identity.

... and beyond

Looking beyond the EU, it is clear that twinings have a role to play for creating ties of mutual trust and understanding. In the Balkans, in Eastern Europe, or in the countries around the Mediterranean basin, twinning contributes to building a stable and sustainable neighbourhood policy. Beyond this, in relations with countries of the South, partnerships between towns are becoming one of the key tools for European development aid. As interactions between the different regions of the world develop more and more, the stakes are global, and towns in the North and South are increasingly called upon to work together.

Exchanges of experiences

Based on friendship and trust, twinning can be a source for exchanging experiences and mutual enrichment in numerous areas. We can see this from the partnerships that developed between European towns around projects on waste treatment, water management, economic development, and improving social services, all thanks to twinning.

TWINNING: AN INSTRUMENT FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

European citizenship: the feeling of belonging to a common identity

The concept of European citizenship relates to a sense of belonging to a political entity that is common to all the peoples of the 27 member States. This identity is the proof of a united Europe of solidarity, whose citizens have come together to work toward common aims.

The two pillars of European citizenship are as follows :

- Close links between Europe's peoples
- A direct relationship between the citizens of the member States and the European Institutions

In recent years, several concrete developments have arisen further strengthening this feeling of identity: the single currency, the common EU passport as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

A status – the European citizen

European citizenship has also implied a specific status, since 1992, due to the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht. Any citizen of a member State is a citizen of the European Union, thus benefiting from certain rights:

- the fundamental and personal right to move and reside freely, to work, and to have free access to education in the member States
- the right to vote for and stand as a candidate at municipal and European Parliament elections
- the right to petition the European Parliament and to complain to the European Ombudsman
- access to the diplomatic and consular protection of another Member State outside the EU.

Strengthening European citizenship

European citizenship cannot be taken for granted; it must be built on a daily basis, through concrete actions and individual commitment from all. Following the enlargement on an unprecedented scale in 2004 and again in 2007, the negative outcome of the referenda in France and The Netherlands, and more recently, the steps taken toward a new EU treaty, efforts must be redoubled so that citizens regain a sense of common belonging in Europe.

Twinning can be one of the most appropriate tools for this. Through exchanges between people from different member States, twinning helps strengthen ties between communities. By creating opportunities for participation in concrete projects which are often financially supported by the EU, twinning can clearly demonstrate the great potential of European action, and is often the first point of contact with the European Institutions for citizens, especially for young people.

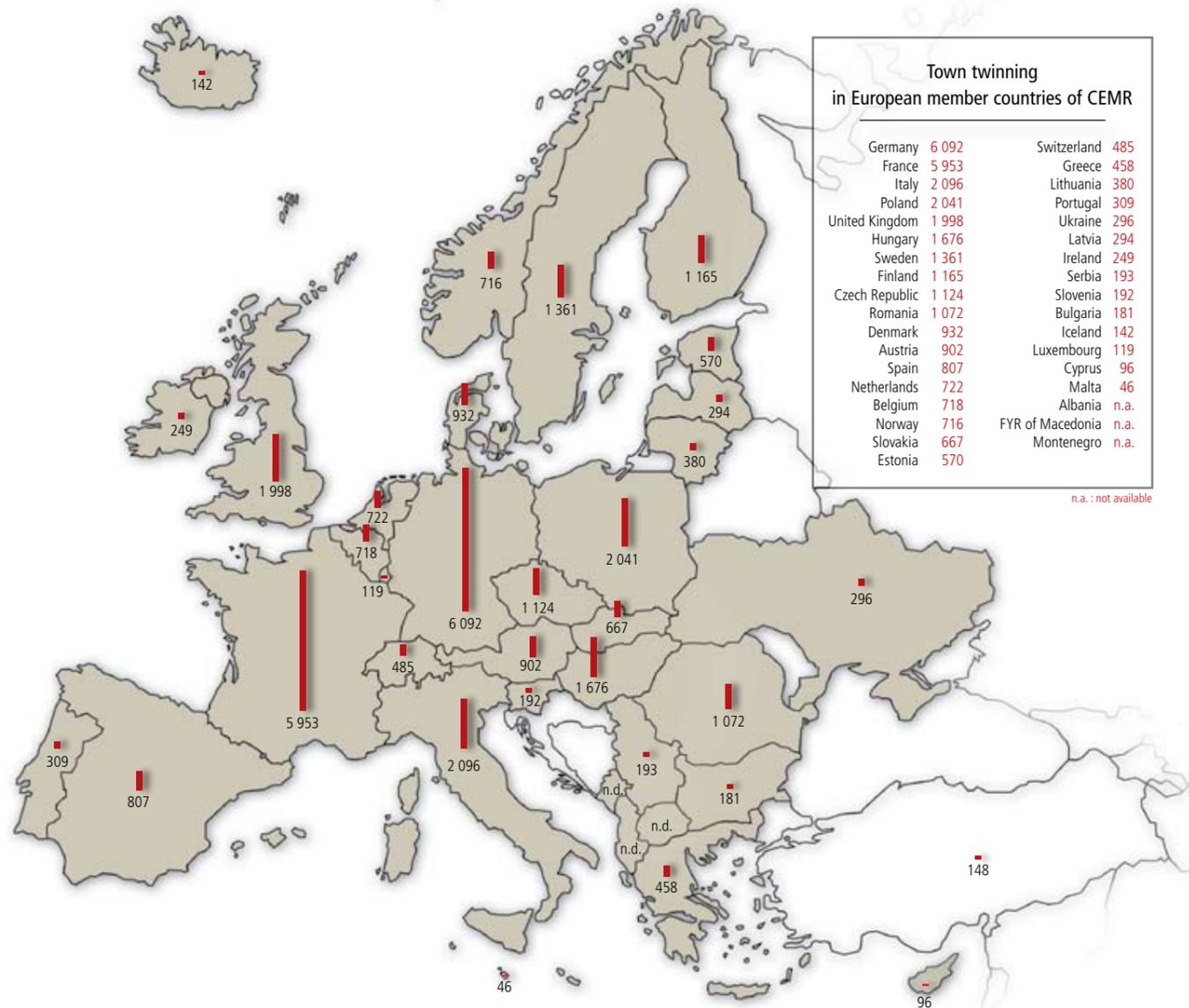
THE EVOLUTION AND GEOGRAPHY OF TWINNING

From the 50's to today: the continuous expansion of the twinning movement

The first twinning links were born in the aftermath of the Second World War, due to the initiative of a handful of Mayors convinced that friendship between the citizens of Europe was the necessary first step to rebuilding a stable and peaceful Europe. The aim of the first twinning links was therefore to bring together the people of France and Germany, with the first wave of twinings signed in the 1950's particularly involving these two countries. When France and Germany signed the Friendship Treaty of 1963, 120 Franco-German twinings could already be counted. Twinning later diversified and spread to gradually include all European countries. In 1991, CEMR calculated over 8 500 twinings linking towns from 14 countries (the then 12 Member States, plus Austria and Switzerland).

Fifteen years later, the number of twinings has grown considerably. A study carried out in 2006 with CEMR's member associations in 35 countries found that there were over 17 000 twinings in Europe, each involving at least two local authorities. This impressive increase can be explained in the context of the opening up of the former communist States, which helped many partnerships to be created, particularly in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, and with the creation in 1989 of an EU programme specifically to support twinning between European local authorities (see part 5, twinning instruments). The financial support to facilitate citizens' travel to their town's twins, as well as the organisation of related events, greatly stimulated the European twinning movement.





The Geography of Twinning

It is evident that many twinings arise between neighbours or countries sharing cultural and historic links. The vast majority of twinning links counted bring together authorities from countries that have borders in common. However, since the opening of the former communist States, and due to ever-improving transportation, towns are increasingly inclined to set up more long-distance partnerships.

Certain countries are particularly active in twinning. For historic reasons, France and Germany remain to this day the countries which count the most twinning links – some 6000

– over a third of which are Franco-German twinings. These are followed by Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom, each of which can count some 2000 twinings. When populations are taken into account, it is in Scandinavia where countries are in fact most active.

