

# KS' International Projects

2014 Annual Report



## What is KS' International Projects?

KS' International Projects is a part of the Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and works on cooperation projects abroad. KS' International Projects receives support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), European Economic Area (EEA) financial mechanisms, as well as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). KS' International Projects consists of five project managers. Professional expertise from KS itself and KS' members is drawn into the projects at need. The international project unit also cooperates with other relevant organisations and ministries in Norway, depending on the focus area of the project.

### EEA and Norway Grants

The EEA Grants and Norway Grants are the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to reducing economic and social disparities and to strengthening bilateral relations with 16 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe. Through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the Internal Market with the 28 EU member states. The countries also share common values and responsibilities with other European countries to promote equality of opportunity, tolerance, security, environmental sustainability and a decent standard of living for all. Funds are set aside in all beneficiary countries to support networking and foster project partnerships on initiatives of mutual interest. The EEA and Norway Grants are set up for five-year periods. For the period 2009-2014 €1.8 billion has been set aside under the Grants. The financial mechanisms are built in such a manner that there are programmes, and under the programmes there are pre-defined projects as well as open calls. For more see [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org)

KS is a Donor Programme Partner (DPP) in the area of capacity-building and institutional co-operation in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania as well as in the area of children and youth at risk in Estonia. KS is also a project partner in numerous countries under the EEA and Norway Grants.

### Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

KS has received funding for numerous cooperation projects from Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). Norway has a solid local government sector and has a lot to offer in building strong and stable local democracy in other regions with local government associations as partners. KS' International Projects have NMFA-funded projects in several European countries which are not part of the EU.

### Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

KS and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) entered into an agreement in 1996. The cooperation required KS to make active use of its Norwegian experience and competence in local government in local institutional building in countries in Eastern Africa and Latin America. The cooperation agreement stated that KS will give technical assistance as well as establish cooperation between local government institutions in Norway and in the relevant countries: A so-called Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) Programme, where KS' members were given the opportunity to cooperate with a local government in, for instance, Kenya, Tanzania or Guatemala. 2014 was the final year of this programme, and KS will explore other opportunities for such a programme.

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We hope this publication will stimulate reflection and debate on local governments' role and place in the "new global partnership"

## Foreword

Next year marks the end of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals agreed by world leaders during the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. Much has been achieved. Much, however, also remains to be done before every person obtains a life of freedom and dignity.

In the past year we have seen a growing momentum in recognition of the role of local and regional governments in formulation of, and delivery against, the new international development agenda to be expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, covering the years 2016 through 2030.

The Rio + 20 summit in 2012 lay the foundation for recognizing local governments' importance in international development in its declaration "The World We Want". This was followed up in the 2013 report from the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent People of which the Chair of United Cities and Local Governments was a member. The Synthesis Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda "The Road to Dignity by 2030" moreover states that the Sustainable Development Goals must be implemented at the local level with the full engagement of local and regional authorities.

Local governments are now about to be fully recognized as part of a "new global partnership". This is a major achievement. It is also a tremendous challenge. Local governments in a number of countries are, unfortunately, not always up to the daunting development challenges our world is facing in order to overcome poverty, manage accelerating urbanization or facing climate change. KS is – through international projects – committed to solidarity with

other local government associations, as well as contributes towards successful devolution, strengthening local government capacities and improving local governments' operational context. This in order for local governments in every country to rise to the development challenge and make significant contributions towards final formulation of and delivery against the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in 2015.

This report provides a snapshot of KS' international activities in 2014. It suggests how we operate and on which issues. It lists our partners and indicates our footprint. We hope it will stimulate reflection and debate on local governments' role and place in the "new global partnership".

Kindest regards  
Gunn Marit Helgesen  
President of KS



# Projects 2014

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Bulgaria	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Bulgarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Technical Assistance Directorate, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria	Norway Grants € 42,000 for 2014
Bulgaria	Strengthening the Capacity of the National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Bulgarian Municipalities through Cooperation with Norwegian Local Authorities	The National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Regions - NAMRB	Norway Grants € 184,465 for project period 2013 - 2014
Czech Republic	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	Union of Employers' Association. Trade Union of Health Service and Social Care	Norway Grants € 42,880 for project period 2013 - 2014
Estonia	Donor Programme Partner for Children and Youth at Risk	Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice	€ 36,000 For 2014 EEA Grants
Georgia	Effective participatory local government and regional development	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	€ 200,000 For 2014 NMFA
Guatemala	Municipal International Cooperation	Ål – Solola Stord – Comalapa Odda – Santiago Atitlan Stjørdal – Panajachel Tinn – Champerico Tromsø – Quetzaltenango	€ 15,800 per year € 23,300 per year € 11,300 per year € 17,100 per year Final year 2014 Norad
Hungary	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Hungarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	National Development Agency	Norway Grants € 62,000 for 2014
Hungary	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	TÖOSZ (Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities)	Norway Grants € 82,3930 for project period 2013 - 2014
Kenya	Municipal International Cooperation	Melhus – Taveta Porsgrunn – Kisumu Skodje – Voi	€ 21,500 € 13,600 € 12,600 Final year 2014 Norad
Kosovo	Enhancing Local Economic Development in 5 pilot municipalities eGovernment in municipalities	KS-Kosova	€ 1,875,000 for project period 2011 - 2014 NMFA
Latvia	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development in Latvia	Norway Grants € 37,000 for 2014
Latvia	Smart governance and performance improvement of Latvian municipalities	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) State Regional Development Agency in Latvia	Norway Grants € 285,650 for the entire project period 2014 - 2015
Lithuania	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Lithuanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania	Norway Grants € 38,000 for 2014

