



**Estonia—  
Latvia  
stories**

**Estonia–Latvia**  
**Stories**  
2007–2013

## Estonia–Latvia Stories

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Linking Estonia and Latvia  
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On the cover: Estonian and Latvian national flowers – cornflowers and daisies,  
photo by *Julia Metkalova*

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## Linking Estonia and Latvia

This phrase has served as the slogan of the Estonia–Latvia Programme for seven years, and as someone, who works for the programme from the very beginning, I can proudly say that it is exactly what we have achieved. A lot of Estonians and Latvians have discovered the neighbouring country as a place with plenty to learn from and people, who are worth cooperating with – be it professionally or in the field of hobby activities, from business development and environmental protection to joint singing and orienteering. There are friends and colleagues on the other side of the border, not foreigners about whom we know only a standard set of prejudices. Many of our friends have become true advocates of Estonia in Latvia, and even more surprisingly – advocates of Latvia in Estonia, as Estonians have been more sceptical and less interested in Estonian–Latvian cooperation.

In several cases regular cooperation between partners has spread to other fields of life after the end of projects, i.e. the spectrum of cooperation topics has stretched wider than it was initially planned. And on a personal level, many project participants admit that after the project their personal holiday or weekend plans have been more often linked to destinations across the border. In some cases it has been even more personal, as several of the stories in this book indicate.

With this publication we want to offer evidence that through the eyes of people living in Estonia and Latvia, who have been involved in cooperation themselves, or who have benefited from cooperation activities. They also think that both countries, that have had similar history for a long period of time, are now closer than they have ever been, and that today there are more reasons to cooperate than ever before. And partially it is also thanks to the activities of the Estonia–Latvia Programme.

Enjoy reading 67 short stories, told by the people of Estonia and Latvia, and who knows – perhaps you can get an idea of your own that could link Estonia and Latvia even closer together in the future.

Peeter Unt



people

Linda and Sulev left their old home behind, moved closer to the sea and soon had three sons. Meanwhile they had no idea that their life is being observed by thousands of hidden pairs of eyes.

People watched through the webcam, how white-tailed eagles were fixing their new nest, as the tree they had chosen as the foundation had turned out to be a bit shaky. "I guess they enjoyed the view from that specific location more and it was also closer to their "hunting grounds";" the eagle specialist of Estonian Ornithological Society, **Urmas Sellis**, explained.

Majestic white-tailed eagles with a wingspan of up to 2.5 meters are Estonia's biggest birds of prey. White-tailed eagles use their talons for catching fish. Our smallest eagle, *Pandion haliaetus* or osprey, is also a skilled fisherman, diving after their prey. Both can be found rather numerous in Estonia and Latvia, but they are still considered to be amongst rare species.

Three years ago, the ornithologists of neighbouring countries discovered that it would be useful to raise the awareness of people who become in contact with eagles during their daily jobs: foresters, fish breeders, hunters etc. Within two years, 1000 people learned more about the lifestyle of eagles and why they need protection. "A small car can take steep curves with ease, while a big tractor drives off the road. Likewise, small birds can react to environmental changes rapidly while bigger birds have more trouble. If we change the life conditions of eagles by a great deal, they cannot adjust," **Urmas Sellis** explains. This is why eagles nesting in the woods shouldn't be disturbed or scared away from their "restaurants" at bodies of water.

Nature management department specialist of the State Forest Management Centre, **Toomas Hirse**, says that

**It was exciting to see how eagles take care of their offspring and experience the joys and concerns of parenthood together with them.**



## How Eagles Became Stars

Osprey, Photo by Betti Säre



learning how to determine eagle species and identify their nests definitely came in handy. "It was also stressed that all nests should be reported to researchers." Hirse co-ordinated the participation in forester seminars and also presented them with wonderful news: the life of those beautiful birds can now also be observed via webcams. "It was exciting to see how eagles take care of their offspring and experience the joys and concerns of parenthood alongside with them," he recalls.

In the opinion of the ornithologist of Latvian Fund of Nature, **Jānis Kūze**, the biggest surprise was how many actually viewed the life of eagles through the webcam. "An Estonian osprey was viewed almost five million times a year!" It was constantly viewed by an average of 3000 people and by 45 000 people in a day. The eagle had audience from 140 countries, most of them from Germany, Sweden, Russia and Taiwan.

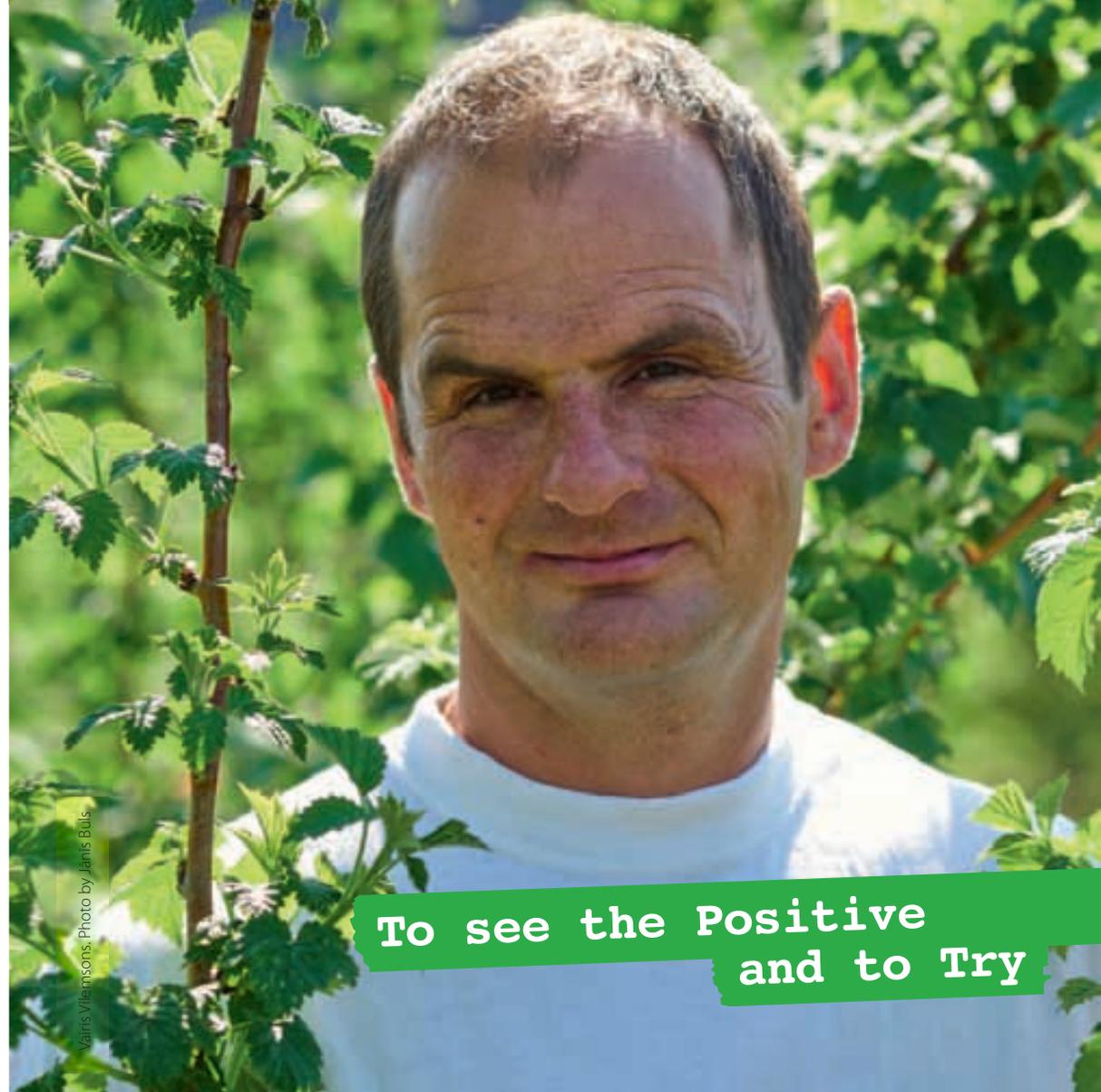
Receivers attached to birds allowed the researchers to collect information on their nesting habits, migration etc. White-tailed eagles don't migrate much but one of them took a summer vacation near Arctic Ocean, while ospreys vacationed in Africa.

Scientists also developed a harmonized methodology for observing birds. "We learned a lot from our Estonian colleagues and will definitely follow a fresh approach when monitoring eagles," Jānis Kūze comments.

Latvian Fund of Nature and Estonian Ornithological Society worked together to make the joint enterprise Eagles a success.

Eagle = kotkas = ērglis

Made Laas



Jānis Vilemsons; Photo by Jānis Būlis

To see the Positive  
and to Try

Vairis is 34 years old and is not overweight. Because **Vairis Vilemsons** spends the entire summer in berry furrows. After graduating from Ape Vocational School, he didn't rush to the city but held onto the land instead. He and his wife are cultivating strawberries and raspberries not far from the banks of the River Gauja. They put a signboard at the motorway that they are selling berries. On Sundays, when people from Alūksne are going to Rīga, many people stop by "Ziediņi" house. "A raspberry variety with berries weighing eight grams will



yield this summer," proudly explains Vairis. When estimating the prime cost with the Estonian entrepreneurs at the seminar, the price appeared to be very low. The neighbours wondered – why so? Vairis explained that he is nursing the plants himself and they cost nothing. Estonians snapped, "What do you mean – cost nothing? That is work! You have to know the cost of your work!" Vairis reconsidered and understood that it is true, "I don't work for free – you need to evaluate your work and include it in the prime cost."

At the seminars, Vairis has met some local entrepreneurs he previously did not know about, like **Egils Ābolkalns** who is breeding 70 sheep. "I practically live in the barn in the winter when lambs are born," Egils laughs. There is no time for seminars, but during the one he attended he learned that the Estonian sheep farmers also have few opportunities for processing wool. "In one of the farms they are felting the wool themselves, but I don't have any time for that." The wool is piled like firewood and waiting to be washed, for you can sell it only after that. Egils also found out at the seminar that it is not as easy to sell canned lamb in Estonia as he had thought. "You have to cooperate, maybe then something will work out. I will support every cooperation, because backup is always necessary."

Happy for both farmers is **Daiga Bojāre** from Ape Municipality. She was the one who talked them into attending the seminars. "The belief that the municipality can help somehow is small." Daiga remembers that she called people repeatedly saying, "Come and listen, maybe you will find something useful." As an answer she received mumbling that there will be no point in that. "But you can't change anything if you do not see what is happening around. You start thinking when you see the positive." This was the case with the country goods booklet – when it was developed, many farmers, inspired by Estonians, finally agreed to open their farms for public. Among them also Vairis Vilemsons. "We heard in Setomaa: you have such values, and we didn't know about them!" Daiga remembers and is happy for having acquired the trust of people from Ape and her encouragements to take some action.

You can't change anything if you do not see what is happening around. You start thinking when you see the positive.

"Buy Local" was implemented by the Union of Rural Municipalities of Setomaa in cooperation with Ape Municipality.

berries = ogas = marjad,  
sheep = aitas = lambad

Ieva Alberte



## Across the Border with Siren Blaring

Leia Järve (first on the right) with colleagues. Photo by Betti Säre

"Hello, did you call the ambulance? Can we speak in Russian or English - you see, we come from the neighbouring state..." This is how the senior medical assistant of the ambulatory care unit of Valga hospital, **Leia Järve**, has lately addressed several of her patients.

"No one has actually been upset about me not speaking Latvian. People are happy to hear that neighbours are willing to lend a helping hand," says Leia Järve, who has crossed the Latvian border in an ambulance to reach a patient several times. Estonian ambulance brigade is called when the need for medical attention is immediate but local team is busy. "Our edge is that the trip is short, we can start helping the patient and hand them over to the Latvian team when they arrive," Leia Järve comments.

Most frequent calls are for a child in fever cramps or an adult suffering a heart failure. But there was also a time when Estonian brigade rushed out to help a Latvian woman who had accidentally drunk a caustic chemical poured into a lemonade bottle. Urgent arrival is also important when someone has a heavy fall during the winter, in order to prevent additional risks caused by hypothermia or frostbite.

Valga hospital is situated in a border town; closest hospital in Latvia is situated about 50 km from the border, in Valmiera. "Our ambulance brigade gets called to Latvia 12-20 times a year," says the head of Valga hospital, **Marek Seer**.

If necessary, Latvian patients will be taken to Valga hospital. "Transport is always difficult for an outpatient. It is reasonable to pick the shortest route for hospitalization and the decision is made by the ambulance brigade on site," the chief doctor explains.

Though quite beneficial, cross-border co-operation between ambulances has been active for only couple of years. Interstate agreement was signed in 2010. After that details needed to be negotiated. For example, what is expected from the ambulance brigade on site, what sort of equipment will they need, which documents need to be filled out according to the legislation of neighbouring country. This was carried out in 2011-2013, under a joint name Best Teams. The co-operation between Valga and Vidzeme hospitals was nationally supported by Estonian Health Board and State Emergency Medical Service of Latvia.

**Ambulance brigades can find help from Estonian, Latvian and Russian concise dictionaries.**



The effort resulted in the creation of common directives and concise dictionaries in Estonian, Latvian and Russian, for the use by ambulance brigades. Freshly acquired knowledge was practically tested on intensive exercises in April, 2013, where brigades had to locate a patient in the countryside of a neighbouring country and assist them accordingly. "Exercises were a great success. More importantly we now have good friends amongst the health care professionals of our neighbour country, who can help us in finding reasonable solutions for future co-operation," Marek Seer rejoices.

By now, Leia Järve knows many of her Latvian colleagues by face and name. "The only thing complicated about the joint ambulance services is finding a patient in a foreign location, especially in the countryside," she says.

Best Teams was supported by Estonian Health Board, State Emergency Medical Service of Latvia and Valga and Vidzeme hospitals.

Anu Jõesaar

ambulance = neatliekamā medicīniskā palīdzība = kiirabi



Sandra Lipska and Ilmārs Pumpuris. Photo by Janis Bulls

## The New Sounds of the Ancient Instruments



zither = cītarā = kannel

**Sandra Lipska** and **Ilmārs Pumpurs** have been engaged in the traditional music, playing in a folk ensemble and folk music band, and participating in various instrument playing trainings for several decades. Ilmārs reveals that initially the interest was practical, which was followed by studies at the Academy of Culture and the Academy of Music. Simultaneously, in order to facilitate the sustainability of folk music, Pārdaugava Folk Music Society was created.

Many musical instruments played by country musicians hundred years ago – such as drums, violin, or mandolin – are well known today as well. Others, which were made by local craftsmen, have almost become extinct. Pārdaugava Folk Music Society has been trying to do a lot in order to revive the skills of crafting the ancient multi-string instruments – cimbole, pogu cītara, and cītarkokle. “It seems that we have managed

to maintain the skill of crafting the ancient zither, but it wasn’t exactly the case with the Latvian garmon,” Sandra says. It turns out that a peculiar, sonorous and splendid model of bellows was known in Latvia, especially Vidzeme. And probably they are popularly called ieviņas because the most famous craftsman of bellows was **Augusts Ieviņš**.

One day the famous Estonian garmon crafter and player **Heino Tartes** volunteered to help restore musical instruments. Estonians had made efforts to save the old craftsmanship secrets and were now offering to share their knowledge and experience. It turns out that the Latvian and the Estonian folk music have a lot in common: both song and dance melodies and instruments of a similar structure.

By working together, Estonian crafters helped restore the Latvian ieviņas, whereas Latvians did not hold back when they had to pass on the self-acquired skills of crafting the multi-string instrument cītarkokle (rahvakannel). The first garmons and zithers made by Latvians and Estonians were given to the musicians who were learning to play them. This is how a full folk music tradition preservation cycle developed.

Ilmārs thinks that preservation of the local cultural traditions is the biggest benefit from the cooperation between Latvians and Estonians in maintaining the skills of instrument crafting and learning to play the traditional instruments of both countries. He is convinced that the traditional culture and its peculiarity is what makes Latvians and Estonians interesting and recognised among other European nations, like Germans, the French, Italians, the Swiss, who also sing, play the garmon, the mandolin, the violin, and the zither.

“House of Sounds” was jointly implemented by Pārdaugava Folk Music Society and Põlva Municipality.

**The traditional culture and its peculiarity is what makes Latvians and Estonians interesting and recognised among other European nations.**



## Ice Field Brings People Together

October 2011. Opening ceremony of a freshly built ice field in Rõuge city. Audience holds town folk and school children; the president of Estonian Ice Hockey Association, **Jaan Mölder**; and neighbours-partners from across the border, Ape. **Kalvi Kõva**, former mayor of Rõuge and current member of parliament, ceremonially hands the current municipality mayor, **Tiit Toots**, a snow shovel - may the ice field always be smooth and skateable! Applause and cheering.

Almost three years later, the municipality mayor Toots recalls how he never believed that he out of all people would catch the hockey fever. Now the mayor plays for the hockey team Rõuge Snipers - if the weather is brisk and ice skateable, fully equipped hockey players can be seen chasing the puck on the illuminated ice field late in the evening. Founding an ice field has brought life into the community: alongside with the creation of the team, ice servicing equipment was bought; the hockey club bought proper equipment and even hired a trainer.

The sporting fever has engaged the whole community and ice field gets visitors even from distant locations, from Võru and even Tartu, being the best open-air ice field in Southern Estonia. "Thanks to our possibilities a hockey team was also put together in Mõniste and we were able to hold an all-Estonian ice hockey tournament," **Jaanus Mark**, development advisor of the municipality, comments. "It brings tourists to the area."

Before hockey practice, the ice is free, and anyone who feels like can polish their skating skills free of charge. "Municipality members are very pleased," assures the development advisor, who is also happy to take his 13-year old son Marten to the ice field on his free time and enjoy some father-son quality time by skating together. Skates can be rented from a local school for a small fee. His younger son Markus, who is still in kindergarten, is also learning skating with his group buddies. As snow was scarce this year, the outdoor classes of school children were held on the ice field.

Building of the Rõuge ice field has fostered the relationship between locals and their neighbours from Ape, who have taken part in founding the field since the beginning.

**Three years ago, the rural municipality mayor Tiit Toots would have never believed that he out of all people will also catch the hockey fever.**



Residents of Ape are now regularly visiting Rõuge for a casual hockey game and competitions, while people of Rõuge go to Ape during the summer for a match of volleyball. They even held common sports-themed exercises and hosted the Olympic medal winner, **Allar Levandi**, as a speaker. Hockey tournaments in Rõuge have even reached an international level - last tournament had participants from Estonia, Latvia and Finland. The Estonian Ice Hockey Association has high hopes for the progeny of Rõuge.

People of Rõuge have used the ice field well. Last summer the field got a grass surfacing as a result of co-operation between the sports club and municipality and is now hosting fierce football battles in summertime.

Sportborder was brought to life by Ape and Rõuge municipalities and sports association Taevatäht.

skating rink = slidotava = liuväli

Tiia Kõnnussaar



Sandra Liepkāja, photo by Jānis Bulis

Ladies of the  
Fireplace Rose Garden

“You need to sense everything with the fingertips here,” says **Sandra Liepkāja**, manager of the guest house, the kitchen of which turns into a fireplace rose garden from time to time. And cardboard flowers are really growing quickly there! First you have to tear out and fold the forms from an egg box. While they are being made, the fire in the stove is making crackles so that Sandra can hear it and take a look at the tin with cherry red paraffin. When it is warm enough, you dip the forms in it a few times, and then the beauties are put on a baking paper to dry. The garden on the kitchen table is blossoming in less than half a day!

**Stay among other people, look at how to create good things out of nothing – different joy of living, a different taste of life right away!**

A few years ago nobody in Latvia had even heard of fireplace roses. And then there was an announcement in Ape about a masterclass trip to Varstu, Estonia, to learn to make an efficient and decorative kindling for a fireplace. A group of ladies visited the Estonian teacher, among them also **Irina Piterāne**, a professional florist, unemployed at the time. In a situation like this, any additional skill is invaluable. “Stay among other people, look at how to create good things out of nothing – different joy of living, a different taste of life right away! You feel that you’re still capable and can learn and surprise others with your handiwork,” says Irina. Sandra adds, “When you are busy, you don’t even want to talk a lot! You are simply engaged and making sure to keep up with the others.”

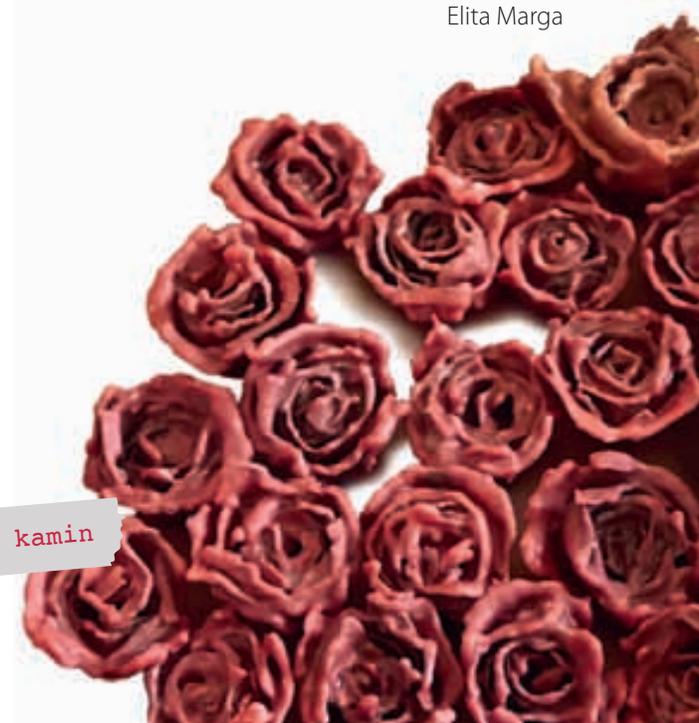
Both inhabitants of Ape reveal that it was easy to understand one another, because language is not the determining factor in communication. Irina says, “Estonians who already knew how to make roses did not hesitate to approach us, to show, to encourage. Meanwhile, I was watching the local ladies – who are at least seventy already – being deeply involved in making the roses. Elderly people don’t have to just sit at an oven stove at home! I am still happy to run into the girls at a shop. We always smile at each other, have a chat with Marianna, as she knows Russian.”

The daughter of Irina has placed the fireplace roses from her mum in a visible place, which already warms the cockles of her heart – they are not hidden from the eyes under

the roof, whereas Sandra’s daughter Krista made her summon up the courage for a premiere at Ape local market, and her husband also encourages her to go in public. Then the roses will blossom not only in the houses of their relatives and friends; other people will also see the masterpieces that can be made when Estonian and Latvian women combine creativity, knowledge, skills, and strengths.

“Still Active” was implemented by the Latvian Community Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with Ape Regional Council, Community House of Varstu, Helme Municipality, Ķoņi Life School, Naukšēni Regional Council, Support Club for Ape Development, Taagepera Society of Volunteers, and Varstu Municipality.

Elita Marga



fireplace = kamīns = kamin

Initially, **Tuuli Pärtli** was planning to write a financing application for expanding a port, but the active lady (“I’ve written several project applications and received funding for more than half of them,” she introduces herself.) got stuck when trying to find Latvian co-operation partners. But the talk about Ventspils youth collective with **Kristians Jacevičs** started rolling smoothly already from the first e-mail. And the port was temporarily left in the background.

“We clicked really well right away,” Tuuli recalls. As a result of an active mail correspondence it was agreed that the best way for both Estonians and Latvians to benefit from the freshly found synergy is to start organizing joint youth events. “By the time we actually met in person, we had exchanged exactly one hundred e-mails,” Tuuli says. She knows the exact number thanks to the curiosity that caught both her and Kristians, and made them count the emails. “Every letter was a pleasant one without exception,” Tuuli adds. “I was the oldest member of the organizing team but never felt as our age differences would stand in the way of something.”

“Good old Tuuli,” **Mihkel Süld** from Saaremaa says with a smile, when asked to recall joint events with Latvian and Estonian young that he helped to arrange. He still remembers his first meeting with Tuuli, when he promised to join the organisation team half by accident. Tuuli’s cheerfulness and enthusiasm were infectious, it never occurred to Mihkel to not join in on her ideas. “I wasn’t really sure what it was all about, at the start, so I just said yes,” Mihkel laughs. He admits that working with organizing youth events gave him additional courage and improved his organizing skills, and he truly believes that it also made him a better socialiser. “I’ve gotten the feeling that it’s not yet very popular amongst Estonian young to participate in such events,” Mihkel thinks, and believes that the events are gaining popularity. Thanks to youth camps Mihkel got to know and befriend many new people. When travelling to Latvia he no more needs to worry about accommodation and is always happy to host his Latvian friends, who he met at the same youth events, in his own home.

**By the time we actually met in person we had exchanged exactly one hundred e-mails.**

**100 Fun E-mails  
and Eager Youth**



As a matter of fact, by the last day of the event, the e-mail count between Kristians and Tuuli had reached 170. Meanwhile, the amount of knowledge and friends gained by Latvian and Estonian young thanks to those emails undoubtedly exceeds that number by a great deal.

Cooperation between the young was supported by Ventspils Youth Council and Triigi Trikirand.

island = sala = saar

Anna-Liisa Reppo



Uģis Amons. Photo by Andris Arhomkin

Sharing the Skills

“The ties between the entrepreneurs from Ogre, Engineering Research Institute of Ventspils University College, and Tartu Science Park have a long history, for we jointly solved various technical problems. But a few years ago we all started to search for an opportunity to approach the Western production and business administration style not only with intuition and intelligence but also with globally recognised methods,” says **Uģis Amons**, Head of Ogre Business and Innovation Centre. When studying at Riga Technical University, he attended the lectures about innovative entrepreneurship within the cooperation programme between Latvia and Norway. Uģis was excited by the idea about the production efficiency improvement method that the Western entrepreneurs had taken over from the Japanese company *Toyota* – LEAN management – already when consulting the new entrepreneurs. And the next level of skills was the acquisition of *iPlanner*, the professional business plan software.