One of the major issues for the future will be to develop relations between people of different cultures and whose backgrounds may be quite diverse. In this way, twinings between distant local authorities must be encouraged, particularly between the West and the East, as well as between the North and the South. Only in this way will true solidarity for our entire continent be achieved.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TWINNING ?

→ Active citizenship participation

A good twinning link should involve as broad a range of members of the community as possible – of all ages and backgrounds, and in both partner towns. Though young people may be most often the main focus of twinning, all members of the population can benefit. Elected representatives and civil servants must be the driving force behind projects, but they should not be the only people involved

→ A European dimension

In the European Union, a good twinning link is a means of giving life to active European citizenship, by strengthening links between citizens, by ensuring the promotion of the European project, and by forging the European identity. By helping people to experience the daily life of others, and to discover new cultures and languages of their partners, twinning helps citizens to understand that they belong to one community of values, and thus lay foundations for solidarity.

→ Raising awareness of the major issues of our day

Activities developed through twinning links can provide good opportunities to make the citizens consider the major issues of the day, and particularly for young people. Numerous activities are undertaken around such themes as the environment, the future of Europe, human rights, peace, or the Millennium Development Goals.

→ A sustainable relationship

A good twinning link must be able to withstand the test of time, and not merely reflect the prevailing mood of the day in the city council. Strong friendships and true links of solidarity between the citizens of different towns need time to grow. Only by persisting over the years can one town come to count on another in the case of sudden catastrophe, for instance, as was the case for certain Portuguese towns during the terrible forest fires in the summer of 2005 or other catastrophes experienced in some European countries where twinned towns were a source of aid.

→ A basis for exchanges

A twinning link based on solid friendships can create an ideal environment in which to develop new cooperation techniques. Exchange of experience and best practice, joint reflection on challenges that should be faced and combining efforts can all contribute to supporting environmental and infrastructure development, for example for transport, waste treatment or social services.

IN SUM, A WELL STRUCTURED TWINNING CAN BE A REAL SOURCE OF COHESION AND ENRICHMENT. IT CAN:

- Reveal new cultures to an entire population
- Teach citizens about Europe
- Encourage the community to consider and exchange views on the major issues of the day
- Help improve the environment and infrastructure of the communities involved

Examples of Good Practice



Bringing the People of Europe Together

Citizens take action to celebrate 10 years of twinning

The cities of Olivet (France) and Bad Oldesloë (Germany) celebrated the 10th anniversary of their twinning in October 2006. On this occasion, Olivet invited one of its other partner cities, the English town of Fakenham. The whole community was involved: schools welcomed visiting students, associations organised cultural and sporting events, many families welcomed visitors into their homes, shopkeepers decorated their storefronts with European motifs, local businesses offered internships.

The numerous activities planned for this week were very well received by the German and English guests. In addition to the cultural and sporting events, participants could enjoy a European exhibition at which a member of the European Parliament gave a presentation. These exchanges also included very diverse types of activities: participants could sing at a retirement home, participate in wine-tasting workshops, visit a vocational high school, the Senate and the city hall of Paris. The event was a great success, and with host families getting involved, real friendships were forged, opening doors for future projects together.



Project budget : 18 000 €

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Bringing the People of Europe Together

A twinning enhanced by regular up-keep

The cities of Rotherham (United Kingdom) and Saint Quentin (France) have been twinned for over 10 years. They hold regularly scheduled support meetings and work together to plan activities for both twinned towns. Once a year the elected representatives of the two cities gather in order to decide upon activities for the coming year. Rotherham has set up a liaison group with its international partners, which operates twice a month as a forum for exchange between the different actors involved.

As a result, the twinning between Rotherham and Saint Quentin has remained constantly active over the past 10 years. The main activities are student exchanges and cultural visits, and there is a 300€ scholarship available for citizens organising travel to the twin town.

Project budget : annual budget of 10 000 €

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Bringing the People of Europe Together

Workshops for preparing the future together

The city of Gibuli (Latvia) and the city of Bramsnæs (Denmark) set up workshops in order to consider together the future of this Latvian community. Debates were organised by two inhabitants of Bramsnæs which brought together 45 participants from all walks of life (students, business leaders, civil servants, employees, etc.).

The workshops were carried out in three phases: an analytical phase during which the participants shared their different problems; a brainstorming phase during which a range of different possible solutions were laid out; and a third phase which allowed the participants to come away with concrete solutions which could be applied to daily life.

These workshops helped the participants to come up with real solutions to different concerns, as well as find ways of dealing with their problems themselves. A youth group was set up following one of the sessions, and playing fields constructed based on the work of another workshop.

Project budget : 1 800 €

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Bringing the People of Europe Together

Language courses for adults

The cities of Cardiff (United Kingdom) and Heilbronn (Germany) undertook an ambitious project, combining English classes with learning about different European cultures. Additional partners from Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, and Spain, gave this project a fully European dimension.

The participants wrote up stories about their areas of origin, in collaboration with language professors. All the stories were then shared with the other groups, thus creating an exchange of the participants' different customs and ways of life. The different groups and their professors meet on multiple occasions to share their stories and practice the

language in which they worked. This project and the stories were to be presented at an international reading festival at St Donat's Art Centre in Cardiff.

Project budget : 6 200 €

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Art and culture

conditions. Some have participated in the camp since its opening in 2003. These annual gatherings allow the children to have a better sense of the progress they have made, which leads to a great sense of satisfaction.

Project budget : 4 000 € per year

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Cultural exchange through art

The cities of Tata (Hungary), Svodin (Slovakia) and Sovata (Romania) organise an arts camp every year. The camp, which takes place in Tata, gathers over 20 youth from the three cities for the first week in August. With a new theme every day, participants work on different artistic techniques, exchanging their views and methods. On the last day, a public exhibition allows the budding artists to present their work to the inhabitants of Tata.

This arts camp strengthens the sense of European belonging for the participants and provides them with a chance to learn more about their common cultural heritage. Some children from Sovata live in particularly difficult social

Art and culture

Tackling prejudice through theatre

The cities of Nancy (France), Karlsruhe (Germany) and Lublin (Poland) have set up a common project based on theatre. Joint workshops were set up by university theatre students from the three cities. The working themes focused on prejudices that can arise against other European peoples. Participants also learned about issues related to disabilities, working with deaf partners for one of the workshops. This project led to theatre productions that were put on in each of the partner cities.

The theatres of the French, German and Polish universities exchanged practices and developed solid relationships. This community project developed views on European identity, and facilitated the sharing of experiences gained with the general public thanks to the performances.



Project budget : 30 000 €

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Art and culture

Cross-border TV

The cities of Kežmarok (Slovakia) and Nowy Targ (Poland) have created a common television station. This news channel presents the news of both cities. A documentary was made about the linked cities of Kežmarok and Nowy Targ and shown on the station. To promote the station, a conference and major communication campaign (leaflets, posters, etc.) were organised. With over 5 500 subscribers, this project has had a real impact.

The creation of this news channel was part of a programme to create a "communication bridge" between Kežmarok and Nowy Targ which helped the inhabitants of the two cities to learn about each other. Furthermore, it serves as a promotional tool for both partners as both the original project and the publicity through the documentary has had some noteworthy results. Both cities have much tourism potential, and are hopeful that their news channel will attract new visitors.

Project budget : 14 000 €

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Meeting by music

The city of Jammerbugt (Denmark) is twinned with Kuusankoski (Finland), Lindesberg (Sweden), Oppdal (Norway), Altenholz (Germany) and Strzelce Krajeńskie (Poland). Together, these cities organised a classical music concert in 2004. Choirs from the different cities performed individually and then came together for a grand finale for which they had previously rehearsed as one large ensemble.

Art and culture

The meetings in preparation for the concert also served as an opportunity for the participants to discover more about their partners' cultures. This experience also let the performers learn more about the music that is performed in the different cities, sharing new and interesting working methods. In the end, this was a very well-received project, which has left some strong friendship links interwoven across the continent.

