

Tornio-Haparanda – a Unique Result of City Twinning

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HAPARANDA , founded in 1842 by Karl XIV Johan
Area 918 km²
Inhabitants 10 200
Population density 11,6 per km²
Unemployment rate 14,7 % (2004)
Number of companies about 800



TORNIO, founded in 1621 by Gustaf II Adolf
Area 1227 km²
Inhabitants 22 300
Population density 19,2 per km²
Unemployment rate 14,8 % (2004)
Number of companies about 1 050

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THE BORDER CITIES of Tornio in Finland and Haparanda in Sweden make up a significant and exceptional area. This area is an essential part of the northern part of the Gulf of Botnia extending from Raahe to Piteå, in its centre. Close cross-border cooperation of this kind between two cities located in different countries is unique in Europe. Although Tornio and Haparanda administratively belong to different states, diverse cooperation is carried on in almost all administrative sectors.

Forerunner in cross-border cooperation

Tornio and Haparanda have a long common history. The border line between Russia and Sweden, drawn at the Peace in Hamina (Fredrikshamn) in 1809, divided this area into two parts. In spite of the national frontier, peaceful relations and dealings between people continued as before.

In 1986, the city governments decided to study possibilities for cooperation between municipalities. As a result of this study, Provincia Bothniensis, a cooperation organisation between Tornio and Haparanda was established in 1987 with the aim to promote cooperation between these border cities. The decision-makers of the cities were far-sighted, and long before the debate on Finland and Sweden joining the EU was started they understood what benefits would be brought by cooperation.

The development and deepening of cooperation is the administration's responsibility. In this the Administration the City Councils appoint five members each for municipal electoral period. This organisation also has its own office.

Work groups form an important part of cooperation. At present there are work groups dealing with following issues:

- Business and Tourism
- Training and education
- Community structure, city planning, environmental issues, technical services
- Physical education and leisure time

- Social services and health care
- Culture and youth activities
- Planning and constructing a new city centre 'On the Border'

In addition, there have been many projects in progress belonging to the EU Interreg programme.

For a period of more than ten years, we can list several concrete results which also have brought economic benefits to the cities. The objectives, which were set at the founding stage of the organisation and in the course of cooperation, have been achieved and in most areas even exceeded. These achievements include cooperation in cultural and leisure time activities, borderless education; free school attendance across the border on all levels including vocational training, the common comprehensive school 'Language school' and the upper secondary Euro school, cooperation and joint investments in fire and rescue services, common sewage treatment plant, combining the district heating networks, combining the tourist agencies, carrying out the redevelopment plan of the city bay, located at the national frontier.

'On the Border'

The most concrete result of the cooperation is constructing of a new common city centre on the border area. It has been a process of 10 years starting in 1995 when Finland and Sweden joined the EU. The process has proceeded in phases starting with an international architecture competition in 1996. The second phase was the development plan for the area, the third the realisation plan including both master plan and town plan. The construction started in 2005, and in 2008 there is going to be about 100 000 m² new commercial space in the area. The world famous IKEA is going to open their northernmost unit in the world in November 2006. IKEA is followed by the most famous chains of stores in Sweden and in Finland. It also means about 1 500 new jobs in service sector by 2010.

The cities have expanded their cooperation network also to the regional level. The road administrations of Finland and Sweden participate in the cooperation project, and the land survey offices of the two countries participate in its general planning. We are now creating a new kind of working pattern in which the frontier, which used to be regarded as a barrier, has been turned into a resource, a resource which will offer new opportunities for the development of the regional.

Educations focus

Bilingualism is a unique richness of Haparanda-Tornio. The cities have a common language school in Haparanda in which instruction has been given in Finnish and Swedish since 1989. The curriculum of the school is a combination of the curricula of the Finnish and Swedish school systems. Thus, children grow up becoming bilingual and international at the same time as they develop roots in the community.

In autumn 1998, Eurolukio, the Euro upper secondary school, started its activity, also unique among schools. In its curriculum, internationalism is a concrete thing. The aim is that pupils gain active skills in more than two language and good possibilities for postgraduate studies both at Finnish, Swedish and European institutions of higher educations and universities.

Vision 2010

The Administration of Haparanda-Tornio has adopted a new vision up to 2010, according to which *'Haparanda-Tornio is an international centre in The Bothnian Arc and Barents Region; a meeting place for cultures, knowledge, logistics, innovation and people'*

The aim of the decision-makers and official in Tornio and in Haparanda is to be forerunners of the frontier cooperation also in the future. This means that we must have new ideas and courage to realize them.

International attention

Cooperation between Tornio and Haparanda has been given attention widely in Finland and Sweden as well as at internationally. Haparanda and Tornio have participated in many international projects with the aim to develop a cooperation organisation similar to the Haparanda-Tornio pattern between other city twins in European borders.. At the moment Haparanda-Tornio

are partners in 'City Twins Cooperation Network' project together with 8 other cities on European and Russian borders. More information about the project is available in www.citytwins.net.

More information can be found on following homepages:

www.tornio.fi

www.haparanda.se

<http://www.pagransen.com>

Haparanda-Tornio is a case that has been studied in many documents:

Publications

- Zalamans, Dennis: The light of two border towns from a different angle. The situation of youths in Narva and Valga on the Estonian border, 2005. Forthcoming
- Zalamans, Dennis: The Next Generation. A study of youths in five border towns: In Narva and the Baltic Sea Region, edited by Karsten Brüggemann. ISBN: 9985-4-0417-3, Narva, 2004.
- Zalamans, Dennis and Kujala, Jukka: European Impact on the Finnish-Swedish Border – The case of Haparanda and Tornio, in *Regional Policies in Europe. Soft Feature for Innovative Cross-Border Cooperation*, edited by F.M. Zimmerman and S.Janschitz, Leykam, Graz, ISBN 3-7011-0043-8, 2004.
- Zalamans, Dennis: Cross Boundary Regions around the Baltic Sea – The case of Haparanda/ Tornio and Öresund, 2003. Forthcoming.
- Zalamans, Dennis: Boundaries to Communication – The case of Haparanda/Tornio and Valga/Valka, part I. Licentiate thesis, Stockholm university, 2002.
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- Lundén, Thomas and Zalamans, Dennis: Local co-operation, ethnic diversity and state territoriality – the case of Haparanda and Tornio on the Sweden – Finland border, in 'Binational Cities', a special issue of *Geo Journal*. Vol 54, No 1, ISSN 0343-2521, 2001.
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- Lundén, Thomas och Zalamans, Dennis: Att överskrida gränsen utan att gå över ån efter vatten. *Geografiska Notiser* 1999:1, pp54-62.
- Lundén, Thomas och Zalamans, Dennis: Valga/Valka delad stad. *Geografiska Notiser* 1998:1, pp29-34.
- Heininen, Lassi, 2004. 'Hapatornio' – Twin Town. In: *Baltic Region - Conflicts and Co-operation. Road from the Past to the Future*, an Estonian-Finnish-Latvian-Lithuanian-Swedish reference book. The English Edition. EuroUniversity, Estonian Euroinfo Society, Kirjastus ilo. Estonia 2004, p. 210-211. (the book is also published in Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and Swedish languages)