The main idea can be characterised in short, “Patience, patience and once again patience.”

“When establishing and developing their companies, the Estonian partners stick to the Western standards, but Latvian entrepreneurs are leaning towards the Eastern style,” Uģis notes. “About a half of the entrepreneurs I know don’t have strong business plans and, for some reason, many of them think that there is no point in wasting time doing the paperwork.”

Now the situation is changing for the better. A group of entrepreneurs has developed in Ogre that analyse their mistakes in detail and observe the principles that work successfully in the world. In this way, they don’t have to waste time

by reinventing the wheel. Furthermore, new ideas are born and evolving along with the experience. “Thanks to contacts with the Estonian colleagues, my professional capacity has developed, the business centre has gained a lot, and the activity of entrepreneurs in Ogre has become considerably more efficient.”

**Ēriks Mikštas**, entrepreneur from Ogre, whose metal structures company is introducing the LEAN management in its activity, says that the main idea can be characterised in short, “Patience, patience and once again patience.” And employees getting used to the idea that they themselves are responsible for what they do. There is no

need for another group of superiors between the employee and the company management. The mindset of people is also changing.

Cheese manufacturer **Māris Legzdiņš** from the company *SierŠtelle* agrees with him. The use of *iPlanner* software has facilitated the financial planning, project preparation, and relations with banks.

The cooperation between Ogre and Tartu will continue without a doubt. Furthermore, the interest from both sides is increasing.

The lead partner of “Skills Centre” was Ogre Business and Innovation Centre, partners – Tartu Science Park and Ventspils University College.

Ģirts Kondrāts



business plan = biznesa plāns = äriplaan

Estonian football boys were in for a surprise when they went to play against Latvian guys: our southern neighbours played with true fury!

When the boys of Tartu FC Santos played against Gulbene and Smiltene football clubs two years ago, they saw that they're facing a bigger challenge than expected. Latvian boys played with passion and knew no fear when going for the opponent's goal and weren't even shy to give a nudge or two once in a while. "They play with a bit more force and fire and their play style has more Russian elements. So I told our boys to put some more passion into their own play style, and pour everything into the game," trainer **Timo Afanassjev** says.

All 1400 boys participating in four tournaments were awarded but coaches saw that in the age group of 8-9, Estonian boys had the advantage, in 10-11 the lead went over to Latvians and in 11-12, Estonians took it back.

Playing against different opponents helps with the development of football players as they have to learn to observe the play style of their rivals and figure out how to counter that. While Estonians learned from the Latvians how to play with more passion, Latvians got the chance to experience our better strategical preparation.

"The biggest difference is that our club is more professional and is playing by modern rules, while Latvians are still focused on raw results," Afanassjev points out the main differences. He saw from the faces of Latvian coaches that children-friendlier Estonian football definitely impressed them. Estonian clubs allow children to enjoy their childhood and don't focus strictly on results as it is with grown-up players. "We'll go home and make some changes," some Latvian coaches must have definitely thought.

Timo Afanassjev adds that playing football abroad also broadens the mind and gives the children positive emotions and confidence. "I remember gaining plenty of confidence on such trips as a kid and being more courageous at home later. Kids also learn the rules of the football world and understand that they act as part of the team."

**Playing football abroad also broadens the mind and gives children positive emotions and confidence.**

**Friendly and Fiery Football**



game = spēle = mäng  
blood = asinis = veri



President of the club, **Meelis Eelmäe**, says that meetings held with Latvians were also remarkable because the sports event was complemented by a culture program. Kids had the opportunity to visit theatre, learn the language of their neighbours, though mainly football terminology, and mingle with other children. "It was a huge event with different sense and feeling. We haven't seen an event that big afterwards."

The communication with Latvians didn't end with the event - smaller groups still visit each other time-to-time. Timo Afanassjev adds: "Once the football hall of Tartu will be ready two years from now, we can start making bigger plans and I'm sure that our Latvian friends will want to visit and play with us in the winter. They will be more than welcome."

Sports meetings between Latvian and Estonian football boys were organised by FC Santos, FB Gulbene 2005 and FK Abuls Smiltene.

Made Laas



Helēna Raue. Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis

The Masters of Waves

"I am easily frightened. I don't watch horror movies, I prefer comedies instead," **Helēna Rause** admits. And this is said by a sailing champion who has overtaken the boys from Finland and Estonia! Helēna from Riga is 17 years old and has been sailing for ten years. She likes to smile and is friendly. "I strive for the things I want to achieve. I really enjoy the sea and sailing because it gives so many positive emotions." This is the reason the one-week camp in Saaremaa was just for her. Helēna usually practices in the Gulf of Riga, but during the camp the practices took place in open sea. "In Saaremaa I learned to handle waves in order to maintain the speed and keep the water out of my boat. I understood how to benefit from the waves when the wind is light."

One day after the practice, a jam was created at the shore. The Estonians blocked Helēna's efforts to get ashore because they wanted their people to get out of the wa-

ter first, not their competitors – Latvians. "I got really angry and started to scold in Latvian. Of course, they didn't understand what I was saying, but my face perfectly explained that I wasn't joking around. Now they are my friends. The best thing during this camp was that I met a new friend, **Marie Pihlas**." Marie is a year younger than Helēna. A pretty and quiet girl. Very talented and persistent. She lives in Saaremaa. "We were the toughest competitors in all the races, but after a while we understood that we can also be friends."

The camp ended with a small race, Helēna got the second place. A year later in Pirita Helēna presented the skills gained in the Estonian waters, battling in a race with around 100 sailors

from Finland, Russia, and Estonia. Such a large-scale competition was the first for Helēna. "I didn't have too high expectations, but deep in my heart I believed that I can perform well!" Helēna's sister and parents were cheering her up, and Helēna finished first among the girls and 14<sup>th</sup> in total.

She was also ahead of her club member **Eduards Stipnieks**. "Estonians are fast and fight to the last breath in races," Eduards explains. He will remember Saaremaa as a place of jellyfish and wind, "which is always good there. And therefore the waves as well. Just like Helēna,

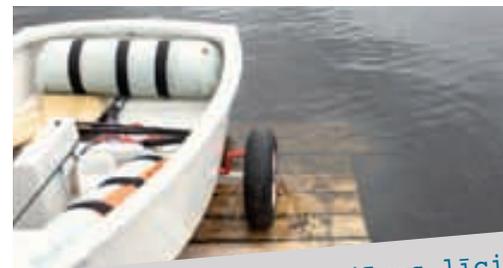
Although the communication in the Internet Age is easy, relationships can only be created in person.

I also learned to handle the waves in Saaremaa." Eduards also met a friend during the camp, and he can get in touch with him on *Facebook*.

"It was very nice. Sun, wind, and water – everything for health! And friendship with the Estonian people," trainer **Valdis Alviķis** shares his memories about the camp. Good contacts have been established, cooperation with the Estonian clubs has become more successful. "Although the communication in the Internet Age is easy, relationships can only be created in person." V. Alviķis is especially delighted about the new friendships between the children. For some it was also the joy of discovery because it was their first time in Saaremaa.

"Young Sailors" was jointly implemented by the Latvian LASER Class Association, Latvian Sailing Federation, Pärnu Yacht Club, and Saaremaa Association of Marine Sports.

Ieva Alberte



Gulf of Riga = Rīgas jūras līcis = Liivi laht



## Ballgames Here and Across the Border

South-Estonian boys playing football. Photo by Jassu Hiertsman

Different ballgames have been honoured throughout history by both Latvians and Estonians. This is why it was decided to improve the sporting conditions for young people on both sides of the border. Gyms were renovated and necessary equipment acquired for active young sportspeople of both countries. In addition, they organized multiple sports events.

The member of the Zeltini council of a rural municipality, **Elita Laiva**, recalls: "The idea was born in 2009, when the municipality of Zeltini was looking for options to support and develop popular sports. "They were trying to find a way to improve the conditions for ball sports, and the Cross Border Ball idea was perfect.

According to Elita, team sports have always been honoured in Zeltini. They have a long-time tradition of holding annual local beach volleyball and football competitions. This was a good way to improve the sporting conditions and to create tighter bonds with athletes from the neighbouring country. It was a tempting offer for Zeltini and she remembers their co-operation with the Estonian team with only good words. "They already have experience from an earlier time, and thanks to their support, we started to see that our ideas can be brought to life by close co-operation," Elita Laiva adds.

Elita Laiva has only praise for the organisational side of events. This could be one of the main reasons why the co-operation between Estonia and Latvia is still in full swing. Namely, Estonians still love to visit their Latvian neighbours for an occasional friendly football game, even after the official co-operation has long ended.

The cultural worker from the Ilzene municipality, **Linda Laiva**, also has only fond memories about Cross Border Ball. She recalls: "In September of 2011, we held an Estonian-Latvian exhibition game in basketball in Ilzene. This happened thanks to Cross Border Ball. Our freshly renovated gym had all the means for a proper basketball match: scoreboard, balls, baskets, etc. And we also had just gotten a new floor."



**Cross-border ball games brought together several hundred young people.**

In addition to improved sporting conditions and friendship games between the two countries, they also organized sports camps. Cross-border ball games brought together several hundred young people.

The co-operation project was supported by Võru and Lasva municipalities on the Estonian side, and Liepna, Ilzene, Alsviķi and Zeltiņi on the Latvian side.

Anna-Liisa Reppo



ball = bumba = pall



Māris Bambiņš. Photo by Jānis Bulis

**Doing One Job Together**

**Gints Kopštāls**, Chairman of the Board of Ainaži Volunteer Firemen Union, meets with Estonians every day. And a few times a year, the firemen from Ainaži rush to the Estonian side of the border to help. For example, if there was a fire in Häädemeeste, the Latvian firemen could arrive much quicker than those from Pärnu. Twice a year, Gints Kopštāls meets with his colleagues at the North Livonian Festival in Estonia at the beginning of summer and in Latvia at the end of summer. “The colours on our vehicles are the same, but in terms of the technical support Estonians are ahead of us,” he admits. “While we fought for the survival of the Association of Latvian Voluntary Firemen Union, the Estonian colleagues participated in international missions and provided their support to the victims of natural disasters. It is good that we are doing the same job in the border area together now.”

Meanwhile, **Māris Bambis**, President of the Latvian Fraternity of Chimney Sweeps, remembers the first Latvian–Estonian Conference in Häädemeeste in a good light. It has become a starting point for the cooperation of Latvian and Estonian firemen and chimney sweep fraternity in the border area. “After that, we started to meet with our counterparts for four or five times a year in various places in Latvia and Estonia to talk about the

chimney sweeper = skursteņslauķis = korstnapūhkijs



most important issues. Of course, not only about chimney sweeping. Last year we were interested in what we are experiencing ourselves this year — the introduction of euro.”

He explains that the soot and old chimneys in Vidzeme and Estonia are quite similar. Nowadays, Latvia tends to follow the chimney technologies from Germany, whereas Estonia follows the Finnish experience. After all, these are only technical details.

In Latvia there are 63 people who have received journeyman and master certificates from the Fraternity of Chimney Sweeps. Estonians have their own Chamber of Estonian Chimney Sweeps, but, at the same time, firemen provide short courses for their chimney sweepers as well. “It is important to stress that not everyone who has theoretical knowledge can be a master. That is why our colleagues and we are working on keeping their profession safe,” says Māris. But there are a lot of good memories. “When we were in Rūjiena during the Day of Happiness, we invited our colleagues from Estonia to join us in the parade because, all around the world, when one sees a chimney sweeper in his black uniform and shiny buttons, everyone, especially girls, immediately understands that this man brings happiness. Estonians remembered about us during the Tallinn City Festival and invited us to a festive lunch. For the second year in a row we are going to Italy where the town of Santa Maria Maggiore hosts an international festival of chimney sweepers. Our counterparts from many European countries and we will participate in a parade that will symbolically continue the road that started in Häädemeeste,” the master says.

**When one sees a chimney sweeper in his black uniform and shiny buttons, everyone understands — this man brings happiness.**

“Fire Safe” partners were State Fire and Rescue Service of the Republic of Latvia, Aloja Regional Council, Association of Latvian Voluntary Firemen Unions, Häädemeeste Municipality, and Salacgrīva Regional Council.

Ģirts Kondrāts

Ten or so Estonian-Latvians were eating cold soup, which they had named the SIB Net soup, in a small diner near Valmiera and were discussing, with thoughtful looks: “Now we're knee-deep in trouble.”

Four years ago, these young people took a difficult task on their shoulders: creating a network that would support rapidly-growing small companies, or the so-called gazelles. “Our goal was to figure out their most substantial problematic points. By doing so, we could support such companies by providing incubation and focus on the question of how to include risk capital into their financing. At the start, it seemed that we could not crack this riddle, but the more time passed, the clearer the picture became. Next time, when we'll have another meal of soup, we certainly won't look that worried,” **Vaido Mikheim**, the project manager of Tartu Science Park, recalls.

The idea of the SIB Net (Small Innovative Business Promotion Network) was suggested by the people of Ventspils University, wishing to lend a helping hand to student groups planning to start their own businesses.

Both in Ventspils and Tartu, a pre-incubator was created for organizing training and competitions for finding new business ideas for start-up companies.

The head of New Garage Time, **Mehis Pärn**, and his team won one such competition. The youth came up with an idea on how to use IT-methods for simplifying everyday shopping: receive price comparisons from stores via the Internet, order goods in the store or at home etc. “At that time, we were told that the idea is impracticable because it's too complicated, but currently, there are several similar working solutions out there,” Pärn comments.

Though they didn't succeed in realizing their idea at the time, they had the opportunity to learn and to exchange experiences during events held for starting companies, and were even rewarded with free private consultancy services for a whole year. “Our consultant took their job very seriously and urged us to really push it. They also helped us to reach people with whom to discuss our plans. It was a valuable experience.” Most

Now we're in  
tight co-operation  
and sometimes  
I visit Riga more  
than Tallinn.

## SIB Net Helped Feed the Gazelles

importantly, the core group of the team became the seed for a new company creating Internet software. "There was a lot to do, but we still weren't pleased. Our aim was to grow from a service provider to a manufacturer," Pärn recalls.

Within two years, the development network for small companies helped almost 500 enterprises from South-Estonia and Kurzeme and areas of Riga in Latvia. The incubator helped companies with creating a business model, putting together a strong team, investing funds, developing creativity, etc. In addition, Estonians and Latvians created lots of business ties. "I and others didn't know much about Latvia before this undertaking. Latvia was a foreign country of six-toed people. Now we're in tight co-operation and sometimes I visit Riga more than Tallinn," Vaido Mikheim from the Tartu Science Park states with a smile.

The information-heavy co-operation was possible thanks to the support of an international team: the region of Riga, Institute of Baltic Studies, the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, Tartu Science Park, Ventspils High Technology Park and Ventspils University.

Made Laas

cold soup = aukstā zupa = külm supp



Jānis Zilberis and Jānis Zilberis,  
Photo by Andris Arhoms

Pop the Bottle Open!

**Jānis Zilvers** lives in one of the most beautiful places in Latvia – Sigulda. Although he is a professional builder- engineer, he doesn't work in his profession. Jānis works at the Town Council and grows plants of fruit trees and berry bushes. Pears and apples as well. The entire Zilvers family works at the farm "Pīlādži". Winemaking was always on Jānis' mind because there were always loads of apples in the garden. Also his son Jānis encouraged



him to start making wine when he returned after finishing his studies in Finland where he learned to make wine. Both of them had their ideas on how to make wine, but they always lacked the motivation to start. Visiting the Polli Horticultural Research Centre was exactly what they needed. "The understanding about processing became clear. I studied the equipment," Jānis Zilvers, Sr. explains. Soon after that, he and his son renovated an old fruit warehouse, bought the necessary equipment, and squeezed their first apple juice. "Now we are making our own wine!" Jānis is proud. In four years we have made more than ten "Zilver" wine varieties: semi-sweet lilac wine, semi-dry apple wine, sparkling rhubarb wine, and other wines from berries, fruit, and forest berries. Now we are making calvados as well. "I visit the Polli Horticultural Research Centre three times a year. Yes, there is a research centre in Dobeles, but more scientific rather than production-oriented," Jānis admits.

The Polli Horticultural Research Centre is like an experimental factory: it can be rented to test the production. If you arrive with a box of apples, you can make a jam or squeeze some juice. It is all packed at the factory as well. The produce can be sold because the Polli

Horticultural Research Centre has made all the necessary arrangements for this. After that, the only thing you need to do is to harmonise the storage of products with the Latvian food safety supervisors. "You just need to load your crates, go to Polli, and return with a finished product. No worries at all," says professor **Jānis Lepsis** from Pūre Horticultural Research Centre who curated the meeting of berry producers from the two countries.



**In four years we have made more than ten "Zilver" wine varieties: semi-sweet lilac wine, semi-dry apple wine, sparkling rhubarb wine, and others.**

"It isn't far, but I hadn't been there for some reason," this is the most common thing the domestic producers from Vidzeme say after visiting Polli, which is not far from the Latvian border in Rūjiena. Latvians took apples to the centre in order to try a new storage method, as well as froze sea buckthorn berries with all the branches. "After that, the berries can be shaken off the branches and aren't damaged, as it would be if you froze them after picking off. We don't do that because we don't have such a deep-freezing equipment," J. Lepsis explains. The product Estonians bought the most while visiting Pūre were the orange berries.

Jānis still remembers a rhubarb jam from a small farm in Estonia, "A real grandma's jam!"

"Good Fruit" was implemented by the Estonian University of Agriculture, "Berry Farming" LLC, farm "Lāses", farm "Pīlādži", Partnership of Kandava, and Pūre Horticultural Research Centre.

**apple juice = ābolu sula = õunamahl**

Ieva Alberte

## Skills that Fascinate and Inspire

Daiga Bojāre. Photo by Jānis Bulis

One learns, gets excited and starts to make little carpets or other kinds of fabric, so that later they could be sold in fairs to locals and guests. This was what happened to the inhabitants of Ape in Latvia and Mõniste in Estonia when they got an opportunity to become domestic producers.

In order to learn the new skills, courses in Ape and Mõniste were to be attended. In these courses, 10–15 people learned various practical skills. “The audience was quite varied,” says the representative of Ape Regional Council **Daiga Bojāre**. A gentleman and a shop accountant have really got into basket weaving, whereas another lady who used to weave a long time ago has picked up the long-forgotten skills again. A PE teacher has joined her in the efforts of gathering knowledge as well. An inhabitant of Ape **Anna Duntava** even got into several crafts: she wove rugs, coloured yarns, and made cheese. Some of the participants were so excited that they went to Liepāja or Lithuania to find more qualitative wickers. The courses taught not only specific crafting skills but also skills of creating a visual look, developing a sense of colour and style, and selling the product. The news about the courses spread around most efficiently from one person to another – word of mouth.

**The local society has started to get involved. If the people see that it is something good, they will come.**

Because of this, Mõniste and Ape were able to organise cross-border fairs and allow the domestic producers to work not only in their towns but also in the neighbouring town. It is important to say that a lot of people keep practising their crafting skills even after the courses. “Our weavers are still very active. Wicker weavers haven’t stopped their work as well. There really is a future for this,” Daiga Bojāre stresses.

It was a joint project — Estonians frequently visited Latvia and Latvians went to Estonia. We were used to seeing people from the neighbouring town because Ape and Mõniste are only about ten kilometres from each other. On the one hand, having joint courses is a logical thing to do. On the other hand, the language barrier is too big and the knowledge of the foreign language varies.

Because of this, not only the crafts were learnt. People learned Latvian and Estonian



as well. “While living together, we understood some of the simplest words, but, in order to learn a language properly, a higher proficiency is necessary,” Daiga Bojāre shares her experience. For many Latvians, these courses were necessary because they work in Estonia every day. Even shop vendors would benefit greatly from knowing the neighbour language better because they often work with customers from Estonia. Meanwhile, Estonians felt a greater need for the Latvian language, for example, when working in the tourism industry. In reality, the lack of language knowledge didn’t stop the participants from joining long discussions about various issues by even using gestures after the initial confusion was gone.

The courses weren’t only practical. They helped to acquire new acquaintances and friends as well. They were motivating and encouraging, Daiga Bojāre concludes, “The local society has started to get involved. If the people see that it is something good, they will come.”

“Idea on the Border” was implemented by Ape Regional Council and Mõniste Municipality.

Kaspars Ģērmanis

on the border = uz robežas = piiril  
cross-border = pārrobežu = piiriülene



Sīm Saal. Photo by Lauri Kulpsoo

# MOTO Started Something Beautiful

**Kristiina** and **Ģirts** met in a motocamp. The Estonian girl Kristiina competed in the four-wheeled Quad or ATV category, while the Latvian young man Ģirts drove in a two-wheeled solo class. As it happens, the Estonian-Latvian youth and children's motocamps had another unexpected but wonderful outcome in addition to the original plan. "Kristiina and Ģirts are getting married in June and we're all invited," cheers **Teresa Sale** of Valga Motoclub K&K.

Teresa is one of the organisers of the cross-border youth and children's camps and competition series called MOTO. It all began when Motoclub K&K came up with an ambitious plan to expand the whole field of motorsports. "We decided, together with Latvian clubs, to organise joint camps and competitions - five camps in each country - so that children could compete against each other and experience the joy of success. We also wanted to give children who live close to racetracks, but have never had the chance to participate in the races, an opportunity to give it a try," Teresa says.

The camps proved to be such a success that they needed to find more volunteers for trainer positions. **Siim Saat** (11) and **Robin Malk** (10) received information about the camps from a motoclub. "Boys were really impressed," Siim's dad, **Sven Saat**, recalls.

"My respect to the residents of Valga, who went through the trouble of organising the whole event. It's so much more different if participants are actually guided by a skilled trainer with professional sports experience—" **Ivar Vaaderpass, Kait Kompus, Veiko Sale**. By now, Siim and Robin are already participating in Estonian championships. "There is determination and motivation - one just has to hope things won't get stuck behind financial matters," Sven Saat comments. "The camps gave a strong push in their personal development. It's important that

children have the opportunity to participate in such camps for free, for some of us it is a really big deal." Furthermore, children got to hang out together in the evenings, and I have no doubt that everyone went home with new friends to count on. "I don't really know how they talked to each other, as there was obviously a language barrier, but somehow they still managed to get along perfectly well," Siim's father laughs.



Motoclub K&K has also flourished, thanks to the events. Its list of members currently consists of 42 kids – starting from the youngest, 5-year-olds, up to 16-17 year olds who have already gained good results in the competitions. "There are more of those who are interested, but we just don't have enough equipment to serve them all. I feel bad for the children who had to give up motosports after the camps ended," Teresa Sale says with a hint of sadness. To cover the expenses, the club cannot avoid collecting a participation fee from its members.

**Children got to hang out together in the evenings, and I have no doubt that everyone went home with new friends to count on.**

The city of Valga has given the motoclub a three-storey building with 1500 m<sup>2</sup>, which also holds a hobby school and the Youth Technology Centre of Valga County. Even the state has invested into the club as a partner - in January 2014, they gave Motoclub K&K 13,6 hectares of land for building a sports base. "Our centre has evolved upwards from its original field," Teresa Sale says. "We're also handling children-at-risk, and provide psychologists and counselling services. We have understood that you should approach young people as a whole."

Youth motosport camps came to be thanks to the joint efforts of Motoclub K&K and the Latvian Amateur Motosport Association.

**love = mīlestība = armastus**

Tiia Kõnnusaar

If you hear a sound that resembles a competition between at least ten dentists in the discipline of the loudest drill in the world but you can't see any white scrubs around and see an installed race track in the middle of the room and tiny little cars rushing at the speed of light instead, there is no doubt that this is a slot car racing. Each participant has arrived with their own garage — a big box that is similar to that used in ice fishing, but no one uses it as a chair. Instead, they place it on the table in order to better prepare its improvised pit stop — wrenches, soldering iron, lathes and, of course, the car itself.

"This type of sport is almost for everyone from eight to eighty," **Jānis Rage-Raģis**, non-formal education specialist, explains. My hobby has been the same for forty years, just like my friends. As we know, interests unite, and this is the reason why such a good cooperation has been established with our Estonian colleagues. "**Kaiar Tammeleht** and **Johannes Mets** are real pros in model cars. We are consulting one another, but more on the strategy of car modelling development in our countries than about engineering details. Latvia or Estonia alone does not have a sufficient number of such sportsmen to ensure a high level for a longer period. We need Estonians, and Estonians need us — it means bigger competition and more fun. Finally, there are two magnificent tracks in the Baltics, and this allows us to organise international competitions. We are staying together during the voting in order to get the possibility of organising a championship in our country. When the Estonians vote, we will, of course, support them!" Jānis explains.

Now they are proud to see their boys stepping on the podium. But they are also happy if the neighbours win – it is as if they have won themselves.

**Pēteris Dūnis**, slot car racer with a 13-year experience in car modelling, admits, "The modern tracks are a real benefit. There was a time when this sport in Latvia was close to extinction due to the lack of tracks and competition. If the tracks are bad, there won't be a new generation of slot car racers. If you can't practise, there won't be any results. The European money changed everything, the level raised instantly and considerably.

The feeling of a tough competition is necessary – it helps to improve ourselves as well.

No Braking for the Baltic Slot Car Racers!

Jānis Rage-Raģis (from left) with a colleague.  
Photo by Jānis Buls

Estonians are very good at this, they are continuing to raise the level. The feeling of a tough competition is necessary — it helps to improve ourselves as well.”

Each sportsman has its own signature in slot car racing. During the fantastic visual experiments on the track, everything depends on one’s skills, nuances, little tricks, and all of this is on both sides of the border. And now we have a truly amazing track where we can demonstrate this all to our colleagues and fans.



“Hobby Slot Car Racing” was implemented by Sindi Town Government in cooperation with Limbaži Regional Council.

car = auto = auto

Elita Marga



Raili Kessel. Photo by Bettii Saie

**Stubborn Latvians  
and Brave Estonians**

The small South-Estonian enterpriser, **Raili Kessell**, came up with the idea to start producing homemade bread in three quarters of an hour. "In the spring of 2010, we joined forces with my daughter and sat down at our kitchen table for some brainstorming. We had already created the company; what we needed now was the line of business," recalls the small businessman, who had just returned from one of the most prestigious organic food fairs, "Grüne Woche". It wasn't long until Raili made her next decision - to leave her safe state position for good, and invest herself fully into running a business.