Project budget : 10 700 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

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Art and culture

An international exhibition for strengthening ties

The cities of Leidschendam-Voorburg (Netherlands), Hranice (Czech Republic), Konstancin-Jeziorna (Poland) and Temecula (USA) organised a major artistic exhibition that travelled to the four cities. 44 artists from these cities were able to exhibit over 150 works.

This exhibition met with great success. It allowed for links to be developed and strengthened in many areas, as well as solidarity and mutual comprehension to grow between the partners. New art projects were born as the result of the exchanges of this project.

Project budget : 30 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

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PO Box 905, 2270 AX, The Netherlands

Youth

Active promotion of educational exchanges

Since October 2004, schools from Leeds (United Kingdom) and Brno (Czech Republic) have together pursued an ambitious initiative in education. A conference on the theme of individualised teaching was organised in Leeds to launch the project. The participants from Brno visited centres of excellence for information technology and study support, as well as other schools. The schools in Leeds learned about the added value that can be gained from international exchanges.

The city of Brno organised a conference following the exchange in order to reinforce the partnerships. Since the launch of this project, links between the two cities have developed and exchanges multiplied with 25 schools now actively involved. New potential projects have also appeared on the horizon, such as the possibility of creating a first bilingual school of Brno – a project for which Brno would very much count on support from its partners in Leeds.

Project budget : 20 000 €

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Youth

Schools for solidarity

The cities of Kuusankoski (Finland) and Vologda (Russia) organised student exchanges. During one of these exchanges in June 2005, the Finnish students participated in renovating a Russian school. The mornings were devoted to construction work, and the afternoons left for visits to other schools or cultural activities. During the exchange, the Finnish students were placed in Russian host families.

Thanks to this project, the school's playing fields were completely renovated and new sports equipment installed. Living with their host families, the Finnish students were able to learn about Russian culture. Many prejudices were dispelled, with lasting friendships forged in their place.

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Youth

Coming together in sports

The city of Olsztyn (Poland) hosted the "Olympic Games of Partner Cities" in June 2006. 250 young people from the cities of Offenburg and Gelsenkirchen (Germany), Perugia (Italy), Kaliningrad (Russia), Halmstad (Sweden) were invited. Following a welcome by the Mayor of Olsztyn, the young people had many opportunities to interact, coming together over 4 days on volleyball, football, basketball and tennis courts. A formal opening ceremony, like that of the Olympic Games, was held in Olsztyn's main stadium.

These games brought together over 2000 spectators. Friendships grew between the young people from all the different partner cities and they all learned a great deal from organising a project of this magnitude. This event has had far-reaching repercussions, promoting Olsztyn's image in Poland as well as in the countries of the other partners.

Project budget : 15 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

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Officer for international co-operation,
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Youth

Organising together, coming together

Students from the cities of Lassees (Austria), Strzyzow (Poland) and Briennon (France) came together through a very complex cooperation project. In May 2005, an exchange was set up based on a common budget and a common scholastic programme established by professors. The programme included language and cooking classes, sports activities, environmental projects, and excursions. The students carried out research on the European Union and looked at the differences in their school systems. They also met with young students with disabilities at a special school.

This jointly-organised student exchange demanded major involvement from all the students. Working on the basis of a common budget and programme, the students' awareness of their partners grew quickly, particularly as for the sake of communication, students got to experiment with each others' languages. Certain students continue learning these languages to this day.

Citizenship

Celebrating Europe Day together

The town of Halle (Belgium) has been twinned for several decades with two partner towns: Mouvaux (France), for 48 years, and Werl (Germany) for 33 years. Halle decided to use the occasion of Europe Day to celebrate the signing of a third twinning together with its other twin towns. The signing of the twinning between Halle and Kadan (Czech Republic) was thus signed on 9th May 2006, during the festivities for Europe Day. This twinning agreement gave itself the objectives of peace in Europe and friendship between the towns, schools and associations involved.

This new twinning owes its existence to longstanding links between schools of the two towns, which had been the source of many musical, artistic and sports exchanges. Today, the two towns wish to broaden their partnerships to include all the citizens, and to develop commercial exchanges in the future.



Project budget : 10 000 €

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Citizenship

A local youth parliament

The twinned cities of Alsómcsolád (Hungary) and Marefalva (Romania) decided to develop their partnership. For several years, a local youth government had already existed in Alsómcsolád. Its partner decided to adopt this system at home, by taking on its own local issues. This project also aimed to develop tolerance in the young people of the Hungarian city. In 2002, young people from Alsómcsolád travelled to Marefalva to present the workings of their local government. For one week, young people from the two cities worked together on how to set up a similar structure in the Romanian city. Four thematic working groups were set up. For each theme, a particular event was organised.

This experience allowed the young people to learn about each other. By working together with concrete objectives, links developed quickly. The young Romanians undertook

projects that they had laid out with their Hungarian friends. Together they learned techniques for managing projects, particularly in financial management. This taught responsibility, and helped develop trust in the municipality. The local youth government of Marefalva is the first of its kind in Romania.

Project budget : 4 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

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Citizenship

Women in local political life

Young women of the twinned cities of Stockport (United Kingdom) and Heilbronn (Germany) worked together on the issue of the role of women in politics. The young Germans are members of the youth parliament of their city. During the European Year of Citizenship through Education, in 2005, the young people got together in Brussels, at the office of the representation of Greater Manchester. There they met with European leaders, including members of the Parliament. This was followed by a visit from Heilbronn to Stockport to discuss local issues including the voice of women in democracy. They then met with members of the city council. They were also able to visit the national Parliament with a day trip to London.

The two groups of women found the debates on common issues interesting. Together they were able to consider the functioning of the democratic process at local, national and international levels. The visit to Stockport allowed the German women to bring back to their city specific proposals for the youth government of Heilbronn.

Project budget : 7 000 €

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Social inclusion

Working together to take better care of older people

The twinned cities of Leeds (United Kingdom), Brno (Czech Republic) and Brasov (Romania) work together on issues relating to the care of older people. In November 2006, Leeds hosted a visit by its two partners to look at how municipalities can work more effectively with other agencies responsible for providing care to older people. The project sought to look at ways the three cities could involve older people more directly in the development and planning of policies and, as well as social workers, voluntary groups and other institutions, the steering committee included older people. The programme was thus constructed in keeping with the priorities which they themselves had defined for their own wellbeing.

The project resulted in a number of strategies that the three cities could use in future work programmes which were built around common values such as the positive promotion of the image of older people, and the provision of accessible and flexible services to allow people to continue to live in their own homes and have independence. The project is highly dependent on the involvement of the older people in the decision making process which is achieved through seminars and consultation exercises through questionnaires.



Project budget : 4 000 €

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Social inclusion

Helping disadvantaged members of the community

The cities of The Hague (Netherlands) and Warsaw (Poland) have been twinned since 1991. For over two years, they have pursued a joint project to provide care for drug abusers and the homeless. This was based on exchanges of experiences through seminars and working meetings. The main theme dealt with cooperation between non-governmental organisations active in this field, and the local authorities. The participants also discussed a range of matters such as the role of the police, psychiatric issues, the organisation of administrative services, training, etc. In April 2005, an agreement was signed between the NGO partners of the two cities, with the support of the municipal services. In 2007, the first training courses got underway.

This project has allowed civil society associations and local authorities to learn to cooperate and have more trust in each other. The training courses have given optimism for more effective assistance to people in difficulty. The city of Lviv (Ukraine) has demonstrated much interest in this project which it became a part of in December 2006



Project budget : 21 500 € of investments

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Social inclusion

Getting to know better migrant workers

The cities of Carrickmacross (Ireland) and Carhaix-Plouguer (France) regularly organise cultural exchanges. In August 2005, they involved workers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in their festivities. In addition to the traditional Celtic performances, the participants from the Baltics performed dances and songs from their countries. A small bookshop and photo exhibition were dedicated to the Baltic partners during the four day visit of the French partners to Carrickmacross. Several meetings were organised where the Baltic participants could express their views and experiences on life in their new community to elected representatives and employers.