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Lithuania	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	Lithuanian Trade Union of State, Budget and Public Services. Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania.	Norway Grants € 21,778 for project period 2013-2014
Moldova	Capacity-building within CALM for local democracy in Moldova	CALM	€ 5,000 for final year 2014 NMFA
Poland	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	Association of Polish Cities	Norway Grants € 171,715 for project period 2013 - 2014
Poland	Building competences for inter-municipal and inter-sectorial cooperation as tools for local and regional development	Association of Polish Cities in cooperation with the Association of Polish Counties and the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland	EEA Grants € 230,000 for entire project period 2013 - 2015
Portugal	Sexual and moral harassment at the work place	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment and seven other Portuguese institutions	EEA grants € 127.804 for period 2014 - 2015
Romania	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	The National Agency for Civil Servants - NACS	Norway Grants € 108,396 for project period 2013 - 2014
Romania	A Green Way to Sustainable Development	The Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu	EEA Grants € 690,790 for project period 2013 - 2015
Russia	Presidential Programme: Internships for Norwegian and Russian public employees	The Presidential Academy for National Economy and Public Administration, North-West Institute, Saint Petersburg	€ 740,000 for project period 2010 - 2014 NMFA
Slovenia	Work Life Balance	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	Norway Grants € 49,600 for project period 2013 - 2015
Spain	Work Life Balance	Women's Institute Federation of Spanish Municipalities and Provinces	EEA Grants € 196,096 for project period 2013 - 2015
Tanzania	Municipal International Cooperation	Aust-Agder/Arendal – Mwanza	€ 26,000 per year Final year 2014 Norad
Uganda	Municipal International Cooperation	Ringebu - Mityana	€ 17,000 Final year 2014 Norad
Ukraine	Efficiency Networks, with an applied research component and a Local Democracy Survey conducted (2011- 2015)	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)	€ 921,200 for the project period 2011 - 2015 NMFA
Zambia	Municipal International Cooperation	Jølster – Mpulungu	€ 17,000 Final year 2014 Norad

# Promoting Social And Economic Inclusion In Europe



Foto: Marianne Gjør

## Norwegian Local Governments' Motivation for EEA and Norway Grants Project Participation

KS serves as a Donor Programme Partner for five EEA or Norway Grants programmes in five countries. In addition we partner with project promoters for a number of EEA or Norway Grants funded projects relevant to local governments in the beneficiary states. One of the main responsibilities under these agreements is for KS to bring best practice from Norway to beneficiaries, through mobilizing participation of own members.

In order to learn and to improve services to members, KS commissioned *Prosjektforum* – which is a research unit part of a Master Programme at the University of Oslo – to a study on motivation, benefits and obstacles for Norwegian local government participation in EEA and Norway Grants projects.



Questions explored were:

- Why do Norwegian local governments partner with project promoters implementing EEA or Norway Grants funded projects?
- What are the benefits for Norwegian partners from such partnerships?
- Does KS partnership facilitation meet members' needs?

The survey sampled experiences from 170 individuals representing 64 entities of which 44 were municipalities, 17 county councils and 3 inter-municipal companies who had – at one point – attended KS organised information and partnership events. 73 respondents or 43 % of the sample completed a structured questionnaire.

The study shows that main motivating factors for Norwegian local governments

for taking part in EEA or Norway Grants projects is own capacity building, networking, cultural exchange and implementation of own strategy. Participation furthermore contributes to recognition of own competencies and skills. Project partnership is perceived as valuable as it contributes to learning and provides input on how to overcome challenges at hand in the participating Norwegian local and regional government.

The key obstacles to participation were reported to be bureaucratic procedures, time-consuming processes, insufficient budgetary coverage (leading to partnering Norwegian local government picking up costs), as well as difficulties in scoping partnerships. Lack of project ownership or influence on project promoters' choices of activities was not reported to be a significant hindrance for Norwegian

participation. The number of impediments is diminishing with the Norwegian local governments' increasing experience with international partnerships.

*The benefits increase with the number of successful project partnerships a local government has been a part of.*

It is observed that KS' facilitation is perceived as more helpful and efficient by members who are successful in establishing partnerships. Local governments which have unclear expectations or strategies for partnership are less likely to benefit from

facilitation. Also, if a local government succeeds in establishing and implementing a partnership once, it tends to be much more successful the next time. The benefits increase with the number of successful project partnerships a local government has been a part of.

EEA and Norway Grants encourage strategic and long-term cooperation among public entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway on one side and 16 beneficiary countries in EU. More than half of the 150 programmes have partners from donor countries. KS has a donor programme partner role in five countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Hungary.



## Strategic Partnership through EEA and Norway Grants

Since KS entered into the Donor Programme Partner (DPP) agreement in 2011, we have experienced mutual benefits of the cooperation. The partnerships promote professional cooperation between KS and the ministries and other public institutions responsible for local and regional affairs in the beneficiary countries. KS offers input to the development of strategies as well as design of the programmes. KS and our members obtain insight into policy areas in other countries, as well as establish alliances for better cooperation with European umbrella or other relevant lobby organisations.

Once the programme is established, KS assist its partners in reviewing the programme progress. In the countries where there are open calls, KS participates in a selection committee as an advisor or as a full member.

In order to establish strategic partnerships and facilitate fruitful dialogue we have to learn from each other's best practices, challenges and innovative solutions. KS

as a programme partner facilitates study tours for the Programme Operators or relevant entities to Norway, as well as organise experience exchange seminars for the Programme Operators.

A donor programme partner is expected to be a resource in facilitating networking between the programme operator and potential project promoters and/ or project partners from the donor countries, advising on and reaching out to possible donor country project partners and advising on possible activities within the programme to strengthen the bilateral aspects. Following you can read about two countries where KS is a DPP in two different programme areas: Estonia and Latvia.

### ESTONIA

KS is DPP in Estonia for the Children and Youth at Risk Programme. In order to ensure the framework for cooperation between the Estonian programme partners, a Trilateral Agreement has been signed between the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs.