**The real binder between Estonians and Latvians was the unexpected illness of their translator.**

The idea borne from brainstorming was starting to take shape. "Thus far, my only experience with baking bread had been when I had done it for my family or as a gift for my friends," Raili thinks back to how her business started. She received a helping hand from FoodArt, which was created as a result of Latvian-Estonian co-operation, with the purpose to develop the production of farm and organic goods and reinforce communication between small enterprises and gourmet restaurants. With some help from FoodArt, the home-made bread received beautiful packaging, and Raili learned some much-needed tricks for creating a marketing conception. Her friends and family thought her decision to become an entrepreneur a bit crazy, but Raili had no fear. As it became evident, she had every reason to be confident: the bread sold well. Raili is not afraid to try out different flavours and recipes, but she's also very good at listening to her clients. "My communication with Latvians helped me to understand that different nations love different nuances when tasting their food," Raili Kessel says. "What some like, others might hate, and vice versa." She also remembers with friendly laughter how one of her Latvian colleagues stubbornly tried to recreate the traditional bread, the so-called coarse bread. This is something that requires serious effort in figuring out how to market it efficiently, as its storage life is very short.

**Tiiu Marran** from the Põlva County Development Centre recalls how the most difficult part of FoodArt was finding co-operation partners. The year-long search brought success: they found partners both from Estonia and Latvia. "Everyone was very excited

during training," Marran explains. The real binder between Estonians and Latvians was the unexpected illness of their translator, an unlucky event. It became clear that poor language skills were no barrier to success, and by the evening, everyone was getting along. **Tiiu Ohvril** from the University of Life Sciences also believes that strong bonds of friendship benefited everyone. The University's part was to add a scientific approach to FoodArt. In co-operation, they created a calculator for summing up the final price, making the life of farm product developers just a tiny bit easier.

FoodArt was created by the Sigulda municipality, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, the Latvian Agricultural Counselling and Training Centre and the Põlva County Development Centre.

Anna-Liisa Reppo

tasty = garšīgs = maitsev





## The Unexplored Vastness of the Neighbour's Language

Inita Viñola, Gunta Kļava  
and Valts Ernštreits.  
Photo by Andris Arhomiķis

How many Estonian words do you know? Five or maybe ten if you think hard enough? And how many Latvian words do you think your acquaintances and friends know? Probably about the same.

This is one of the reasons why small groups of specialists in Latvia and Estonia are compiling the Estonian–Latvian and Latvian–Estonian dictionary. **Inita Viñola** and **Gunta Kļava**, representatives of the Latvian Language Agency, and the linguist **Valts Ernštreits** can name only several people in both countries who can not only successfully communicate in both languages but also understand the lexicology. “It’s only normal that there are so few people because this is a very narrow field,” Inita Viñola admits.

The idea of compiling a dictionary is quite old. One of the reasons — Russian and English dominate in the communication between Latvians and Estonians. “Many think — why should we need to use Latvian or Estonian if we have English?” Valts Ernštreits points out. However, Latvia and Estonia are in one region that has strong cultural and historical bonds, and some of the brightest minds in politics and culture have even acquired education in the neighbouring country.

The linguists that are working on the new dictionary must establish a new standard because it is most likely that the previous dictionaries are not on par with the modern requirements. “This time we have started from absolute zero,” Valts Ernštreits admits. For example, while compiling the English–Latvian dictionary, there aren’t such difficulties because we can compare our ideas with those that can be found in other English–Latvian dictionaries. A good example is the phrase *horse collar* that was included in the Estonian–Latvian dictionary of 1960. Such words aren’t topical any longer. Now the linguists must find a precise equivalent of such words as *financial lease*, *printer*, *smart phone*, *computer mouse*, *shopping mall*, *credit*, *brand*, and *payment card*. Furthermore, the linguists must comprehend the legal system

**Latvia and Estonia are in one region that has strong cultural and historical bonds, and some of the brightest minds in politics and culture have even acquired education in the neighbouring country.**



and the administrative division in both countries. For example, in Latvian there is a word *novads* that doesn't fully correspond to the administrative division of Estonia.

The Latvian–Estonian and Estonian–Latvian dictionaries are going to be printed in 2015: each dictionary will have 2,700 copies, about 40,000 entries, and 1,000 pages. These are going to be the biggest dictionaries published in these languages ever.

It is already possible to view the electronic version of the dictionaries at <http://www.ee-lv.lv/lv/vardnica>. If an entry seems to be translated wrongly, simply inform the authors! “We are trying to involve the society, we don't want to make an impression of some wise guys sitting behind thick doors and making all decisions,” Valts Ernštreits emphasises. If you know Estonian and Latvian, you have a major opportunity to get involved in creating a historical work.

The new dictionary is compiled by the Latvian Language Agency in cooperation with the Estonian Language Institute.

Kaspars Ģermanis

dictionary = vārdnīca = sõnaraamat



Kiur Kõva. Photo by Jassu Hertschmann

Organic Farmers  
are Inspired with  
Good Ideas from Latvia

**Kiur Kõva**, a landowner from Viljandi, is a dedicated organic farmer. “If your health has given you a warning sign, you’ll stop considering the pros and cons of organic production. You make a decision based on what’s best for you and your children’s health,” the father of two sons states firmly. The Kontsu family farm has held a certificate for organic grain production since 2001. They grow all sorts of organic produce, from rhubarb and garlic to onions and potatoes.

In the summer of 2012, the potato fields of Kontsu farm went through an expansion. This came to be thanks to a joint initiative of Estonian and Latvian farmers, producers and scientists – BaltOrgPotato – with the aim to grow organic potatoes and market the produce in the European Union. Estonian farmers received a purchase offer from the organic Latvian-Swedish starch factory in North Latvia, Aloja. Questions about which potato strains are best for producing organic starch; how to cultivate organic fields; which

fertilizer to use and how to fight against pests were researched, by scientists from the Latvian Science Academy and the Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute, in partnership with farmers.

In the summer of 2013, Kiur Kõva carried out scientific research of his own, on how the dosage of modern organic fertiliser, vermicompost, affects the productivity of starch potato fields. Vermicompost consists of potato peels, grass and hay processed by earthworms. “I had previously used liquid vermicompost in my greenhouses,” the farmer says, “But it was my first time handling granulated compost.”

Kiur Kõva describes the co-operation with Latvians as profoundly pleasant – nice, curious people and great communication. In the spring of 2014, he had to decide on the size of the current starch potato field. While more successful Latvian potato farmers are managing potato fields up to 60 hectares in size, the Kontsu farm has started with only 1.5 hectares. It would definitely be profitable to expand their potato fields even slightly.

**Kiur Kõva carried out scientific research of his own, on how the dosage of modern organic fertiliser, vermicompost, affects the productivity of starch potato fields.**

**Pille Ardel**, the vice president of the Estonian Crop Research Institute, notes that, while several small Estonian family farms went along with the idea of starch production, it would be more suitable for big producers, those who can invest into 20 hectares or more.

The BaltOrgPotato initiative also attracted participants who don’t plan to stick to growing starch potatoes, but the co-operation project allowed people to come up with several great ideas and helped all participants make new, useful connections that will last in the long run.

The joint initiative BaltOrgPotato was carried out by Aloja Starkelsen AS, the Latvian Association of Organic Agriculture, the Estonian Biodynamic Association, the Economy Institute of the Latvian Science Academy, the Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute, the Latvian Association of Potato Farmers and Producers, and the Priekuli National Plant Breeding Institute.



Anu Jõesaar

potato = kartupelis = kartul



**Kaerajaan gave dance fever both to Estonians and Latvians**

Estonian men's choir singing.  
Photo by Jassu Hertsman

On a scenic Rose Island in Kuningatalu, a June day in 2010 was celebrated with music, singing and chattering in Latvian, Estonian and Russian. The Võru House of the Handicapped was having visitors from a small Latvian border town Smiltene.

"I remember that the wind on that day was impressive - skirt tails were fluttering when women were dancing," **Aavo Veske**, the head of ensemble Elurõõm, recalls with a smile. The age of the dozen singers of Elurõõm starts from 65, and the oldest of them are boldly over 80 - a sign of the vitalizing effect of singing.

In the August of the same year, the residents of Võru made a reciprocal visit to Smiltene. "There was a big dance and song festival for the elderly and handicapped, which brought in a variety of groups from across Latvia and visitors from Estonian border lands," **Ain Jõesalu** recalls. She's the executive arm of the Euregio Pskov-Livonia Estonian division and the Estonian co-ordinator of supporting the tradition of dance and song festivals. "Performers wore their beautiful national dress or group uniforms; the festival was colourful and emotional. The age of participants didn't stop the festivities from being joyous and unforgettable." There has always been friendship between the people of the borderlands, but ten years of a Latvian-Estonian border has reduced communication slightly. "We're now working on restoring it," Jõesalu comments. "The opportunities of people are poor, which means we need to give them a slight push - once they get off the ground, it's easier to walk on."

Altogether, dance and song festivals brought in 13 Estonian and 7 Latvian groups, each of which with one or two partners across the border. **Tamara Laht** from the Võru House of the Handicapped says that her brightest memory is from a joint concert that took place in the Võru civic centre Kannel in December 2009, where the real party started after the concert itself had already ended, and all performers came together in the small blue hall of Kannel. "One song that was familiar for both Estonians and Latvians was "Kurzeme" – Estonians sang in their own language, Latvians in theirs, and it was a powerful experience." Even better, Estonians taught the Latvians how to dance the kaerajaan,

**Estonians sang "Kurzeme" in their own language, Latvians in theirs, and it was a powerful experience.**



an Estonian folkdance, and later on they all tried it together. The party rush made it easy to make friends, exchange stories and contact details.

About 6000 people participated in dance and song festivals on both sides of the border. In Estonia, the events were held in Põlva, Võru, Paistu, Sõmerpalu, Parksepa and Rõuge. "People were proud to be a part of it," Ain Jõesalu says. Performers were compensated for transportation and food, so this was a perfect chance to get out of the home and experience something new, even for those with otherwise poor opportunities. And the rush is still on: the communication between Võru House of the Handicapped and the people of Smiltene has become a tradition they like to honor at least once a year.

The joint enterprise Song and Dance Festivals was supported by Euregio Pskov-Livonia Estonian and Latvian divisions.

Tiia Kõnussaar

traditional dance = tautas deja = rahvatants



Aigita Milovankina. Photo by Jānis Būlis

Masterstrokes at  
Valmiermuiža Market

When visiting the market in Valmiermuiža, one cannot be wearing pyjamas and carrying an old plastic bag – appropriate clothing and accessories are a must, explains **Aigita Milovankina**, mistress of “Dulbeņi”. We can see her standing by her produce – honey and bee pollen — dressed in white blouse and skirt for special occasions. The most popular product at Valmiermuiža market “Ar gardu muti” that comes from “Dulbeņi” is shiitake mushrooms, but they have already been bought out by the regular customers – the only thing left to do is to wait for the next harvest. During the autumn, wood logs that have the mushroom mycelium will again be covered in dark brown, tiger ear-like mushrooms.

**Valmiermuiža has a special aura – festivities, music, well-dressed people; each market is like an exhibition.**

Aigita reveals that the valuable mushrooms have attracted even Estonians – there was a young couple standing on the doorstep of Milovankini house one day. Recently married, they wanted to move to the countryside and came to ask for advice for starting a business. They discovered on the Internet the success story of “Dulbeņi” and came to Latvia to see with their own eyes how they were coping with the shiitake. “They became sort of thoughtful after understanding

the amount of work required for this business,” Aigita remembers. “But Estonians aren’t lazy at all. If they start something, they will finish it!”

At the market “Ar gardu muti”, Latvian, Russian, and English can be heard more frequently than Estonian. And **Ilze Briede**, the swift bread baker and the mistress of “Donas”, says that the Latvian cuisine is highly valued by our neighbours. Estonian tourists who are visiting “Donas” tend to order a real ancient Latvian feast in advance. It includes sprat and curds liaison, lard gravy, goat sausage, as well as pearl barley porridge with fried onions and carrots.

“We serve the long household table, put the food on hefty plates, so everyone can enjoy all the food. They eat and praise the food! Our black bread is very highly valued – Estonians call it the Latvian bread. They study the processes of its making and are quite amazed that the loaf of bread is put onto maple leaves and in a wood-fired oven. The neighbours use electric ovens and bake bread in a specific form, similar to *kiegelītis* [brick],” Ilze explains. She thinks

that Latvians should learn something about the market and trading culture from Estonians. “Valmiermuiža has a special aura – festivities, music, well-dressed people – similar to the high standards of the neighbours, where each of them is like an exhibition. It is very enjoyable to look at the seller who embodies the produce itself. Truly elegant!”

Aigita Milovankina thinks that the market “Ar gardu muti” would benefit from the high-quality Estonian sheepskin and wool products that are available in Tallinn. Such products should be brought to Valmiermuiža – sales would be guaranteed!

Lead partner of DELBI was the Estonian Business Chamber in Latvia, which implemented the activities in cooperation with the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tartu City Government, and Valga Town Government.

Elita Marga

honey = medus = mesi  
mushrooms = sēnes = seened  
market = tirgus = turg



Light-haired Estonian girl **Kärt Pöder** (11) is a student of the Valga elementary school. While most of her classmates head home after the school day is over, on four days out of five, Kärt takes an hour-long trip to the Latvian side of the Valga-Valka twin city. This is due to the fact that the closest art school is located in Valka.

She doesn't think of the trip as too long, because, since she was a little girl, she has dreamed about learning how to draw. The gorgeous pictures drawn by her kindergarten teacher became Kärt's bluebird. Her mother, **Rita Švirbulis**, recalls that it was impossible to walk past a street artist with her daughter, without stopping. She froze and stood in fascination until the master had finished their work.

"My friend read from the paper that they are opening a class in Estonian in the Valka art school. She wanted to go and asked me to come along," Kärt explains how she ended up going to an art school in Latvia, in the fall of 2012. Her friend's interest ran out soon, but Kärt is going to her second class by now.

The Valga-Valka co-operation agreement has supported children who wish to study in the Valka art school for a while, but all study groups used to be in Latvian and Russian. Estonian groups were added in 2012, thanks to Estonian-Latvian cross-border co-operation. They furnished classrooms and hired teachers. From the study year of 2013/2014, the progress of education in Estonian has been supported by the Valga municipality. The study plan lasts five years and is based on the Latvian occupational curriculum "Visual and plastic art". In the first year, the course brought in 18 Estonian youngsters in the age of 9-14; in the second year, courses I and II already have 25 students in total.

Kärt had formerly participated in the pearl workshop of the Valga civic centre. "For now I've discovered that I like woodwork and ceramics more," she says and tells us that she recently made a small room out of clay and is almost done with her wooden horse project. Kärt is also enjoying the composition course: though theory is sometimes challenging, her teacher **Margi Vähi** can explain everything in a simple and understandable way.

**My friend read from the paper that they are opening a class in Estonian at the Valka art school.**

**Kärt is  
Chasing her Bluebird**



art = māksla = kunst  
school = skola = kool

The head of Estonian studies of the Valka school of art, Margi Vähi, praises the perseverance of Estonian children: the school is known for its high academic requirements and strong discipline. To make it easier for children, some of the courses were brought over to the Valga civic centre in the second year. Margi Vähi hopes that Valga city can soon find a permanent studio for the school, which Latvian students could then use as well. Studies could be mixed over time – Latvian teachers could teach Estonian children, and Estonian teachers could share their experience and knowledge with Latvian students.

The Art School Walk was brought to life by the Valga and Valka municipalities.

Anu Jõesaar

places

## Two Countries, One River

“We have one river, but there are two countries, and we aren’t sure whether both countries have the same plans. If one does something on one bank of the river, they must know what is happening on the other,” **Ilva Cimdiņa**, specialist from the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, explains the situation two years ago. While studying nature processes in the River Gauja or Koiva (in Latvian and Estonian respectively), there was no certainty in whether the specialists from both countries were doing their work based on the same criteria. For example, a lake that would be in one category in Latvia may have a different category in Estonia.

**Juris Aigars**, expert from the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, gives one more example: it is believed in Latvia that the water transparency in a specific lake is one metre, but in Estonia — two metres. The aim of the researchers was to achieve a single comparative methodology that would serve as a basis for the planned management works in the Gauja and the Koiva basin in the future.

This was the reason Latvian and Estonian researchers got into a car and went to remote places where the rivers belonging to the basin of the Gauja and lakes are located. Armed with a great amount of equipment, boats and containers, the scientists passed thickets in order to reach places where animals are more frequent guests than humans to study the chemical composition of river waters, fish, molluscs, banks, plants, and everything else near the water or in it. Each member of the expedition was an expert in his field, for example, an expert in the chemical composition of water and an expert who knew all about fish.

The researchers and more than ten students from Latvia alone went on these expeditions for several days. Latvian and Estonian researchers often took part in separate expeditions. It was done in order to compare the

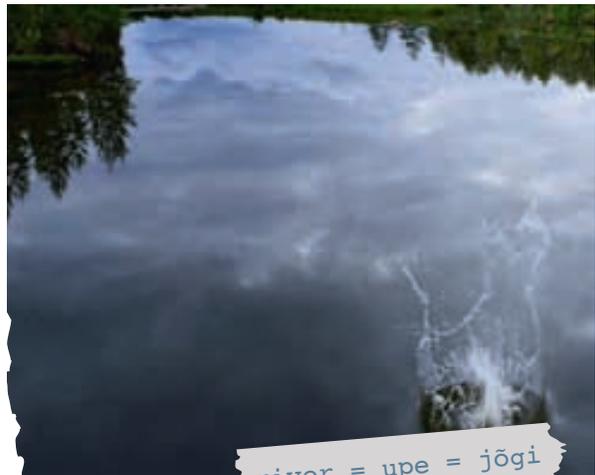


results and discuss whether the researchers from both countries see the Gauja and the Koiva with the same eyes, and to exchange the methodology and acquired data.

But this and other works (e.g., installation of river water treatment equipment) provide the results only after several or many years. In addition, only experts understand their importance. This was one of the reasons why the joint cleanup of the rivers was launched. In one of these events, researchers and locals worked together in Ape to clear the banks of the Vaidava River from tree trunks, branches, and enclosures. The locals have helped

**If one does something on one bank of the river, they must know what is happening on the other.**

a lot and are always ready to give a hand. “Locals joined in and saw the results almost immediately,” says Aigars smiling and points out that the locals have some benefits from this as well.



river = upe = jõgi

“Gauja/Koiva” was jointly implemented by the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Institute of Biology, University of Latvia, Baltic Environmental Forum – Latvia, Baltic Environmental Forum – Estonia, Tallinn University of Technology, and the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

Kaspars Ģermanis



**Well-kept Road Network Keeps People in Borderlands**

Lea Lihemäe.  
Photo by Jassu Hermsman.

## Kilingi-Nõmme – Mazsalaca Road

The people of Kiisa are pleased. It was just a year ago that they couldn't be sure if they could even get out of their homes in spring, when the ice on roads was melting. The school bus, carrying the children of the municipality, often reached its destination late. **Lea Hiiemäe**, living in Kiisa, only 700 m from the Latvian border, says that you literally couldn't tell one hole from another and when one of their family cars was in use, the other was usually getting fixed in the repair shop. The hole-pierced horror during the spring and fall was a real dust devil in the summer.

Some parts of the infamous road were indeed truly difficult to pass through.

road = ceļš = tee



Kiisa is a small settlement with a population consisting mainly of pensioners and with few job opportunities. Locals go to work in Pärnu or Finland, meaning that a good connection to the outside world is especially important. The reconstruction of the road between Kilingi-Nõmme and Mazsalaca (Väike-Salatsi) in 2011–2013 has improved mobility on both sides of the border. The full length of the existing gravel road was covered with asphalt and the sharpest curves were smoothed out.

The head of the Road Administration's building division, **Sven Savi**, admits that some parts of the infamous road were indeed truly difficult to pass through. "When reconstructing the road, we had to sometimes take a break to think about what to do next. It seems that our solutions worked out well," he continues with a hint of satisfaction. "The project didn't foresee using foundation textile, so we used it where deemed necessary and also built thicker road layers." As a result of the project, the 16,2-kilometers long road through

Kiisa from Kilingi-Nõmme to the state border, and the 17,4-kilometers long road heading from the Latvian border to Mazsalaca, were fully renewed.

"The house used to tremble when cars were passing by, now you can't even tell," pensioner **Rein Luha**, whose household is located a couple of kilometres towards Latvia from Kilingi-Nõmme, recalls. "And there is no dust. The traffic has improved remarkably. This road is definitely a good thing. I'm just sorry that my madam wasn't able to see it finished."

Lea Hiiemäe uses the freshly asphalt-coated road quite often. "I go shopping in Latvia,"



she explains, "where the local store is only 5 kilometres from me. And Latvians go shopping in Kilingi-Nõmme, as they think some things are cheaper here, in Estonia." Lea has noticed that the new traffic has definitely more life in it. "Big trucks couldn't use the road during the muddy season. Now Latvians are hauling timber to Pärnu night-and-day." Lea Hiiemäe is tolerant about the whole situation. "We could have used a decent road ten years earlier, maybe it would have helped to save our school," she thinks. "But we're happy about the changes even now."

The reconstruction of the road between Kilingi-Nõmme – Mazsalaca was supported by the Estonian Road Administration and the Latvian Ministry of Transport.

Tiia Kõnnussaar

"I found a beautiful flower with green petals near my house. Could you tell me what it is?" The employees of Salaspils Botanic Gardens are asked this question regularly. The questions come from people all around Latvia. However, soon people will be able to decipher plants on their own because a virtual plant identifier is being developed in Salaspils. It will be possible to search the database according to the appearance, shape, and habitat of a plant. A picture and a description in Latvian, Estonian and English will also be available. The garden will become even more technologically developed after a topographic survey will be carried out and it will be made accessible online as an interactive map. Before visiting the garden, it will be possible to see it on the Web page. "This is a time when everyone is busy and in a hurry; we take a step towards our visitors. If they see the garden virtually at first, we hope they will wish to visit it as well," **Andrejs Svilāns**, Head of Salaspils Botanic Garden, explains.

**This is a time when everyone is busy and in a hurry; we take a step towards our visitors.**

The idea of the interactive map comes from the Estonian counterparts who already use it. **Laura Zvingule**, co-author of the project, reveals that the work on the interactive map and the structure of the database of the plant identification tool is carried out in close cooperation with the Estonian counterparts. When the database is ready, it will be linked with others to make it possible to see whether the specific plant can be seen in Tartu, Salaspils, Tallinn, or Riga. For example, type the word *magnolia* in the database, and it will show that there is a wide variety of magnolias in Riga and Salaspils, but only one in Tartu. Laura explains that the employees worry each year whether the white beauty will survive.

The idea of opening another garden territory for the visitors of the botanic garden came up along with updating the garden map.

This territory is an area with plants that characterise a specific continent, e. g., Chinese spruce and pine trees. "These trees have been in the collection since 1970s. Only now they are ready to be seen in their full glory," A. Svilāns indicates.

The botanic garden has an area of about 130 hectares and will acquire 2,000 new labels. Earlier there were labels in Latvian and Latin, now there will be English ones as

**To Decipher  
Each Flower**



garden = dārzs = aed



well, and it will also be possible to see the country of origin. These labels will serve for a longer time because they are manufactured differently. "They won't last for three winters only," Laura explains.

Gardens should work together, A. Svilāns learned while visiting a tourism fair in Hamburg. Many have said they are planning to visit all the Baltic states in one go. "We should make a "VIA Dendrology", similar to "VIA Baltica", which would connect all the dendrological plantations and manor gardens."

"Smart Gardens" is a joint initiative of the National Botanic Garden of Latvia, Environmental Development Association, Society of Friends of the BG of the University of Tartu, and University of Tartu.

Ieva Alberte

Fishermen near Pärnu. Photo by Toomas Kalda

## Does the Baltic Herring Like Wind Turbines?



The people of Pärnu county are putting together a complicated puzzle: they must place fishing boats, sailboats, wind turbines and jet skis in the sea, where neither disturbs the others.

Pärnu Bay is indeed busy: it is crossed by large cargo vessels and small fishing boats, fancy sailboats and speedy surfing- and kite-surfing boards. While it is natural for the mainland to have set areas for residential districts and agricultural regions, the sea remains generally unzoned. Everyone using the marine space has simply followed the laws and regulations of their field, and has so far managed to co-exist without much trouble.

Meanwhile, there are new candidates for the sea space: wind energy developers and jet ski hobbyists. If it proves possible, we would like to find a spot for them, too.

wind energy developers and jet ski hobbyists. If it proves possible, we would like to find a spot for them, too," the planning advisor of Pärnu municipality, **Raine Viitas**, explains.

Last year, a record number of sea wind turbines (418) were built, and, according to the executive director of the Estonian Wind Power Association, **Tuuliki Kasonen**, this industry is worth developing in Estonia. Wind turbines don't create waste, nor do they need fuel, and constructing them creates new job openings. "The eastern shore of the Baltic Sea and the Pärnu area have good wind conditions and obviously wind energy can only be produced where it's windy. In addition, our sea has lots of unused space, where wind turbines would disturb no one," Kasonen says.

Fishermen of Pärnu are still worried about Eesti Energia's plan. As it is not fully known where the fish are moving and spawning, wind turbines might unwillingly disturb their

A year and a half ago, people started thinking about what's actually going on in Pärnu and Liivi Bay, and how to fit all interested parties in a way that keeps the sea clean and the fish happy, not escaping the waters in terror.

This undertaking has already stirred the waters pretty heavily. "Pärnu Bay is the cradle of fishing and we need to make sure we won't harm the representatives of our county's traditional profession - fishermen. Meanwhile, there are new candidates for the sea space:



sea = jūra = meri

life cycle. "According to scientists, some fish species are disturbed by wind turbines, some are not. How will the wind park affect the life of Baltic herring?" Raine Viitas asks.