The enthusiastic Baltic participants provided books, DVDs, photos and CDs for the exhibitions and the Celtic festivities were very much enjoyed by all. The Irish and French participants were able to learn about the workers, and to better understand difficulties they face. Since then,

friendships have lasted, and the workers have become more closely involved in their new communities with direct results such as, for example, an increase in success for obtaining driver's licenses, and some workers are taking free English lessons from a member of the twinning association.

Project budget : 8 000 €

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+353 42 9661097



Common solutions for fighting pollution

The twinned cities of Ptuj (Slovenia), Burghausen (Germany) and Banska Stiavnica (Slovakia) and Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire (France) have the common feature of particularly significant relations with water, which, in all of these cities, plays an essential role in local development. In August 2002, these partners gathered in Ptuj to exchange experiences on water management. Several partners joined the local elected representatives: experts, NGOs, water distribution companies and ecological associations. The participants worked specifically looking at Ptuj's situation and its

Sustainable development

problems with pollution. A concrete work programme was defined through this conference.

This event allowed Ptuj to plan its approach to improve the city's water management. The lake of Ptuj, which provides the city with many possibilities for water-based leisure activities, has a toxic pollution problem. After the conference, the rehabilitation of the lake began in 2004 with a global approach. Toxic mud was recycled through the construction of a dike and islands; rules of behaviour were drawn up for leisure-seekers; measures to protect birds were improved. Ptuj also signed a charter with Banska Stiavnica, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its water management system. Ptuj has very high hopes for this new partnership to add value to its own heritage.

Project budget : 45 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information

Tanja Ostrman Renault,
International Relations,
tanja.or@ptuj.si



Sustainable development

Raising youth awareness on sustainable development

The twinned cities of Sint-Truiden (Belgium) and Duras (France) organise student exchanges. The French students' stay with their Belgian hosts in April 2006 was devoted to learning about sustainable development. The students from the two cities held debates on the environment, development cooperation, fair trade, organic farming, and employment of persons with disabilities. Several members of the European Parliament participated in the debates. The young people visited different sites by bicycle, such as organic farms, waste treatment plants, and a technical high school where industrial packaging and organic production is taught. They also carried out surveys on sustainable development and created a game around these issues.

The students got very involved in all the different phases of these projects. Older members of the community participated as well, and together they could exchange views on issues of sustainable development. The participating members of the European Parliament explained the EU's vision in this area,

presenting policies that exist already, as well as which have been foreseen. Moreover, the Belgian and French students compared the situations in Belgium and in the south of France. This awareness raising action was thus planned with a broad approach to the issue, and greatly interested the students from both cities.

Project budget : 11 000 €

Persons to be contacted for further information

in Sint-Truiden :

Mr Peter Dufaux, Echevin,
peter.dufaux@pandora.be
+32 11 68.28.16

in Duras :

Michel Prevot,
Vice President of the Twinning Committee,
m.prevot@tiscali.fr
+33 553 644 916

Sustainable development

Protecting Europe's coastlines together

The twinned cities of Jurmala (Latvia), Anadia (Portugal), Cabourg (France), Eskilstuna and Gävle (Sweden), Palanga (Lithuania), Pärnu (Estonia) and Terracina (Italy) are all located on or close to the coast. Therefore, environmental management is a key priority to the municipal agenda. In September 2006, Jurmala hosted a conference for its partners on "managing and protecting the coast". This involved several Latvian environmental protection institutions. Representatives from each of the cities presented their approaches to environmental issues and participants then made site visits to Ragakapa natural park, one of many beaches, as well as the outdoor museum of Jurmala.

This conference allowed participants to share their experiences with environmental management. The cities had very different approaches in this area, which provided for rich and instructive exchanges for all.



Project budget : 2 300 €

Person to be contacted for further information

Ms. Gunta Uspele,
Head of Department of Tourism and Foreign Affairs,
Jurmala city council,
Guntau@jpd.gov.lv

Sustainable development

Planting for a greener Europe today

The cities of Prešov (Slovakia) and Remscheid (Germany) have been twinned for many years and out of this partnership came the project "Eco Europe." Its purpose was to raise awareness of the young people in both cities about environmental matters. In July 2006, two weeks of this project were devoted to creating "the alley of twinned towns". The young people planted trees together, one German student and one Slovak per tree. They also visited the neighbouring area of Prešov and its particularly rich natural sites.

This initiative helped the young people become more familiar with nature and ecology through concrete actions. In planting and working with nature, they learned to respect, protect and even develop their environment. For years to come, the pathway of small trees will remain a natural area of beauty by the Torysa River.



Project budget : 6 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Mária Vargovčíková,
vargovcik.radnica@presov.sk
+421 51 310 01 35

Improving the provision of local services

Transferring competences by front-line work and training

The cities of Heumen (Netherlands) and Csorna (Hungary) have been twinned since 1991. They carry out student exchanges, as well as more technical cooperation.

In the field of **agriculture**, students from the technical farming school of Csorna benefitted from an annual three-week training programme on farms in The Netherlands, from 1992 to 1996, in order to learn modern farming techniques.

In the field of **environment**, in 2001, officers and elected politicians from Csorna and Budapest participated in a project on waste management and to raise public awareness about CO2 emissions. This trip included technical training.

Upon their return, the two Hungarian participants applied what they had learned, specifically setting up a regional waste recycling system. The waste is now used as an energy source for heating in Csorna. They also carried out information campaigns.

In the field of **health**, officers from Csorna spent one week in Heumen with their counterparts to look specifically at the new regional programme on health. Following visits to retirement homes and a clinic, the employees set up an information campaign in Hungary, a monitoring system and a municipal programme for in-home assistance.

Improving the provision of local services

Building an ambitious social policy together

The twinned cities of Zutphen and Deventer (Netherlands) and Tartu (Estonia) have together developed a policy to address the social and health needs of the older population in Tartu. This project brought together civil servant from the three cities and the meetings included visits to institutes, as well as presentations and debates. Training sessions were also proposed for Estonian health care professionals. In parallel, the city of Tartu obtained new information based on a survey which Zutphen had carried out at an earlier date.

The project exceeded all expectations and Tartu quickly adapted the proposals of its Dutch partners. The project began in March 2002 and by the end of 2004, Tartu had established its own municipal policy on social aid. Great progress has been made regarding the care of older people and related institutions. The Dutch practitioners were amazed at the success of the project, and how much they had learned themselves throughout the process. Following this success, the three twinned cities decided to set up two new projects on palliative and in-home care.



Project budget : 76 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Jacques van Trommel,
 Project Manager
 Town twinning Deventer-Zutphen-Tartu,
 j.vantrommel@zutphen.nl

Improving the provision of local services

Improving services through close cooperation

The cities of Viborg (Denmark) and Marijampole (Lithuania) have been twinned since 1992, with some financial support from their counties. Their partnership addresses many social issues, such as education, culture, health and the environment. Every three years, the two cities sign a cooperation agreement and twice a year, a group from Marijampole travels to the Lithuanian partner city.

Over the years, many links have been created in the two communities which have led to activities between hospitals, libraries, museums, churches, schools, social workers, and also the cities' administrations. Through exchanges of experiences, they seek to improve the services they provide to their citizens. The latest project underway is to develop documentation centres in the schools.



Project budget : 21 000 € per year, on average

Person to be contacted for further information :

Steen Andersen,
 steenand@post.tele.dk

Local economic development

Helping businesses get on their feet

The cities of Barcelona (Spain) and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) have been twinned since 1992. During the siege of Sarajevo that lasted from 1992 to 1996, the city of Barcelona responded to appeals for solidarity by sending humanitarian aid. The partnership has continued, and developed by pursuing actions for aid and economic development.

In 2003, they began a project to create a small business incubator with the aim of stimulating economic activity by supporting businesses at the initial set up stage. The project began with the refurbishment of the building of the Spanish International Agency for Cooperation of Sarajevo. Later, training courses on marketing and management were offered to people looking to begin a business. The incubator became operational in May 2005. Businesses are supported throughout the administrative process as they are getting started, and receive management support once they have been launched.