KS aids in the selection process of projects in order to support community-based crime prevention measures, reduction of drop-out rates for secondary schools, inclusion of socially excluded young people and offer incarcerated youth aftercare services. It is important to point out that project promoters pay special attention to involving minorities in the project activities – promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding and the rights of minorities. Special attention is given to implementing activities that involve youth with special needs (including those with disabilities, study difficulties, etc.) and whose mother language is not Estonian.

Under one of the predefined projects that is implemented by Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, a concept for improving the support system for children and youth at

risk has been prepared. The comparative studies of the evidence-based interventions programmes have been completed. Based on the studies conducted, two evidence-based programmes were chosen: The positive parenting programme “Incredible Years”, and one for youth with serious behavioural problems and their families, called “Multidimensional Family Therapy”.

*“From our experience it is important to have a DPP in order to share experiences and relevant contacts as well as to have an “outside” and objective view on progress related to activities. Thanks to the DPP’s input we have had contact seminars and conferences with Norwegian experts and organisations. My personal observation is that the problems related to children and youth at risk are similar in Estonia and*



*“It has been professionally very interesting to learn more about outreach youth work, inclusive education practices and other relevant topics from Norwegian experts. It has been inspirational input to daily work”*

–Gerttu Aavik,  
Programme Manager, Estonian Youth Work Centre

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–Gerttu Aavik, Programme Manager,  
Estonian Youth Work Centre

#### LATVIA

Within the framework of the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities” in the year 2014 implementation of four pre-defined projects were started. The projects are targeted at increasing institutional and human resources capacity in public, regional and local institutions responsible for regional development, by cooperating and sharing experience with similar institutions in Norway.

Within the pre-defined projects of the programme there have been 13 experience exchange visits between institutions in Latvia and in Norway. Two experience exchange visits between institutions in Latvia and in Poland have also been organised. Every project have also organised a major publicity event in order to present objectives of the projects, planned activities and expected





outcomes, as well as to popularize the Norway Grants in Latvia.

Four Norwegian institutions are involved in the implementation of the Programme at the project level – Ministry of Local Governments and Regional Development of Norway, Oppland County, Aust-Agder County, Østfold County, and KS, which is involved both at the project and at the programme level. The partners have shared their experience, knowledge and best practice examples, as well as assisted in implementation of activities not only planned within the projects, but also additional activities, for instance, representatives of Oppland County and KS participated in a measure under the Bilateral Fund dedicated to synergies between the pre-defined projects of the

programme, says Solvita Ciganska, Head of National and Foreign Support Instrument Division at the Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia.

*“KS has been a great help both at the phase of elaboration and preparation, as well as at the phase of implementation of the programme by sharing experience and knowledge, presenting proposals and generating ideas for gaining a greater benefit from the programme. Thus we find that having a Donor Programme Partner is helpful. The interesting aspect we observed during implementation of the programme is that notwithstanding considerable differences in the general level of welfare between Norway as the Donor State and Latvia as the Beneficiary*

*“Also our interest is caught by development centers in northern part of Norway – their influence on surrounding territories and development trends, especially demographical tendencies and economic advantages.”*

*–Solvita Ciganska*

*State, there are municipalities in Norway, which are experiencing the same challenges and are seeking solutions to the same problems as the municipalities in Latvia, e.g. population decline. We are interested in how Norway is planning public services in remote areas and in territories with low density of population. Also our interest is caught by development centers in northern part of Norway – their influence on surrounding territories and development trends, especially demographical tendencies and economic advantages.”*

*–Solvita Ciganska, Head of National and Foreign Support Instrument Division at the Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia.*



## Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue

Many countries in Europe today find themselves in a situation of financial and social crises, and social dialogue and tripartite dialogue may be particularly important in times of economic crises and unemployment.

Norway and the Nordic countries are characterised by small open economies, a well-developed welfare state and organised labour relations. At a time when many European countries face financial crisis, Norway and the Nordic countries have shown good results in terms of growth, employment, gender equality, competitiveness, living standards and equality in the society compared to other countries.

Nevertheless, “The Nordic model” faces a number of new challenges, both due to external changes, such as increased global competition, migration

and European integration, and internal changes related to aging and diversification of the population, as well as urbanization, and rising expectations for health, education and welfare. A core question is whether we will be able to meet these challenges by renewing institutions and instruments, without compromising the objectives.

The importance of a high quality and efficient public sector is crucial. Interaction between the three parties: the government, the employees and the workers and their representatives do, however, vary. Many countries have little tradition for effective tripartite dialogue in the public sector, and the status of municipalities as employers is often not formally established. Local government associations do – to a varied degree – take part in national tripartite negotiations.

