



Torsby Municipality's policy for international contacts

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Introduction

International contacts are increasing as a consequence of a general globalization.

Torsby municipality has a lot of international contacts and there is good reason to establish a general policy for international issues.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to create a platform for the municipality work with international issues. International contacts are one instrument for development, among many others and shall be regarded as investments with a high priority in relation to other investments. The ultimate purpose of international contacts is to create long-term added values for Torsby municipality and its citizens.

Goals

The goals of Torsby Municipality's international engagements are:

to enhance democracy and create contacts across political and cultural borders, thereby increasing understanding and fraternization between peoples and cultures.

to develop our own activities by:

- adding new knowledge and experiences to our citizens, employees and political officials
- take advantage of the opportunities for municipal development created by international cooperation, like financial support via different EU-programmes
- enhance the marketing values and opportunities of Torsby municipality

General priorities

- cooperation within Europe
- high priority for international youth-exchange programs
- cooperation where established contacts can be taken advantage of

Working methods

The international activities of Torsby municipality shall be characterized by long-term thinking and foresight.

International contacts shall be:

- well planned
- financed in budget
- well documented
- evaluated

Every municipal department with ambitions of establishing international contacts must assign a person responsible for these contacts, within each respective department.

Responsibility and organization

The Municipal Council decides on the policy for international contacts. Responsibility for ongoing political treatment of the policy lies with the Council. The Council assigns a responsible official for international contacts. The official for international contacts is responsible for forming a committee, in cooperation with the officials within each department, tasked with coordinating the international activities of the municipality.

Contacts with twin towns

As of today, Torsby has formal contact agreements with five Municipalities in Europe and with Easter Island in Chile. (See fact-box below)

Country	Twin town	Approval in the Municipal Council
Chile	Easter Island	1987
Denmark	Skjern	1977
Finland	Rautalampi	1992
Finland	Pernå	1977
Norway	Bömlo	1977
Germany	Grosskrotzenburg	1965

The agreements do not specify any economical responsibilities and twin town agreements shall always be treated as other international contacts. No new twin town agreements shall be established. Twin towns where cooperation is aimed at concrete projects or where well-functioning collaborations are established shall be prioritized.

Financing

Municipal funds are to be reserved for covering certain costs connected to international contacts. In all other respects, each department is responsible for the handling and financing of its international contacts.

In cases where international contacts are undertaken outside of the municipal departments, each single activity regarding financing, representation or any other responsibility, much be decided upon and processed before it starts.

Summary

The international policy shall be a common platform for all municipal international contacts. The responsibility of each municipal department, for its international contacts, is particularly underlined. It is part of each department general responsibility to look at the opportunities to start international cooperation projects that can contribute to its development and competence. Budgetary funds should be made available to meet raised needs as a consequence of participation in international projects.