Project budget : 688 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Rosa Bada,
 Head of projects,
 Department of international cooperation,
 city of Barcelona,
 rbada@bcn.cat





Local economic development

including farmers organisations, the Region, the chamber of agriculture, an agricultural school, and head bakers. Political and administrative representatives of Jammerbugt made presentations on adaptations in Danish agriculture in the European context. Visits to farms and production sites allowed the participants to see concrete examples in implementation.

The Polish delegation was very pleased with the outcome of the seminar. Following the exchanges, the municipality of Strzelce Krajenkie redoubled their efforts to follow the Common Agricultural Policy. Polish farmers progressively began to develop new working methods as inspired by what they had learned from Jammerbugt.

Common Agricultural Policy applied at local level

The twinned communities of Jammerbugt (Denmark) and Strzelce Krajenkie (Poland) are both located in rural areas. Strzelce Krajenkie asked its Danish partners to organise a seminar about the Common Agricultural Policy to share experience on possible solutions for achieving sustainable and competitive agricultural development in the European context. The Polish delegation was made up of a variety of partners from the municipality of Strzelce Krajenkie

Project budget : 16 900 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Sonia Dornhoff Jensen,
 son@jammerbugt.dk
 (Jammerbugt Commune, Toftvej 43, 9440 Aabybro)



Local economic development

Annual visits to stimulate innovation in agriculture

Twinned for over 10 years, the cities of Ede (Netherlands) and Chrudim (Czech Republic) set up a common working group on agriculture early on in the partnership. This has resulted in a number of initiatives involving farmers, chambers of agriculture and farming schools.

Since 2001, these exchanges have become more ambitious. Every year 8 farmers from Ede travel to Chrudim and 8 farmers from Chrudim then make the return journey. The exchange visits allow each partner to learn about the new methods being used in each country. A wide range of themes are covered: the organisation of farms and agricultural cooperatives, community policy, education in the area of agriculture. The participants meet their counterparts and other regional actors, and visits to the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture and to the chamber of agriculture provide a broader view of the sector.

The partnership has led to new projects with students from the farming schools of the two cities maintaining regular contact. Since 2003, Chrudim has staged an annual exhibition of flowers from The Netherlands.

Project budget : 5 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Ir E. Lagerweij,
 Coordinator Agrarian Working Group of Twinning,
 irelagerweij@hetnet.nl
 + 318 611275
 (Nieuwe Kazernelaan 87, 6711 JC Ede)

Solidarity

From humanitarian aid to economic development aid

The cities of Allschwil (Switzerland) and Blaj (Romania) have been twinned since 1989. Following the fall of communism, the Swiss city organised humanitarian transport, with shipments of basic food, mattresses, clothing and medical aid being sent to Blaj.

The relationship developed over time, and new means of cooperation were created. Collaboration was established with Romanian businesses and farmers, with financial aid and training offered, particularly for wine-making.

In parallel to the support provided by Allschwil towards its Romanian counterpart, the citizens of the two cities began to develop links. Families of Allschwil hosted school children from Blaj, and the football club of the Swiss city invited its Romanian counterpart for a match. Artists from the two cities also set up a common exhibition, and a week of Romanian cuisine was organised.

Person to be contacted for further information :

Andreas Weis,
 andreas.weis@allschwil.bl.ch

Solidarity

Renovating a new centre for older people

The city of Vlist (Netherlands) participates in a project of reconstruction in its twin city Bac (Serbia). The aim is to fix up what was once an old school building in order to create a new retirement community for older people. Civil servants of Vlist travelled to Bac to lend their technical expertise to this project to support and improve the quality of life for older people, particularly in the struggle against poverty, improving conditions, and providing adequate access to employment and/or volunteering possibilities.

Volunteers played a key role in the project. A media campaign, by radio, website and leaflets, helped recruit many volunteers. The project also had the goal of allowing young unemployed people to get involved in an activity that would help them gain new skills and feel more involved in their own community. In future, the centre will employ a staff of more than twelve, including nurses, doctors and a director.



Project budget : 15 500 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Darija Sajin,
 Director of Municipal Administration,
 info@bac.co.yu
 +381 21 77 00 75

Solidarity

A friendship born from helping the population

Since 1990, the cities of Ianca (Romania) and La Chapelle sur Erdre (France) have pursued a great variety of activities together. At first humanitarian in nature, the partnership then focused on education. La Chapelle sur Erdre participated in creating a library, shipped French language study books and computers, and hosted visiting Romanian teachers. At the same time, there were numerous citizen exchanges between the cities. In 1991, 45 visitors from Ianca travelled to meet their French partners and learn about France, with a return visit to Ianca by 40 French partners.

The partnership progressed, with more technical projects being conceived such as the rehabilitation of the Laboratory of the Water Works of Ianca (supplying drinking water to 50 000 inhabitants) and purchasing a leak detector for the supply line (cost 38 000€). La Chapelle sur Erdre also participated in the purchase of a snow plough. In addition, 21 hospital beds were sent to Ianca's new Socio-medical centre, and specialised sealed mattresses purchased in Romania (cost 13 000€).

In 2002, both municipalities signed a friendship protocol in La Chapelle sur Erdre. The delegation from Ianca was made up of 45 people and was accompanied by a folklore group of 25 young people of 14-22 years old. They performed at the annual music festival on 21 June. The return of the friendship protocol took place one year later in Ianca, with 40 French delegates. Student exchanges between the two cities are underway.

Person to be contacted for further information :

Cristian Balas
18 rue Braille,
Bl. B3, Sc. 1, Et. 1, Ap. 1
815200 Ianca
Judet de Braila
Romania



Examples of international twinning

Throughout the world, local and regional governments are responsible for a great number of services for their citizens, be it education, water management, health, social action or waste treatment. They therefore constitute an essential and active component in improving people's quality of life as well as in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Thanks to the work of their representative organisations, local and regional authorities are increasingly getting involved as partners in cooperation programmes of national, European and international institutions. This recognition allows for an improved access to financing from donors – albeit limited – as well as a better comprehension of the needs and expectations of the local authorities.

In this way, European local and regional authorities have a very important role to play as they bring their know-how and broad expertise in a wide range of fields. By sharing their experiences with local authorities on other continents, and, to a lesser extent, by helping to finance projects, the European local authorities actively contribute to development in the world. The following examples demonstrate the great potential of this type of cooperation.



Luxembourg - El Salvador

Water supply in El Salvador

The cities of Prézersdau (Luxembourg) and San Agustín (El Salvador) signed a twinning agreement in April 2004. Prézersdau decided to support the financing of a water network project for San Agustín. This cooperation became a reality with the signing of a twinning charter in the presence of the Minister of Cooperation of Luxembourg. At this occasion, the political leaders of the two municipalities set out concrete projects in terms of education, health care and infrastructure. Following these official meetings, others were organised which involved the wider community in order to raise the awareness in Luxembourg citizens about the problems faced by a developing country.

The twinning accompanied by a dedicated source of financial support helped the project for a water network in San Agustín develop, and helped address the consequences of the 2001 earthquake. The project was financially supported by the Ministry of Cooperation in Luxembourg.

A delegation from Prézersdau was able to travel to El Salvador and to witness for themselves the necessity and importance of decentralised aid in this country in general, and in San Agustín in particular.

Project budget : around 16 500 € per year
(0,5% of the municipal budget of ordinary income)

Person to be contacted for further information :

Emile Calmes,
Deputy Mayor of Prézersdau,
ecalmes@chd.lu
+352 021 199 333

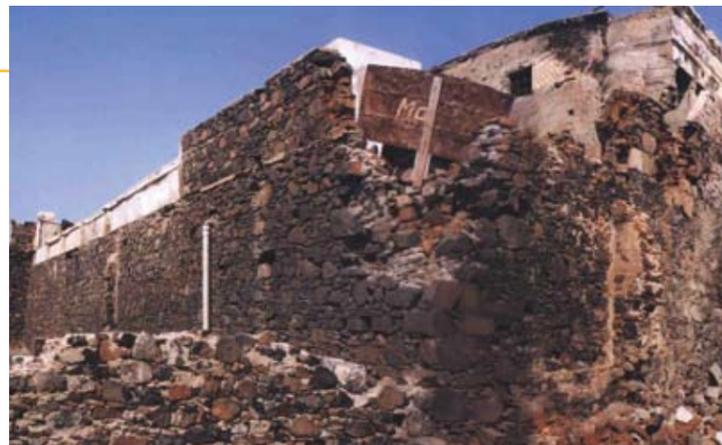
Portugal - Cape Verde

Restoring heritage in the South

Cooperation with other Portuguese-speaking countries is a priority for the city of Porto (Portugal).