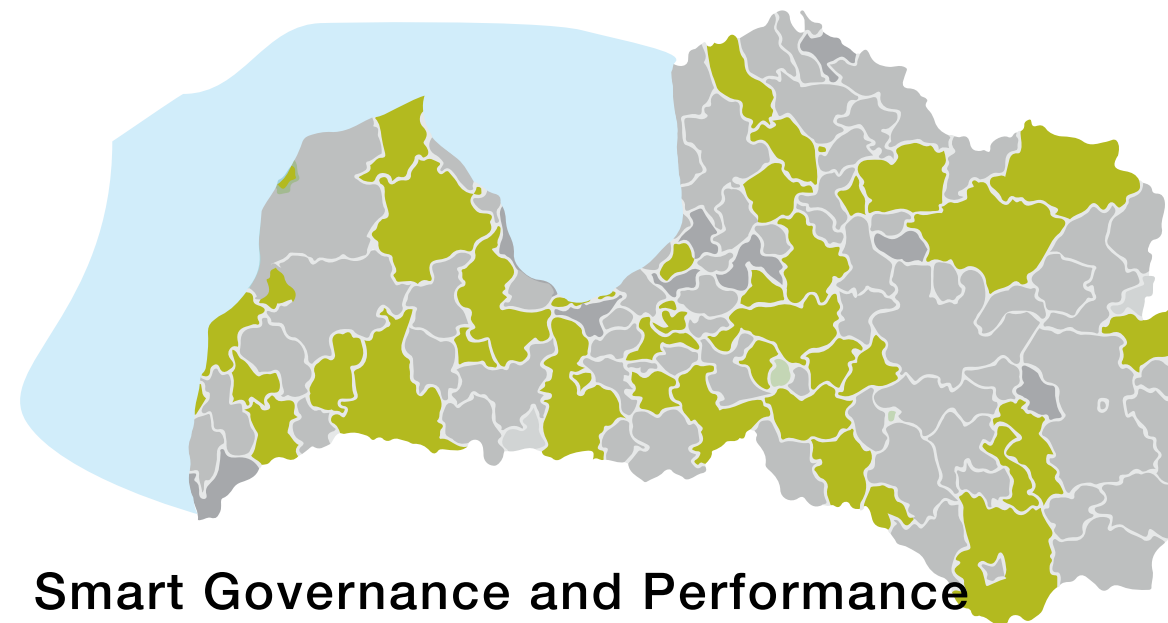


The Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue, financed by the Norway Grants scheme to promote the decent work agenda and foster tripartite dialogue launched in 2011, gave KS a unique opportunity to collaborate with European colleagues on this issue.

KS and the Norwegian Union of General and Municipal Employees (NUMGE) worked closely together in seven projects with partners in six beneficiary states, sharing our experiences as representatives of the employers and the employees in the municipal sector in Norway. KS also cooperated with FaFo – a Norwegian research institute –, the Ministry of Labour and the, then, Ministry of Administration and Consumer Affairs. In addition many Norwegian local governments hosted field visits in Norway; Lunner, Steinkjer, Fredrikstad and Øvre Eiker.

Different themes were selected for the projects, - themes that were related to challenges in the country of the project promoter. Four of our partners chose to demonstrate the importance of the link between decent work and social dialogue by focusing on threats and violence at the work place, so called third party violence. Three projects chose a more structural or organizational theme, focusing on mechanisms to strengthen tripartite dialogue.

KS was impressed by our partners’ willingness to try out new arenas and cooperate. For some this was the first step to realize that they have common interests. Norway has a strong tradition on tripartite consultations, bringing together workers, employers and government in formulating and negotiating labour standards and policies. As partners we have been challenged to reflect on own traditions and experience, well aware that no model fits all.



## Smart Governance and Performance Improvement of Latvian Municipalities

A separate brochure sums up the experiences from KS' co-operation on Decent Work and Tripartite co-operation.

*“The project opened our eyes to a new field of activities – improving social dialogue in municipal offices and enterprises, i.e. improving working environment, relations and communication at the work-place, as a way of maintaining high motivation and quality of services provided to citizens by employees.”*

–Tomasz Potkański,  
Association of Polish Cities (AUC)

*“After many years of focus on the effectiveness of public service delivery, we have come to the conclusion that salary alone is not a sufficient motivator, and that we have to promote high organizational culture within municipal sector organizations. In order to strengthen this approach on both sides, both employees and employers, we decided to build a new knowledge base – including a first-time ever Polish version of the of KS Employment Monitor, which brings together statistical information about the municipal labour market. We also collected descriptions of good practices of building and maintaining high organizational culture and good working relations, focusing on efficient social dialogue and management by values and non-financial motivation at the local level. [...] We were glad to learn that the Polish municipalities were open and eager for this approach. However, we have only started this process – perhaps for the first time ever in Poland.”*

– Tomasz Potkański, Association of Polish Cities (AUC)

The kick-off for one of four pre- defined projects under the programme “Capacity building and institutional cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian public institutions, local and regional authorities” in Latvia, was organised in January 2014. KS cooperates with the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (LPS) and the Latvian State Regional Development Agency (SRDA) on this pre-defined project; however KS is also Donor Programme Partner on the Programme level.

Within the framework of the programme, four pre-defined projects exist, and the aim is to develop strategic planning and strengthen service delivery at the national, regional and local level in Latvia. The programme is especially focused on developing a system for analysis, evaluation and improvement of service delivery in local government. The three other pre-defined projects also have Norwegian partners: Aust-Agder County, Oppland County, Østfold County, and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation in Norway. For more information on these three projects see [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org).

So, what will the project “Smart management and improvement of Latvian municipalities», implemented by LPS in cooperation with SRDA and KS, achieve?

- Establishment of networks of local governments
- Development of a model system for the analysis of local government performance
- Training of local government employees
- Establishment of a system / database for analysis, evaluation and improvement of local government performance

The foundation of the project is based on the Efficiency Network Methodology developed by KS and the Local and Regional Ministry in Norway in the beginning of 2000. The network methodology is particularly concerned about whether there is a relationship between inputs and results. A network looks at the service from two perspectives: (i) the quality that we can measure with indicators – the amount of time spent on executive work, user results, availability, coverage and so forth – and (ii) the quality



that is perceived; the experienced quality of users and employees.

The foundation of the efficiency network methodology will give the project the information and the evidence required to meet the other objectives of the project, i.e. how to create the model system for the analysis of performance; achieve a good overview of the existing training needs; and developing a database (based on the Norwegian municipal-to-state -reporting database named KOSTRA).

So far one network on strategic management, and six networks within the sectors health, education and technical services, have been established. The first meetings in all of these networks were held in December 2014, and it will be interesting to follow them into 2015.

In addition to travelling to Norway to share experiences with Norwegian local governments which have been part of these kinds of networks earlier, the project team – with some participants from the first networks – travelled to Poland to visit the Association of Polish Cities (APC) and some of their members. In the last

period of the EEA Grants KS and APC cooperated on the same theme as KS and LPS is now: The Efficiency Network Methodology. And APC have also created a database.

