

# Town twinning projects on Social Inclusion

Innsbruck, AUSTRIA, 10-12 May 2006

*Brochure of best practices*

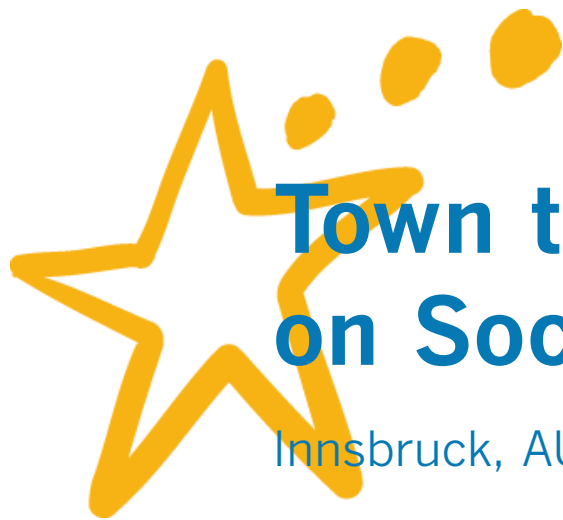


Education and Culture



EUROPEAN COMMISSION





# Town twinning projects on Social Inclusion

Innsbruck, AUSTRIA 10-12 May 2006

## Social inclusion – an important element of the Active European Citizenship

Today, European societies are confronted with certain social tensions which, to different degrees of intensity manifest themselves on local, regional, national and European levels. These tensions are caused by various socio-economic factors such as unemployment, discrimination and the fragmentation of society. Social relations become fragile, and the very concept of active citizenship is questioned.

Many Europeans choose not to participate in public life and in the democratic processes. Therefore, we need actions that reinforce the values underpinning the European integration process such as solidarity, equal opportunity, tolerance, social inclusion and inter-cultural understanding. For this reason the European Commission supports wide range of activities in the area of active European citizenship. For example some 1400 town twinning projects receive support every year. In the future years similar activities will be supported through the new “Europe for Citizens” programme.

In this publication, which is a part of an exhibition organised by the European Commission in the framework of 23rd Annual Assembly of the European Council of Regions and Municipalities, six case studies on town twinning contributing to social inclusion are presented. They were identified as inspiring and motivating projects which promote social inclusion and European co-operation, and thus serve as an example of active European citizenship

**Pierre Mairesse**

Director

Youth, Sport and Relations with the Citizen



## MAZARA DEL VALLO (IT) MAHDIA (TU) SANTA POLA (ES) VOLOS (GR)



### Twinning for social inclusion of Mahdia' fishermen in Mazara del Vallo

Half of Mazara del Vallo' fishermen are immigrants; nonetheless they face continuous precariousness as they lack technical and linguistic skills and are the most exposed to the oscillations of the work market. For this reason the Sicilian town of Mazara del Vallo has taken on the agenda of town twinning an important local issue: social inclusion of Mahdia' fishermen.

- The project "Euro Mediterranean – Culture, economics and development thanks to the vivacity of citizens" was organized by Mazara del Vallo (IT) in July 2003 with their twin towns of Mahdia (TU), Santa Pola (ES) and Volos (GR).
- Its dense programme focused on the social inclusion of immigrants in the economics of Mazara del Vallo, prevented by a close system of integration of the immigrant community. The Fisheries sector is pointed as the appropriate sector in favour of this inclusion: need of an abundant workforce and a large demand compared to other sectors.
- The objectives of this project were multiple: promoting and developing international cooperation for the economic development of the territory; promoting the knowledge of the cultural and artistic patrimony as well as productive activities such as fishing and artworks; sustaining and saving resources of the environmental system; promoting the diffusion of the information to all citizens...

#### CONTACT DETAILS

MAZARA DEL VALLO - Comune di Mazara del Vallo  
Tel: +39 0923 93 29 19 Fax: +39 0923 93 31 77  
E-mail: vdesimon@tin.it



MAZARA DEL VALLO (IT)  
MAHDIA (TU)  
SANTA POLA (ES)  
VOLOS (GR)



## Twinning for social inclusion of Mahdia' fishermen in Mazara del Vallo

- More precise objectives were to outline the difficulties of integration between the communities of Mazara and of Mahdia and identify solutions, mainly for the Tunisian immigrants working in the Fisheries sector.
- Concrete actions were therefore undertaken during this meeting, namely the creation of a Counter for information, orientation and training of the immigrants, within the Fisheries Service Centre of Mazara del Vallo. This would provide immigrants with: multilingual information and orientation on opportunities and administrative modalities of work, organisation of Italian language course, training in relations to their working activities including a training on "on board security rules", and definition of means to validate their competences.
- The meeting resulted in defining agreements between the Sicilian authorities and their counterparts in Mahdia for the implementation of the following actions: host and create more opportunities for potential Tunisian fishermen who intend to include themselves in the fisheries sector in Mazara, and define for them training sessions and recognition of their competences.
- These thematic actions reinforced consequently the existing links of Mazara del Vallo with Tunisia.

