



Europe in the Future Multifaceted and Unified

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Program of the Network of Towns

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Europe
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Europe
in the Future
- Multifaceted
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Program of the Network of Towns

Europe in the Future- Multifaceted and Unified

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What is the Network of Towns Programme?

The Network of Towns Programme is a formal partnership between two or more towns

that is characterised by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of agreed goals. Working together provides benefits to the citizens.

The Network of Towns is an approach that enables exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices between partners. Network partnerships typically focus on selected performance areas.

The Network of Towns Programme is created in the frame of the project “Europe in the Future - Multifaceted and Unified”, co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union.

For the purpose of the document, a town is considered a city, municipality, local authority or any other organization that works in the field of local self-government.

Overall Aim of the Network of Towns

The purpose of the Network of Towns is to make our cooperation more sustainable. We work together to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process, its history and diversity and promoting opportunities for social and intercultural engagement. In the future we will work to solve our problems by exchanging best practices and experience. The Network of Towns aims to promote the sharing of ideas, skills and learning from each other through the exchange of information and technology transfer. The approach provides opportunities for peer support in the field of self-government on a local level and cultural exchange.

Characteristics of the Network of Towns

- **A mutually beneficial exchange based on equal footing.** No town is giving and no town is taking. Each one has to give and take. It is not about how many resources a partner has, and it is not a donor - receiver relationship. Neither is it a big sister - small sister relationship.

- **Formal** - There is a written agreement between the towns.
- **Substantive** - That the interaction is significant and lasts for a period of time i.e. it is not only a one-time interaction.
- **Collaborative** - The towns work together on a specific project to exchange information and skills. The period of interaction, the areas of exchange and the actual processes are determined by the towns. The relationship is about acknowledging differences and making the best out of them. It involves creating common ground for sharing ideas and experiences.

Types of Network Activities

The Network of Towns activities can take various forms including but not limited to the examples below:

- **Training exchanges** can involve internships, on-site training or study tours e.g. one or more persons from one town can visit the partner town for a period of time to learn or impart (impart or import??) information and skills.
- **Study visits** involve the visits of several expert policy-makers or stakeholders of the town for the purpose of providing or receiving training.
- **International meetings** involve meetings between partners for the purpose of collaborating in the planning of events and exchange experience regarding specific topics.
- **Collaboration** in terms of project initiatives involves towns agreeing to work together to establish a specific programme to address an issue that affects them.
- **Cultural exchange** involves international events that aim to present cultural differences and traditions of each partner country.

Benefits of participating in the Network of Towns

- **Capacity Building** - Partnership strengthens the towns involved through a transfer of skills, technologies and knowledge.
- **Sharing best practice** – the Network provides opportunities to identify successful policies, techniques and interventions and to promote them between the network members as well as other stakeholders. Learning about these best practices saves organizations' time and effort;

- **Building relationships** – the participation in the Networks of Towns will encourage collaboration and helps to build strong relationships. Towns can mutually support each other and can turn to their partner for support or they can work together on a specific issue or project;
- **Effectiveness:** Networking that involves collaborating on a specific initiative results in stronger and more effective programmes.
- **Broadening horizons** – The Networks of Towns will be a way to reach out to others, break down barriers and learn about other cultures and traditions;
- **Building a global movement** - Partnership knows no geographical boundaries; it affects people all over the world. Partnership will help build an even stronger movement and create a feeling of belonging to a global family;
- **Solidarity:** The Network helps to create a feeling of belonging to a larger community. Towns involved in the Network are often inspired by the work of their partners.
- **Achieving measurable results** - The results of a partner relationship could for example be the creation of a new project, a larger number of members, and the identification of new funding sources to implement ideas in reality.

Pre-requisites for an effective association to the Network of Towns

According to literature and given the experience we have, there are some aspects that must be considered for a Network partnership to work. These include:

- **Equal participation** on level ground.
- All interactions are based on **mutual respect, honesty, trust and transparency**.
- There should be organizational **integrity with each town** honouring its side of the agreement. There needs to be recognition by both parties that everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to offer.
- Prior to the beginning of the process the associations **agree on the form of the Network**.
- There must be an **equal contribution** to all activities, which are based on a jointly prepared and mutually agreed action plan. This action plan should address agreed challenges and include a budget breakdown that is based on areas needing development in each partner town.
- A **written commitment** is strongly suggested to avoid any misunderstanding

between the network's members.

- **Working across cultures.** Culture is what motivates people to behave and act in the way that they do. This can also be at individual or group level. Towns engaged in the Network of Towns should allow for adequate time to discuss, understand and deal with cross cultural issues. There have to be insights and a thorough understanding of such issues as there can be a real threat to the viability of the relationship without first acknowledging and working through real or potential cultural barriers.

Who can take part in the Network of Towns?

Cities, municipalities, local authorities, any organization in the field of local self-government which work to increase the prosperity of their territory and their citizens.

Any local authority which believes that the power is in the union.

We will become stronger in future if we explore the history and culture of each other .