*“This project provides the possibility to implement capacity building and institutional cooperation between Norwegian and Latvian local and regional governments in a sustainable manner, focusing on practical hands-on experience sharing and knowledge transfer between the involved institutions.”*

–Ligita Pudža,  
Project Manager, Latvian Association of Local and  
Regional Authorities (LPS)

## Combatting Harassment at the Work Place in Portugal



KS is a project partner in an EEA project in Portugal focusing on harassment at the work place. The project is part of a larger EEA funded programme focusing on gender equality and work life balance. The first project meeting was held in January 2014, and the main activity in 2014 was a study visit from Portugal to Norway in October. The objective of the visit was to exchange experience on the status and situation of labour market and harassment in the workplace in Portugal and in Norway.

The project looks at harassment at the work place within a broader social context, linked to social and economic equality in general, gender equality, labour market, working conditions and social dialogue. The Portuguese participants therefore met with different Norwegian institutions and organisations, including the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, the Norwegian State Labour Inspection, the Norwegian Union of Local and General Employees as well as with KS.

Generally speaking, the economic and social and economic crisis in Portugal and many other European countries tend to lead to not only increased unemployment, but also represent a risk of social dumping and insecure contractual arrangements. This does not necessarily imply more harassment, but may imply that employees do not report harassment, not to the employer, and nor to the authorities. This may be one of the reasons why comparative analysis based on the so called European Work Life Study shows much higher levels of so called “adverse social behavior,” which include harassment, in Norway than in Portugal.

In addition to Portugal, KS has been involved in 2 other projects that are part of gender programmes, a Norway Grant funded project in Slovenia and an EEA funded project in Spain.



## Gender Equality and Small Villages Challenges in Hungary

The official launch of our cooperation project in Hungary was held in the beautiful surroundings of Matrahaza at the foot of the Matra mountains in November 2013. Our sister association TOÖSZ – the Hungarian National Association of Municipalities - is project promoter and our partner in the project “Capacity Building and Institutional Co-operation between Hungarian and Norwegian Authorities”. The project contains multiple activities aiming at exchange of experience between Norwegian and Hungarian local governments to strengthen the capacity of Hungarian local governments within areas high on the agenda for Hungarian municipalities, such as gender issues, small villages challenges, how to improve services towards municipal enterprises, and elderly care.

The project implementation was unfortunately halted due to unexpected challenges at national level. Two measures were, however, successfully implemented as planned : The pilot on Gender Issues and a study visit to Norway by the Small Villages Association visiting the Hedmark Region, including its capital Hamar, and the three municipalities Trysil, Elverum and Tolga, focusing mainly on local and regional development.

The objective of the Gender Issues pilot was, through an exchange programme of locally elected representatives, to learn from each other in order to improve the equality between women and men. The kick-off on the pilot was in Budapest in April 2014. The selection of possible participants was based on language skills and

*“You can never create gender equality in a society if it is going to be only at an individual private base. Equality has to be struggled for at different arenas; in politics and at work places. Employers are important. There has to be a basic attitude in kindergartens and schools. Men and women are created differently, but should be equal when it comes to terms of work possibilities, wages and respect. Gender equality must be viewed as a benefit for the whole society, not only for women.”*

–Bjorg Tingstad, Mayor, Fosnes Municipality

ideas for implementing small local pilot projects. The Pilot was a mutual gain for the participants: five female Norwegian and Hungarian politicians, visiting each other’s local governments, and participating in study visits and workshops to exchange experiences and practices.

*“The Scandinavian model might be a great example for us in the economic, cultural as well as local government sphere. It is exemplary as it is based on the respect and acceptance of other cultures, the creation of an independent, unique social model built on true equal opportunities and the protection of the rights of minorities and women. With the help of the MANORKA project, five of us, as the representatives of local government sphere, councillors, mayors and vice-mayors, had an opportunity to have a glimpse into this different type of thinking. We had the chance to exchange experiences with our Norwegian colleagues on gender issues. The great part of this pilot project was that a true exchange of experiences took place as the Norwegian partners travelled to Hungary and had a real-life experience on what is going on here. We also designed our own pilot projects based on our Norwegian experience but created them in a way that we adjusted them to the Hungarian specificities.”*

– Agnes Zakar, Councillor of Szentendre



# Capacity Building at Local Level in Bulgaria

KS is cooperating with our sister association in Bulgaria, the National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria, NAMRB, on the project “Strengthening the Capacity of the National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities through Co-operation with Norwegian Local Authorities.”

The main objective of the project is to enhance the institutional capacity and development of human resources of Bulgarian local governments and NAMRB, through cooperation and transfer of knowledge, experience and good practices

with KS. The measures and objectives of the project are structured so as to meet Bulgarian national priorities for capacity building of human resources, development and modernization of public administration, improvement of the delivered public services in compliance with inhabitants’ needs, transparent financial management and sustainable, as well as regional development set in strategic national policies.

The project contains three main elements: first, capacity building for development of efficient dialogue with central authorities

and activities of local government. Second, improved framework and capacity building for sustainable and transparent local finance management, and third, development of efficient forms of inter-municipal cooperation for public service provision.

Three study visits to Norway were arranged focusing on the above issues, and a mini- seminar on local finance management was arranged in Oslo in April 2014 for a broader group, including representatives from the Bulgarian Programme Operators; the Council of Ministers, and

Project Promoters; The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and NAMRB, and the Norwegian Programme and Project Partners; KS and the Barents Secretariat. The Norwegian municipalities of Askim, Stange, Trysil, Vadsø, have participated in project activities.

# Democracy And Social Progress In Member Nations Of The Council Of Europe



## Ukraine –What Now?

2014 has been a year of turmoil in Ukraine, with the Euromaidan Revolution in February 2014 that culminated with the flight and subsequent impeachment of the then-President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich. This was immediately followed by a series of changes in quick succession in Ukraine's sociopolitical system, including the formation of a new interim government, the restoration of the previous constitution, and the call to hold impromptu presidential elections within months. The newly appointed interim government of Ukraine ended up signing the association agreement with the EU and committed to adopt reforms in its judiciary and political system,

as well as in its financial and economic policies, in order to comply with the provisions set in the agreement.