### CONTACT DETAILS

MAHDIA - Mairie de Mahdia

Tel: +216 98 408 826 Fax: +216 73 695 330

E-mail: mahdia.corseterie@planet.tn

SANTA POLA - Ayuntamiento de Santa Pola

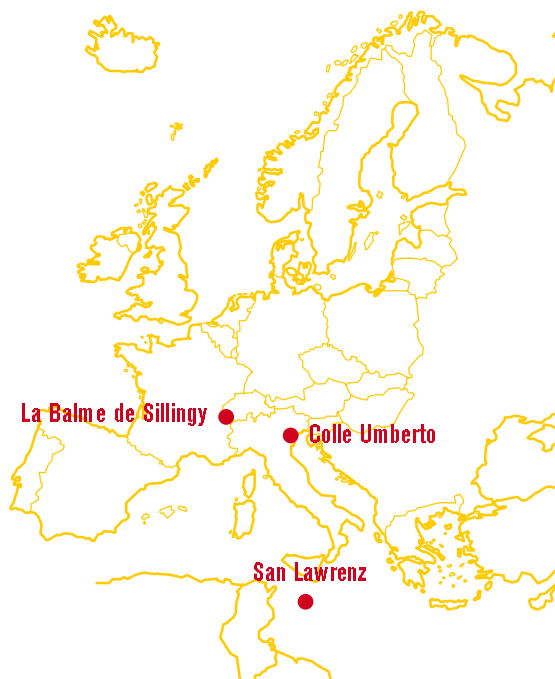
Tel: +34 96 541 11 00 Fax: +34 96 669 27 72

VOLOS - City of Volos

Tel: +30 42 12 30 93



## SAN LAWRENZ (MT) COLLE UMBERTO (IT) LA BALME DE SILLINGY (FR)



### Town twinning – contributing to social inclusion for disabled people

- This new town-twinning relationship encompasses an important theme of disabled citizens' participation in the community life and of support other members of local community, especially youth, can provide to them through voluntary work.
- Within the framework of the signing of the new Twinning Agreement between San Lawrenz (MT) and Colle Umberto (IT) in 2005, a project "Discovering Each Other through Culture, Environment and Tradition" involved all sectors of the disabled community, from the young, to women, to the elderly.
- The meeting mainly dealt with the issue of full inclusion in the educative, cultural and social sectors. Integration in social life was particularly emphasised.
- To make it easier and more affordable for disabled people to participate in the citizens' meeting, San Lawrenz organised a direct charter flight from Venice to Malta.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

SAN LAWRENZ - Local Council

Tel: +356 21 56 35 56 Fax: +356 21 56 36 56

E-mail: [sanlawrenz.lc@gov.mt](mailto:sanlawrenz.lc@gov.mt)



**SAN LAWRENZ (MT)**  
**COLLE UMBERTO (IT)**  
**LA BALME DE SILLINGY (FR)**



## Town twinning – contributing to social inclusion for disabled people

- As a follow-up several projects to promote the integration of disabled people into local society have already been carried out by San Lawrenz and Colle Umberto.
- One such project encouraged citizens to do voluntary work with disabled people. To this end, San Lawrenz council sent a student to Colle Umberto, also involving the French town La Balme de Sillingy for nine months to do voluntary work with people with disabilities.
- Disabled people also participated in another joint project between the two towns: an English-language course was held in San Lawrenz for students from Colle Umberto, a considerable number of whom had disabilities. The students stayed with residents of San Lawrenz so that the two communities could experience living together.
- These projects enabled the citizens from San Lawrenz and Colle Umberto to find out about each other and their respective cultures and lifestyles in the new twin towns. The twin towns intend to embark upon further projects involving all sectors of both their communities.