Since 1992, the city has been twinned with Mindelo (Cape Verde). This partnership focuses on the urban renewal and restoration of the historic heritage of the city. Porto thus developed projects to restore monuments built by the Portuguese: an old fortress (Fortim D'el Rei) as well as a plaza (Praça D. Luís). At the same time, Porto financed the construction of a fish market in order to improve public health in Mindelo.

The market opened to the public in 1997, allowing the population and vendors to carry out sales in good sanitary conditions. The development of an urban planning policy has helped the development of infrastructure and quality public spaces. Porto hopes that these rehabilitation projects will help Mindelo attract tourists, and therefore support the economic development of the city.



Project budget : 200 000 €

Person to be contacted for further information :

Carla Fonseca,
dmri@cm-porto.pt
+351 22 600 66 67/8/9

Finland - Tanzania

Looking after children on the street

The twinning between Vaasa (Finland) and Morogoro (Tanzania) has served as a basis for a cooperation project concerning orphaned children. The social services of the two cities collaborated on the placement of orphans in families of Morogoro. The adoptive families were able to benefit from a loan to set up a business, the aim being to help them ensure the care and education of the child, as well as to pay back the loan. Interest on the loans was transferred to the department of social affairs of Morogoro which allowed more loans to be made available. The host families participated in training sessions on adoption as well as on setting up a business.

Under the project, 4000 orphans were identified in Morogoro. Over 75 families took advantage of the training courses and received loans. 200 orphans were placed in families, all in good conditions. In this way, their primary and secondary education will be ensured. Moreover, thanks to the loan system, the participating families now enjoy a better life themselves.

Project budget :

20 000€ per year,
provided by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Persons to be contacted for further information :

City of Vaasa:
Anna-Maija Iitola,
Chief Secretary,
anna-maija.iitola@vaasa.fi
(P. O. Box 3, 65101, Vaasa)

City of Morogoro :
Devota Nkwera,
Community Development Officer,
devonkwe20@yahoo.co.uk
(P.O. Box 166, Morogoro Municipality)



Setting up an international twinning

useful contact information

CEMR's national associations



CEMR and its national associations are increasingly active in the field of development cooperation. For further information on EU programmes, as well as on possibilities for financing or existing partnerships at national level, contact CEMR's national associations.

All contact details for CEMR's national associations are available on the CEMR website, on the "members" page : www.ccre.org

United Cities and Local Governments



United Cities and Local Governments
Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis
Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos

CEMR is the European section of the World Organisation of local authorities: United Cities and Local Governments. Headquartered in Barcelona, UCLG represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage. The organisation's stated mission is to be the united voice and World advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community.

Present in 136 of the 192 United Nations members states, UCLG's members include individual cities and national associations of local governments. UCLG has a decentralised structure with seven world regions which can advise and support the creation of partnerships in their region.

Further information on UCLG can be found on their website : www.cities-localgovernments.org

EU Aid



The recognition of the role of local and regional authorities in development aid has led to better recognition by the EU in general. The revision of the Cotonou Agreement in 2005 was an important step forward in this process as it allowed local and regional authorities to be included in consultations as well as in the implementation of EU programmes. Additionally, their interests were better taken into account in the drawing up of EU cooperation programmes for the period 2007-2013.

Overall, today local and regional authorities' access to EU programmes on development aid has improved. Specifically, the thematic programme "Non State Actors and Local Authorities" set up by the European Commission for the period 2007-2013 represents major progress, and opens significant possibilities for financing. In addition, the participation of local authorities in the other thematic programmes and in the geographic programmes is encouraged as well.

For information on the different EU programmes for development aid, please consult the website of EuropeAid, the Office for cooperation of the European Commission :

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid>

Development education and the Millennium Development Goals



One of the major issues of the century is how to reduce the inequalities between developed and developing countries. In order for all the actors concerned, and particularly the States and international institutions, to take action and really work for development in countries of the South, it is crucial that public awareness be raised on these issues, and that leaders be compelled to take action in this area.

During the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, the 191 Heads of State present agreed upon 8 objectives to aim to achieve by 2015, with the overarching goal of fighting extreme poverty in the world and reducing the development gap.

These "Millennium Development Goals" are promoted by the United Nations Millennium Campaign which works to raise public awareness around the Goals, and to call national governments to take action on the commitments they have taken in the fight against poverty.

European local and regional authorities here again have a major role to play. As the sphere of government that is closest to the citizens, these can serve as the ideal relay for the Millennium Campaign's awareness raising work, and particularly through twinning actions.

To learn more about the MDGs, you can check out the Millennium Campaign's website : www.millenniumcampaign.org

or contact Jordi Llopart, European Coordinator of the Campaign : jordi.llopart@undp.org

[Twinning Instruments 5]

The EU programme "Europe for Citizens"

Since 1989, the European Commission has provided financial support to twinning actions. This aid was obtained thanks to the action of the President of the European Parliament at that time, Nicole Fontaine, who presented a report demonstrating the importance of twinning for European cohesion. In 1989, 3.5 million Ecu were devoted to supporting twinning. This financing has since been regularly increased, reaching 12.5 million € for the year 2006.

EU action in support of twinning is covered for the period 2007-2013 in the programme "Europe for Citizens", which aims to support a broad range of activities and organisations in the pursuit of "active European citizenship." The overall budget of the programme is of 215 million € for the seven years. Among these activities, twinning – in budgetary terms – is the main measure supported: 11 to 14 million € per year are set aside for this, with the precise amount varying depending on the year.

The programme guide provides all the practical information on how to receive financial support. Five permanent priorities are defined in the guide, which will be maintained throughout the programme's duration :

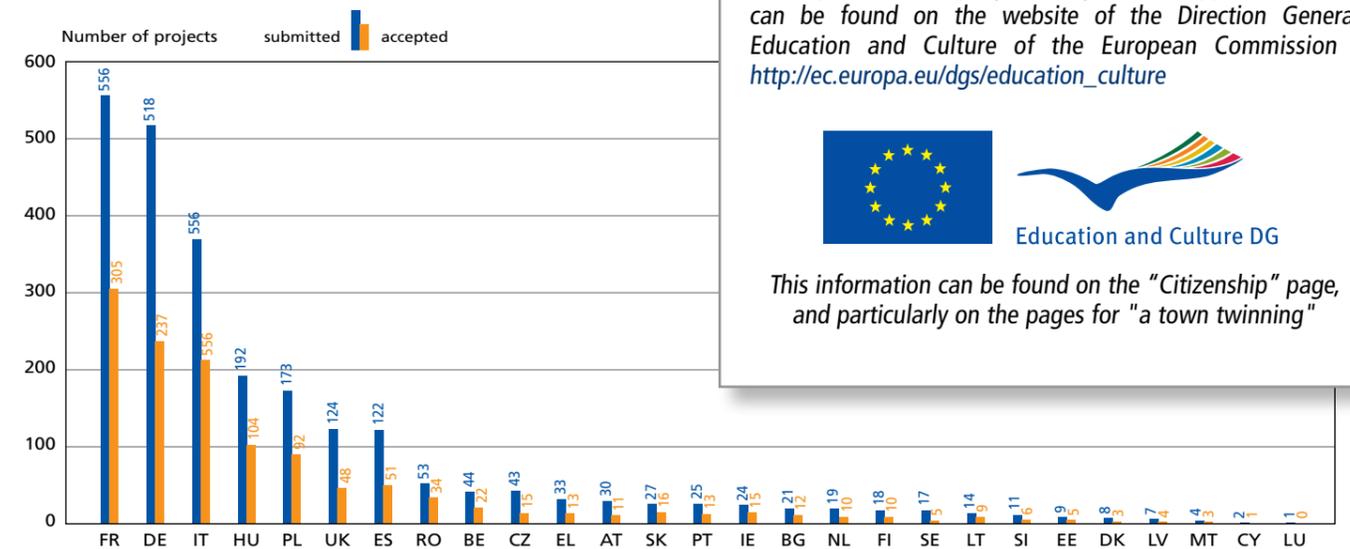
- Future of the European Union and its basic values
- Active European Citizenship: participation and democracy in Europe
- Inter-cultural dialogue
- People's wellbeing in Europe: employment, social cohesion and sustainable development
- Impact of EU policies in societies

The Guide indicates which countries may participate in the programme: it is open to the 27 EU member States; with certain conditions, it is also open to the following countries: signatory countries of the European Free Trade Association that are members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), acceding countries and the Western Balkan Countries.

