

## SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION OF TWINNING RELATIONS OF THE CITIES OF THE ARKHANGELSK REGION BETWEEN 1988–2023

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Roman BOLDYREV, Slavyana BOLDYREVA  
Northern (Arctic) Federal University

Jawahar BHAGWAT  
Northern (Arctic) Federal University, University of Mumbai

Andrey PODOPLEKIN  
Federal Center for Integrated Arctic Research of the Ural branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences

**Abstract:** The article analyses socio-humanitarian international cooperation, known as "twinning," among cities in the Arkhangelsk region spanning from 1988 to 2023. Leveraging the concept of paradiplomacy, the authors examine twinning relations, highlighting key stages, forms, and spheres of this international cooperation using the comparative historical method. By employing the problem-chronological method, the authors trace the formation and changes in

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Dr **Roman Yu. BOLDYREV** – Professor, World History Department, M.V. Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, Russia.  
ORCID: 0000-0003-4262-7285. E-mail: r.boldyrev@narfu.ru  
2 Prospekt Lomonosova, Arkhangelsk, Russia, 163002.

Dr **Slavyana Yu. BOLDYREVA** – Associate Professor, Department of Regional Studies, International Relations and Political Sciences, M.V. Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, Russia.  
ORCID: 0000-0003-0677-6312. E-mail: s.boldyreva@narfu.ru  
2 Prospekt Lomonosova, Arkhangelsk, Russia, 163002.

Dr **Jawahar V. BHAGWAT** – Associate Professor, Department of Regional Studies, International Relations and Political Sciences, M.V. Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, Russia; Associate Professor, University of Mumbai, Mumbai, India.  
ORCID: 0000-0002-8100-9976. E-mail: jawahar.bhagwat@gmail.com  
2 Prospekt Lomonosova, Arkhangelsk, Russia, 163002.

Dr **Andrey O. PODOPLEKIN** – Associate Professor, Leading Researcher, Laboratory of Socio-Cultural Dynamics of the Development of the Arctic Regions of the Russian Federation, N. Laverov Federal Center for Integrated Arctic Research of the Ural branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Arkhangelsk, Russia.  
ORCID: 0000-0001-9939-6153. E-mail: podoplekin@mail.ru  
20 Nikolskiy Prospekt, Arkhangelsk, Russia, 163002.

Received November 27, 2023

Accepted February 21, 2024

**Conflict of interests:** The authors declare the absence of any conflict of interests.

these relations. The study utilizes the system-structural method to analyse the socio-humanitarian dimension. The article establishes that twinning cooperation promotes mutual understanding and trust, establishing socio-economic and humanitarian ties, and acts as one of the drivers for developing these cities. Nonetheless, the authors note that the twinning relations of the Arkhangelsk region are facing a crisis due to the impact of COVID-19, the special military operation, and the sanctions against Russia.

**Keywords:** twin cities, interregional cooperation, cross-border cooperation, cultural ties, paradiplomacy

One of the key trends of our time is globalization and regionalization, which have led to the widespread international activities of governments at the subnational level. Originating in Western Europe post-World War II to foster peace and reconciliation, inter-city collaborations, known as twinning ties, gradually proliferated worldwide. Twinning embodies cultural exchanges, economic bonds, and the preservation of historical connections, with economic and cultural affinities often steering the choice of twin cities.

The regionalization processes that took place in Russia during the 1990s were closely tied to the increase in economic activity and international connections of regions and cities. The Arkhangelsk region, in particular, has relatively well-developed contacts with regions of other countries, especially in the context of active cooperation with the Arctic countries like Norway, Sweden and Finland. In the late 1980s, the region began establishing twinning relations and concluding cooperation agreements with cities in the USA, Norway, Germany and Poland. These processes saw their most extraordinary growth in the 1990s.

Some researchers believe that twinning relationships have evolved beyond mere friendships. Through public diplomacy and cultural exchanges, twinning fosters mutual understanding and trust, serving as a tool to bolster economic and socio-humanitarian connections and boost the economic and cultural growth of cities. These various factors underscore the importance of this article.

The question of the role of twinning in the formation of transnational associations was first raised by the American geographer W. Zelinsky in 1999 (Zelinsky, 1999). In the American academic tradition, 'twin cities' studies are common. The first attempt to comprehend this concept was made by Russian researchers A.G. Sergunin and A.A. Anishchenko (Sergunin, Anishchenko, 2012). From a geographical point of view, the concept of "town twinning" is considered by N. Clark (Clark, 2010). Polish political scientist J. Jańczak also describes this twinning model of European border towns (Jańczak, 2017). His joint research with Finnish scientist P. Joenniemi theorizes the concept of "twin cities" and considers other forms of cooperation between cities (Joenniemi, Jańczak, 2017).