How to join the Networks of Towns?

If you share our ideas, please follow the next step:

Step 1. Express interest in Network of Towns

Please download and fill out the application form which is published on the site of Network of towns <http://europeinfuture.eu/?page=6&lang=en> and send it /scanned/ to the following e-mail: office@europeinfuture.eu

PARTNER INFORMATION SHEET

Please provide the following information:

Please briefly present the partner organisation (e.g. its type, size, scope of work, areas of specific expertise, specific social context)

Provide three reasons why the Network will be useful for your organization;

Provide three benefits your organization hopes to gain from the Network of towns

What are the main topics which you would like to exchange experience on?

Do you have twin cities? Please indicate the names of the cities if applicable

Legal representative (name, address, phone number, e-mail)

Activity contact person (name, address, phone number, e-mail)

The TOWN of /name of city, municipality, local authority or organization/ has expressed interest in participating in the Network of Towns

Representatives of the organization:

1. Name, position, sign (signature?)
2.

Step 2. Formalizing the relationship

The agreement of the Network of Towns has to be signed by a legal representative of the organization.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT OF THE NETWORK OF TOWNS

The City of [NAME], does hereby agree to promote, support and encourage exchanges and cooperative activities between the citizens of each community.

These exchanges and activities shall be based on shared goals of economic development, cultural understanding and improved municipal governance and administration.

In pursuit of these shared goals, our cities shall:

- Encourage study abroad programs between our respective schools;
- Explore cooperation and exchange between local development agencies, chambers of commerce and tourism departments;
- Perform inbound/outbound youth exchanges;

- Provide support for the exchange of art and cultural products between our respective museums, galleries and cultural institutions;
- Prioritize municipal exchanges in the areas of transportation management and water management, environment;

In all activities each side will endeavor to ensure mutual benefit for each city, and shall draw on its institutions, social organizations and citizens to promote cooperation.

The agreement has been made in two copies in English, each one being equally authentic.

We hereby pledge to cooperate with each other as Member of the Network of Towns on this [DATE].

[SIGNATURE]

[NAME OF ELECTED OFFICIAL]

[TITLE]

[DATE]

Step3. Future initiatives – Strategic Action Plan - Annex 1

Step 4. Monitoring and evaluation of the Programme

At agreed intervals /annual/ an evaluation will be carried out by the members of the network. The evaluation might include some of the following elements: commitment of each member, relevance of the project regarding the needs and constraints of the municipalities, benefits of the initiative; sustainability of the proposed initiatives, likely short- and long-term impacts and multiplier effects of the project; networking benefits relating to the type of links that have been established with various partners; transferability of the initiatives so that any lessons learnt can be shared with others for additional positive outcomes.

Annex 1

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Open for additions

Vision	Work together to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process, its history and diversity and promoting opportunities for social and intercultural engagement				
Strategic objective	1. to solve our problems through the exchange of best practices and experience. 2. to promote the sharing of ideas, skills and learning from each other				
Output	Activities	Timelines	Responsible	Resources finance	Other
Project "Social One Stop Shop"	Exchange good practices in the social field	5 April 2017	Aksakovo Igualada	Bulgarian Operative Programme "Human Resources"	
Youth exchange	Strategic partnership	26 April 2017	Nughedu Santa Vittoria, Aksakovo	Erasmus +, KA2	
Project "The future of Europe-Reload"	Democratic engagement and civic participation	1 September 2017	Aksakovo	Europe for citizens	
Local administration peer-peer exchange	Strategic Partnership in the field of education, training and youth	2018	Aksakovo	Erasmus +, KA2	
.....					

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT OF THE NETWORK OF TOWNS

The **City of Aksakovo (Bulgaria), City of Igualada (Spain), City of Setubal (Portugal), City of Nughedu Santa Vittoria (Italy)**, does hereby agree to promote, support and encourage exchanges and cooperative activities between the citizens of each community.

These exchanges and activities shall be based on shared goals of economic development, cultural understanding and improved municipal governance and administration.

In pursuit of these shared goals, our cities shall:

- Encourage study abroad programs between our respective schools;
- Explore cooperation and exchange between local development agencies, chambers of commerce and tourism departments;
- Perform inbound/outbound youth exchanges;
- Provide support for the exchange of art and cultural products between our respective museums, galleries and cultural institutions;
- Prioritize municipal exchanges in the areas of transportation management and water management, environment;

In all activities each side will endeavor to ensure mutual benefit for each city, and shall draw on its institutions, social organizations and citizens to promote cooperation.

The agreement has been made in two copies in English, each one being equally authentic.

We hereby pledge to cooperate with each other as Member of the Network of Towns on this May the 18th 2017.

Atanas Stoilov
Mayor of Aksakovo Municipality
18th May 2017

Manuel Pisco Lopes
First Deputy Mayor of Setubal
18th May 2017

Francesco Mura
Mayor of Nughedu Santa Vittoria
18th May 2017

Marc Castells i Berzosa
Mayor of Igualada
18th May 2017



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