Planners are trying to use existing data to find a balance between different human activities and protection of the ecosystem. Meanwhile, they're also thinking ahead 20 years or more and trying to foresee our future actions. "For example, aquaculture - we still haven't tried the artificial cultivation of seashells and algae, but Hiiumaa has shown serious interest in that field. Should we also plan a special area for that?" Viitas debates.

Planning the sea area of Pärnu and Hiiumaa residents helps to protect the Baltic Sea and use its resources jointly and reasonably. Other Estonian counties with a coastline must start working on the same issues, too. The coastline of the Baltic Sea is shared by Estonia and Latvia, making cross-border co-operation the best way to enforce the idea of the Baltic Sea as a common sea space.

Planning the coastline and the Baltic Sea area was supported by the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, the Pärnu county government, the Kurzeme region, and the municipalities of Engure, Pāvilosta and Roja.

Made Laas

Põlva Town has patiently worked for years to organise the youth music festival “In-tsikurmu Muusika Festival”. “And the Estonian willingness to share this experience with others has helped young people from Ogre to create their own music festival “Cita Vide”, which is now described by the members of the local municipality as an original festival and a tradition worth supporting,” **Ilze Staģīte**, representative from Ogre Regional Council, explains.

**Laura Zvejniece**, the coordinator of the festival, remembers: the idea that the city needs its own, different youth music and art festival was around for a while in Ogre youth clubs “Rotaract Club of Ogre” and “Project Workshop”. “We thought about the ways to help young and talented youth bands that couldn’t otherwise get on the stage and prove themselves in front of a wider audience. The band “Audience Killers” is a perfect example. They came to the festival organisers and asked whether they could perform some of their songs. Now they are recognised not only in Latvia but also in Estonia and Finland.”

“The knowledge that was picked up from the organisers of the Põlva festival by fifteen young and creative people in six months was immense and can be perceived as a success story of organising festivals. There is a lot more to add to experience, including informal contacts,” Laura stresses. She adds that the first thing to consider is the differences in the Latvian and the Estonian legislation in respect to advertising and organising a festival. For example, organisers of “Cita Vide” tried to advertise their festival in Riga and other places by means of guerrilla marketing, but they received a warning from the police. In Estonia, it seems that no one would object. “But the main thing Latvians learned from Estonians was to analyse the problems and find the solutions with a cool head instead of falling into the traps of Latvian emotionality that tends to squeeze through even in unimportant tasks,” Laura adds.



Organisers of “Cita Vide”. Photo by Andris Arhomkin

More than  
Just Experience

Are young people the only ones who benefit from this music and art festival? "Definitely not," Laura indicates. During the first event in 2012, there were supposed to be

The main thing Latvians learned from Estonians was to analyse the problems and find the solutions with a cool head.



about 1,000 listeners on Ogre Island, but more than twice as much came, including the members of motor club "Rēgi". A year later, the club celebrated its 10th anniversary, and one of the festival stages was especially for "Rēgi". Sounds of a real metal music came from that stage, and even the rock veterans "Opus Pro" performed. "Cita Vide" has welcomed musicians and DJs from Sweden and Lithuania as well. Some of them have played on the stages of the well-known festival "Positivus" in Salacgrīva, but the Estonian band "Pragante brigaad" was noticed by the organisers of "Positivus" during their concert in Ogre. And everything will definitely continue.

Lead partner of "Young, Active, Creative" was Põlva Town Government, partners – organisation "Munalinn", Ogre Regional Council, Ogre Youth Club "Project Workshop", and Rotaract Club of Ogre.

festival = festivāls = festival

Ģirts Kondrāts

Kuressaare beach house. Photo from project archive

## Beautiful Beach is Pleasing Both Locals and Visitors



## One Vacation – Two Countries



Children enjoy the playground so much that it's difficult to get them to go home when the day is over. And during periods of rest, we can buy ice cream from the cafe in the beach building.



Kuressaare delights visitors with a beautiful beach area, complemented by the new beach building and a playground for children.

When long-time Kuressaare resident **Maris Rebel** walks towards the beach with her children, she remembers how muddy and brushy the seaside used to be in her childhood, in the beginning of the 90s. Back then, only a few vacationers were lying between the lilacs, and now the beach is bustling with people during the summer. "What used to be and what is now, are like night and day - the beach has become remarkably more beautiful over the past years."

Her three children head straight for the new playground, but have to wait to actually enjoy some attractions, as there are so many competing for the privilege. "My favourite is the horse swing," the oldest, nine-year old **Kaur**, says. "Children enjoy the playground so much that it's difficult to get them to go home when the day is over. And during periods of rest, we can buy ice cream from the cafe in the beach building," their mother concludes.

The capital of Estonia's biggest island received a new playground, changing cabins, bicycle racks, sand stoppers and a brand new beach building four years ago. The roof of the special-looking beach building was built with a whole 750 tonnes of concrete, and even received an architectural award. It has room for the life-guard, summer cafes and a youth centre.

A youth worker of the Kuressaare Youth Centre, **Lii Vanem**, says that before the beach building was completed, young people were meeting up in temporary

construction cabins. Now they have their own rooms in the new building, where they can hold interesting events throughout the course of the summer: sports events, felting, glass painting and recycling workshops etc.

The youth centre opens in the morning and there hasn't been a day when the number of visitors has dropped below ten, while sometimes the number of interested children goes up to 40, or even 50. While free recreational activities are mainly intended for the children of Kuressaare, visitors are always welcome. The most exotic visitors we've hosted thus far are Indians. "Our greatest value is that we also offer opportunities for handicapped children and while people's behaviour near them used to be somewhat awkward, they have been integrated into the general community by now," Lii Vanem is pleased.

The beach building also brings together different organisations. Children have had the opportunity to participate in training held by lifeguards, fire-fighters, and others. "After a meeting held by the policemen, even one of our "bad boys" said that wow, cops are human after all. Hearing something like this from a young person with a rebellious attitude definitely warms your heart," Lii laughs.

Kuressaare, in co-operation with municipalities of North-Kurzeme, started working on remaking their beach area five years ago. The aim was to win the Blue Flag quality marking for Kuressaare and Ventspils beaches. Over two years, they held information days and quizzes for young people, to raise their awareness on environmental impact, and created brochures and leaflets introducing the area. Representatives from Kuressaare, Ventspils and Talsi also participated in tourism fairs held in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Russia.

The gratitude for making the joint enterprise such a success goes to the municipalities of Ventspils and Kuressaare and the Talsi Tourism Information Station.

Made Laas

beach = pludmale = rand



## Echoes in Mazsalaca

Mazsalaca memorial for the fallen Estonians during Latvian Freedom Fights. Photo by Jānis Bulis

A newly paved road leads from Estonia to Mazsalaca. The Salaca River has eroded and lulled the reddish sandstone and has created the smoothest curved cliff in Latvia. It can create a mysterious echo – the speaker is surrounded by silence, but his words can be heard dozens of metres away. It is remarkable that a century old Estonian history also echoes here.

The directions to the “Monument to Soldiers Killed in Latvian Freedom Fights” aren’t necessary for the locals, but vehicles with licence plates of the neighbouring country follow them until they get to the oak alley. The white steps there lead to a burial mound. The centre of the memorial – a monument curved in a stone from Saaremaa, simple but powerful.

“Mazsalaca is reviving,” **Vilis Zariņš**, representative of the municipality, admits. “When the Estonian Independence Day comes, we raise the blue-and-white Estonian flag. The saying “Let’s visit the Estonians!” has already imprinted itself in our folklore.” The memorial is a park where the fallen can rest and the alive can linger in memories. The sense of cleanliness and peace flows from the hill at the bank of the river to the town life as well.

Head of the Brothers’ Cemetery Committee and architect **Eižens Upmanis** points out that the first soldier that was killed in 1919 in the Estonian Freedom Fights was Latvian. Quite a few Estonians have received the Order of Lāčplēsis, whereas Latvians have received the Cross of Liberty from Estonia. “People are becoming more interested in cemetery as a heritage from the past,” Mister Upmanis explains. “Our and Estonian history can’t be torn apart. If someone asks why, we have the answer. Now we live on two sides of the border but are actively working in the fields that concern both sides. For twenty years, **Tina Tojak** from Pärnu travels the country in search for the evidence of Freedom Fights, for places where the unknown soldiers might have been buried. Historian **Küllo Arjakas**

**When the Estonian Independence Day comes, we raise the blue-and-white Estonian flag. The saying “Let’s visit the Estonians!” has already imprinted itself in our folklore.**



from Tallinn is always ready to jump in, give a helping hand and cooperate.”

There are cleanups and camps where young people from Latvia and Estonia can learn about their joint history. Representatives from non-governmental organisations, students and pupils aged between 16 and 25 are invited to take part in these events. “We will choose those who wish to experience this feeling of being together,” Eizēns Upmanis explains. “Educational institutions tend to have too cosmopolitan attitude, while parents try to secure the material side of the family and forget about the history, traditions, and even patriotism.”

The Soviet ideology has fallen short in breaking our proud Estonian and Latvian brotherhood that fought for the freedom. These roots run even deeper now. Both in Latvia and Estonia.

“Reviving Joint History” is implemented by the Latvian Brothers’ Cemetery Committee and Estonian Brothers’ Cemetery League.

Elita Marga

Estonians = igaunī = eestlased  
Latvians = latvieši = lätlased



Protolab workshop in Tartu. Photo by Betti Säre

From a Sower  
to a Satellite

In the May of the previous year, thousands of Estonians were celebrating: the first Estonian satellite, ESTCube-1, was sent into orbit around the Earth. The Protolab team from the Tartu Science Park was especially proud of the event, as they were responsible for creating the housing and some other important details of the cube-shaped space ship.

The head of the student satellite program, **Mart Noorma**, thought at the start that they would have to order the housing from a foreign country. "But then we discovered



that the Protolab equipment depot is able to mill out the fine structure with a precision that complies to all standards. We're glad that the major mechanical components of the first Estonian satellite are of domestic origin."

Protolab is a truly unique place in Estonia, where they help businesses create new products from start to finish. Engineers create technical solutions and technologists produce them on high-tech milling machines. Most prototypes go under the category of fine mechanics and mechanism design. "In their free time, during their smoke breaks, our handymen have solved issues that have proven to be unbreakable for several other engineers and special machines," the head of the Protolab team of Tartu Science Park, **Roman Mugur**, recalls.

The services of the workshop, now operational for five long years, have been used by at least one hundred technology companies. It's not rare for the Protolab team to come face-to-face with a challenge, when a company that wishes to use their services

presents them not with blueprints, but with an idea that needs to become a product. "In co-operation with the client we move towards a working solution, step-by-step," the manager says.

Several Protolab creations have drawn attention across the country. For example, Click&Grow used our services to develop a sowing machine for a smart flowerpot, and the private limited company Stigo applied to build a modern foldable electric moped.

If a specific product cannot be made in the development centre, clients are directed to another technology partner via the co-operative network. Tartu Protolab has good connections all across Europe and they co-operate closely with their Latvian colleagues from Ventspils and Ogre. "For example, when it seems reasonable to print out a prototype by using a 3D-printer, we'll be happy to direct the client to the Ventspils Protolab. In return, they send companies with equipment building requests over to us," Roman Mugur explains.

Laboratory workers of the two countries have also become close on a personal level, thanks to tight co-operation in production and economy. The Protolab collective includes lots of young and sociable people who have enjoyed fun times during several joint events. "I was surprised at how fast young people, who knew so little about each other's country and culture, started getting along," the manager recalls. "The after-work communication of Protolab employees quickly earned the name Protoclub, showing that everyone had become good friends with similar interests. Our common denominator is a bright person looking to come up with innovative ideas, and to bring them to life."

The cross-border co-operation was supported by Tartu Science Park, the Ogre Business and Innovation Incubator and Ventspils University College.

**Our common denominator is a bright person looking to come up with innovative ideas and to bring them to life.**

prototype = prototips = prototüüp

Made Laas

## The Same Land, New Opportunities

Ilmārs Baunis. Photo by Andris Arhomkin



It seems that everything is clear — paradise apples, apples, and a wild meadow. But can you imagine? We can make house wine from the paradise apples, other apples allow us to make chips, and a rare plant can be hiding between weeds. That is the result if one can look at simple things differently...

A few years ago, several dozens of Latvian and Estonian farms decided to assess and diversify their work and fish for new ideas. Estonian institutions had already had previous experience with such farms, and this experience turned out to be very useful for Latvia.

And this led to owners of 10 farms, specialised, for example, in cultivating grain, dairy farming, or sheep farming, from each country attending different courses, seminars, and going on experience exchange trips to Latvia, Estonia, and Sweden. **Andrejs Briedis**, representative of the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre, points out that the farmers learned about nature. These farms had previously wanted to develop environmentally friendly farming and were located near the protected areas.

Step by step, the farmers learned, noticed, or developed things that they had missed earlier. For example, a protected plant was found in the farm of **Ilmārs Baunis** in Naukšēni. The plant was hiding in one of the farm's meadows for a long time before it was finally noticed. Now the meadow must be scythed only once a year for the plant to continue to live. The farmers learned more about handling bushes so they can become a great place to live for insects that play a big role in the natural processes. At the same time, the farmers identified the territories that require more work in order to improve all the natural processes.

Owners of another farm realised that they can make house wine and compote from the paradise apples, planted more of these trees, and opened a café. Other owners decided to try out something completely different – they turned simple apples into apple chips. In this case, the farmers benefited from the courses about marketing and the skills to sell your product successfully.

**Step by step,  
the farmers  
learned, noticed,  
or developed things  
that they had  
missed earlier.**



Many farmers understood that it is necessary to specialise in a specific area of livestock rearing and to have a clear goal, otherwise the economic benefit may be low. Others believed that guest houses would be the best idea. These guest houses were created with the main purpose of educating their guests about environmentally friendly farming. The same goal was set forth during the open days where the new model farms were visited by several hundred farmers.

The farmers who previously didn't know one another still communicate, cooperate, and provide each other with advice, if necessary. Sometimes even the smallest thing can help you start seeing new opportunities in your land and farm.

"Demo Farm" was implemented by the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre in cooperation with Estonian Fund for Nature and Latvian Fund for Nature.

Kaspars Ģermanis

farm = saimniecība = talu

Hillar Zahkna. Photo by Jassu Hertsman



Snow does not  
Care for State Borders

There is an Estonian children's book about Timbu-Limbu, a snow mill working on the top of a mountain, with snow millers grinding snow. If Estonia or Latvia really had a working snow mill, we would probably find it in Haanja or the Alüksne Uplands, where snow



lasts the longest every year, allowing people to make the most of the skiing season. Another common quality of Haanja and Alüksne is the fact that each country's capital is located several hours' drive away from both. This means that the sports centre really has to put a lot of effort to attract people, and the entertaining qualities of these two sites are definitely stronger together, rather than separately.

The decision to make a joint effort and start developing their winter sports centres was made by the municipalities of Haanja and Alüksne in the second half of the year 2000. To encourage co-operation between the athletes and trainers of the two countries, they held different sports events during the season of 2008–2009. For example they invited the Haanja ski club, the Alüksne sports club and children of Võru Biathlon to participate in a joint training camp held in Alüksne. Trainers could exchange experience, while young athletes could make new friends and

got accustomed to the tracks and sports facilities of Alüksne. They held exercises for biathlon referees, offered everyone interested basic training in skiing on Haanja ski tracks, and arranged a joint biathlon competition for the border-areas.

"We created a good base for our relationship. Those ties were made to last and they will definitely help us in the future," Haanja municipality mayor **Juri Gotmans** asserts. "A network was created. For example, if we happen to need licensed referees in Haanja, we now know exactly who to call in Latvia."

Might be that some Estonian kids will be inspired from the fact that they can train on the same tracks as Rastorgujevs.

Side-by-side with outdoor exercise and hobby sports, they also strongly supported creating good conditions for professional athletes: training for sports referees were held; Haanja's shooting range received an international license and the Haanja skiing centre ac-



quired a track tractor. A technical project was drawn up for the Alüksne winter sports centre and it also obtained some snow cannons. Thanks to the joint development activities, Haanja and Alüksne Uplands can now support big events that would be too much to handle for just one partner. Competitions can also be held so that one stage takes place in Estonia, the second in Latvia and a third in Russia. As a result of the effort, several external clubs have discovered the Haanja and Alüksne area as a good training opportunity. This, in turn, supports the development of local life and business.

One of the well-known Estonian biathlon trainers, **Hillar Zahkna**, confirms that co-operation with Alüksne has made Haanja a strong pillar to rely on for Estonian biathlon. He mentions that the most successful Latvian biathlete, European champion and 9th place finisher in Sochi – **Andrejs Rastorgujevs** – is also from Alüksne. "Might just be that some Estonian kids will be inspired from the fact that they can train on the same tracks as Rastorgujevs."

The co-operation was supported by the Haanja and Alüksne municipalities.

snow = sniegs = lumi

Anu Jõesaar



## The Coffee Stays in the Cup

Lauris Karlsons. Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis

Mērsrags Port had turned into a thicket of bushes. Spooky fishing boats stood still. Small sailing ships and yachts couldn't enter it because the quay hadn't been dredged for years. Since the Soviet times it had been used for fishing and wood export. "I wanted to hop in a ship and go straight to Estonia, but nothing," **Lauris Karlsons** remembers. He and his family moved from Riga to a seaside village. The quay was so high that the only way to get on the ship was by jumping. The quays in Saaremaa and Ruhnu couldn't service Lauris' ship because they were built either for big ferries or small yachts. There was a funny experience in Ruhnu — when the water level was very low and ships couldn't enter the quay, Estonians got into boats and came to meet everyone. Lauris and his allies in Latvia and Estonia decided to take matters into their own hands and put these harbours in order. "I had to persuade Estonians though," Lauris laughs.

While dredging the quayside at Mērsrags Port, a lot of things were found – boots from the Soviet times, fishing nets, and even anchors. "So much sand and mud! We even found oil spills and cleaned them, so we also did a nature-friendly job," he remembers. Soon after that, a small hotel and a yacht service were built, so you can have your clothes washed and the yacht repaired on the spot. The port changed. The sound of squeaking masts and wind blowing in sails became so familiar during the summer! Even ships from America entered the port. And each summer brings more and more sailors. Races attract heaps of yachts. Even "Hercogs Jēkabs", the wooden giant built in Liepāja, entered the port and even almost got to the town centre – the bridge over the canal was full of locals. There is also a ship going from Mērsrags to Estonia three times a week during the summer. Previously the tourists were taken on the old fishing boat "Lasis", it swayed so badly that everyone kept their coffee in a flask and was afraid to drink it. Now there are comfortable ships – the coffee is still.

**Previously the tourists were taken on the old fishing boat "Lasis", it swayed so badly that everyone kept their coffee in a flask and was afraid to drink it.**



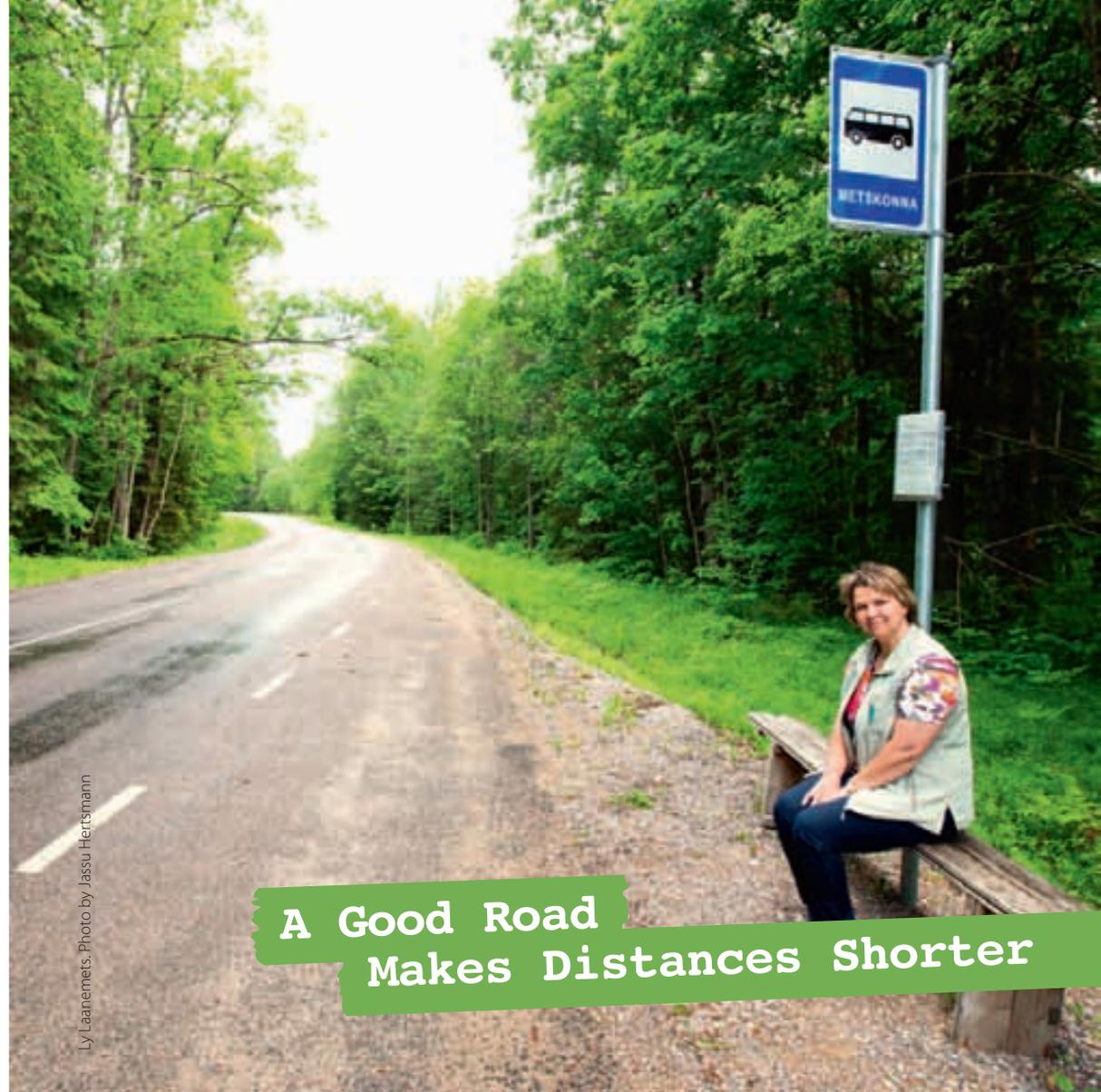
Mērsrags has revived, visitors keep on coming. The locals have started to smoke more fish because now they can be sold to the tourists. "There are a lot more tourists. If they come, there are fifteen at a time," **Mareks Līcītis**, a shop owner, points out. He doesn't know whether they have arrived by yachts, but the language definitely isn't Latvian.

When Lauris is at home and a dark, cold autumn evening is ahead, he sometimes looks at the pictures of the port before all the work and after. "It warms my heart," Lauris says.

"Baylink" was implemented by Mērsrags Port Authority in cooperation with ADA Ltd., Kurland Ltd., and Island Lines Ltd.

Ieva Alberte

coffee = kafija = kohv  
port = osta = sadam



L. Laanemets. Photo by Jassu Hertsmann

**A Good Road  
Makes Distances Shorter**

More and more cyclists can be spotted on the charmingly curved Karksi-Nuia – Seda road. It was just recently when only single travellers came to pass this road, and even that was usually by a mistake - the loose gravel surface made it almost impassable for light vehicles.

Now even cars with foreign plates are using the Karksi-Nuia – Seda road, while only a few years ago, a local Lilli village resident, **Ly Laanemets**, witnessed in the Viljandi tourism information centre how foreigners were recommended a different route to Latvia through Valga or Ikla. “Now, many tourists heading to Europe prefer our naturally beautiful road to large highways,” Ly Laanemets confirms.

Ly manages the activity of the Lilli Nature House and is happy that the fixed road has brought some life into the village. “Before, the drivers of large buses didn't want to drive close to the house in fear of breaking expensive equipment. Now we're getting visitors from across Estonia.”

The programs, camps and summer information point of the Lilli Nature House are annually visited by about 2000 guests. Ly Laanemets, the visiting manager of the nature conservation department of

the Southwest Estonian area of the State Forest Management Centre (RMK) noticed while comparing data that the annual number of visitors to RMK objects have increased from two thousand to up to five thousand after the new road was completed. Ly believes that the increase is definitely related to improved road conditions. “I'm happy that the road was also fixed across the border. We're taking our family and youth groups to exploring trips in Latvia,” Ly brings another example on how the new road has changed the life of Lilli village.



What's even more important - the new road coating has made it easier for families to attend school, work or kindergarten outside of the village. Several Lilli families are taking their little ones to the kindergarten in Karksi-Nuia every morning. Now, when the road isn't dirty and poked with holes, even the distance feels different. “Earlier I thought about going to Nuia with a sort of loathing, while now I simply take it as a quick trip there and back,” the village elder, **Alli Laande**, rejoices. “Fifteen kilometres feels like a walk in the park compared to earlier,” she laughs. In Ly Laanemets's opinion, lots of caravans and tourism buses are cruising on the road during the summer, following the renovation. This will give locals a good opportunity to develop tourism services and sell local goods. “We have already started with translating the learning course information into Latvian, as we're getting more and more visitors from Latvia,” Ly Laanemets says. Alli Laande adds that a higher traffic flow has opened doors to many new opportunities, for example starting a small company, like a bakery. “We're hoping for the best,” he feels optimistic.

The Karksi-Nuia – Seda road was reconstructed with the support of the Estonian Road Administration and the Latvian Ministry of Transport.

Anna-Liisa Reppo

**Fifteen kilometres feels like a walk in the park compared to earlier!**

**nature house = dabas māja = loodusmāja**

Some time ago reasonable water tourists didn't even think of going to Durbe, Kurzeme — paddle for a few metres, get off, pull the boat to the bank, and continue your adventure on foot, carrying all the equipment on your back. More extreme tourists have searched for a real adventure, and the wild alder and bird-cherry thicket hasn't been an obstacle.