Many Russian studies on cross-border and international cooperation are relevant. Thus, the relations of municipalities from the point of view of law are considered by O.N. Evmenova, Y.A. Semakina and K.V. Farkhutdinova (Evmenova, 2011; Semakina, 2014; Farkhutdinova, 2019), political aspects are studied by Y.V. Kosov and A.E. Prokopenko (Kosov, 2003; Prokopenko, 2009), while L.A. Zarubina's research is devoted to socio-philosophical aspects (Zarubina, 2021). V.B. Maximov, E.V. Kuznetsova and Y.N. Sayamov consider twinning ties as an element of international relations and foreign policy (Maximov, 2012; Kuznetsova, 2021; Sayamov, 2021). Of particular interest are the works of E.V. Mikhailova on the study of twinning and cross-border relations, where the author introduces the concept of 'the phenomenon of adjacent border cities' (Mikhailova, 2015).

V.V. Komleva concludes that the model of international cooperation between the regions of Russia tends to be centralized, despite the legal and organizational capabilities of the subjects of Russia to independently determine their foreign economic and international cultural ties (Komleva, 2022). She infers that even amidst the backdrop of tougher sanctions against Russia, the regions continue to be one of the key participants in international cooperation. International and twinning relations of specific regions and cities are analysed by E.V. Karpenko, A.V. Belova, O.L. Chernobai and D.A. Pashayan (Karpenko, 2007; Belova, 2009; Chernobai, 2010; Pashayan, 2021). However, many works are limited to describing the history of the evolution of twinning ties without trying to analyse the current state of affairs and identify problems of the development of the twinning movement. Also, until recently, most studies were devoted to the European region and North America, but in recent years there has been a growing interest in twinning ties of developing countries.

Several researchers study the possibility of using the potential of twinning ties, for example, for the development of territories (Yarovoy and Podolsky, 2014; Sapryka, 2017), and regulation of migration flows (Dmitrienko, 2021). The international relations of the Arctic regions of Russia are explored in works by O.B. Alexandrov and E.G. Bolotnikova (Alexandrov, 2003; Bolotnikova, 2012). S.P. Arteev and E.A. Shlapeko study the relations of specific regions – the Republic of Karelia and the Republic of Komi (Shlapeko, 2013; Shlapeko, 2017; Arteev, 2018). A.V. Shilovsky explores cross-border cooperation of the Murmansk region (Shilovsky, 2008). The twinning relations of Arkhangelsk are also described by S.I. Shubin, I.V. Rogachev and E.A. Rogacheva (Shubin, Rogachev, 2017; Rogachev, Rogacheva, 2021). The concept of paradiplomacy is of crucial importance for the methodology of this article (Akimov, 2016; Kerimov and Bakov, 2019; Mikhailenko and Zolotarev, 2021) as it allows to comprehensively analyse twinning ties as one of the types of international activity of subnational territorial units. We define paradiplomacy as the public-governmental activity of non-state actors in the implementation of their international and foreign economic relations within limits established by the state. Relying on urban diplomacy and paradiplomacy, twin cities form mutually beneficial relations with many world-system actors, pursuing their interests and further

strengthening national influence. For example, R.S. Mukhametov notes that at the present stage, twinning has become one of the key strategies aimed at increasing competitiveness in the international arena (Mukhametov, 2020).

However, none of the above research focuses on the mechanisms, problems, and prospects of twinning relations of the Arkhangelsk region as a whole, making the article's subject relevant. The chronological framework of this article is the period from 1988 to 2023. 1988 marked the conclusion of the first twinning agreement between Arkhangelsk and the city of Portland (USA). Events related to the special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine and the subsequent curtailment of many projects determine the upper limit of the study.

**Table 1. Development of partnerships between the cities of the Arkhangelsk region and foreign cities in 1988–2023**

Year	Twin cities with cities of the Arkhangelsk region																		
	Portland (USA) – Arkhangelsk	Vardø (Norway) – Arkhangelsk	Emden (Germany) – Arkhangelsk	Slupsk (Poland) – Arkhangelsk	Mulhouse (France) – Arkhangelsk	Oulu (Finland) – Arkhangelsk	Kiruna (Sweden) – Arkhangelsk	Ljusdal (Sweden) – Arkhangelsk	Tromsø (Norway) – Arkhangelsk	Sukhum (Abkhazia) – Arkhangelsk	Ashdod (Israel) – Arkhangelsk	Jermuk (Armenia) – Arkhangelsk	Minsk (Belarus) – Arkhangelsk	Vitebsk (Belarus) – Arkhangelsk	Portsmouth (USA) – Severodvinsk	Sumy (Ukraine) – Severodvinsk	Mozyr (Belarus) – Severodvinsk	Minsk (Belarus) – Severodvinsk	Neustadt (Germany) – Severodvinsk
1988	+																		
1989	+	+	+	+															
1990	+	+	+	+															
1991	+	+	+	+															
1992	+	+	+	+	+														
1993	+	+	+	+	+	+													
1994	+	+	+	+	+	+									+				
1995	+	+	+	+	+	+									+				
1996	+	+	+	+	+	+									+				
1997	+	+	+	+	+	+									+				
1998	+	+	+	+	+	+									+				
1999	+	+	+	+	+	+	+								+				
2000	+	+	+	+	+	+	+								+				
2001	+	+	+	+	+	+	+								+	+			
2002	+	+	+	+	+	+	+								+	+			
2003	+	+	+	+	+	+	+								+	+	+		
2004	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2005	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2006	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2007	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2008	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2009	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2010	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	
2011	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+	+	+	
2012	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+	+	+	
2013	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+	+	+	
2014	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+	+	+	