An increasingly pressing question amid the turmoil in Ukraine is whether some form of devolved governance can suffice to stabilise the country. The issue will be central in the post-election dialogue on Ukraine's future. Decentralisation has been on the agenda for many years in Ukraine; however, the hope is now that the reform processes will begin. The Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko outlined 25 June 2014 a plan for the country's decentralisation:

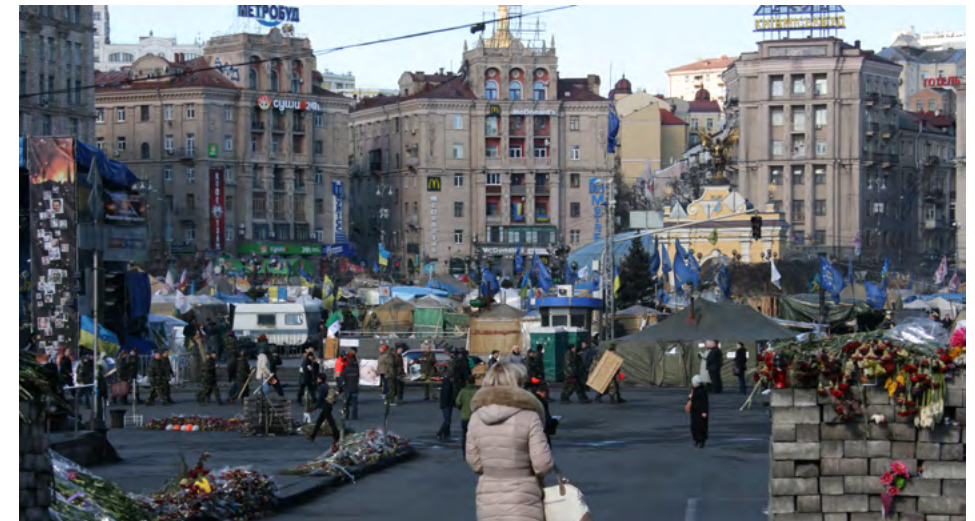
*“We want to change the system of regional authority, granting local governments real powers which they have never had in the history of modern Ukraine,” Poroshenko said during a meeting in Kiev with representatives of local governments, where over 300 Mayors attended and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC).*

This kicks off an important time for the local government sector in Ukraine. Priorities and decisions should be taken as close to the citizens as possible taking into consideration administrative capacity, cost effectiveness and resources available. This means developing the balanced division of responsibility between central and local government based on the specific situation and history of the country.

In the last days of December amendments to the Budget and Tax Code were adopted by the Parliament. AUC’s initial calculations show that this amendment will increase the local governments’ own resources by nearly the double. The next step is preparing and introducing social standards in the health care, education and social protection sectors, so as to guarantee the full coverage of local governments’ needs to deliver the services.

If the decentralisation reform coupled with the administrative structure reform is going to be carried out, all efforts need to be focused on this now – 2015 will be an important year.

KS have cooperated with the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) since 2007 on competence building of local governments and consultations between AUC and the central government, and are in the midst of an ongoing project on Local Democracy and Citizen Participation. In 2014 the Local Democracy Survey, inspired by a similar survey conducted by KS in Norway, was conducted. It provided unique insights into citizens’ experiences with local government in terms of its reliability, accountability, transparency and efficiency. Besides the survey to citizens, a targeted survey among representatives of local councils



and local administration illuminates the gaps in perceptions among local level policy makers and local residents.

Fifteen local governments from all over Ukraine are participating in a network in the project, and the survey was conducted in all fifteen, as well as five additional local governments as a control group. The results of the surveys varied greatly and there was no consistency in results in the east, west, north and south. The results have been presented to the local governments and are now being further analysed by the researchers in Ukraine with the help of the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), and the local governments are working out improvement plans based on their specific results and good experiences from other participating local governments. A survey such as this – coupled with network meetings with professional experts from Norway and Ukraine, AUC, KS, NIBR – aids the local governments in building a good local democracy with increased citizen participation.

There are over one million displaced people in Ukraine at the time of writing this article, and there is no sign of peace

in eastern Ukraine. The situation in Ukraine challenges local governments as well as the central government, but AUC, NIBR and KS will still continue working on a stable local democracy and at the same time laying the foundation for contact between local governments from all over the country.

*«Ukraine has been ill and suffering for many years. The citizens have tried to cure her by voicing their opinions through demonstrations and revolutions. It is difficult to say how effective this is, but it is the only way the citizens know. A way with high costs with too many lives lost. Let us now move forward to a constructive dialogue, although much more time-consuming and difficult it is better than hearing Ukraine’s citizens desperately shouting at Maidan “Band get!” [“Gang of criminals – be gone!”]. The government – central, regional and local – must all see the citizens of Ukraine as their partners, build the foundation for a real dialogue, listen to the citizens and implement their will. Then Ukraine can once again recover from her long-time suffering.”*

–Olena Tomnuyk, Project Manager, Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)



## CALM – A Strong Partner in Reforms in Moldova

Before 2010 Moldova lacked a consolidated and impartial local government association as recommended by the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The local government sector was weak and subject to frequent central government interference. Through the establishment of the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova – abbreviated CALM – as an impartial and consolidated association in 2010 and the following approval of the National Decentralisation Strategy conditions were right for moving towards a more democratic and reform minded Moldova; a country that has lagged behind in democratic and socio-economic development since its independence in 1991.

With support from KS CALM made use of this window of opportunity to strengthen the association and position itself as a trusted and legitimate voice of local government interests. Through a high number of coordinated and strategic activities CALM has become trusted by national authorities as a national consultative body. It has gained the approval and confidence of local governments, which a steady increase in membership testify.