**Mirta Jansone**, owner of a boat rental company, doesn't hide her joy about the thorough and well-organised cleaning of the Durbe River. "Here the enthusiastic cleanups didn't cut it. They needed the right equipment and the knowledge of what and how to do. The results brought benefits for the river, the sea, and people as well. When water tourists had tried out all the standard routes, we started to go to places where something new could be done. We started by cutting trees that had been fallen over the river. The result was a door-like structure where people could get through instead of pulling boats out of the river. The locals watched what we were doing and thought that we are a bit crazy for doing this. Then they were close to the truth. When new trees fell in, we took saws and made new corridors again."

"Durbe was a difficult case," **Rolfs Jansons**, who is an active boater, remembers. "Now it is clear that the European funds are being spent meaningfully. We have a beautiful water way twenty kilometres to Pāvilosta now." There are pretty limited possibilities for water tourism in Estonia, therefore they choose Latvia. They research the Web pages of the biggest boat operators and find a worthy route!

A professional programmer but an enthusiastic boating fan since the "Stone Age" and a certified water tourism instructor, **Peep Moorlat** is excited about the Durbe River. Before the clearing works had started, he took a boat and went through — when all the trees are removed, the route will be great! Then he would go once again.

"I'm a real optimist," Rolfs Jansons says. "The situation is improving each year, and not only because of our cleaning; the awareness and habits of the society also

Here the European funds are being spent meaningfully. We have a beautiful water way twenty kilometres to Pāvilosta now.

The Durbe River  
Flows Free!



change. If one stands on the river bank with a can in his hand, the can doesn't hit the river. Littering is a habit that has started to die out."

The Durbe is a real paradise for nature lovers — untouched, picturesque landscape. The river flows free and both Latvians and Estonians are invited to try it out.

By the way, during the 1970s, the Latvian director **Aleksandrs Leimanis** shot the famous movie "Vella Kalpi" (Devil's Servants), and the episodes with the river banks were shot near Keila Waterfall in Estonia. The Keila was in the role of the Daugava back then. Maybe the time has come for the beautiful Durbe to become part of a romantic Estonian film?

"Riverways" was implemented by Kurzeme planning region in cooperation with Valga County Development Agency, South-Estonian Tourism Foundation, Lenne County Development Centre, Viljandi County Local Government Association, Põlva County Development Centre, Emajogi Riverland Fund, Põltsamaa Municipality, Haapsalu Municipality, Võru County Development Agency, Vidzeme planning region, Ape Regional Council, Burtnieki Regional Council, Mazsalaca Regional Council, Strenči Regional Council, Valka Regional Council, Riga, planning region, Aloja Regional Council, Carnikava Regional Council, Ikšķile Regional Council, Inčukalna Regional Council, Jūrmala Town Council, Ķekava Regional Council, Ogre Regional Council, Ropaži Regional Council, Salacgrīva Regional Council, Salaspils Regional Council, Sigulda Regional Council, Grobiņa Regional Council, Kuldīga Regional Council, Liepāja City Council, Nīca Regional Council, Pāvilosta Regional Council, Priekule Regional Council, Roja Regional Council, Saldus Regional Council, Skrunda Regional Council, Ventspils Regional Council, and Aizpute Regional Council.



boat = laiva = paat  
ship = kuģis = laev

Elita Marga



Valga rescue service. Photo by Betti Säre

**Citizens of Valga and Valka  
Can Now Feel Safer**

## Valga-Valka Joint Rescue Capacity

On Christmas Day of the previous year, Valga rescue services received a call - woodsheds on Kungla street, in an area of couple of hundred square meters, were in bright flames. The Valga team was assisted by their colleagues from Valka, and with their joint effort, the fire was put out.

"The co-operation between alarm centres is now seamless," the operative officer **Rannar Tamm**, a rescue worker with 20 years of experience, says appraisingly. "There was a danger that the three houses nearby would also catch fire, and it was only a question of a few minutes. Help from Valka arrived in 10 minutes. The closest Estonian rescue team in Tõrva would have taken 20-25 minutes. Our fast reaction helped to prevent the worst."

Citizens of both Valga and Valka can now feel better about their improved safety. Furthermore, the rescue team of Valga can also benefit from their new modern building and better working conditions.

The new red and white two-storey building on Karja street was completed in 2012. The opening ceremony was attended by the chiefs of Estonian and Latvian rescue services. "The old and current buildings are like night and day," **Argo Länik**, the head of management division of the rescue department comments. "Before, the rescue team was located at two ad-

addresses. Now they can reach the scene of an accident remarkably faster: the technology and men are in the same building and they can immediately head to the accident site."

The head of the Valga county rescue district, **Alar Roop**, adds that while Estonia got a new building with a full interior, Latvians got two modern machines - a tank and hoisting vehicle. If necessary, Estonians can borrow the hoisting vehicle from the Latvians. The co-operation between the rescue services of the twin towns has also improved thanks to the new building, which offers well-equipped counselling and seminar halls



for meetings, exchanging experiences, language lessons and arranging joint exercises.

"We now have much better conditions for holding training exercises," the operative officer, Rannar Tamm, tells us. "We have a large practice field where we can daily practice rolling open fire hoses even 70-80 m long. Men can stay fit in our gym, and we also have a sauna and good conditions for showering."

The new building is also a real gem to show the visitors. The Valga rescue service is often visited by schoolchildren who can marvel at the powerful technology and listen to safety lessons.

**Now they can reach the scene of an event remarkably faster: the technology and men are in the same building.**



The collective action Valga-Valka Joint Rescue Capacity was carried out by the Estonian Rescue Board and the Latvian National Fire and Rescue Service.

Tiia Kõnnusaar

firefighter = ugunsdzēsējs = tuletõrjuja

The shortest road from Alūksne to Estonia goes through Ape, a small town in the Northern Vidzeme. On the map it is only a narrow line that crosses two borders. At the same time, it continues one of the main roads of the town. Dzirnava Street turns into the road that leads to Mõniste, then Valga, Võru, and Tartu. The local inhabitants of Ape use the road almost every day, be it for work or shopping. It is much closer than Smiltene or Valmiera. The road is used by the Estonians who visit Latvia as well.

The Chair of the Regional Council **Astrīda Harju** says that, according to the data of Latvian State Roads, the average number of vehicles using the Ape–Mõniste road is 324 a day. Every sixth vehicle is a lorry or timber lorry driving from the Vidzeme highway or from Estonia to the Vidzeme highway. If a cargo ship has entered the Port of Tallinn, the flow of lorries from the Southern Latgale becomes even more intensive.

**Daiga Bojāre**, inhabitant of Ape, says that the locals have been waiting for the road to be repaired for years. When driving along the road section from Ape to the border, the experience of a two-kilometre long bumpy road without any road poles often stirs up irony that they are home again. It is simple — Estonia has better roads.

The local entrepreneur **Nauris Tetters** agrees, “Think about the first impression the road creates about Latvia for, let’s say, German tourists who go to Ape from Mõniste! As soon as the border is crossed, the tyre hits a pothole! Germans are used to simply getting in a car and driving where necessary. We always have to wonder what the road will be like and whether the car won’t break,” he points out angrily.

“In the spring of 2014, when we together with Estonians have finally fought the road reconstruction and even know who will do it, the chair of the Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development has changed four times. During these years, we frequently had to go to Riga, Pärnu, Valka, Valga, and Võru to participate in cross-border discussions, and every time a new issue had to be solved we tried to incorporate the Ape–Mõniste road as well. Would we alone have managed to struggle through and achieve the

**Would we alone have managed to struggle through and achieve the road reconstruction in the border area? Maybe. But together it went smoother.**

**Across  
the Border Smoothly**

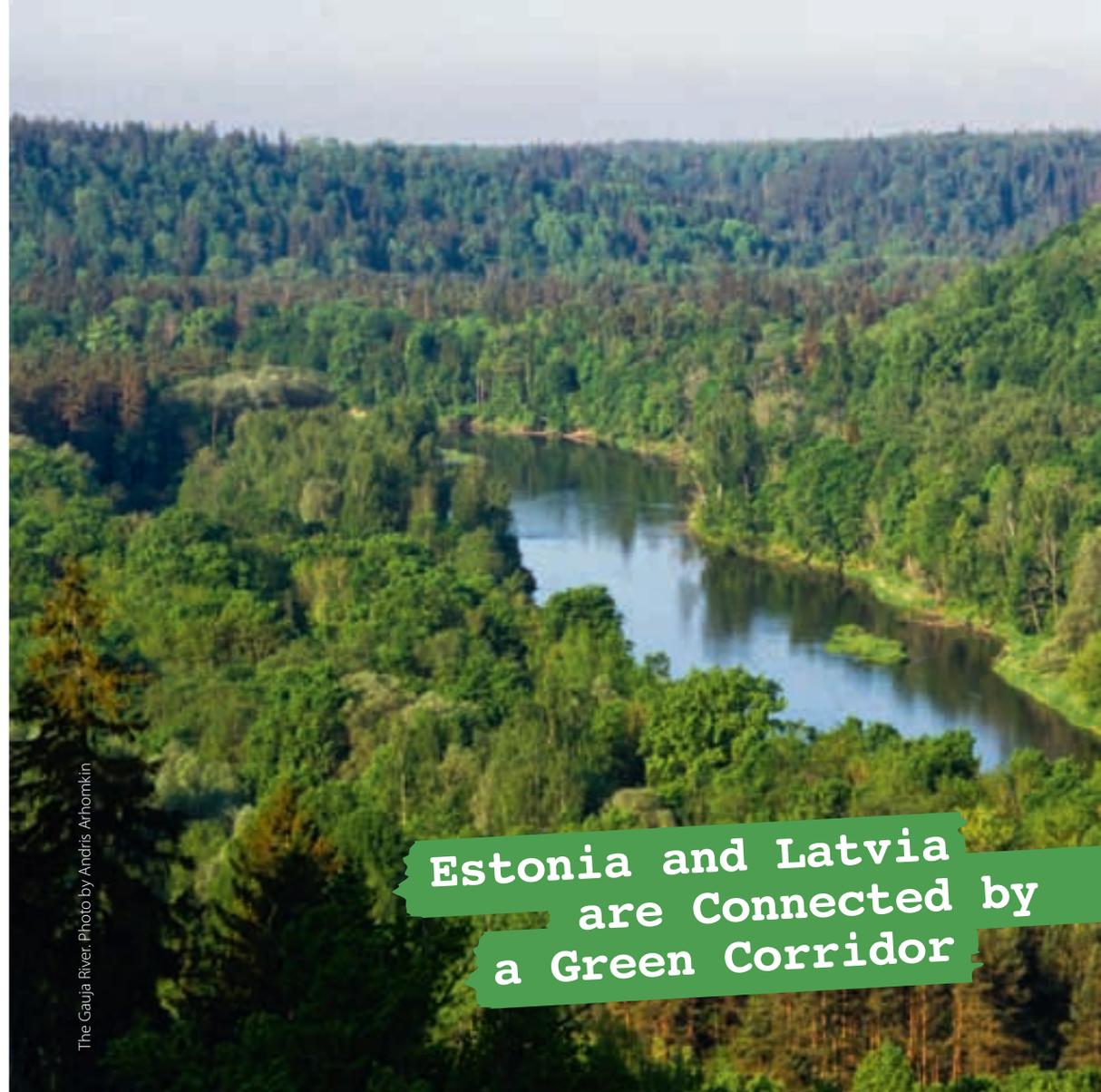
road reconstruction in the border area? Maybe. But together with the Estonian engagement, hard work of Meelis Metus, member of the Municipal Council of Mõniste, who shook the officials from both countries, the task was easier to achieve," Astrida Harju admits.

Reconstruction of Ape–Mõniste Road was carried out by the Estonian Road Administration and the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia.

Ģirts Kondrāts



pothole on the road = bedre uz ceļa = teeauk



The Gauja River. Photo by Andris Arhomkin

Estonia and Latvia  
are Connected by  
a Green Corridor

According to an old Estonian saying, two heads are better than one. This is why Estonian and Latvian natural scientists decided to join forces for a better overview of rare species in both countries, in the green corridor connecting Estonian and Latvian territories.

A nature protection biologist and a member of the Green Corridor team, **Tarmo Evestus**, recalls that one of the biggest challenges in the co-operation with Latvians was getting over the language barrier. They never managed to find an interpreter possessing a full natural terminology but were helped out by Latin, where help was needed. "By using Latin, we could always be sure that we were talking about the same thing," Tarmo

Evestus says. Apart from some language issues, Evestus rates the co-operation with Latvians as beneficial to both sides. The Green corridor includes border areas on the Latvian-Estonian border: those on the Estonian side - Karula, Taheva, Mõniste, Varstu, Rõuge, Haanja and Misso. Out of the larger landscape of protection areas, it includes Koiva-Mustjõe, Paganamaa, Luhasoo, the Peetri river, Hino and Parmu. "We were impressed by the voluntary monitoring activities carried out in Latvian schools," **Kristiine Palm**, the project leader of the Green Corridor, comments. Still, Palm thinks that Estonian conservationists are one step ahead of their southern neighbours when it comes to planning nature conservation, and can share some useful tips with their cross-border friends.

Before the current initiative was launched, the border area had not been explored much. Estonian and Latvian scientists focused on figuring out the exact condition of the existing natural assets. They carried out joint nature conservation projects. "Much of the work was done by volunteers," Tarmo Evestus recalls. Voluntary work brought together locals, landowners,

responsible agencies and professional conservationists. Improving the condition of grouse habitats was treated as a priority: they thinned out thick underwood by cutting down spruces. In Latvia, the river bed of Koiva was cleaned of plants and sediments. Kristiine Palm considers the toughest touchstone of the joint enterprise to have been continuing the already initiated co-operation. "We have lots of good contacts amongst local activists, with whom we hope to stay in touch in the future," Palm assures. "As Estonia and Latvia are very close neighbours, it's inspiring to see how they are protecting the environment similarly to us across the border."

The Green Corridor was carried out in co-operation between the Latvian Nature Conservation Agency and the Estonian Environmental Board.

Anna-Liisa Reppo

interpreter = tulks = tõlk

**Voluntary work brought together locals, landowners, responsible agencies and professional conservationists.**





“Cycling tourism is becoming more and more popular and attracts people who want to spend their free time actively,” **Raitis Sijāts**, Chairman of Vidzeme Tourism Association (VTA), explains. The idea that Latvia needs its own cycling routes that are included in the European routes and could map a road from Nordkapp to Greece or would lead around the Baltic Sea was around as early as in 2008.

Mapping the road is one thing, for example, indicating that this is the route No. 1, but in reality the road is not ready since there are no signs and no safety and convenience for the cyclists. “That is the reason we first looked at what is happening in Estonia, what has been done there by the Chairman of Cycling Club **Rein Lepik**. At that point, in comparison to everything done in Estonia, Latvia looked pretty bad. We had to act if we wanted to improve the situation,” Raitis Sijāts remembers. “Now, after several years of work, Vidzeme and Southern Estonia is connected by an internationally recognised 1,296-kilometre long cycling route, we can be delighted about what we have achieved by working together. The experience we gained from Estonia now attracts interest from Greece and Cyprus, and even Estonia itself,” the Chairman of VTA stresses and adds that the blue road sign “Tour de Latest” with the route number six is already well-known.

Cycling organisers from both Latvia and Estonia understand the importance of representing the differences in our countries. It is important to show that a separate nation lives in each side of the border, each having different mentality and language despite the fact that their history was united by Hansa and Livonia. “Of course there are

**The experience we gained from Estonia now attracts interest from Greece and Cyprus, and even Estonia itself.**

## Through the Ancient Livonia on a Bicycle

Juris Leimanis. Photo by Andris Arhomkin



differences, for example, Estonia has a better infrastructure, more cycling routes, but Vidzeme offers more to see, for example, landscapes from Gauja National Park and various castles,” Raitis Sijāts points out. And we have done a great job in respect to making available different maps and information stands.

A while ago, **Michael Cramer** from the European Green Party in the European Parliament, the author of the idea of the Iron Curtain Trail, looked towards the Northern Europe, including Vidzeme.

The profitability from cycling tourists is recognised more and more by the local entrepreneurs. **Juris Leimanis** from Cēsis has already mapped out eight routes around Raiskums Lake. And he is not the only one. But these efforts aren’t in vain because each cycling tourist who travels from Estonia to Vidzeme spends 16 euros on average.

“VisoEst by Bike” was implemented by Vidzeme Tourism Association in cooperation with Amata Regional Council, Ape Regional Council, Gulbene Regional Council, Latvian Tourism Development Agency, Madona Regional Council, Mālpils Regional Council, Ogre Regional Council, Sigulda Regional Council, Valga County Council, and Valka Regional Council.

bicycle = velosipēds = jalgratas

Ģirts Kondrāts



## Valga Railway Station Greet Passengers

Renovated Valga-Valka station building.  
Photo by Betti Säre



On the evening of the fourth Advent of last year, the people of Valga were streaming towards the light-decorated station. It wasn't a case of sudden travel fever - everyone wanted a look at the freshly renovated station on its opening night.

"People are happy when something good happens in the town, and many wanted to see the station building after the renovation," says **Katre Kikkas**, the head specialist of the town development office. Interest was actually so large that about 50 people had to stay outside. The lobby, with its high ceiling and curved windows, echoed with choir music and every single seat was filled.

The Valga station has been renovated twice. The aristocratic red brick building, built in 1890, was destroyed in World War II. It was replaced in 1949, with the help of German war prisoners, by a new eclectic, true-to-the-era building. The city had done its best to maintain the building, but by 2012 it had become the typical historical station - paint peeling from walls, plumbing and electrical systems in dire need of renewal, and the basement flooded with water.

Now the commonly used part of the vivid station looks fresh again. Electronic boards mounted on the walls display bus- and train schedules, including international travel times, in multiple languages. The front side of the building also has a set of information boards, which display time, date and air temperature. Historical benches were renewed; heating-, water- and electric systems were replaced. "Our new station build-



ing is really modern and beautiful, and thanks to information boards, all the schedules are easily accessible," says high-school student **Merlika Hüdsi**, who travels from Valga to Tartu or Tallinn quite often.

"The feedback has been only positive, everyone is looking forward to the opening of the station cafe this summer," Katre Kikkas recalls. "The community has definitely benefited from the freshly renovated station building. The lobby is warmer, the whole building friendlier to visitors. Once we get the rest of the building fixed, the speed of life will pick up even more."

The people of Valka are also actively using the new Valga station. Right now, the Valka bus station has an information board with bus- and train schedules, and a map of both Valga and Valka, for easier tourist navigation. The Valga municipality is planning to add more comfort and launch a public transport line between Valga and Valka - for example, small electric buses going from downtown Valga to the station and back. They are also planning to completely renovate the station building and use it as a Valga-Valka joint station - common city planning is definitely smart, as it helps in preserving the environment and in strengthening ties between the two cities.

The beautiful station building was renovated with the help of the Valga and Valka municipalities.

**Our new station building is really modern and beautiful, and thanks to information boards, all the schedules are easily accessible.**

Tiia Kõnnusaar

**railway station = dzelzceļa stacija = raudteejaam**



## More Fireproof Border

A visualisation of Valka depot building,  
photo by SFRS

There will be a new fire depot in Valka soon with enough room for all the necessary equipment and rescue systems. The current depot building has become old and cannot provide everything that firemen and rescuers need. The depot will be located in Valka but Estonians will benefit from it as well. Moreover, the building is part of both countries' relations. A step ahead towards providing new material and technical support will be made after a long Latvian and Estonian firemen cooperation during which the border area has become more fireproof and safer.

Deputy Chief of State Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Colonel **Intars Zītāns** explains that 1990s was the time when the cooperation between both services meant organising various events and meetings, but then both countries slowly started participating in development programmes. "Border area is a place with fewer inhabitants," Intars stresses. And the government usually gives more assets to places that are more densely populated.

SFRS representative **Rūdolfs Azens** says that the new Valka depot is a testimony of successful mutual cooperation. Valka needed a new depot. Without a doubt, the new infrastructure will improve the safety of both Latvian and Estonian regions because the Estonian rescuers and people will also benefit in case of emergency even though the depot will be located in Valka. "This has been a long-term cooperation, and it still acquiring new forms," Intars says.

He reveals that the new equipment that will be stored in the depot that is still under construction, for example, ladders for fire trucks, has already been purchased. This equipment will help in dealing with floods, chemical accidents, forest or other fires, as well as different emergency situations in both countries. In addition, the new equipment will help the firemen to work more efficiently in difficult situations, difficult-to-access locations, and in case of limited water resources. At the same time, experience exchange, exercises and joint training will also continue.

**This has been a long-term cooperation, and it still acquiring new forms.**



rescue service = glābšanas dienests = päästeamet

The new depot will employ 30 people and will be responsible for providing its services to Valka Region, Valga County, Smiltene, and Strenči. Intars adds that the social meaning of the depot is to make life in the countryside safer and better.

"JATE" is implemented by Latvian State Fire and Rescue Service and Estonian Rescue Board.

Kaspars Ģermanis



Vaike Pommer, Photo by Jassu Hertsman

Celebrating Heritage



**Vaike Pommer** fights to preserve the heritage of earlier generations. "Preserving our heritage is a responsibility. Even if we ourselves don't find it interesting, we should give our descendants the chance to remember our historical background." This is why the Estonian-Latvian database was created, mapping over 35 000 objects across Estonia alone. And that was only the beginning.

But what is heritage? What makes it just a rock or a rock with some significant meaning in terms of our culture?

Does every track need protecting or

are some of them just tracks? 100 people were picked out to map the heritage, and taught to find answers to such questions. "We followed our gut feeling when thinning out the candidates. Generally, you can tell who is who just by eye contact," Vaike recalls. Candidates whose first interest was about salary were excluded immediately.

**Does every track need protecting or are some of them just tracks?**

In Vaike's opinion, the most important part of mapping heritage is communicating and working with other people. You need to find someone who can tell you stories about local rocks, tracks or trees, so you can store that information for future generations.

Latvians started mapping their own heritage only half a year later. "We showed them our legacy in Saaremaa. We love our Latvians," Vaike says. "They organized their mapping action a bit differently - used more modern means - and the result was impressive," she praises her Latvian colleagues.

The co-operation with Latvians was mostly about maintaining cultural heritage objects. For example, they cleaned the Koiva river banks together, looked up local tracks and

fit them with road signs. The toughest part of protecting your heritage is educating people and raising their awareness.

**Kersti Siim**, who worked on mapping cultural heritage objects, believes that her contact with cultural heritage has brought her closer to nature and has taught her to understand the connections between different things in life. "It is not always easy to identify yourself with what your ancestors have left behind, especially when their heritage goes back centuries," she says. "For me, cultural heritage objects symbolize the expression of people's true wishes – the wish to survive, the wish to evolve, the wish to move forward, the wish to be seen, the wish to create something." Those are the primal values that shape the environment around us.

The project for mapping cultural heritage objects was carried out in co-operation with the State Forest Management Centre, the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve of the Latvian Nature Conservation Agency and the Latvian State Forest Management Centre.

Anna-Liisa Reppo

data base = datubāze = andmebaas



“The Nordic countries have some really spectacular buildings — energy-efficient glass covers the wall in the South, and sun cannot escape it and stays there, be it a freezing winter or a hot summer. Every corner of the room is full with an indescribable feeling that warms the cockles of your heart!”

If such text appeared in press a century ago, it would probably be placed in the literature corner together with tales and myths, and people would talk about it as a loafer’s dream – no need to gather wood, no need to light up your fireplace, just enjoy the warmth. However, such texts are now read by educated people and can be found in the descriptions of so-called passive houses.

Green journalist **Anitra Toma** found out about these economical houses that only need a single light bulb for the entire heating system and went to see this miracle with her own eyes. “Entrepreneur **Kaspars Kauliņš** built the passive house for his mother in Slītere so that no more wood gathering is necessary and you can leave the house empty for a while during winter without worrying about water pipes freezing. I wanted to visit. At first, a funny view – small, farm-like windows on the side of the road and enormous and thick in the South. The architect explained that special small beads are worked into the floor that absorb heat and later transfer it. When going through a shop, I found a book about ecological building, bought it, and gave it to children – I hope they will build something similar for themselves!”

Recently, the real estate market was shaken by the news about the value of passive houses increasing. Architect **Ervins Krauklis**, who designs energy-efficient houses, is sure that those who understand the pros of green thinking will definitely benefit from that. “The Nordic neighbours are lucky to have real enthusiasts of passive houses at the



Those who understand the pros of green thinking will definitely benefit from that.

## The Amazingly Smart and Energy-Efficient Buildings

Ervins Krauklis with a colleague.  
Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis

University of Tartu, where even a special laboratory for energy-efficient houses has been established. It is lead by **Tõnu Mauring**. They started this research about seven years ago at about the same time we did, and information is a real plus for Estonians because they received support for research and education. We are keeping on par with them as practical people – we build the houses! For example, we took old, terribly-looking Soviet dorms in Ērgļi and changed them into a student hostel for the vocational school – a smart building where students can experience all the benefits of a passive house. I think, as time goes by, the people will want to build similar houses for themselves.”