In addition, annual priorities will be defined each year. Twinning actions which correspond to the permanent themes or to the annual priorities have more likelihood of being awarded funding. All priorities are laid out in the application form to request financing.

The European Commission encourages filling out the application electronically on the Internet in order to facilitate the process. Calculation of grant amounts is based on a system of daily rates which are calculated as a function of the number of participants, the distance between the twinned towns, and the country in which the activity takes place. Awarded grants are from 2 000€ to 20 000€. The majority of actions supported are one-off activities, but the Commission also provides financing for multi-annual projects.

This table presents the number of applications submitted (in blue) and accepted (in yellow) by countries participating in the programme in 2006. Over half the applications submitted received grants from the Commission. Applications are selected based on the quality of the projects presented.



In order to receive advice and support on the application process, we advise you to contact one of CEMR's national associations, whose contact information can be found on CEMR's website (www.ccre.org) in the "town twinning" page which can be accessed from the "fields of activity" page.

All information on the programme "Europe for Citizens" and in particular the programme guide and application form can be found on the website of the Direction General Education and Culture of the European Commission : http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture

Education and Culture DG

This information can be found on the "Citizenship" page, and particularly on the pages for "a town twinning"

An Evaluation Check-list

A twinning is not something to be improvised, it must be carefully prepared, and this is one of the keys to a successful twinning! To help you cover all the bases, we have prepared an evaluation check-list which should help you ensure that you have taken all the important steps for creating a dynamic and efficient project – a partnership that will be able to withstand the test of time!

A good fit

From the first stages of seeking a partner town, it is important to find a good match, with good possibilities for sharing: rich cultural heritage, similar geographic situations (coast, mountain towns, etc.) similar number of inhabitants or economic activities, etc. To set up interesting projects in which the populations can really get involved, there should be a minimum of interests in common.

→ Define common objectives

To give the twinning direction, the partner towns must define together the objectives of the project. Whether this involves sporting events, technical partnerships, thematic networks, etc., the relationship will be more dynamic if the twinned towns have fixed goals together, if possible with a timescale and deadlines. If the partnership is to last, the best thing could be to set up multiple long-term projects.

→ A support structure for the projects

Over time, the energy behind the partnership can weaken. A small but active team, in each of the twinned towns, can help maintain connections, develop the partnership in projects, seek financing... This twinning "motor" can be a sort of steering committee for the twinning, an association accredited by the municipality which works in cooperation with the town and its associations.

→ Involve the community

The elected representatives represent the political will of a twinning, but they must have the support of all their citizens. For this, the twinning must have support from the different municipal structures and associations. Schools, sports clubs, music schools, leisure groups, retirement communities, etc. should all be involved. At the same time, the twinning must be visible so that every citizen can feel directly concerned. For instance, signs can be posted at the entry of the town hall, notices placed in the town newsletter and website, or during public events.

→ Working with the schools

There are many ways of involving the community's schools in the twinning. Student exchanges are often one of the high points of a partnership, and help involve a major part of the town community as, by necessity, they include parents, teachers and school personnel, student associations, etc. But there are other possibilities to look into, such as developing synergies between twinings and eTwinning, the main action of the eLearning programme of the European Union.

eTwinning promotes school collaboration in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies by providing support, tools and services to make it easy for schools to form short or long term partnerships in any subject area.



For more information, please consult the eTwinning website: www.etwinning.net

The Twinning Oath

The twinning oath is considered an "accord" that is signed by the legal representatives of partner towns. Below we provide a model oath that has been adopted by a great number of towns, and modified by others. Whilst not legally binding, this document facilitates the setting up of a trusting relationship, and can be used for the city council's approval of the twinning.

Its form and content are not fixed, and may be amended depending on the specificities of the partnership being set up, or according to the wishes of the partner towns. The title of the text may also be modified as judged appropriate, such as charter or convention on twinning, or of cooperation, a friendship pact, etc.

The text should be submitted to the city council with the draft deliberation on the ratification of the twinning with the partner town. The twinning oath is then signed at a public meeting, and is usually proclaimed aloud to those present. The signatory towns take a commitment together, but this carries no legal obligation and there is no legal recourse in case of litigation. Moreover, a local authority may at any moment put an end to the partnership by means of deliberation of the city council annulling the twinning's ratification.

TWINNING OATH

We, (name) and (name),

Mayors of (country) and of (country)

Freely elected representatives of our fellow-citizens,

Certain that we act on behalf of the sincere wishes and real needs of our populations,

Aware that our civilisations and peoples found their origins in our ancient free local communities, that the spirit of liberty was first recorded in the freedom won by them, and later, in the local self-governments they were able to found,

Considering that history shall continue in a wider world, but that this world will be truly humane only in so far as men live freely in free cities,

Convinced of the necessity of respecting the principle of subsidiarity,

Affirming our value of respecting human rights, which we hold as inviolable and inalienable.

Recognizing that the growing interdependence of different national societies necessitates an international, global democratic order, the foundation for a real peace

Convinced that the ties that bind the towns of our continent constitute a fundamental element upon the path towards developing European citizenship and thus promote a Europe of human dimensions.

DO TAKE, ON THIS DAY, A SOLEMN OATH

According to the relationships established between our two countries,

To maintain permanent ties between the governments of our municipalities in order to promote our dialogue, to exchange our experiences and to implement all joint activities which may foster mutual improvement in all domains that fall within our competences,

To encourage and support exchanges between our fellow citizens in order to ensure, through greater mutual understanding and efficient cooperation, the true spirit of European brotherhood for our now common destiny,

To act according to the rules of hospitality, with respect for our diversities, in an atmosphere of trust and in a spirit of solidarity,

To guarantee for all people the possibility of participating in the exchanges between our two communities without discrimination of any form,

To promote the universal values of liberty, democracy, equality and the rule of Law, through our exchanges and cooperation,

Focus our efforts using all the means at our disposal to supporting the success of this essential undertaking for peace, progress and prosperity, which is :

EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNITY.

Place Date



Organisations to contact

CEMR's National Associations

CEMR brings together 49 national associations of local and regional authorities in 36 countries. To assist you in your twinning endeavours, they are there to help! They can provide support throughout the different phases of a twinning:

in partner searches, for information about existing funding opportunities, for advice on how to set up projects, etc. The list below gives the contact information of the officers in charge of twinning affairs in the different countries.

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Frau Tatiana DETERING

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Rhodes Conference

On 10-12 May 2007, in parallel to the launch of the "Europe for Citizens" programme (see Part 5: twinning instruments), CEMR organised the conference Twinning for Tomorrow's World in Rhodes, in partnership with its Greek section KEDKE and the city of Rhodes, and with the support of the European Commission. This Conference gathered some 500 participants from 29 European and Mediterranean countries, who together debated the areas for action where twinings will have a key role to play in the coming years, in contributing to advances in both Europe and the World. With three main themes, speakers were able to present concrete examples of projects upon which experts further expanded with a more theoretical analysis. The principal conclusions drawn from these debates are presented here, as well as the Final Declaration of the Conference.