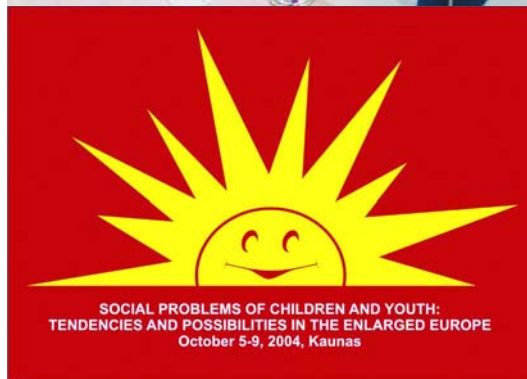
### CONTACT DETAILS

COLLE UMBERTO - Associazione Gemellaggio  
Tel: +39 0438 501558 Fax: +39 347 30 14 953  
E-mail: [afr.sinistra.piave@libero.it](mailto:afr.sinistra.piave@libero.it)

LA BALME DE SILLINGY - Comité de Jumelage  
Tel: +33 04 50 68 87 67 Fax: +33 04 50 68 87 67  
E-mail: [mairie@labalmedesillingy.fr](mailto:mairie@labalmedesillingy.fr)



KAUNAS (LT)  
BRNO (CZ)  
GRENOBLE (FR)  
LAVRIO (GR)  
TARTU (EE)  
WROCLAW (PL)



## Towards social inclusion of disadvantaged children

A network of 7 twinned towns brought together child-care specialists and practitioners to exchange their experience and to propose solutions on how to protect the rights of one of the most vulnerable group - children from disadvantaged background and how to integrate them into social life on local level. They further explored the role of social organisations in partner towns vis-à-vis the provision of specialized services. This is a type of event where participating towns can learn from each others experience and thus improve their own activities in the area of social intervention.

- Child care experts from Kaunas (LT), Brno (CZ), Grenoble (FR), Lavrio (GR), Tartu (EE) and Wroclaw (PL) came together for a series of discussions and study visits on how to ensure the well-being of children and youth who live without parental supervision.
- The main objective of the meeting was to exchange experiences and best practices with regard to safeguarding the rights of children living in poverty and unfavourable social environments, organising after-school activities and providing services at social institutions.
- Key topics included the protection of children's rights, organisation of after-school activities, crime prevention programmes, providing services at social institutions such as day-care centres and maintaining the relations between children and parents.
- This meeting started with each city introducing their situation in the field of child's protection and child's care in order to share experiences and practices.

### CONTACT DETAILS

KAUNAS - City Municipal Administration  
Tel: +370 37 424011 Fax: +370 37 425443  
E-mail: [daivap@kaunas.sav.lt](mailto:daivap@kaunas.sav.lt)



KAUNAS (LT)  
BRNO (CZ)  
GRENOBLE (FR)  
LAVRIO (GR)  
TARTU (EE)  
WROCLAW (PL)

## Towards social inclusion of disadvantaged children

- Study visits to day-care centres and other social institutions which provide services to the children and youth of Kaunas were followed by discussions on how to use available funds more efficiently, the capacity of social organisations to provide their services in a timely, relevant manner and the best practices currently used in each of the participating cities.
- By sharing their experiences and the best practices in each of the five twin cities, the network explored the various means of improving the social situation of children and youth who live in difficult social environments.
- Participants were confident that the contacts and cooperation initiated during this project will serve as a basis for future cooperation. They strongly support continuation of the project in order to analyse urgent issues in each of the participating cities.

