



Cross-border cooperation Valka – Valga: a motor for regional development

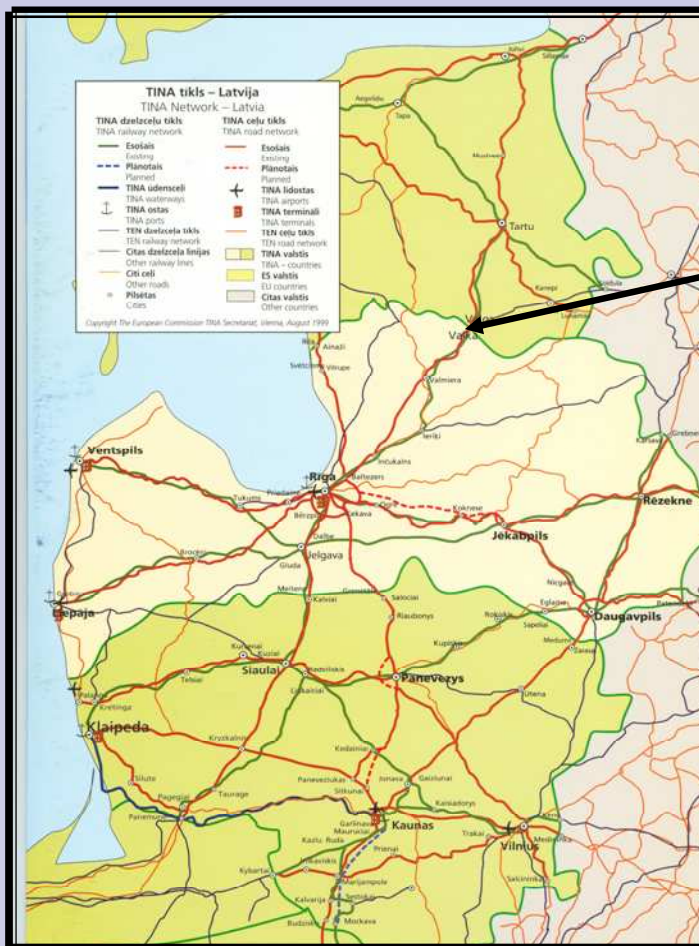
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Valka – Valga

1 city 2 states



Valka - Valga





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General information

Valka, Latvia

Territory – 14.4 km²

Population – 6 500

Distance to Riga – 178 km

National structure:

Latvians – 67.2%

Russians – 22.9%

Estonians – 1.4%

Valga, Estonia

Territory – 16.5 km²

Population – 14 890

Distance to Tallinn – 252 km

National structure:

Estonians – 62.3%

Russians – 27.4%

Latvians – 2.3%



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History



- 1286 – first mentioned in historic sources
- 1584 - Polish King Stefan Batory granted the town rights
- 19th century – became an important railway junction
- 1920 – divided between the new independent countries of Latvia and Estonia
- From 1940 – Soviet regime
- 1991 – re-establishment of independence



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History





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Success stories

- **Regular contacts between local municipalities**
- **Joint projects**
- **Culture events**
- **Sports activities**



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Contacts between local authorities

- **1995 – official co-operation agreement**
- **Regular meetings of municipal leaders and specialists**
- **Joint tackling of border crossing problems**
- **Generation of project ideas**



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Project “ESTLA”

- **Financed by EU ECOS-Ouverture programme (1996 – 1998)**
- **Partners: Valka – Valga and Tornio (Finland) – Haparanda (Sweden)**
- **Establishment of co-operation board and working committees**
- **Exchange of experience in cross-border co-operation**



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Institute of Latvia – Estonia and Institute of Estonia – Latvia

- **To promote integration of Latvia and Estonia into EU**
- **To develop co-operation in fields of education and culture**
- **To promote collaboration of University of Latvia and University of Tartu**
- **To create an info centre of education**



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Project “Development of cross-border infrastructure in Valga-Valka”

- **Financed by Phare “Co-operation Programme in the Baltic Sea Region for Latvia 2002” (2005)**
- **Development strategy of Valka and Valga**
- **Reserch on joint wastewater treatment system**
- **Public bus transport across the border**



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Project “Valga-Valka: 1 city 2 states”

- **Financed by BSR INTERREG III A (2005 – 2007)**
- **Comprehensive plan of Valka and Valga**
- **Fostering tourism development (strategy, marketing)**
- **Cooperation in education, culture and sports (development plan, meetings, events)**
- **Cooperation in health care (development plan, language courses, study trips)**



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Future prospects

- **United economic area**
 - transport and logistics centre
- **Cooperation in education:**
 - international study centre in Valka
 - vocational school in Valga
- **Linked town services:**
 - public transport (bus, railway)
 - gas pipeline
 - refuse collection
- **Visitor centre on the border**



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CULTURE





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Sport and leisure activities





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Thank you!

**Welcome to
Valka, Latvia, and Valga, Estonia!**

www.valka.lv

www.valgalv.ee