



## **Valka / Valga (Estonia/Latvia)**

**Ernests LIBIETIS**

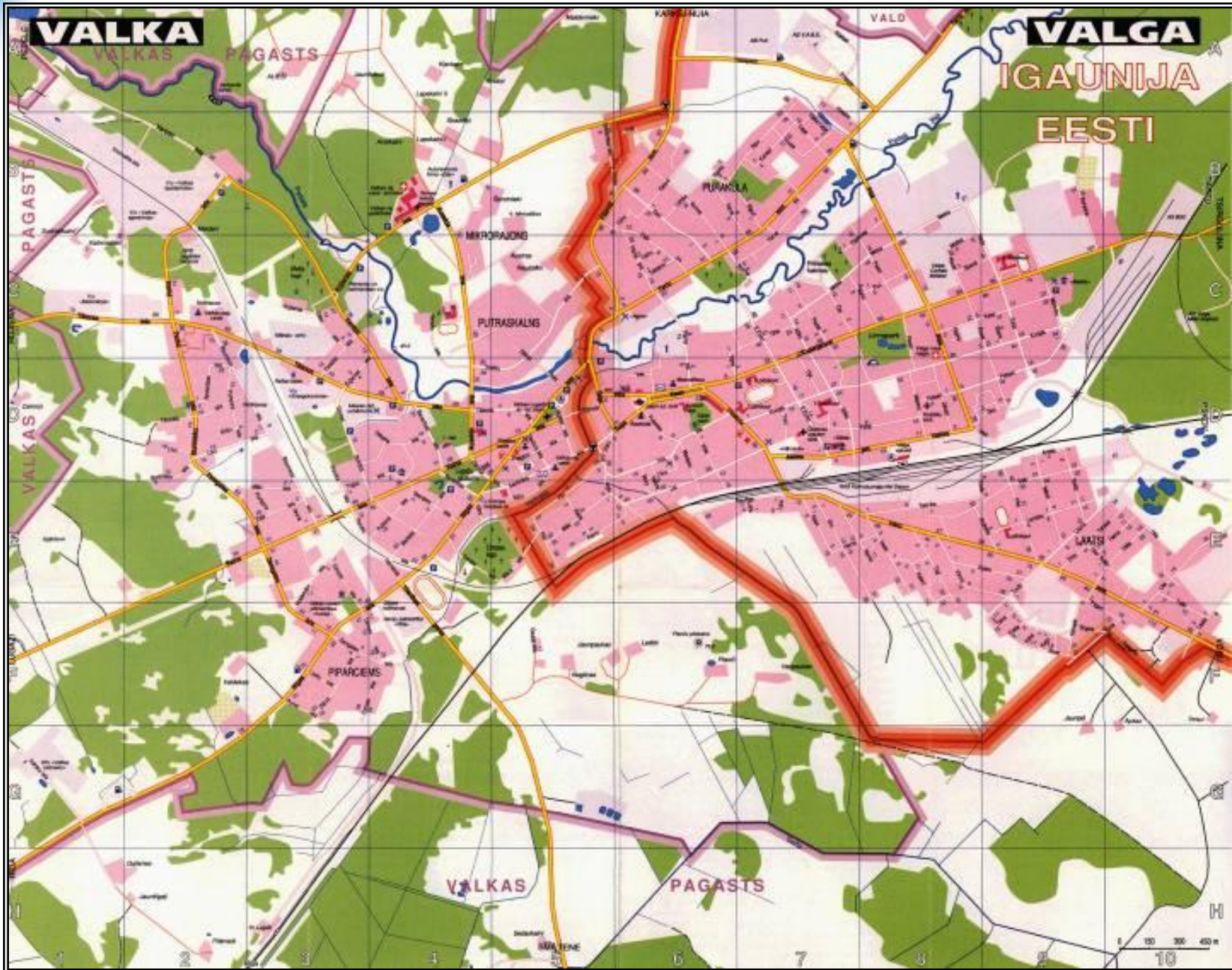
*Head of development and project department  
of the City of Valka*

# Valka / Valga 1 city 2 states



Valka - Valga





# General information

## Valka, Latvia

- Territory – 14.4 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population – 6 100
- Distance to Riga – 155 km

### National structure:

- Latvians – 67.2%
- Russians – 22.9%
- Estonians – 1.4%

## Valga, Estonia

- Territory – 16.5 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population – 13 890
- Distance to Tallinn – 245 km

### National structure:

- Estonians – 62.3%
- Russians – 27.4%
- Latvians – 2.3%

# History

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

# Why co-operation?

- To use existing resources jointly
- Town as an entirety, progressing to considerable co-operation centre
- Environment and its protection has no state borders
- Cultural diversity

# Milestones in co-operation

- Dec 1995 – the first co-operation agreement between Valga and Valka was signed
- May 2004 – joining European Union
- July 2005 – Valga – Valka joint secretariat was established
- Dec 2006 Valga-Valka became members of City Twin Association
- Dec 2007 Estonia and Latvia joining Schengen agreement

# Co-operation

## 1. Town administration

- Common development plans, Master plan
- Common marketing – logo, slogan, booklets, souvenirs, mascot, DVD, town map
- Joint secretariat for co-ordination of co-operation
- Monthly meetings of leaders of Valga and Valka municipalities

Perspective: development of common town centre and infrastructure (ice hall, cinema, tourist visitors centre, former Soviet military bunkers, improvement of border line area)



## 2. Environment and tourism

- Development of Pedeli recreation area what unites two countries
- V-V tourism and marketing strategy 2007-2016

### Perspective:

- Continuation of development of Pedeli recreation area in Valka
- Development of common marketing of the city

### 3. Education, culture, sport

- Culture – common cross-border events
- Sport – common cross-border events, meetings
- Education – common summer camps for youth, common art education
- Dec 2006 V-V common development plan in the fields of education, culture, sport

Perspective: Vocational education for Estonians, Latvians in Valga,  
higher education in Valka, opportunity at schools to study the language of the neighbouring country

## 4. Health care and safety

- Jan 2007 Valga-Valka common development plan of health care
- Co-operation projects between Valka and Valga fire-brigades

### Perspective:

- Valga hospital services for inhabitants of Valka with the same conditions (agreement between Estonia and Latvia)

## **Project “Increasing Attractiveness of Valga/Valka”**

- Financed by Estonia-Latvia Programme (2008 – 2010)
- Development of a joint tourist visitor centre and a joint ice hall (technical documentations)
- Development of abandoned former Soviet military bunkers and border line area in Valka as a tourist attraction (detail design)
- Infrastructure along the Pedele River
- Joint image of Valga-Valka (maps, mascot, souvenirs, DVD, book)

## **Project “Development of common art environment in Valka/Valga”**

- More than 30 Estonian kids attending Latvian Valka Art School
- Financed by Norwegian Financial Instrument programme “Cross-border co-operation” (2009-2010)
- Reconstruction of Valka Art School building (new classes, exhibition hall)
- Joint art and cultural education activities



*Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations*



**Paldies!  
Aitäh!**

**Welcome to**

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

**[www.valka.lv](http://www.valka.lv)**

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