### CONTACT DETAILS

GRENOBLE - Ville de Grenoble,  
Service des Relations Internationales

Tel: +33 4 76 00 76 84 Fax: +33 4 76 00 76 88

E-mail: veronique.stephan@ville-grenoble.fr

BRNO - Statutární Město Brno

Tel: +420/544 233 513 Fax: +420/544 210 825

E-mail: skultety@vinohrady.brno.cz

LAVRIO - Municipality of Lavrio

Tel: +30 22920 25060 Fax: +30 22920 22413

E-mail: dhmarxos@lavrio.gr

TARTU - Municipality of Tartu

Tel: +372 7 361 308 Fax: +372 7 361 301

E-mail: indrek.rohtla@raad.tartu.ee

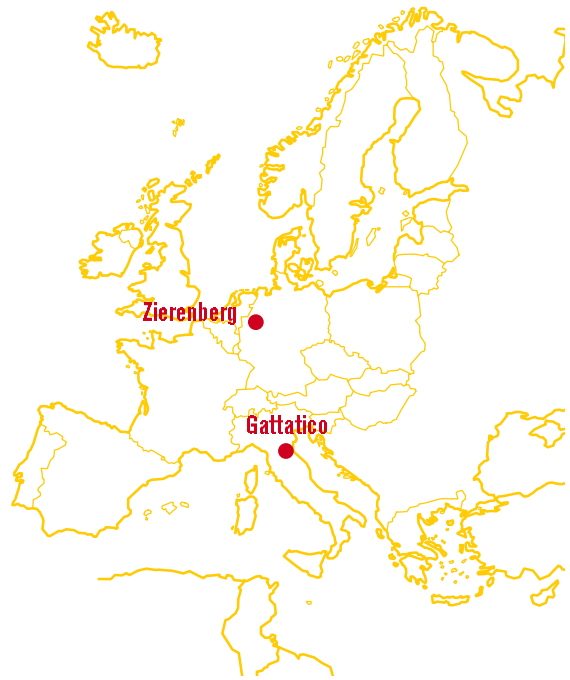
WROCLAW - Urząd Miejski Wrocławia

Tel: +48 71 777 77 42 Fax: +48 71 777-81-52

E-mail: dss@um.wroc.pl



## ZIERENBERG (DE) GATTATICO (IT)



### “Yes to Sport – No to Drugs, Violence and Racism”

This bilateral town twinning demonstrates how young people can be involved in the local life through sport and at the same time recognise and support the hidden values behind these activities. The idea stems from the “European Year of Education through Sport” initiated and supported by the European Union in 2004. It focused on such important issues as prevention of violence and discrimination as well as promotion of tolerance.

- The partnership between the two towns dates back to 1999; several projects have been implemented by the two towns in the past: in 2000 with the project “Friendship house” and 2002 with a project around culture and sports. The two towns recognized the importance of the social inclusion issues, result of which was a project involving young people from both communities. Young people from Gattatico (IT) and Zierenberg (DE) took part in a meeting to discuss issues relating to social inclusion in the European youth community. A first session took place in 2004 in Zierenberg and the second session was organised in 2005 in Gattatico.
- Police, community workers, local schools, sports clubs, prevention councils and citizens of the twin towns also participated in the conference, which was attended by regional and supra-regional politicians.
- The conference examined issues such as how to make sport into an attractive alternative to drugs and alcohol, and how to replace racism and violence with fairness and tolerance.



#### CONTACT DETAILS

ZIERENBERG -Förderverein Städtepartnerschaften

Tel: +49 5606 531277

E-mail: [jufi@onlinehome.de](mailto:jufi@onlinehome.de)



ZIERENBERG (DE)  
GATTATICO (IT)



## “Yes to Sport – No to Drugs, Violence and Racism”



- The project, involving young people from Zierenberg and from Gattatico, included lectures and discussions on how to combat racism and violence through sport related activities. One of the aims of the debate was to relay information on the principle “Yes to Sport – No to Drugs, Violence and Racism”.
- The meeting also involved sports activities and a visit to ‘Ballance 2006’, a street-football tournament to promote tolerance amongst the European and international youth communities.
- The participants also formed a joint team to play against American schools, present in Zierenberg thanks to a school exchange programme.

### CONTACT DETAILS

GATTATICO - Comune di Gattatico

Tel: +39 0522 477939

E-mail: [angela.bussei@comune.gattatico.re.it](mailto:angela.bussei@comune.gattatico.re.it)



## MARVEJOLS (FR) COCKERMOUTH (UK) LOUSA (PT) GALWAY (IE)



### Integration of disabled people into professional life

This particular project focuses on an important and complex issue of integration of disabled people into professional life. There can be no full integration unless it also takes into account work opportunities for people with disabilities. This event provided disabled people from different countries of the European Union with an opportunity to identify best practices and limitations they face concerning full professional integration.

- Within the context of a 20-year-long twinning agreement between Marvejols (FR) and Cockermouth (UK), a thematic workshop took place in 2004 in Marvejols between disabled people from the twinned towns and from Lousa (PT) and Galway (IE).
- The week-long event had two objectives: to have disabled people from different countries meet, work and participate in cultural activities together, and to organise a European meeting on the theme of social and professional inclusion for the disabled.
- Participants in the event realised that in all countries young people with disabilities have the same difficulties in integrating. They also highlighted the importance of sheltered workshops, such as Les Ateliers de la Colagne in Marvejols and West House in Cockermouth, which help prepare young disabled people for the professional world.
- The meeting gave each town an opportunity to analyse its strengths and overcome its weaknesses in the field of professional inclusion for disabled people.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