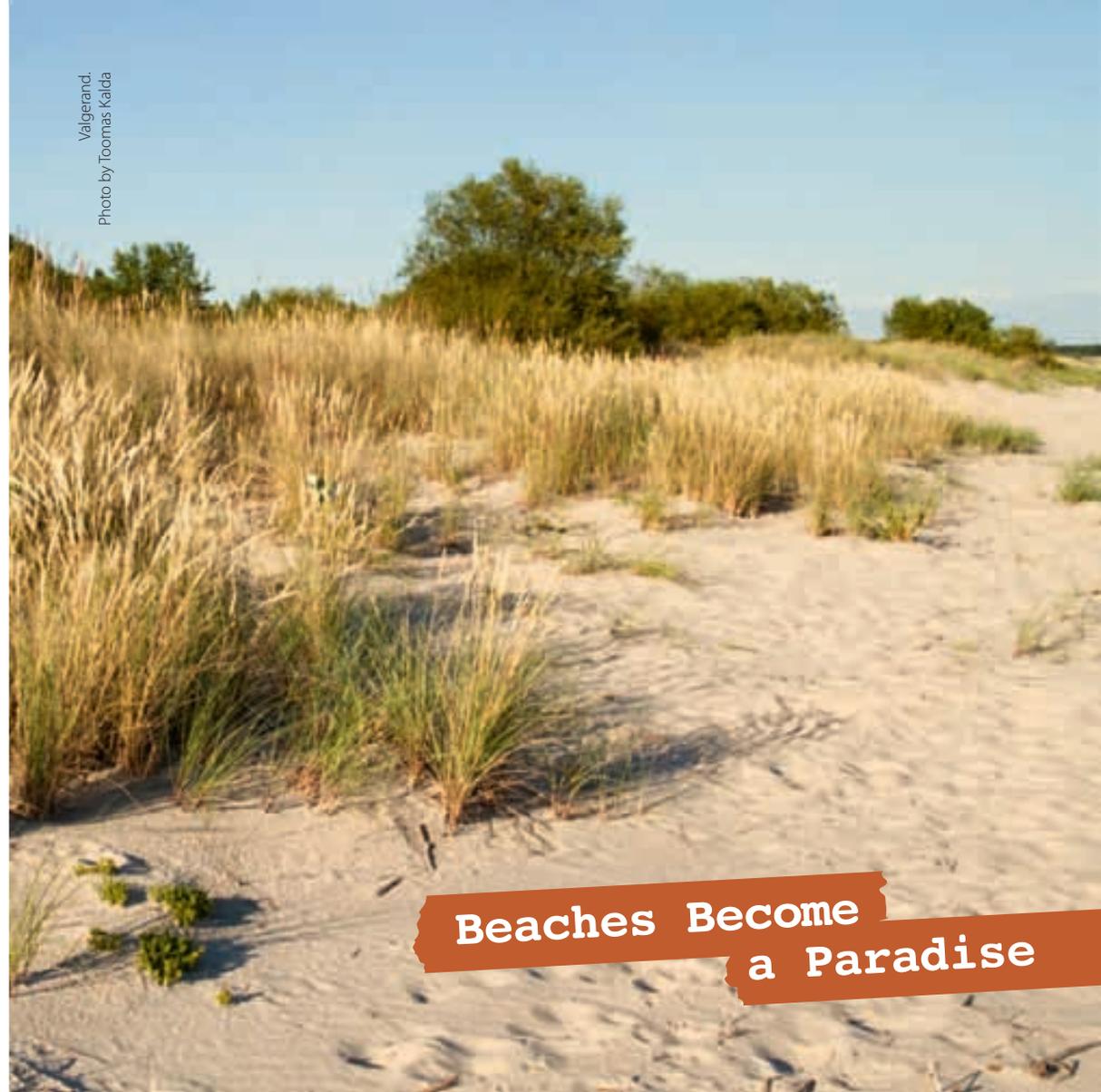
“Active Through Passive” was implemented by Valga Town Government, Green Homes (Zaļās Mājas), Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Passive House Latvia Association, Strenči Regional Council, and University of Tartu.

Elita Marga



passive house = pasīvā māja = passiivmaja

Valgerand.  
Photo by Toomas Kaldä



Beaches Become  
a Paradise

## Beach Hopping

Do you know what a perfect family vacation is? Father playing golf with friends, children having fun in the adventure park and Mother getting a nice tan at the local white-sand beach. No, that wasn't a trick question! This is exactly how people spend their vacation on Valgeranna in Pärnu county, Audru.

**Nature has given Estonians and Latvians a gift in the form of a beautiful long sand beach.**

The Jūrmala beach near Riga, synonymous with sunny vacations, isn't the only white-sand beach in the Gulf of Riga. Nature has given Estonians and Latvians a gift in the form of a beautiful long sand beach, offering opportunities to promote summer tourism even in smaller locations. For example, when you take a bicycle trip from Jūrmala to Valgeranna, you can spend almost all your time driving along the beach line, through the municipalities of Carnikava, Liepupe, Saulkrasti, Salacgrīva, Häädemeeste and Audru. Those seven municipalities set their common goal in 2008, to go for the Blue Flag quality marking. For receiving this marking, the applicants must fulfil several environmental and safety requirements, including creating sufficient conditions for effective lifeguard activity.

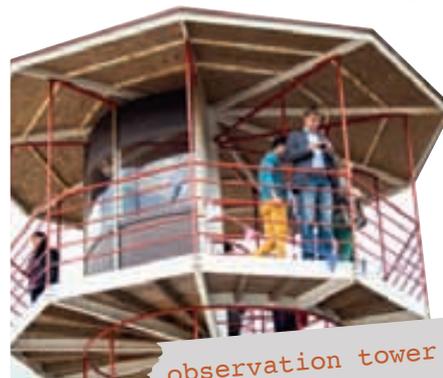
"Valgeranna has a certain niche: it's a small and intimate beach where people like to take their families," **Maris Moorits**, the development specialist of Audru municipality claims. But the January storm of 2005 was rough, both on buildings and the beach. After the storm, they had to start from scratch. In a few years, entrepreneurs built the adventure park and a golf course, and new housing locations emerged. Developing the beach was left for the local municipality, and in 2008-2010 it was generously supported by the Estonian-Latvian co-operation program.



Modern Valgeranna is a true family paradise: the tidied beach is decorated with a children's playground, brand new dressing cabins and toilets. If you take a walk across the illuminated promenade, you can hear children playing and having fun right above you, as the road takes you under the adventure park. "I've lived here for 22 years and Valgeranna is our permanent place for vacationing," says the mother of two, **Maigi Reepalu**. "We used to come here for the sand and the sea, the rest of it was a bit dull. But the current beach with new buildings is like night and day compared to earlier; it's definitely wider and cosier. You can access the sea by the boardwalk, even with a stroller or in a wheelchair."



"We have come a lot closer to the Blue Flag," Maris Moorits adds. The stylish, boat-shaped lifeguard building and tower are ready and waiting for the lifeguard to move in. The Jūrmala lifeguards held training for our local beach guard. Children of all seven municipalities were educated on the dangers of the sea. I am very sure that there will soon be a time when all small beaches alongside the Gulf of Riga will have their Blue Flags.



Beautiful beachscapes came to life thanks to the municipalities of Saulkrasti, Audru, Liepupe, Carnikava, Salacgrīva, Jūrmala and Häädemeeste.

Anu Jõesaar

observation tower = novērošanas tornis = vaatlustorn



**partners**

## Children are Becoming Active Citizens

Participants of a children camp.  
Photo from the project archive



## Cooperation for Sustainability

A television channel in the USA featured a young, 6th grade boy with a roaring bulldozer parked behind him. "We submitted a proposal for renewing the greenery of the school yard, came up with an action plan and now the work is almost done," he explained cheerfully.

**Sulev Valdmaa**, the head of the civil centre of Jaan Tõnisson Institute, watched that clip with curiosity, wondering: "When will our youth become so active?" This is when Valdmaa, who also works as a history teacher in the Kolga school, decided to use the popular American "activation" method for young people on Estonian children.

For example, in one year, the young people of Kolga focused on a rather scandalous topic: alcohol is too easily accessible for children. During a brief presentation that included teachers, the municipality's representatives and the chief of police, youths came to the following sobering conclusion: by the age of 10, most children have been drunk at least once and by their teenage years, they are drinking regularly every weekend. They usually get alcohol from "kind grown-ups". "Adults were baffled by this information," Valdmaa recalls. The young have also researched school violence and transport problems in the municipality with great excitement. "They would be more than happy if all social education classes would look like that."

Now, more than 40 school children from Hiiumaa and Riga occasionally put their heads together and ask: "What is the most urgent environmental issue at home?" The young people of the Käina high-school in Hiiumaa and the Laimite centre in Riga will explore how the problem has been solved elsewhere, and create a theoretical plan, and a plan of action to solve it. For example, they may reach the conclusion that they need to buy new equipment. After figuring out what they need, they'll look into price offers and negotiate with local officials about the possibility to allocate money for such purchases from the local municipality's budget. "They learn to focus on the problem, find solutions

**They learn to focus on the problem, find solutions and reach their practical goals. We're teaching them how to be active citizens.**



and reach their practical goals. We're teaching them how to be active citizens," Sulev Valdmaa explains.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade kids already have an inspiring example right here in Estonia. Nine years ago, the students of Aravete founded a youth activity centre. They found a fitting space, researched the average pay of youth workers, and finally took their idea to the officials of the municipality. **Kairit Kalamägi**, one of the nine active young people behind that idea, still remembers how it seemed almost impossible at the start. They met every week and finally got to renovating both the space and the furniture. "It's very cool that our idea actually worked out. I paid a visit to the youth centre

recently, and found that my handprint on one of the cupboards I painted was still there. I think that it's great that we created the centre, as now others can benefit from it, too. I wish the young people of Latvia and Estonia the best of luck!"

The joint event for school children was supported by the Jaan Tõnisson Institute and Centre for Creative Initiative.



Made Laas

youth centre = jauniešu centrs = noortekeskus



Ernestis Iibietis. Photo by Janis Buls

Kissing doesn't Stop!

## Increasing Attractiveness of Valga and Valka

The Pedele is a river that flows through Valka. The Pedeli is the same river in Valga. The banks of the Pedele definitely could not be called cosy and lively — they were boggy and weedy. It flooded during the spring. Now the banks and dams of the Pedele are put in order. Illuminated footbridges on one bank of the river, granite road and wooden arbour on the other bank. “A beautiful place for walks. It was the first time I walked along the river banks. Earlier there weren’t even paths,” remembers **Sintija**, born in Valka and now working in Riga. She praises the improved road along the river in Estonia as well. It is paved

and everyone, including cyclists, Nordic walkers, and skateboarders, can use it.

**Putniņi** family enjoys the road because they are cyclists. “No more worrying about cars, as it was when we had to cycle along the big street,” mother **Jana** explains. She has noticed that the new road is frequently used by young mothers who go to the playground. “There is a lot of movement, but enough place as well.”

Now we have one more place put in order. And a peaceful coexistence between neighbours continues.

On the Estonian side, the road is about 5 km long, on the Latvian side — about 700 m.

Wooden footbridges and the arbour are mostly enjoyed by those who like walking. “Latvians travel to the Estonian side more. Be it with sticks, on bikes, or running. Estonians enjoy a careless walk to the top of the hill and sitting in the arbour while looking at the town,” **Gunta Svane** from Valka Council has noticed. During the summer, the roads are full with cyclists, but cross-country skiers take over in the winter. “Now we have one more place put in order. And a peaceful coexistence between neighbours continues,” Gunta says.

Pedele Nature Trail is now bustling with life. During the theatre festival “Tāļivs”, the wooden footbridges were full with spectators who watched the play on the other side of the river. When the midnight came, the water glistened under the skies full of fireworks. “This was my first attempt to discover a new place. The faces of the artists were too far to distinguish, but the atmosphere made it a small price to pay,” **Ernests Libietis**, Director of the Latvian–Estonian Institute, admits.

When asked if couples are visiting the wooden arbour on the Valka–Valga border

at night, Ernests confirms it by saying, “Kissing doesn’t stop!” He has not noticed, however, whether these are Estonians and Latvians.

“We are a big family and close friends,” Gunta Smane says about relationships at work and with neighbours. She remembers the friendly atmosphere when they worked on creating Pedele Nature Trail. There is a vision for the former Valka nuclear missile bunkers and an ice hall. Lots of souvenirs have been made, like cups and chessboard, and bordering poles now have names: the Estonian pole is called Peter, the Latvian pole — Pēteris.

Valka un Valga were improved in a joint work by Valka Municipality and Valga Town Government.

Ieva Alberte



neighbors = kaimiņi = naabrid

Both ethnic cultures - setos in Southeastern Estonia and suiti in west Kurzeme are unique. Nowadays, setos and suiti walk the same path to preserve and develop their cultural heritage. Why not continue together?

They are different and still so much alike in many ways. The living habitat of suiti in the Alsunga area is a small Roman Catholic island amongst Lutherans, while the setos are a Russian Orthodox community near the Russian border. Both ethnic groups are small - setos only have 3000 members, the suiti 2800. When hearing of the suiti, every Latvian thinks of singers dressed in colourful national costumes from the ensemble Suitu Sievas, performing multivocal drone-type folk songs. Similarly, the setos are known to Estonians by their singsong tradition, and no one will mistake seto women wearing beautiful national dresses and fancy brooches for anyone else. Both suiti and seto cultures are on UNESCO's list of intellectual cultural heritage.

A seto woman, **Rieka Hõrn** has hosted suiti visitors a couple of times. "Bourdon songs are very different from singsong," Rieka describes, "but similar to setos, the suiti make their songs about what they see and think. They often sing funny songs about people, sometimes with a hint of mischief." As a maker of delicious sour milk cheese, Rieka believes that suiti national cuisine also resembles that of the setos, but there are definitely recipes that are unknown and exciting for each.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been a sort of awakening for both communities and their daily routines have much in common. **Ahto Raudoja**, the manager of the Seto Institute, has learned more about the suiti and says: "We clicked immediately. They also have an enthusiastic younger generation dealing with preserving and passing along the heritage. For example, we're both currently mapping our traditional architecture."

Since the summer of 2013, they have been co-operating steadily. Suiti were invited to the summer university in Setomaa to exchange thoughts on different workshops. For example, they discussed creating an alphabet book in the national dialect. Setos already have an alphabet book and are working on an accompanying CD. The suiti dialect differs less from the Latvian language than seto from Estonian, so they're only preparing

We clicked immediately.

## Setos and Suiti Together

Seto men and women in national costumes.  
Photo by Jassu Hertsmann



a workbook. They're creating materials in English, introducing the neighbourhood.

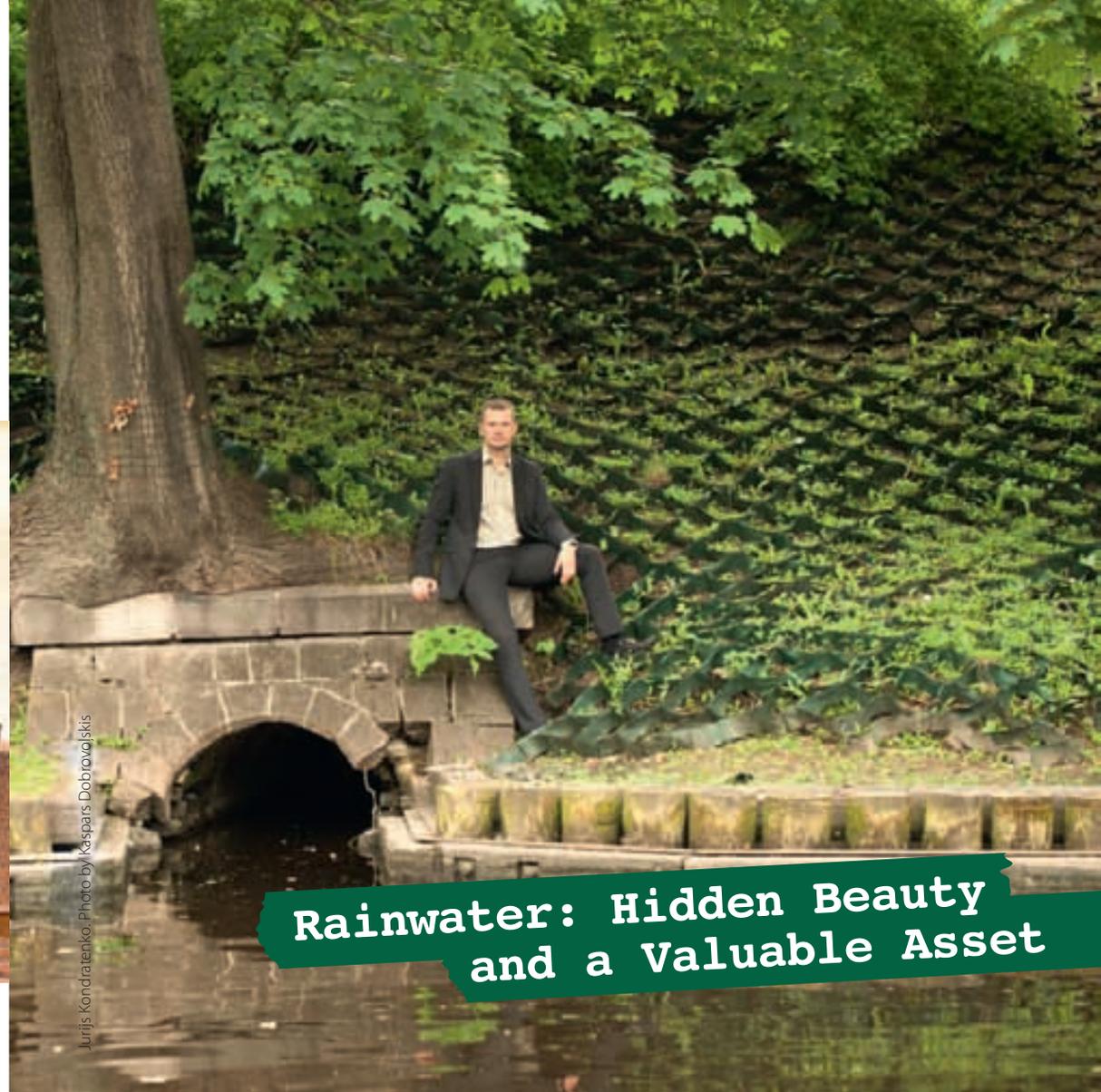
Meanwhile, there are still several meetings ahead. In the summer of 2014, a joint camp for seto and suiti children is much anticipated. They will visit each other's big events: suiti singers have been invited to participate on Seto Kingom Day and in return, representatives of the seto culture will visit the big Micaelmas Day fair and festival in Alsunga in September. Setos will also be participating in the international bourdon song festival in June. Their co-operation will last until the fall of 2014.

The social and cultural co-operation of the two communities was supported by the Seto Institute, the Alsunga municipality and the Ethnic Cultural Center "Suiti" Foundation.

Anu Jõesaar



polyphonic singing = dziedāt daudz balsīgi = mitmehäälselt laulma



Jurijs Kondratenko. Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis

## Rainwater: Hidden Beauty and a Valuable Asset

## (D)rain for life

During the urbanists' summer days in August 2011, the right people came together. To be more precise, these days mark the beginning of evolving an underdeveloped area – sustainable rainwater management. “We did what we wanted to do and probably even more,” admits one of the involved – **Jurijs Kondratenko**. The works haven't been finished, and probably we need three or four more years for it to really start paying off. “To understand, learn, and share the experience in Latvia,” Jurijs reveals the main goals.

The essence of sustainable rainwater management is creation of ponds, collectors or drainage that carry rainwater away from buildings and other populated areas, as well as make the surroundings cleaner and more attractive. Rainwater management was carried out in Võru and Pärnu in Estonia, and Riga and Baldone in Latvia.

Rainwater can be changed from a nuisance to an element that adds quality and aesthetics to the city.



Of course, various preparation works were necessary before the territories were put in order – a team of various experts was established that included engineers, landscape architects, and specialists from other fields. Due to the lack of experience, not only Latvian and Estonian specialists were invited but also experts from other countries. Before starting the works, the team went outside, examined the nature, more specifically, the place where the rainwater would have to be managed. We organised joint brainstorming, we had meetings with municipalities and other potential clients to introduce them with the sustainable rainwater management system and its effects on the environment.

The biggest success story for Jurijs is the project on Skanstes Street, Riga. There was an area with accumulated water without any possibility to drain it. The capacity of the pump

station was too low and ditches were overgrown. Most likely, in the future, there will be some catchment, ponds, and a pump station. “It drains the water and looks good. We show that things can happen, and hopefully they will,” he explains optimistically.

There were also three other socially important projects. Three places in Baldone flooded after strong rain or snow – even a territory in the lower part of a slope flooded and increased the possibility of accidents. During the winter, the ice accumulated and eroded the slope. Jurijs says that the solution for Baldone was to create a pond for rainwater where people could swim. And during the winter, the pond could be used for ice skating. A similar situation was in Võru and Pärnu where **Gen Mandre** was the supervisor. There were steep streets in both places, which resulted in local floods in the lower parts of the streets. Jurijs stresses that rainwater can be changed from a nuisance to an element that adds quality and aesthetics to the city. “We form the environment that benefits from rainwater instead of becoming ruined by it,” he concludes.

“(D)rain for life” was implemented by the Latvian Association of Spatial Planners in cooperation with Estonian University of Life Sciences and Society Technologies Foundation.

Kaspars Ģermanis

rain = lietus = vihm



The Estonian and Latvian state border is going through a change both in language and sign systems, but nature knows no boundaries. The Gulf of Riga is an area where co-operation between Estonian and Latvian scientists is definitely required.

“We had to find a way to erase the border between the two countries,” **Urmas Raudsepp** from the Marine Systems Institute at the Tallinn University of Technology briefly describes the aim of Gorwind.

How to organise co-operation between Estonians and Latvians to benefit both? How to find a common language between two neighbours so different? How to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings that would make working together, if not impossible, then at least difficult? Those who are now involved in the joint effort know answers to all those questions and can show impressive scientific results to prove it.

To create a uniform database on the natural territory jointly owned by Estonia and Latvia, it must be intensely observed, with the results entered into the information database.

By now, we have sufficient data on sea breeze distribution and ice conditions, seal and bird habitats and flight corridors over the Gulf of Riga. People's attitude towards wind parks and their possible economical outcome has also been researched in the region of the Gulf of Riga. That data has been made available to future wind park developers, local municipalities and decision-makers, as well as existing assessors of the environmental impact of existing wind parks.

Urmas Raudsepp believes that the key to successful co-operation is an ambitious and clear goal. **Ain Kull**, the senior research fellow of the Institute of Geography at the University of Tartu, adds that smooth co-operation also requires constant communication. While the term “co-operation” sometimes ends up being just a word on paper, that wasn't the case with Gorwind. People coming together from both sides of the gulf shared a similar world view and were true professionals. Numerous Skype conferences, e-mails and meetings made the information exchange easy and smooth.

**The Gulf of Riga is an area where co-operation between Estonian and Latvian scientists is definitely required.**

## Erasing State Borders



Estonian and Latvian scientists both benefited from the project. Ain Kull is confident that their success wasn't just a coincidence: "When choosing partners, we already knew that we would have to complement each other, if necessary." For example, Estonians could help their neighbours become better nature observers and in return, Latvians provided some good hints on data processing. Gorwind has concluded, but the co-operation between two countries will continue.

Gorwind was supported by the Marine Systems Institute at the Tallinn University of Technology, the Estonian Fund for Nature, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology and the University of Tartu, and the University of Latvia.

Anna-Liisa Reppo

wind = vējš = tuul



Joint Robots  
Will Be Smarter

Jānis Grundšpenķis. Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis



are equipped with sensors that allow the robots who are linked in one system to carry out specific functions depending on the task at hand. But a good sensor that would serve as human ears, eyes and nose costs ten times more than the robot itself. "Our challenge is to find a balance between the costs of the robot and the sensors," the professor points out.

**Robots send signals to one another and exchange information, can help if other robots get damaged.**

**Tiits Roosma** and **Alvo Aablo**, the study programme in Tartu also specialises in intelligent robotic systems. There is only a step left before the student exchange can begin.

Along with it, a system that popularises the ideas of natural sciences was created. Seminars on simple construction of robots were organised in 12 Latvian and 12 Estonian schools. In the end, pupils entered a competition where they built sumo robots and then put them to test. "Children saw the things they can create, and the best of them

One may ask: Is it possible to combine artificial intellect and sumo robots built by students? Easily! **Jānis Grundspeķis**, professor of the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology at Riga Technical University, says that students of the RTU study programme Intelligent Robotic Systems have been tinkering with robots and solving artificial intellect problems for several years.

Robots don't communicate in human language but send signals to one another and exchange information, as well as can help if other robots get damaged. They

"However, we worried about the Estonians detachment and whether they would be interested in our proposal a few years ago, when RTU offered the University of Tartu to create a joint study programme that would specialise in this," J. Grundspeķis remembers — the scientists in Tartu were more involved in creating lego robots that require already manufactured components. The scientists at RTU, on the contrary, built sumo robots themselves. Now, thanks to the interest of our partners

enjoyed the victory prize," the scientist stresses.

The third good thing that was created because of the cooperation between Latvians and Estonians is the establishment of Demo Centre in the premises of the IT Cluster in Riga, as well as in Tartu and Ventspils. Head of the Latvian IT Cluster **Lilita Sparāne** explains that Riga IT Cluster has been visited by 1,600 people from 26 countries, including students, pupils, and professionals from many fields, in a very short period of time. That is one step closer towards the cooperation of Latvian and Estonian universities in the future.



"ICT DCNet" has been jointly implemented by Riga Technical University, Latvian IT Cluster, University of Tartu, Tartu Science Park, and Ventspils High Technology Park.

Ģirts Kondrāts

robot = robots = robot

In the field of biotechnology, Estonian and Latvian companies and scientists often compete with each other, but there are also projects which involve companies and scientists from both countries and thrive on their co-operation.

That was the goal in 2010, when a year and a half long counselling and training series for Estonian and Latvian scientists and companies active in the field of natural sciences was begun. Co-operation took place between large technology-heavy institutions like the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia, the Latvian Technology Park and the Business Innovation Centre of the Latvian Electronic Industry.

