

Flekkefjord, 20.06.09

Agreement of twinning cooperation activities between Flekkefjord, Bollnäss, Kankaanpää, Misburg-Anderten and Morsoe

Introduction

The municipalities and twin towns;

- Flekkefjord, Norway,
- Bollnäss, Sweden,
- Kankaanpää, Finland,
- Misburg-Anderten, Germany and
- Morsoe, Denmark

are in this document of agreement declaring their willingness to continue and strengthen their town-twinning cooperation activities.

United, the twin towns will work for establishing activities and projects to provide knowledge about and benefits from the competences of each other.

The overall purpose of the twinning cooperation is to maintain the good neighbour relations between our countries and focus the mutual understanding provided by different levels of contact between our organizations and citizens.

It is therefore important to maintain the traditions of the existing twin-towns cooperation. Today, there are already - at different levels - a number of valuable and long lasting organizational and personal contacts between the twin towns. These links are supposed to be continued and developed by this agreement of twinning cooperation. In order to develop our contacts accordingly it is our vision to be able to add some new and valuable activities to the existing twin towns cooperation.

Our municipalities face a lot of challenges these years; in terms of changes in globalization, environmental issues, local economy and in the demands for new municipal services. Therefore, it should also be considered how existing activities can be innovated in response to the changing environment of local government affairs.

Focused theme areas of twinning activities

To make the cooperation even more powerful this agreement is to be more focused on a number of specific theme areas. The selected theme areas should be core activities in a updated twin-towns cooperation.

This updated agreement of twin-towns cooperation is suggested to have four theme areas of specific lateral or bilateral twinning activities:

1. Culture and leisure events
2. Voluntary organizations meetings
3. Tourism activities
4. Municipal Benchlearning

1. Culture and leisure events

The twin-towns are having a rich cultural and leisure life – offering citizens a variety of activities. Culture and leisure are central preconditions for being an attractive municipality to live in, to work in and to visit.

The cultural life needs to be dynamic and continuously offer new and different activities. In this context international activities are most valuable, as they enrich the local culture life with traditions from other countries.

Therefore, cultural twinning cooperation should be included in specific town twinning activities.

Cooperation activities between the twin-towns and local twinning supporters (private and public):

- Cooperation between museums, libraries, cultural organizations etc.
- Exchange programs for musicians, orchestras, choirs, writers, designers etc.
- Exchange programs scout-organizations etc.
- Exchange programs for students in public and high schools etc.
- Exchange programs for young people, e.g. summer exchanges

2. Voluntary organizations meetings

The voluntary organizations are of importance for vibrant local communities. Voluntary organizations have valuable activities in various fields such as sport, music, culture, local history and social affairs.

The contact between the twin towns adds a special dimension to the voluntary organizations by offering the opportunity to meet people from other countries having similar interests and hobbies. This is a direct way to friendships and international understanding.

Cooperation activities between the twin towns:

- Mutual information/advertising of events and activities of specific interest
- Voluntary organizations get-together events
- Sport events especially for children and youth

3. Tourism activities

Tourism is often an important sector in the local economy – and a sector with a potential for further growth and development as many people are spending more time and money travelling. Cooperation activities between the twin-towns:

- Tourist destination offices cooperation in marketing the twin-towns as tourist destinations
- Special arranged tourist tours – “visit your twin town”

4. Municipal benchlearning

Our municipalities face similar challenges these years and each municipal organization has knowledge and experiences in terms of change management.

Therefore, the twin towns may benefit from benchlearning on a number of issues, i.e.:

Strategic development regarding management, organization, attractive workplaces, recruitment, documentation and evaluation, environmental and risk management etc.

- Meeting between boards of directors, biannually – starting in 2009/2010 with a best practice kick-off meeting
- Branch specific exchange programs for municipal employees (conditions will be set in specific agreements between the participating municipalities and funded by the employer municipality)

Involvement of the citizens

The vision for the twin-town cooperation is to give as many inhabitants and groups the possibility to be included by twinning activities created and supported in the framework of the town-twinning.

The objective of the twinning is therefore to work for bringing together municipal politicians and employees, local associations, private companies and citizens.

These groups and individuals from the twin-towns are given the opportunity to meet with a view to create understanding between our countries and cultures.

Frequency of official twin-town delegation meetings

The twin-towns will take decision on the character and frequency in the cooperation in relation to the official annually twin-town delegation meeting.

In relation to the official annually delegation meeting is also considered relevant establishment of working groups or thematic committees to take care of specific twinning operations for the coming year.

This is to power efforts of continuous developments in cooperation with issues or thematic area of common interest.

The annual delegation meetings will be arranged by the hosting twin town for delegations consisting of a maximum of 6 delegates per twin town.

Each twin town will pay for its own delegation costs for travelling, accomodations and insurances.

Due to organisational differences, the twinning delegations may not participate in all specific theme activities mentioned in this agreement.

(see enclosed document from the Patenschaftskomitee des Stadtbezirks Misburg-Anderten of November 10th 2008)

Communication activities

Communication to the public is high priority. It is necessary that as many as possible get to know the results, achievements and successes of the twinning activities.

Communication activities should help to connect people, organizations, business etc. by supplying information.

The twin-towns will support information in their websites about their co-operation with the other twin towns. Other information activities such as brochures and articles in the media should equally be considered. It will frequently be considered how to make effective use of different ways of electronic communications supporting contacts between the twin towns, as for example via the twin towns websites.

Each twin town will dedicated an employee as web master in order to distribute up dated communication from other twins consequently and relevantly at the web sites.

Additionally, each municipality appoints a twinning ambassador as the main contact person for all twin town relations.

Funding and finance

The twin towns agree to exploit the possibilities for applying for finance for activities within the network.

There are numerous funding programmes within the EU, the Nordic Council etc. These programs provide finance for activities in the field of education, culture, environment, energy and labour market.

It is typically a requirement that there are partners from different countries in an EU project. It should therefore be considered, if some of these programmes could be relevant for the future cooperation between the twin towns.

This draft agreement is confirmed by the twinning delegations on November 15th 2008.
Formal political acknowledgement will take place in each of the municipalities in advance of next delegation meeting.

The agreement will be confirmed finally at the annual delegation meeting in Flekkefjord on June 18th - 21th 2009.

Twin town representatives from:

<i>Ingeborg Tausdal</i>	<i>Stein Bløem</i>
<i>Kirsti Håthinsen</i>	<i>Maud Kvamvang</i>
Flekkefjord	Bollnäss

	<i>Knut Frøgaard</i>
	<i>Fritz Kracke</i>
Kankaanpää	Misburg-Anderten

Morsøe

[Signature]
Walter N. Nilsen