1st Theme :

A EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP FOR LIVING TOGETHER IN EUROPE

Session 1 : twinning: a tool for social inclusion and active participation

The re-engagement or inclusion of groups that are marginalised or in difficulty was the common thread of the examples

presented during this session. As an inclusive movement of people, twinning helps all members of the population get involved and be part of new innovations and practices. Twinning can thus act as a catalyst for long-term projects based directly on the needs expressed by the citizens, and allow local authorities to better adapt their services. The first step in such an undertaking is to identify marginalised groups within the community and make contact with them. This requires a careful consideration on the part of the people involved.

Session 2 : youth and twinning: an initiation to public life

Twinning is a useful way of raising youth awareness of public life. As young people are active in many areas, such as culture, education and sports, their participation as active citizens may be encouraged in different ways. It is very important that the young people in a town be given responsibilities within the twinning link, to enable them to feel more involved in the projects, and therefore become a part of their town's political life. Furthermore, by promoting their mobility in Europe, twinning involves youth in the process of European construction, and helps them to understand its complexities and benefits.

2nd Theme :

TOMORROW'S EUROPE: FACING THE CHALLENGES

Session 1 : promoting our cultural diversity and preserving our cultural heritage

Twinning can be a perfect means of promoting Europe's cultural diversity. Learning about other European countries, discovering how culture can become a source of communication, recognising the importance of local knowledge, etc. Citizens' exchanges offer an invaluable potential for cultural enrichment. Moreover, cultural exchanges between cities can help combine efforts and innovations for protecting the environment and the restoration of historic monuments. They are also a great tool for promoting European heritage which helps raise awareness of how close European peoples are even in their cultural diversity.

Session 2 : twinning: a forum for a dynamic, social and sustainable Europe

This session highlighted the added value twinning has in areas such as the creation of businesses, the development of sustainable agriculture, research and innovation. Through very practical partnerships, twin towns mutually benefit from the sharing of knowledge and expertise and can better develop their own environment. To be really effective, the partnership must be based on trust, which a few years of twinning easily creates.

3rd Theme :

EUROPE IN THE WORLD

Session 1 : twinings: bridges for dialogue and peace around the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region is a crossroads of economic, political and cultural ties which have ramifications around the World. The European Union has a very important role to play in the development of trust-based relationships, and in contributing to the stability and development of the region. In this context, initiatives undertaken by local authorities to open the way for reconciliation in zones vulnerable to conflict should be increasingly supported by the European and international institutions. In the Middle East, in Cyprus, the Maghreb or the Balkans, local authorities have a central role to play in creating a region of prosperity around the Mediterranean. The examples of partnerships between Palestinian and Israeli towns demonstrate the fortitude of good will. Though they may not be able to take political or security decisions, local authorities have the power to influence their societies by promoting a culture of peace. Support from European local authorities can be essential in helping such relations to grow.



Session 2 : for a better world: twinning and development cooperation

Town twinning began in the 1950's with the aim of building peace in Europe. It spread to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall, and today has extended its reach around the globe. European local authorities are becoming increasingly significant actors in development aid, and benefit from growing recognition from European and international Institutions. Local authorities have a dual role to play: contributing to raising awareness of global issues, whilst offering their support to development projects to their counterparts of the South. This form of co-operation presents considerable potential.

At the end of the Rhodes Conference, the participants adopted a final declaration which reaffirms the commitment of European local authorities that twinning in Europe continues to contribute to building a strong and united Europe.

Conference "Twinning for Tomorrow's World"

FINAL DECLARATION - RHODES 10 -12 MAY 2007

Fifty years ago, with the Treaty of Rome, the Heads of State and Government began laying the foundations for a Europe of peace, democracy and prosperity.

They had been preceded by Mayors who, refusing to accept the inevitability of war, had decided to take action at their own level, undertaking the reconciliation of the European family. Twinning thus aimed to help mutual understanding grow between peoples, and to contribute to the creation of a European spirit.

Twinning has played an essential role at every step in the development and growth of Europe. We, alongside the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, are proud to have actively participated in this process.

With over seventeen thousand twinings linking European local authorities and communities, this movement is today the largest citizen network of our continent.

The European Parliament and the European Commission have been pleased to recognise this movement, and have contributed to its development through the community aid to twinning, and now with the new programme, "Europe for Citizens." We wish to highlight this invaluable contribution.

Now, Europe and the World are undergoing a profound crisis; a crisis marked by difficulties in the relations between the States and the citizens, a crisis of identity which is in part caused by negative aspects of globalisation which can risk provoking the resurgence of nationalisms and fundamentalisms.

These must always be fought energetically. The European Union must contribute to facilitating progress towards peace and meetings between peoples and civilisations.

We therefore wish for the European Union to have an international role and identity, clearly visible and shared by the European citizens,

We, local and regional elected representatives, and activists of the twinning movement, gathered together in Rhodes from 10 to 12 May 2007 on the occasion of the conference "Twinning for Tomorrow's World":

- Reaffirm our conviction as to the strength and vitality of the twinning movement, in that it facilitates the involvement of the citizens in direct exchanges, thereby giving Europe a day-to-day, human dimension;*
- Restate our commitment to ensure that twinings are instruments for the inclusion of all of our citizens, reflecting their diversity and their cultures;*
- Emphasise that twinings can play a particular role in relations with countries that are potential candidates for accession to the Union, in particular in South-East Europe, but also with all of our Union's neighbouring countries;*
- Remain convinced that twinings can and must help to build bridges between towns and communities around the Mediterranean and serve as instruments for reconciliation and*

foundations for peace in the region, also encouraging the active participation of citizens whose origins lie in these countries who now live in our towns and regions;

- Underline, moreover, that twinings can contribute to policies for development cooperation, and help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; from a wider perspective, they can also serve, in this age of globalisation, to bring together citizens from all our different continents and all our diverse cultures;*
- Reaffirm the importance of the political dimension of twinning as proclaimed by the Congresses of Twinned Towns of Bordeaux (1987), Ferrara (1999), Antwerp (2002), and our commitment for a stronger European Union – in accordance with CEMR's Statutes – which is transparent and close to its citizens.*

Twinning allows citizens to meet and learn about each other, to be enriched by their diversity. These links thus contribute to raising awareness of a common identity and sense of belonging, with an ability to be open and creative, and to the development of a European citizenship based on the values of democracy, freedom, tolerance, solidarity, justice and openness to dialogue.

For these reasons, we would like to reaffirm to the European Parliament, the European Commission and to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe our commitment to our partnership work, undertaken over many years, for the promotion and support of twinning, and underline the value of a strong financial and programmatic commitment from the Union, which should take into account the necessary involvement of all types of local authorities supporting through their twinings the objectives of the Europe for Citizens programme.

To this end, we call on the Council of European Municipalities and Regions to play a proactive role as interface and co-ordinator between our local governments and the European institutions, and to develop practical tools in support of the twinning movement and to cooperate with all networks of municipalities and regions working to promote peace.

Above all, we therefore commit ourselves to working so that twinings may continue to develop as spaces for dialogue and debate, between the citizens of Europe, across all geographical and cultural boundaries, on the issues and challenges of the Union which concern us all, and for which we need common and positive solutions.

In particular, twinings can help with the deepening of dialogue and debate concerning the adoption, before the elections of the European Parliament in 2009, of a Treaty in relation to the fundamental principles on which the Union must be based, to its Institutions, and most importantly to the fundamental rights of the citizens and to European citizenship.

By emphasising once again our commitment to the concept of twinning, coupled with our will to see twinings adapt to the realities of the XXIst century, we believe that we remain loyal to our founding values: to build for our citizens a stronger Europe and a better world, based on our common values.

CEMR in a nutshell

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is a non-profit association. It is the broadest association of local and regional government in Europe. Its members are national associations of local and regional governments from over 35 European countries.

The main aim of CEMR is to promote a strong, united Europe based on local and regional self-government and democracy; a Europe in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to its citizens, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

CEMR's activities cover a wide range of issues such as public services and procurement, transport, regional policy, twinning, the environment, equal opportunities... CEMR is also present on the international stage: it is the European section of the world organisation of towns and municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

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