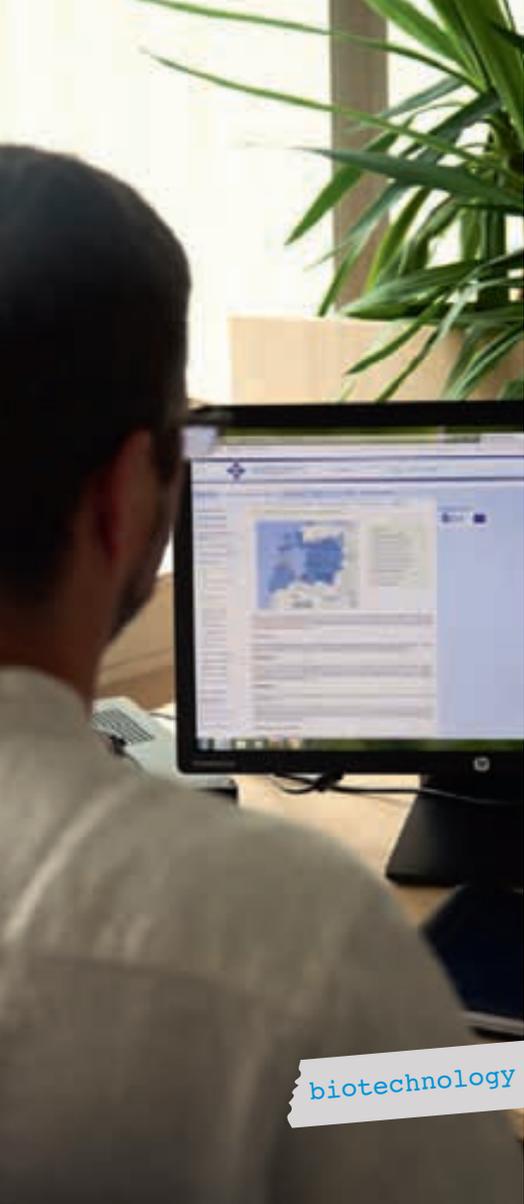
At that time, **Argo Soon**, a consultant at the Estonian Research Council, worked for the Archimedes Foundation, also one of the organisers of the collaboration. "Our biggest and most labour-intensive task was creating a catalogue listing all Estonian and Latvian scientists and companies working in the field of biotechnology," Argo Soon says. He remembers that it was not an easy task, as some of the companies were difficult to reach. In the long run, this actually helped with the final result: they created a virtual network, including profiles and descriptions, providing a better picture on everyone active in the field both in Estonia and Latvia, and allowing companies to research and contact each other.

But to make scientists and entrepreneurs meet eye-to-eye, training and informative events in Tartu, Riga and in border regions were also held. Scientists and students had the chance to participate in exchange programs and to create a direct contact between companies. They also created practical web materials on how to do business in neighbouring countries. For example, a handbook explaining intellectual property in Estonian and Latvian legislation was created. Both Latvians and Estonians had a consultant teaching them tricks of operation in the neighbouring market, starting from simple rules for founding a company and navigating the tax system, and ending with ways to find investments for the company.

**Margit Ilves**, one of the organisers and the head of the BioMed foundation belonging to the Tartu Biotechnology Park, says that, as there are strict confidentiality rules in

**This information block needs to be broken somehow – we still need to figure out how that can be done.**

**Sharing the Secrets  
of Life**



biotechnology and the medical industry, she hasn't received any feedback on whether the co-operation actually resulted in any specific contracts. "But I have heard that students and participants of the scientist exchange program, who visited such companies, were pleased with their experience."

"It became evident that many biotechnology companies from both sides of the border had already formed strong bonds," praises Argo Soon, who believes such ventures are definitely worth repeating in the future. "We're somewhat limited by the old problem, where companies and science groups want to receive information in time but are not very eager to share their own contacts," Soon adds. "This information block needs to be broken somehow - we still need to figure out how that can be done."

Maybe the block will start to give way after the next joint meeting.

BioBoostBusiness was brought to life by the University of Tartu, the University of Latvia, the Latvian Technology Park and the Business Innovation Centre of the Latvian Electronic Industry.

Anu Jõesaar

biotechnology = biotehnoloģija = biotehnoloogia



Uldis Saulitis. Photo by Andris Arhomkin

Celebration of Wetlands



The bog probe looks like a big birch sap drill. It provides the information about the age of the bog and how thick the layer of peat is. "The probe was a long awaited dream come true," **Baiba Pavloviča** from Gauja National Park says. Now it has finally happened. Guide **Anda Andrušaitė** has noticed that during excursions led by her colleague **Uldis Saulītis** an unusual silence sets in when the probe is put to use. "One thing is to tell someone that the bog is very old and there is peat beneath us, but when the probe actually shows that the peat is very deep, the group cannot stop watching."

The tourists are amazed during excursions led by Anda as well. For example, at a night hike where children from Estonia visited a camp near the Gauja. When silently moving along the river, children heard, "Slush, slush!" As if someone was hitting water with a paddle. It was a beaver hitting the water with its tail. "That

was the most frequently mentioned experience in our questionnaire about the most interesting thing that happened during the camp. Many knew how a beaver looks but they hadn't seen one in real life," Anda says.

Estonians welcomed Latvians in their park during the winter. "I was very delighted to spend the time with my family because usually these camps are only for children," says **Ieva Gaile**, teacher and mother of three daughters. She met many other families and got a lot of information about animal footprints in snow. She still uses the games learned in Estonia in her job.

The guide Anda says that the best thing for her was a new experience in making excursion worksheets. Estonians have made them usable for several times — they are laminated and can be written on with markers. "It is clever. Green. However, I didn't use this idea because I wouldn't be able to gather the worksheets and

clean them after an activity." During the excursions led by Anda, children work in pairs of two and write down the things they find. This way they learn to cooperate. A good tool is the pocket-size plant identifier with the information on the most common plants and animals. For example, children can now find water-plantain in every excursion.

Wetlands near Gauja have been treated with the utmost respect. There is a fairy-tale book about the wetlands "Adventures of Kalli and Modris in Wetlands," an exhibition on the wetlands has visited many regions, and even a board game and a DVD about bats has been created.

"Back to Nature" was implemented by Tartu Environmental Education Centre in cooperation with Estonian Environmental Board, Gauja National Park Foundation, Nature Conservation Agency, Ķemeri National Park, and Peipsi Centre for Transboundary Cooperation.

Ieva Alberte

national park = nacionālais parks = rahvuspark  
bog = purvs = raba



## Co-operation Helps Produce an Antiviral Medicine

EstLat Pharma

The products of the Latvian pharmaceutical company Grindeks are also known amongst Estonians. However, few probably know that, in 2011, one of the most successful companies in the Baltic States, and the owner of the Tallinn Pharmaceutical Plant, started a collaboration with the science-heavy Tartu-based small company TBD-Biodiscovery.

Grindeks was interested in TBD-Biodiscovery's options for creating the active agent for the antiviral medicine rimantadine. "The active agent is the main component of the drug. In addition, one pill consists of additives, fillers and colorants," **Oleg Lebedev**, a chemist and the assistant manager of TBD-Biodiscovery's development manager, explains. "Grindeks had all the means for manufacturing such pills on their own, but they were interested in buying the active agent, as their own laboratories and production lines were already very busy. Instead of building an additional plant, it was thought to be more useful to find a partner who would be able to produce it and sell it." TBD-Biodiscovery had the chance to invest into testing production of the rimantadine active agent with the support of an Estonian-Latvian program.

By now, TBD-Biodiscovery owns the technology necessary for producing the active agent, and it has also been registered with the Estonian State Agency of Medicines. "We are now researching the active agent of the antiviral medicine to prove its stability," Lebedev says. "After it has passed all the stability tests, we will be ready to enter the pharmaceutical market: we will provide the active agent, and Grindeks will produce the pills."

The head of the Grindeks research laboratory of active pharmaceutical ingredients, a professor in chemistry and project manager for Grindeks – **Janis Jaunbergs** – is very happy with the co-operation. "Our co-operation was based on mutual interest, respect and synergy, born when TBD-Biodiscovery and Grindeks joined their strengths. TBD has a separate laboratory and an enthusiastic collective, while Grindeks has strong administrative experience required for operating on the strictly regulated drug market. We used TBD for creating the drug, and in return, they received supervision, professional skills and knowledge as well as practical help for stepping into the pharmaceutical trade."

Instead of building an additional plant, it was thought to be more useful to find a partner who would be able to produce it and sell it.

Oleg Lebedev with his colleague.  
Photo by Jassu Hertsmann



The co-operation in question was also a real touchstone for the partnership. As it turned out to be efficient, the partners have launched an additional two joint projects, and have multiple ideas in development. “Grindeks is doing well,” Oleg Lebedev assures. “And that is thanks to EstLat Pharma, which would have been difficult to carry out without much-needed support.”

Janis Jaunbergs mentions that Grindeks and TBD-Biodiscovery already have a contract for the next, remarkably larger order. “TBD-Biodiscovery has already manufactured the active agent of another medicine in accordance with Grindeks technologies. We are actively planning new ventures. EstLat Pharma was only the first step; our co-operation is continuing and expanding. It is supported by a favourable geographical location, a common cultural background, flexibility and quality products provided by TBD-Biodiscovery.”

EstLat Pharma was founded on the co-operation of TBD-Biodiscovery and Grindeks.

medicine = zāles = ravim

Tiia Kõnussaar



Majja Rozīte. Photo by Andris Arhomkin

**Dancing and Singing  
on Both Sides of the Border**

## Cultural Cooperation for Intermediates

An old friendship can develop into a practical cooperation — a good example is the cooperation of five parishes in the border area of Latvia and Estonia. Song, dance and folk ensembles from Ziemei, Veclaicene and Mārkalne parishes in Latvia and Haanja and Rauga parishes in Estonia have been visiting different places in Latvia and Estonia to perform their acts for many years. **Maija Rozīte**, Head of Veclaicene Culture House, and **Ilze Biedriņa**, director of women's choir in Ziemei and Mārkalne, explain that the cooperation between Estonians and Latvians is self-evident and non-negotiable.



**We organise all of our concerts together. They want to work together and rely on us. We have earned the Estonian trust.**

However, a new chapter in this cooperation has been made quite recently due to changes in culture houses, ensembles, and a completely new experience. The culture houses were renovated and the old buildings suddenly acquired new features. They have new windows, a new stage, a new floor and curtains in the hall, as well as a foyer and restrooms. As for the ensembles, they purchased new folk costumes and went to perform to Finland: Helsinki, Tampere, and Vesilahti. There

the Latvian and Estonian ensembles acquired skills in culture management. "There were many people who went to Finland — and they all gained a lot," Maija points out. There were 30 people from each group — 150 in total. Finland was visited by a song ensemble from Veclaicene, a folk ensemble from Ziemei, a joint women's choral ensemble from

Mārkalne and Ziemei, and two dance ensembles from Estonia.

The mutual cooperation between the ensembles of the two countries brought some new things to the table as well. For example, Veclaicene organised the Estonian Day, Ziemei organised the Culture and Language Day, and Haanja organised the Suur Muumagi Festival. In addition, two seminars took place in both countries that taught new ways to strengthen the



cultural bonds between Latvia and Estonia. Ziemei ensemble also got new costumes because the previous ones were 25 years old. A new kokle was purchased as well. Ilze admits that people were very thankful for the opportunity to visit Finland and Estonia because otherwise there aren't many opportunities to see the world.

Maija says that is very easy for the ensembles from both countries to agree on joint activities because of the old friendship. "It is very easy to come to an agreement with Estonians because we all live in the border area," she says. "We organise all of our concerts together. They want to work together and rely on us. We have earned the Estonian trust." Our everyday communication is easier thanks to an Estonian who lives in Veclaicene and knows both languages.

The trip to Finland, seminars, and countless events haven't weakened the cooperation between these five groups. "Everything continues. Nothing has come to an end," Maija stresses and continues to work on new concerts and trips across Latvia and Estonia.

"Cultural Cooperation for Intermediates" was jointly implemented by Alūksne Regional Council, Haanja Municipality, and Rōuge Municipality.

Kaspars Ģermanis

“None of us was ready for the birth of a child with special needs,” says **Liina Lokko**, the mother of 13-year old **Anni** from Tartu. The story of Liina and Anni is about accepting the inevitable and finding strength from love. By now, Liina's family has expanded by two additional members - **Sverre** (10) and **Otto** (4 months). Anni Mängumaa, which she founded in Tartu, has become the centre of developing services and support systems for children with special needs and is already celebrating its 10th birthday.

Shock, denial, rage, guilt, helplessness, sadness and grief - parents who have a child with special needs go through all those emotions. They have thousands of questions. “When sitting in the doctor's cabinet, it all seems more or less clear, but after reaching home, the information starts to fade instead of sinking in,” Tiia Reimand, doctor-geneticist of the gene centre at the University of Tartu explains how such parents can get confused and scared.

Thanks to co-operation with the neighbours in 2010–2011, **Tiia Reimand** can give the parents of each of her patients a hearty and practical book set, “My Special Child”. The set includes a book, an album and a workbook. It answers such questions as: which disability does my child have? How to cope with that knowledge? How to raise such a child? Which schools are suitable for them? How to raise other children in the family? What happens when they grow up? Parents can take notes on their child's progress in their diary-workbook. Meanwhile, the two-language family picture album speaks clearly that families with children with special needs share exactly the same joy as families with healthy children. The first print-run of the book created by paediatricians, geneticists and families of two countries is already almost over. Same materials in Latvian are available online.

It all began with Anni Mängumaa, and the idea to create a connection with a similar association in Latvia, Ceribu Spārni – the Wings of Hope. “It doesn't pay off to fight alone,” Liina Lokko thinks. They held camps for families with children with special needs in Estonia and Latvia. A core group was formed, which started gathering material for

**It doesn't  
pay off  
to fight alone.**

## Families with Special Children

Helle Käand and Maarja-Mari Käand  
Photo by Jassu Heilmann

the future book. The completed work was presented at a big conference in Pärnu. "Parents could share their joys and troubles," Liina Lokko recalls. "Parents with older children have longer experience with raising children with special needs. But society is changing so rapidly that parents of the same or similar-aged children understand each other more on some topics."

Tii Reimand remembers some resourceful meetings, arguments and discussions with their Latvian colleagues from those years. It seemed that the Latvian support system was organised better - at least before the recession - while in Estonia, special medical services and additional studies were more easily accessible," the doctor recalls. Good relations between parents and doctors still stand.

The joint undertaking Tolerance was carried out by ASBL Anni Mängumaa, the Tartu University Hospital and the association Ceribu Spärni.

Anu Jõesaar

family = ģimene = perekond



Sandra Silina. Photo by Jānis Bulis

Health is the Benefit

Once a hungry logger asked a mistress if she knows how to make a tasty soup out of an axe. She answered that she doesn't but will cook it if he gives the necessary directions. The man put his axe in the pot, added water, meat, groats, potatoes, and salt. After a while, the soup was ready, and both ate it in one sitting. This Latvian tale stresses that the quick-witted one is just as important as the one who has the products but lacks the knowledge. Each separately they would have ended up with an empty stomach, but together they made everything happen!

Latvian and Estonian research groups work just like in the tale. Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital has the only stem cell research laboratory in the Baltics. However, to achieve the results to study how the biotechnological tissue materials work, it needs help from the Estonian scientists. Biologist **Ēriks Jakobsons** admits, "The Northern neighbours are perfect in the assessment of the final product. We hope we can reach the moment when burn centres and hospitals can use the materials created by us on a daily

**Uncertain cases, neurological patients, surgical consultations – it is invaluable to ensure that the patient doesn't have to wait for a long time to be diagnosed.**

basis. Our research is necessary for everyone irrespective of their nationality. We work on creating a manufacture process; Estonians helped with some specific works we couldn't manage. Their contribution was the knowledge we lacked, and in return they acquired the entire process protocol. We are the leaders in stem therapy, but professor **Sulev Kõks** and his colleagues from Tartu are excellent partners."

One of the big achievements of our cooperation is the cross-border telemedicine. The new technology gives the main players — Tartu and Riga — the opportunity to involve other regions. That is, with the help of the equipment of telemedicine we are able to broadcast surgeries that are done by highly classified doctors, and other hospitals can watch these surgeries. A surgeon thoroughly explains his actions, points out the most important aspects, he can answer questions and engage in discussions. The important message can reach a maximum amount of doctors without spending additional resources and time. **Sandra Siliņa**, head of the laboratory

at Vidzeme Hospital, values not only the possibility to learn but also the opportunity to receive consultations during video conferences. It is very important to receive a consultation if the patient cannot be transported. "For example, a neurologist in Tartu University Clinic was able to quickly diagnose Lyme disease and start a rapid treatment," Sandra remembers. "Uncertain cases, neurological patients, surgical consultations — it is invaluable to ensure that the patient doesn't have to wait for a long time to be diagnosed."

Estonians have already established a unified database to make the necessary information accessible immediately in every hospital of the country. This work is still in the Latvian agenda, but the example and a cooperative mentor is right here on the other side of the border.

Lead partner of "DELMA" was the University of Tartu, which worked in cooperation with Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University, Põlva Hospital, South Estonian Hospital, Valga Hospital, and Vidzeme Hospital.

Elita Marga



hospital = slimnīca = haigla

**Silja Otsar**, the choirmaster of the mixed choir of the Võru Kreutzwald Gymnasium, smiles when seeing her boys and girls stepping onto the stage in their beautiful national dresses. By now, joint events and training between Latvian and Estonian schools have become history, and most participants have already graduated from high-school, but the memory of heart-warming co-operation with their Latvian neighbours will last through time.

The tangible outcome was gorgeous national dresses and a fixed stage to host outdoor events and concerts. It is somewhat more difficult to measure the gain achieved from the joint singing camps and rehearsals. "We had the luck of having very good partners," project assistant **Siiri Konkso** believes. The joint project went smoothly from the start and didn't even slow down when changes in the Latvian organization team brought some difficulties. "I guess our goal was clear and noble and a motivation in itself," the assistant reveals the secret of good co-operation.

The singing partners had one more trick up their sleeve for successful co-operation - the music. It is easy to work together if you don't need to express yourself in a foreign language. Silja Otsar admits that her choir practices were mostly in Estonian. All necessary information on singing is available in the international language of music. *Piano! Forte!* Hands and feet were also of assistance. The choirmaster recalls that it didn't take long for Latvians to start understanding simpler sentences in Estonian. While it wasn't the main goal, learning each other's language was still exciting. Another valuable experience for choir singers was the opportunity to sing in a foreign language. They learned each other's national anthems. "Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm" wasn't the easiest thing for Latvians to pronounce, but Silja Otsar thinks they handled it remarkably well.

Another valuable experience for choir singers was the opportunity to sing in a foreign language.

Neighbours Singing –  
Joy and Happiness!

Singing Neighbours was born through the co-operation of the Baldone, Jūrmala, Ogre and Võru municipalities.

Anna-Liisa Reppo



piano = klavieres = klaver

Ilona Asare. Photo by Andris Arhomkin



Inspired  
for Success



"Finally we got the Estonians!" architect **Toms Kokins** victoriously announces. For many years now, he has organised summer schools for architects that attracted even Mexicans, Vietnamese, and Australians, but the Estonian architects kept to themselves. They explained that a better practice for them is to combine the acquisition of experience with visiting different places and getting to know new architecture across the borders of the Baltics. When Toms invited Estonians within "Artists for Development" that financed travel and living costs, five architects finally arrived in Cēsis.

During the summer school, several architects studied the rituals affecting the life in the city. One of them: to call upon the Thunder to prevent lightning from hitting buildings. How? The architects built a wooden house for the Thunder himself. 60 people were required to operate the installation and create the necessary sound. Everything went as planned and the whole horizon trembled. The town got an internationally constructed Thunder in honour of the Thunder Day in August.

**The bottom line —  
I have acquired  
wonderful Estonian  
friends!**

Cēsis and Tartu have similar challenges because they both are located a bit far from the capital. Latvians and Estonians have spoken about the negative trend of less and less people in the towns, but the space is the same and something should be done to use it as successfully as possible. A year later, Estonians invited Toms to a design competition for the development of a block. "We didn't win but the cooperation was great." Arriving to the congress in Riga, Estonians stayed at Toms' place. "The bottom line — I have acquired wonderful Estonian friends!"

For many artists the cooperation is still ahead. The director of Cēsis Brass Band has received an invitation from the Tartu band, has presented a song in Estonian, but keeps only a simple communication for now. "We are both trombonists. When writing to each other, we can discuss which grease is better for the instrument," **Māris Buholcs**, director of the band, says.

The project manager **Ilona Asare** thinks that the biggest achievement is the variety of cultural performances presented to the inhabitants of Cēsis with jazz players, artists, and green practices for students of music schools from Tartu. "Summer evenings were beautiful," Ilona remembers. Estonian and Latvian environmental architects from Tartu have created street furniture — flower boxes from palettes that look like a wooden mer-



ry-go-round. Latvians really enjoyed Tartu Centre for Creative Industries and the success of it, for example, renovated wooden buildings, cooperation with inhabitants, the Web page that sets the mark of how to present yourself. And, of course, the fact that the small workshops can exist independently even after the European funding. "We went home inspired," Ilona admits. There is a belief now that Cēsis, which is a lot smaller than Tartu, could also manage something like this.

"Artists for Development" was implemented by Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre in cooperation with Art and Education Centre "Trīs Krāsas" and Tartu Centre for Creative Industries.

summer school = vasaras skola = suvekool

Ieva Alberte



## Future Stars Surprise the Audience

Mart Kirotar. Photo by Betti Säe

12-year old **Mart Kirotar** is pretty famous in the small South-Estonian town of Põlva. Though young, he is already a skilled accordion player and happy to perform for an audience. After he finishes a song, you can call out: "Mart, show us the trick!" The young man will turn his instrument around and play the song "upside down", so that his right hand plays the bass keys and the left plays the melody. His teacher at the Põlva School of Music, **Heino Tartes**, says that for a young musician, he performs this old accordion player's trick with great mastery. Mart remains humble and says that, with some practice, it isn't even that difficult.

The joyful accordion-boy was only ten years old when he was chosen to perform at the youth talent festival organized by Estonian Klassikaraadio and the Latvian radio program Klasika. More than 200 students from South-, West- and North-Estonian schools of music performed in two Radio Classics concerts, the first on the 12th of January, 2013 in the Riga Radio tower and the second on the 15th of February, at the Viljandi Traditional Music Center. Mart was one of the youngest participants in Riga. It was also his first foreign performance. "Latvian girls in their national dresses were standing in line to take pictures with Mart," his mother **Lea Kirotar** recalls with a smile.

During both concerts, future stars impressed the audience with their masterful and strong performances. The stage held several singers and ensembles, for example a handbell ensemble, a traditional music ensemble and vocalists. "As Estonia was represented by music school students from rural areas, not Tallinn, their high skills were a pleasant surprise for all of us," the chief editor of Klasika, Gunda Vaivode, told ETV News after the concert in Riga. "I think Latvian children performed more emotionally, they were fun to watch," Mart gives praise to his neighbours in return.

For the future stars, the festival wasn't just a concert trip. Mart could feel like a true musician, as he experienced so many new things before and after his performance.

**In Riga, Mart gave his first television interview. His concert performance was broadcast on radio in two countries.**



For example, he made his first studio recording for the candidate pool. In Riga, the boy gave his first television interview. His concert performance was broadcast on radio in two countries, and the recording has already collected several hundred views on YouTube. All of these emotions and excitement came to life back home, when the boy put on his yellow T-shirt, decorated by a picture of a flute player. Too bad he's already getting too big for the shirt.

Estonian and Latvian languages are different, but our musical tastes are similar, the chief editor of ERR Klassikaraadio **Tiiateder** briefly summarized the year of co-operation. The Radio Classics concert series turned into a music event lasting an entire season, where neighbours mutually introduced their musical projects and young talents. Though the party is over by now, communication still continues and will hopefully result in new joint music events.

Radio Classics was brought to life in the co-operation of Latvian Radio and Estonian Public Broadcasting.

classic = klasika = klassika

Anu Jõesaar

Aelita Žučkova with students.  
Photo by Andris Arhomkin

## Around One Table and Communicating with Signs



Both Gaisma Special Boarding School and Võru Järve School is home for children with special needs. The speciality of schools and the wish to manage something new were the two main reasons both schools started their cooperation.

**Aelita Žučkova** is one of the teachers at Gaisma Special Boarding School and one of the authors of a book about signs used for communication in everyday life. Since the book was published in both Latvian and Estonian, the children were able not only to tell adults what they want and think, but also to communicate with children from the neighbouring country. “Both can sit at the same table and communicate,” **Vita Felsberga**, Principal of Gaisma Special Boarding School, shares her experience about the communication of Estonian and Latvian children. This is the way the child can learn self-help skills, knows how to communicate, look after himself of herself and what to do in a certain environment.

**Children speaking two languages met – neighbouring children that could joke around, play, and understand that they aren’t alone in this world.**

There is almost no text in the book — only 34 internationally approved symbols or pictograms with explanations. “Children who need this book find it difficult to understand abstract things,” Vita explains.

Now this book is an educating material that is approved in Latvia and used by several schools from both neighbouring countries. The learning material has been published in 1,500 copies.

The book was only one form of communication. We visited each other, and not only children and teachers were involved but also parents. About 90 children visited Estonia, and Latvia was visited by about 60 children. The principal and teacher say that the children became more relaxed and open during these trips. “Children speaking two languages met – neighbouring children that could joke around, play, and understand that they aren’t alone in this world,” Vita explains. These activities were important to parents as well – they understood that there are more parents with such children. They understood that they can travel with their children further than they had thought.

The new experience was acquired through seemingly mundane activities. For example, Estonian children visited the Latvian Zoo, saw Jūrmala, Old Riga, took different



trams and trolleybuses than in Võru, as well as went to Skrīveri. The children took part in workshops as well. “These simple things were something new for them,” the principal explains.

She doesn't hide that she has plans to cooperate with another Estonian school. The main goal is to create new educational materials because the children need more skills to live in the society. Vita stresses that she especially wants to show children the things that characterise Latvia and Estonia. “We want to sing, dance and play Latvia and Estonia,” because many national culture values, for example, *Līgo* and *Metēņi*, fade away due to globalisation.

“Easy Together” was jointly implemented by Võru Järve School and Gaisma Special Boarding School.

Kaspars Ģermanis

Neighbours tend to be competitive, but sometimes you can still come to a surprising conclusion - there is a great nation living right next to you.

Four years ago, forty representatives of the Põlva municipality and tourism entrepreneurs climbed the biggest hill in Latvia - Gaiziņkalns, with its highest point standing 311,6 meters above sea level. Their hosts from the Madona municipality treated the guests with pie and coffee, shared local legends and cracked some jokes: "If we add some meters to our mountain, we can beat the Estonians."