During the project period CALM with support from KS streamlined its statutory bodies and improved organisational policy coordination enabling its governance and

administration to speak more forcefully on local government and decentralisation issues. Also, through consultation with and capacity building efforts for members, CALM managed to convey decentralisation opportunities to local governments, gain knowledge of issues of concern to local governments and formulate these in clear and consistent policies and opinions.

New knowledge and clear positions on local government and decentralisation were disseminated to the general public through existing media outlets or through own media materials. Media and public opinion in Moldova thus has gained better understanding of division of responsibilities between tiers of government and what needs to be done in order to strengthen democracy and improve services to citizens.

The joint KS and CALM project allowed for:

- the general public getting more acquainted with the Moldovan governance structure and the role of local authorities
- local governments to see the need for an association which can speak on local governments' behalf and provide services needed by local government in e.g. capacity building and advice on consequences of reforms and

- central government to understand the importance of stakeholder involvement in reforms, the usefulness of a local government voice in politics as well as appreciation of local government knowledge and competency.

Also, a stronger and better coordinated local government association is helpful in Moldova's strive to fulfil international obligations vis-à-vis the Council of Europe and to gain new opportunities vis-à-vis the European Union.

These achievements were made possible through an impressive number of systematic events for various stakeholders and drafting of a long list of internal regulations, policies, strategies and opinion pieces.

CALM has – as a consequence of this project – become a better consolidated local government association. The role and functioning of its statutory bodies (National Congress, Administrative Council, Executive Board, Association of Rayon Presidents, Rayon Associations of Mayors, and Network of Female Mayors) has been clarified and streamlined. Administrative bodies are better in tune with statutory bodies in an association which is politically impartial and based on institutional membership of local governments.

CALM's administrative capacities have been increased along with capacities of statutory bodies. CALM can better voice members' concerns and has increased access to a more systematic and structured dialogue with the central government.

The general awareness and understanding of local government tasks and responsibilities has been improved through successful outreach to the general public.

Moldova has a better structured local government sector and a stronger dialogue between levels of government which is an asset in continued implementation in the country's National Decentralisation Strategy.

The joint KS and CALM project which ended in 2014 did not touch the pressing issue of local government fragmentation and the need for reform in Moldova's territorial administration. This issue will, however, be considered in a new joint project which has already received funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. New legislation on fiscal decentralisation is expected to encourage local government amalgamation and the number of local governments might drop somewhat before the next local elections.

## Business Opportunities and Employment in Kosovo Local Governments

KS has over the past decade assisted eight selected municipalities in Kosovo to facilitate and promote business development as a strategy to boost employment. Efforts have been centered on training of entrepreneurs in business planning as well as facilitation of credit. In partnership with the Kosovo consultancy firm KS-Kosova and selected municipal business development offices, KS has identified businesses with growth potential and offered them business plan development tools and skills. Trainings have helped identify risk and opportunities for businesses and assisted in elaborating prospective investment plans.

Women and members of ethnic minorities have specially been targeted by this local economic development programme, through providing tailor-made trainings and credit facilities for this particular group

of entrepreneurs. Credit is provided by a Kosovo bank and secured by a bank deposit made by KS. This credit scheme is managed by a credit board comprised of representatives from the bank, KS-Kosova, KS and an external legal advisor. Loan applications are received four times a year from applicants having successfully attended trainings and who are recommended by their municipal business development office. Applications are assessed separately by the bank and KS-Kosova. Recommendations are then made to the credit board.

Several hundred business owners have received training. More than 300 small loans – e.g. less the EUR 10.000 reimbursable in monthly instalments over two years – have been granted. Over 70 % of participating entrepreneurs report increased revenue; more than 90 % of businesses have hired new staff and at

total of some 300 jobs have been created. This successful local economic development programme is coordinated with Kosovo national employment and SME policies as well as with work of the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce through a joint Working Group where the Ministry of Trade and Industry also attends. The group exchanges information and best practice.

The training course and the associated financial product are now fully developed. Studies show that the approach contributes to job creation and to increasing business revenues. Kosovo has a number banks and micro-finance institutions. Fiscal policies are, however, tight. Most institutions are encouraged to improve

efficiency and control operational costs. Few, therefore, offer smaller loans under EUR 10.000. If such products are offered, potential clients normally lack business skills and do not have business and investment plans. Risk is as a result often considerable. It has now been agreed to continue this local economic development programme through transferring ownership and full managerial responsibility to KS-Kosova. KS no longer adds sufficient value to the programme and pulled out of the operation in 2014. KS-Kosova will pursue the operation with the other partners. The programme will continue to also target services and support to women and members of ethnic minorities.



# Internship Programme in Norway for Russian Public and Civil Servants and Vice Versa



Since 2000 KS has organised an internship programme for Russian public and civil servants, financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2010 a new component was introduced and the programme opened up for Norwegian public and civil employees to intern in Russia – increasing the mutuality of the programme, as well as laying a good foundation for future cooperation projects and lasting contacts.

KS cooperates with the North-West Institute for Management of The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) on the implementation of this programme.

In 2014 12 Russian public and civil servants participated in the programme in Norway. After a week of introduction seminar in Oslo – where they were presented the Norwegian government structure as well as Norwegian culture and history, through presentations and field visits – the participants left for their individual host organisation. Some of the host organisations included: Bodø Municipality, Norwegian Police University-College, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Rogaland County, Troms County, Marnardal

Municipality, Åseral Municipality, Kristiansand Municipality, Telemark County, Nord-Trøndelag County and NOKUT. The participants returned to Oslo after their two week individual internships and an evaluation seminar followed. They were very happy about all that they had learnt and all the contacts that they made – and there was a definite increase in understanding of Norway, as well as numerous ideas for cooperation projects, both short and long term.

The programme has a final seminar each year, and both the topic and location changes. Every second year it is in Russia, and then in Norway. In 2014 it was in Norway and the topic was “Trust between Individuals, Society and State in Norway and in Russia”, and consisted of well-known speakers from both countries.