MARVEJOLS - Les Ateliers de la Colagne

Tel: +33 4 66 42 62 00 Fax: +33 4 66 42 62 09

E-mail: : p.lasne@wanadoo.fr



**MARVEJOLS (FR)**  
**COCKERMOUTH (UK)**  
**LOUSA (PT)**  
**GALWAY (IE)**



## Integration of disabled people into professional life

- Disabled people from Marvejols (FR), Cockermouth (UK), Lousa (PT) and Galway (IE) spent a week together as part of a project for social and professional inclusion. During the week they participated in many activities: making wooden boxes, maintaining parklands in Marvejols, cooking and serving their shared meals, staging a play and a percussion concert which was put on before an audience of 400.
- This European meeting on the theme of social and professional inclusion for the disabled allowed its participants to share experiences and listen to testimonies from educators, directors of sheltered workshops, regional representatives and disabled people. Three video projectors simultaneously relayed the speeches in three different languages.
- Through sharing their experiences, the towns reached the conclusion that despite legislation for the integration of the disabled, many firms would rather pay a fine than hire disabled people. This highlights the need for centres for the disabled to encourage visits from companies and to organise internships for the disabled.

### CONTACT DETAILS

#### COCKERMOUTH - West House

Tel: +44 1900 67 777 Fax: +44 1900 68 137  
E-mail: [margaretm@westhouse.org.uk](mailto:margaretm@westhouse.org.uk)

#### LOUSA - Câmara Municipal

Tel: +351 239 990 300 Fax: +351 239 991 989  
E-mail: [cmlousan@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:cmlousan@mail.telepac.pt)

#### GALWAY - Daughters of Charity

Tel: +353 91 528 122 Fax: +353 91 528 150  
E-mail: [info@galaway.ie](mailto:info@galaway.ie)



## GEEL (BE) SLATINA-TIMIS (RO)



### Twin towns working together on local development and social inclusion

Partnership between Belgian Geel and Romanian Slatina-Timis demonstrates the active role town-twinning plays in overcoming division of Europe and building strong links between the citizens of the old and the future member states of the European Union. It is an excellent example of how two communities can create long-lasting co-operation and indeed friendship on human level. Furthermore it also shows the power of partnership in changing people's and community destiny.

- Geel (BE) and Slatina-Timis (RO) first entered into a Twinning Agreement in 1992, since when a number of structural development projects have taken place in Slatina-Timis. Geel has also set up a not-for-profit organisation staffed by equal numbers of councillors and volunteers to work on matters connected to the twinning agreement.
- Cooperative projects between inhabitants of the two towns have been established and managed by volunteers, with the support of Geel's council. The priority of these projects has been 'people development': organisations for women, men and young people have been created to act as local partners for planning and implementing projects, with many exchanges and reciprocal visits taking place.
- All the initiatives undertaken as part of the twinning partnership are good examples of the inter-communal cooperation which now exists between over 120 initiatives in Flanders and their Romanian partners.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

GEEL - Stad

Tel: +32 14 58 20 07

E-mail: [ria.caers@geel.be](mailto:ria.caers@geel.be)



GEEL (BE)  
SLATINA-TIMIS (RO)



## Twin towns working together on local development and social inclusion

- The twinning partnership between Geel and Slatina-Timis has led to cooperation in many fields, such as capacity building, schools, public works, utilities, cultural activities, etc.
- The first major project in Slatina-Timis aimed to improve hygiene and health standards: this was done through education (films, lessons, leaflets, etc. on hygiene and nutrition) and practical measures (improvements to the water supply, sewage system, rubbish dumps, waste collection, etc.).
- A second project addressed front-line health care and health prevention: a local social-medical centre was developed offering over 20 services (GP, dentist, chemist, meeting rooms, etc.). This project was used as a model for establishing similar projects in 10 other Romanian cities and villages.
- Projects organised by the twin towns aim to reach all groups of society: an exchange took place between disadvantaged women from Geel, Slatina-Timis and Resita (RO), in association with the Romanian trade union Cartel Alfa. Participants in the exchange discussed issues relating to social exclusion mechanisms and ways of overcoming these mechanisms.
- Future projects hope to develop rural tourism as a means of encouraging the economy and creating extra income for households.

### CONTACT DETAILS

SLATINA-TIMIS - Adam Slatina-Timis  
Tel: +40 255 26 08 07  
E-mail: mutualite\_csro@yahoo.com