Estonians know that their Suur Munamägi is the highest hill (318 m) in the Baltic States and are convinced that Estonia also bests Latvia in other areas. The recession and administrative reform has made the situation in the neighbouring country difficult. Latvians have been honest about their troubles, but instead of complaining, they showed their guests the local sights, treated them to a plentiful feast and took them to the sauna to whisk them with medicinal herbs. "We were surprised at how open and warm Latvians are. It was amazing to see how they market their tourism objects. Both entrepreneurs and officials care deeply about their community and are ready to work without counting the hours," **Mari-Riina Terna**, the head development specialist of Põlva municipality, says.

**lia Timmi**, the hostess of the Taevaskoja Salamaa holiday centre, marvelled at gracious manors in Latvia. One of the mansions, a castle with glorious towers, had a wide selection of rooms, each showing its individual style. "They were extremely cute and a good example of how hotel rooms can each look different. I was assured that you should follow your own vision." This is why each room in her own vacation home also has a special look, introducing the history of Taevaskoja.

In return, Latvians took an example from the Mammaste health sports centre and started building their own artificial snow system. The young people visited each other on



"We're the same,  
we have similar  
songs and jokes."

Who Can Go  
Higher?



ski tracks and participated in competitions. Last year's Estonian cross-country champion in the 5 km skating style, Marimal Tilk, says that Estonian youth athletes definitely came to like Madona. "They had cosy cabins where they could put on rollers and immediately head to the tracks."

The dominant symbol of conferences, investments and general co-operation was most likely the trip that ended with a singing contest. One evening, when Estonians were dining in Madona, the owner of the pub, a great fan of Estonia, sat at their table and took up an Estonian song. The host of Metsavenna farm, Meelis Mõttus, replied with a Latvian song. Meelis is used to cooperating with Latvians, as his farm is located less than one kilometre from Latvia. Latvians are creating a hydro energy solution for his farm, and occasionally go sledding on the local hill. "We're the same, we have similar songs and jokes," the farmer says. But who won the unexpected singing competition? Of course, it was friendship.

This project in Active Tourism – attractive features of Madona and Põlva - was carried out by the municipalities of Madona and Põlva.

Made Laas

Great Munamägi =  
Lielais Munamēģis =  
Suur Munamägi



To Look  
Over the Border

Aiva Logina. Photo by Andris Atmokin



Madona is a place where operator of Vidzeme Television **Kārlis Kumsārs** and people who think similarly live. They are young, creative people who are interested in photography, making videos and journalism. "A few years ago we found out about Lāhte Gymnasium in Tartu County that has a special media class, and we have a school in Madona and young people that are interested in modern media. That was the moment we understood that we can get further only if we take a look across the Latvian border in the Northern direction. Madona Regional Council and Tartu County

Council found a common language very quickly," **Aiva Logina** from Vidzeme Television remembers. As a result, the pupils of Madona Gymnasium and Madona Secondary School No. 1 acquired computers, a video camera, and editing equipment in order to learn to make video reviews, for example, clips about tourism opportunities around Madona.

"We, inhabitants of Madona, met young people from Lāhte. While in Estonia, we visited the TV3 studio and were present during the shooting of a live musical show. We communicated in English and were really happy about the amazing experience. We also learned a few words in Estonian, and Estonians were thrilled to learn some words in Latvian. It turns out that Latvians enjoy counting in Estonian, whereas Estonians love to say the word *saldējums*, Kārlis Kumsārs, teacher of media class in Madona, shares his experience. But sometimes laughter leads to some very serious things. That was the case when we visited

the Baltic Film and Media School in Tallinn for the first time — two boys from Madona enjoyed the school so much that they started to study there. One of the Estonian girls fell in love with Latvia, and now she studies at Valmiera Secondary School, Aiva points out.

We have also come to other conclusions when working together in creative workshops. And not only that the Latvians are known by the singer **Lauris**

**It turns out that Latvians enjoy counting in Estonian, whereas Estonians love to say the word *saldējums*.**

**Reiniks.** The joint benefit is the knowledge, but everyone has their strong points: Estonians focus on journalism, whereas Latvians — on photography and video equipment for such technical works as framing, lighting, and directing. We must admit the obvious — knowledge can be acquire either by learning at school or by practical work, developing one's interests outside the classroom. "Then we sometimes thought that Latvians have more creativity inside," Aiva concludes.



Of course, Madona Gymnasium would like an accredited media class, as it is in Lāhte. The most disappointing thing is that the professionals who have the know-how and who are ready to teach don't have any education in pedagogy, but at the moment it is impossible to stand in a classroom and pass your knowledge to pupils without such education. But nobody said it will be like that forever.

"MILEDU" cooperation partners: Tartu City Council and Madona Regional Council.

media = mediiji = meedia  
ice cream = saldējums = jāätis

Ģirts Kondrāts

# The Dream of a Humane City

Urbanite convention at the beach.  
Photo from the project archive

Est-Lat  
Urban Activists

When the young city visionaries met, the air was thick with inspiring ideas and the result came fast.

Estonian and Latvian urbanites got together three years ago on Kabli beach in Pärnu County. However, none of the one hundred participants were on the shore of the Gulf of Riga to enjoy nature, but to discuss creation of the city of their dreams. Only a year earlier, geographers, landscape architects and other interested parties had met and decided to turn their focus to Latvia. In Kabli, they discovered that many similar problems were shared: car-focused city planning already cast aside in welfare states in 1970-1980, hassling with municipalities and the low courage and interest of citizens to improve their living environment.

Latvians admire Estonian urban associations that try to co-operate with local municipalities. Latvia doesn't have many such non-governmental organisations, and they are still trying to prove themselves in the eyes of developers and officials.

"We got lots of fresh ideas in Kabli and understood that Latvians and Estonians have similar ideas about developing the city environment. We just need to start working on bringing our best ideas to life," says the head of Urban Lab, **Teele Pehk**.

The most urgent idea in these summer days was the creation of the Baltics Urban Thematics Institute and a joint web platform. Most inspiring were the ideas to create a guerrilla game area, publish an architecture- and city-themed book for children, develop urban gardening, reuse rain water and map the wastelands. "Our biggest achievement was the creation of our little brother in Riga, the Urban Institute, with which we are in tight co-operation," says Pehk.

**Jonas Büchel**, the founder of Urban Institute, thinks their biggest success was creating the network of Baltic urbanites. "The baby called Urban Action was born. We're building the house like a small urban garden, our small and happy greenery, where we can

We need to work with good ideas and support the kind of urban culture in the Baltic States that would include even excluded citizens and listen to their dreams about a better city.

relax and exchange ideas. This is the playground for our Baltic urbanism," Büchel wrote in the newsletter U, for urbanites (September 2011).



Half a year after these summer days, Estonians travelled to Riga and reviewed its most creative quarters and active citizens. A year later, an Estonian-Latvian urbanite convention was held, and since that moment, they've been aiming to meet at least once a year. "Meetings like that are definitely necessary. We want to advance the unity between Baltic urbanites and if necessary, stand up together and come up with new solutions," recalls Teele Pehk.

Jonas Büchel adds that while one dream has already been fulfilled, things must keep moving forward. "We need to work with good ideas and support the kind of urban culture in the Baltic States that includes even excluded citizens, and we must listen to their dreams about a better city."

The development of the cityscape was supported by the Estonian Urban Lab and Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association.

Made Laas

town = pilsēta = linn

Time to Open  
the Borders for Real!



Dagnija Feldhūne with students.  
Photo by Andris Arhomiņš

There are ten coins arranged in a shape of pyramid on the table. Four coins make up the base, the next line consists of three coins, then two, and on the top there is one coin. Only three coins are allowed to be moved in order to turn the sharp end of the pyramid the opposite direction. At first, almost everyone says that it is impossible because at least five coins need to be moved. However, if you think outside the box, the pyramid can be changed within the given number of moves. A similar result can be achieved by those who are ready to erase the borders that are set out by provincial thinking — opportunities for work, education, and cooperation are right here, within a reach. Travelling to other countries for the search of a better life has gone out of fashion, now we are looking towards the Nordic neighbours.



**Elita Uzulēna**, representative of the Latvian Community Initiative Foundation, explains, “Young people from Smiltene and Naukšēni will cooperate with the Estonian youth from Varstu and Võru aged fifteen to twenty. The locals can use their skills and knowledge by creating strong cross-border bonds. A while ago, rural areas further from Riga were closed areas, but you just need to look in a different direction, for example,

towards Estonia. If you drive, the road might be a bit longer, but on foot we are very close! Enough with sitting alone in the corner, let’s open the borders for real!”

Latvians will learn Estonian and Estonians will learn Latvian in special camps. These new skills will be put at test when communicating with their peers in making a film — stories about themselves. They will learn to shoot, edit, use various audio-visual technical tricks in order, for example, for the Latvian and Estonian co-production amateur film “Is it Easy for the Youth to Live in the Countryside?” to hit the screen. They will be able to try and create a motivated team with no weakest link.

**Dagnija Feldhūne**, teacher at Smiltene Gymnasium, says, “Sharing experience and innovative knowledge doubles the amount of useful skills on each side of the border. The youth will want to stay in the countryside when they see the successful entrepreneurship in remote areas. And the process of making friends will let the cooperation grow and become more serious. In addition, it is nice to spend some time together — relax, sing, and dance. A while ago, when the students of Smiltene Gymnasium and Estonian youngsters met each other, it was clear that they are clearly interested in each other and want to stick together!”

“Youth for Synergy” was implemented by the Latvian Community Initiative Foundation, Naukšēni Regional Council, Parksepa Secondary School, Smiltenes Gymnasium, and Varstu Secondary School.

**Travelling to other countries for the search of a better life has gone out of fashion, now we are looking towards the Nordic neighbours.**

Elita Marga

*innovative = inovatīvs = innovatīvne  
knowledge = zināšanas = teadmised*

**Raivo Rõõm** from the orienteering club Ilves started taking his children - 17-year-old Rimo, 14-year-old Andres and 10-year-old Birgit - to competitions as soon as they were toddlers. "Children need experiences. Latvia was a totally new territory, nearby and cheaper to visit than Finland or Sweden," says Raivo, who participates with both his family and students in summer- and winter orienteering on both sides of the border.

The Est-O-Lat League, born through the co-operation of Estonian and Latvian orienteering associations, was the base for competitions, teaching Estonian and Latvian children orienteering and drawing orienteering maps for schools. 15 schools from nine counties in South- and Southeastern-Estonia, Lääne County, Pärnu County, Saare- and Hiiu County were chosen for these events.

"Our co-operation with Latvians was very tight," local project manager **Markus Puusepp** recalls. "Latvians helped us in our schools and Estonians in Latvia - one out of three trainers was always from another country." School children were introduced to orienteering as sports, maps and symbols. After going through some outdoor training, each of them received a map and could participate in a competition. "Children were very eager. Maybe they weren't always the best listeners during lectures, but once they got hold of a map, they showed incredible cleverness," Markus Puusepp comments. Though orienteering was part of the physical education curriculum, there were no orienteering maps at schools participating in the project. "Our mappers went over every school's territory and later created accurate orienteering maps with a legend," says Markus Puusepp. "Those maps are now available in schools, both on paper and electronically." Altogether an area of around 110 km<sup>2</sup> was mapped.

The competitive series of the Est-O-Lat League included orienteering on foot and on bicycles in the summer and on skis during the winter. Altogether, around 12 000 competitors participated in 20 competitions. The biggest event, with 1500 participants, was held in Latvia. The biggest event in Estonia, in Võru County, Sõmerpalu, had 600 competitors. Orienteers were happy: they found fresh competition, new friends and discovered

Once children got hold of a map, they showed incredible cleverness.

It Was Fun  
to Compete  
with Neighbours

that there are equally good or even better locations for competing across the border.

Communication between Estonian and Latvian orienteering clubs has definitely improved. "The co-operation between orienteering club Ilves and the Latvian club Arona is going smoothly," says ski orienteer Raivo Rõõm. "The co-operation between Estonian and Latvian orienteering associations has definitely improved," assures **Vilnis Veļķeris**, an orienteering trainer and organiser from Alūksne on the Latvian side. "We coordinate com-



petition dates so they wouldn't overlap and always help each other during international competitions that are held in Estonia or Latvia."

Gained experience has already borne fruit: this summer, Estonia hosted the MM-championship in ski-orienteering for veterans and juniors, and EM-championships for youth. In 2017, Estonia will be the home of the world championships in orienteering running.

Est-O-Lat League events were organised by Estonian and Latvian Orienteering Associations.

lynx = lūsis = ilves

Tiia Kõnnusaar

## Visiting Neighbours with an Open Heart



Alina Cebure.  
Photo by Kaspars Dobrovolskis

## Connecting Stende and Võhma

“We, inhabitants of Stende and Võhma, are so similar,” **Aina Cebure**, administrator of Stende Sports Centre, says. Ten years ago, not everyone in Stende knew that North from Vilande there is a town called Võhma, and not everyone from Võhma knew about the



**Thanks to a joint effort, Stende now has a beautiful place for the festival in the middle of the centre but the inhabitants of Võhma have a portable stage.**

town of Stende near Talsi. Both towns have so much in common: a railway goes through both towns, people in Stende are engaged in forestry, land amelioration, and grain storage, while Võhma used to have a large meat processing plant and a candle factory. The pace of life in Kurzeme is similar to the Central Estonia.

Amazing similarities! A few years ago, mayors of both towns **Solvita Üdre** and **Avo Pöder** came to a conclusion that both towns lack a proper place to celebrate town festivals. When acquiring money became

an option, the inhabitants of both towns started to tackle all the questions at once — where the open air stage would be located, what design would it have. The people from Stende understood that the building will serve for generations. But they couldn't decide

whether to build in the town centre near the Town Hall or at Jānis Square where they should cut down some trees. At the same time, several families from Võhma said that the centre is noisy enough and they don't want to see an open air stage near their homes. Stende was included in Talsi Region, and that slowed the whole process even more. “Nevertheless, it all had a happy ending,” Aina Cebure remembers. Thanks to a joint effort, Stende now has a beautiful place for the festival in the middle of the centre but the inhabitants of Võhma have a portable stage.

Both towns aren't exactly side by side. Sometimes we had to think about the travel expenses when dealing with things concerning cooperation. The meetings were organised in midway to make everything fair and convenient for everyone involved. Ragana was chosen for this purpose. But in Kandava we attended joint courses where we studied public relations and developed brands for our towns.

Now that Stende is part of a bigger region, formal relations are shaped through Talsi. But the friendship that was strengthened by common interests and joint work hasn't disappeared. “Those Estonians aren't as cold as we imagined them to be,” Aina says. And it is clear why, “We, the people of Kurzeme, went to them with an open heart!”

A proof to that is the film that can be watched during celebrations and a self-made brochure-board game “A Journey from Võhma to Stende”.

Cooperation partners: Talsi Regional Council and Võhma Town Council.

Ģirts Kondrāts



**festival stage =  
svētku estrāde =  
laululava**



**Estonia-Latvia  
Programme  
in Numbers**

### Roads reconstructed



3

Total km in EE 39,1

Total km in LV 38,87

Total km of roads 77,97

LV villages along the roads 9

LV towns along the roads 6

Total number of villages along the roads 15

EE villages along the roads 2

EE towns along the roads 3

Total number of towns along the roads 5

### Rivers where some activities have been implemented



EE rivers 10

LV rivers 24

Total number of rivers 34

### Places that were built, reconstructed or where equipment was installed

EE buildings and sites 108

LV buildings and sites 140

Total number of buildings and sites 248



### Number of words in Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian dictionary

40000



### Fire and rescue personnel trained

EE fire and rescue staff 265

LV fire and rescue staff 251

Total number of fire and rescue staff 516



### Medical personnel involved

EE people 1246

LV people 405

Total number of people 1651



EE stations 4

LV stations 6

Total number of stations 10

### Lifeguard stations and rescue stations built and reconstructed

EE beaches 3

LV beaches 6

Total number of beaches 9



### Beaches improved



Boats and water vehicles in EE 2

Boats and water vehicles in LV 16

Total number of boats and water vehicles 18

Land vehicles in EE 10

Land vehicles in LV 17

Total number of land vehicles 27

### Vehicles acquired



Athletes from EE 8036

Athletes from LV 12301

Total number of athletes 20337

### Athletes involved



Sports events in EE 42

Sports events in LV 45

Total number of sports events 87

### Sports competitions and camps organized

Total duration of sports events 188 days

### Sports sites improved



Sites in EE **5**  
Sites in LV **11**

Total number of sites **16**

### Singers, dancers and musicians involved

Singers, dancers and musicians from EE **1797**

Singers, dancers and musicians from LV **1855**

Total number of singers, dancers and musicians **3652**

### Music events organized

Music events in EE **51**

Music events in LV **41**

Total number of music events **92**

Total duration of music events days **118**

### Websites created

**47**



### Total duration of all projects

**44170** days

**1454** months

**121** years

### Traffic and tourism signs placed



Traffic signs in EE **343**

Traffic signs in LV **140**

Total number of traffic signs **483**

Tourism signs in EE **892**

Tourism signs in LV **985**

Total number of tourism signs **1877**



Folk costumes in EE **115**

Folk costumes in LV **230**

Total number of folk costumes **345**

Folk costumes/performance outfits purchased

People in EE **402**

People in LV **380**

Total number of people **782**

People participating in projects addressing the people with disabilities

Women **86**

Men **31**



Number of people involved in Programme management

Total number of people **117**

Total number of people attending trainings and events



Chimney sweepers from EE **30**

Chimney sweepers from LV **9**

Total number of chimney sweepers **39**

Chimney sweepers brought together



**~100 000**

Enterprises involved **~1700**



Number of eagles' nests checked **743**

Number of eagles' nests with a web camera by the nest **8**

Number of visits to webcam sites (including people from Taiwan, Rwanda, Peru, Myanmar, Isle of Man and Brunei)

**~8 milj.**

Number of tagged seals **15**

Eagles and seals



Bus stops in EE **23**

Bus stops in LV **26**

Total number of bus stops **49**

Reconstructed bus stops

## Topics / Project Names

	ERDF Support EUR	Total Budget EUR	Page
<b>COMMUNITY COOPERATION</b>	<b>3 507 658</b>	<b>4 115 799</b>	
Alüksne–Haanja Uplands	256 670	301 964	105
Sportborder	258 058	292 740	20
Cultural Cooperation for Intermediates	271 340	319 223	173
Connecting Stende and Võhma	255 880	301 035	209
Song and Dance Festivals	85 243	100 286	68
Singing Neighbours	184 183	216 686	182
Cross Border Ball	270 242	317 931	38
Easy Together	39 338	46 280	191
Tolerance	119 376	140 443	176
Still Active	139 158	163 715	23
Friendship Through Football	41 791	49 165	32
Est-O-Lat League	128 853	151 592	206
MOTO	126 522	148 849	53
Young Sailors	129 626	152 501	35
MLEDU	41 883	49 274	197
Artists for Development	109 935	129 335	185
Est–Lat Urban Activists	43 773	51 498	200
Youth Initiatives and Cooperation	143 048	168 292	26
Hobby Slot Car Racing	28 875	33 970	56
Young, Active, Creative	110 957	130 537	90
Idea on the Border	60 670	71 377	50
Radio Classics	81 944	96 404	188
Art School Walk	122 430	144 035	74
House of Sounds	113 824	133 910	17
Seto–Suiti Renaissance	107 310	126 247	152
Cooperation for Sustainability	22 821	26 848	146
Youth for Synergy	120 563	141 839	203

Reviving Joint History	93 347	109 820	96
<b>ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	<b>4 498 292</b>	<b>5 648 059</b>	
Good Fruit	711 619	987 263	47
Protolab Network	865 062	1 017 720	99
Buy Local	399 346	469 818	11
SIB Net	461 041	542 402	44
Boost BioBusiness	188 548	221 821	164
ICT DCNet	503 998	592 938	161
Skills Centre	452 913	566 141	29
EstLat Pharma	124 071	248 142	170
DELBI	222 507	268 081	71
FoodArt	314 699	379 156	59
BaltOrgPotato	254 488	354 576	65
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>5 348 512</b>	<b>6 352 056</b>	
Back to Nature	512 931	603 449	167
Cultural Heritage	692 267	814 432	135
Demo Farm	548 787	645 631	102
Active Through Passive	237 066	278 902	138
GORWIND	1 154 304	1 358 004	158
Eagles Cross Borders	297 972	359 002	8
Green Corridor	274 776	331 055	123
Smart Gardens	384 343	463 063	84
Gauja/Koiva	718 435	865 585	78
(D)rain for life	97 631	114 860	155
Coastal and Maritime Spatial Planning	430 000	518 072	87
<b>HEALTH AND RESCUE SERVICES</b>	<b>4 975 567</b>	<b>7 492 115</b>	
Fire Safe	181 383	213 392	41
Valga–Valka Joint Rescue Capacity	1 976 501	2 325 295	117
DELMA	1 522 237	1 790 867	179
Best Teams	95 450	115 000	14
JATE	1 199 996	3 047 561	132

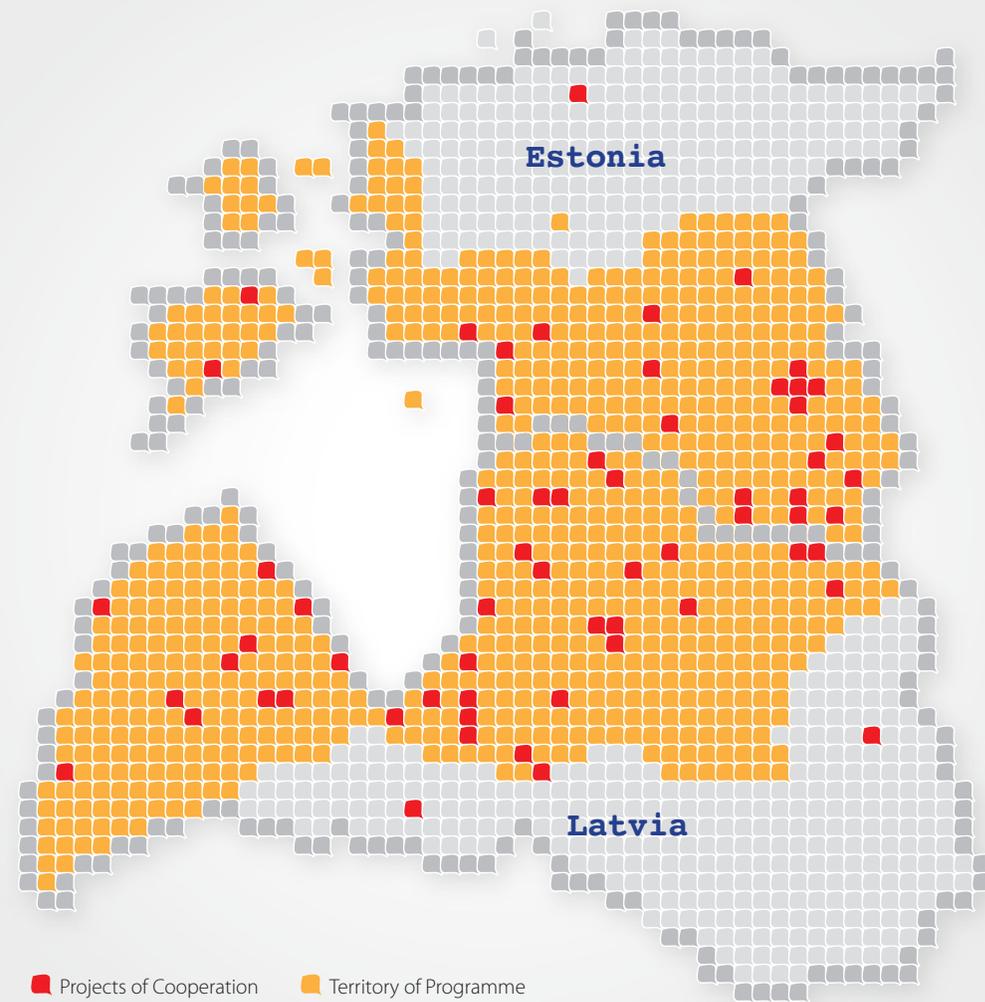
<b>TOURISM</b>	<b>6 681 641</b>	<b>7 911 782</b>	
Beach Hopping	1 590 914	1 871 664	141
Increasing Attractiveness of Valga and Valka	1 281 074	1 507 146	149
One Vacation – Two Countries	570 501	671 177	93
VisoEst by Bike	1 049 319	1 234 493	126
Active Tourism of Madona and Põlva	389 833	458 628	194
Riverways	1 800 000	2 168 675	114
<b>TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>11 531 067</b>	<b>14 438 030</b>	
Karksi-Nuia – Seda River Road	2 672 224	3 143 792	111
BayLink	1 282 047	1 756 902	108
Kilingi-Nõmme – Mazsalaca Road	2 626 802	3 164 822	81
Renovation of Valga–Valka Railway Station	399 999	481 927	129
Ape–Mõniste Road	4 200 000	5 409 759	120
Dictionary	349 995	480 828	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36 542 737</b>	<b>45 957 840</b>	

Status: July 2014

### Number of partners in supported projects

	<b>278</b>	<b>ERDF Support EUR</b>	<b>Total Budget EUR</b>
Local public authorities	107	8 320 655	9 824 874
Regional public authorities	14	1 785 641	2 128 911
Environmental bodies	22	2 804 163	3 322 593
Universities and research institutions	32	4 815 604	5 783 851
State agencies	19	13 312 511	17 849 674
Other public authorities	18	2 379 001	2 804 942
NGOs	55	2 458 860	2 910 391
Private enterprises	11	666 302	1 332 603
		36 542 737	45 957 840

Status: July 2014





## Estonia–Latvia Programme

2007–2013

### In the implementation participated:

Agne Peetersoo  
Agu Laius  
Aiga Petkevica  
Aija Prince  
Aija Romanovska  
Aita Teder  
Aive Adler  
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Aleksjs Šaforostovs  
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Unda Ozoliņa  
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