Nine Norwegian public and civil servants interned in Russia in September. They all first met in Oslo for an introductory seminar where they were presented with the overview of Russian government structure, Russian culture and history as well as relations between Russia and Norway. The introductory seminar was continued in Saint-Petersburg over the weekend, and followed by individual internships in

relevant organizations for five days. As the Russian participants, they reconvened in Saint-Petersburg at the end of the internships and KS joined them for an evaluation seminar, together with RANEPA.

*“It’s a big honour and pleasure for me to be a part of this programme for already 3 years! It’s easy to calculate how many*

*“Both Russian and Norwegian participants emphasise the importance and value of the programme and this characteristic of mutual enrichment of our societies makes the programme even more essential. It is also significant that Russian-Norwegian cooperation within the Presidential Programme keeps faithful in contemporary unstable international situation.”*

*–Evgeny Kitin, Vice-Director of North-West Institute of Management of RANEPA*

*people participated in the programme as interns within this period but it’s hardly possible to define the exact number of people who helped the programme to be organised and developed day by day. I mean people who met the interns both in Russia and Norway, who presented them theoretical and practical issues in economy, law, sociology, management and so on, people who shared their contacts with us - the organisers - to assist us in searching the most matching and efficient hosts for the interns, those who spread information about the programme, helping us to attract the most motivated and experienced participants, who attended our final seminars and conferences, who provided the interns with cultural programme... These are hundreds of people! And thanks to the programme they have become a big team and family, found new partners and friends, got new knowledge and skills. And I’m sure this family-team will keep growing and developing...”*

*–Olga Melenevskaya, Dean of International Relations Faculty of North-West Institute of Management of RANEPA*

# Municipal International Cooperation



## Local Governments Add Value to Sustainable Development - MIC

KS sought continuation of its International Municipal Cooperation (MIC) programme for a new cycle 2014 – 2016. The donor rejected KS application and requested a phasing out of the programme in 2014, claiming results were not proportionate with efforts. KS and participating municipalities accepted the donor's decision to phase out, but challenged justifications on which the decision was based. It was agreed to commission a review of achievements and learnings from the MIC cycle 2011 – 2013, which documented results and can serve as an element in devising a new MIC modality in the future.

The Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) was selected to undertake the study. In a report prepared on the basis of review of documents, a

questionnaire to all participating municipalities, analysis of similar programmes funded by governments in Finland, Belgium and Canada, as well as two final partner seminars organised by KS in Taveta (Kenya) and Panajachel (Guatemala) in November 2014, NIBR concluded:

*“The programme fits well with current thinking on division of responsibilities in service provision and community development between national and sub-national authorities. It responds to needs for stronger capacities in sub-national authorities’ in order for them to better deliver on citizens’ rights. The MIC model, however, also faces challenges linked to contextual issues and must strive to compensate for systemic flaws in the beneficiary municipality.”*



Following a programme review in 2010 KS agreed with the donor to improve programme results through implementing measures such as thematic focus and geographical concentration of interventions. Also, a Results Based Management system was introduced and sharing of experience in clusters systemised. A stronger involvement of national local government association in dissemination of experiences was tested. NIBR in its report concludes that this improvement strategy was fully implemented by KS and had a very positive effect on project results.

In spite of good project results – in particular measured against the very limited available resources – it is challenging to add local government value to development efforts using a peer to peer approach. It is, moreover, unproductive to compare achievements with results from other modalities such as e.g. massive support through “professional” civil society actors. Local governments are public authorities, and have a different role in development aid programmes and respond differently to contextual limitations. The MIC logic is relevant and can add considerable value if well-conceived and well implemented.

NIBR recommended continuation of a KS MIC programme with some modifications to its earlier intervention model. Efficiency can be strengthened through a cluster approach rather than a one-to-one partnership. Thematic focus should be stronger and possibly only include local governments’ role in climate mitigation and adaptation. It should be sourced from “a governance funding window” rather than grants for civil society action. Contextual analysis and mitigation measures must be better integrated into operations.



# Highlights

## January:

KS facilitated Norwegian participation in a contact seminar in Tallinn for potential project partners for Inclusive Education Projects under Estonian EEA Grants programme Children and Youth at Risk.

## February:

KS started cooperating with the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development on the Urban Planning Conference “DiverCITY” financed by the EEA Grants.

## March:

Kick-Off for the Citizen Participation and Local Democracy Network in Ukraine with 15 local governments from all over the country.

## April:

KS shared experience from Municipal International Cooperation (MIC) with its Czech sister association Union of Czech Towns and Municipalities in a seminar in Prague.

## May:

The National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia with KS, Sel municipality and “Protect the Otta River Citizens Action Group”, conducted training on citizens’ mobilization in hydro power plant host municipalities in Georgia.

## June:

The Cooperation Committee for Lithuanian EEA grants programme “Cooperation between National, Regional and Local Authorities” met in Vilnius.

## July:

Final Seminar for Decent Work Project in Hungary.

## August:

KS carried out a fact-finding mission to Ukraine for a furthering of the ongoing cooperation project. KS met with – among others – the Ukrainian Ministry of Regional Development, Housing and Municipal Utilities, the Council of Europe, UNDP and the EU Commission.

## September:

The Polish Ministry for Infrastructure and Development partnered with KS and the Norwegian Ministry of Modernisation and Local Government on the Urban Planning Conference in Wroclaw, Poland, aptly named “DiverCITY”.

## October:

KS welcomed a group of 16 Georgian mayors, local councilors and parliamentarians to Stavanger for them to study the Norwegian regional planning model.

## November:

Final learning and results documenting events within the context of phase out of KS’ Municipal International Cooperation programme took place in Taveta (Kenya) and Panajachel (Guatemala). Norwegian and foreign partners attended.

## December:

KS attended an Estonian EEA Grants conference on “Improvement of the well-being of children and youth and prevention of social rejection” in Tallinn.

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