2015	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2016	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2017	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2018	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2019	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2020	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2021	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
2022	?	?	?	-	?	?	?	-	?	+	+	+	+	+		?	?	-	+	+	-	+	?	?			?	
2023	?	?	?	-	?	?	?	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	-	+	+	-	+	?	?			?	

\*PMR = Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic

Code:

+	cooperation agreement is in force	-	cooperation agreement has been terminated
?	implementation of the cooperation agreement is frozen		

We can distinguish three stages in the development of international partnerships between the cities of the Arkhangelsk region: 1988–1999, 2000–2011 and from 2012 to the present. These stages are characterized by differences in the orientation and intensity of partnerships (see Table 1).

Between 1988 and 1999, municipalities in the Arkhangelsk region established twinning relationships with eleven foreign cities. Three were in the USA (Portland<sup>1</sup>, Portsmouth<sup>2</sup> and Waterville<sup>3</sup>), four in Northern Europe (Vardø<sup>4</sup>, Keutukeinu<sup>5</sup>, Oulu<sup>6</sup> and Kiruna<sup>7</sup>), two in Western Europe (Emden<sup>8</sup> and Mulhouse<sup>9</sup>) and two in Central

<sup>1</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on friendly relations between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Greater Portland"*, 18 November 1988. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Portland.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *"The agreement on friendly relations between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Greater Portland"*, 1 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/upload/archive/bd59164cfcf3a5d20486be8385214921.docx> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>3</sup> City of Waterville, *"Kotlas – Waterville Sister City Connection"*, 1 July 2019. Available at: <http://www.waterville-me.gov/mayor/kotlas-waterville-sister-city-connection/> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on friendly relations between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Vardø"*, 23 February 1989. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Vardo.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Official website of the Naryan-Mar Administration, *"Twin cities"*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.adm-nmar.ru/deyatelnost/mezhmunitsipalnoe-sotrudnichestvo/goroda-pobratimy/> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Oulu"*, 3 June 2019. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Oulu.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>7</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Kiruna"*, 9 August 1999. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Kiruna.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Emden"*, 22 November 1989. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Emden.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between The University of Upper Alsace, the City Hall of Mulhouse, the Pomor State University named after M. V. Lomonosov and the City Hall of Arkhangelsk"*, 1999. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Mulhouse.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

and Eastern Europe (Ślupsk and Tarnuv<sup>10</sup>). The most active period for signing twinning agreements was from 1988 to 1991, during which six out of eleven agreements were finalized. From 1992 to 1995, additional four agreements were signed, with only one agreement signed in 1999. Arkhangelsk led the way in the total number of partnership agreements signed, with seven agreements, followed by Kotlas with two agreements, and Naryan-Mar and Severodvinsk with one each. The cities of Portland, Portsmouth, Vardø, Oulu, Emden, Mulhouse, and Ślupsk, out of the eleven twin cities, collaborated on numerous joint social and humanitarian projects.

From 2000–2011, the cities of the Arkhangelsk region expanded their cooperation with foreign partners, the number of which increased from 11 to 20: three in the USA (Portland, Portsmouth and Waterville), five in Northern Europe (Vardø, Oulu, Kiruna, Ljusdal and Tromsø<sup>11</sup>), three in Western Europe (Emden, Neustadt<sup>12</sup> and Mulhouse), one in Central and Eastern Europe (Ślupsk), five in post-Soviet countries (Sumy<sup>13</sup>, Mozyr<sup>14</sup>, Minsk<sup>15</sup>, Tiraspol<sup>16</sup> and Sukhum<sup>17</sup>). Severodvinsk actively developed partnerships during this period, increasing the number of twin cities from one to six, although mainly with the CIS countries. Arkhangelsk expanded the number of twin cities by three, two of which – Ljusdal and Tromsø – are located in Scandinavian countries, and Sukhum became the first sister city for Arkhan-

<sup>10</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "O roli i znachenii pobratimskih svyazey gorodov Arhangel'skoy oblasti (Spravka) [About the role and significance of twinning relations of the cities of the Arkhangelsk region]", 1 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/upload/archive/bd59164cfc3a5d20486be8385214921.docx> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>11</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "O roli i znachenii pobratimskih svyazey gorodov Arhangel'skoy oblasti (Spravka) [About the role and significance of twinning relations of the cities of the Arkhangelsk region]", 1 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/upload/archive/bd59164cfc3a5d20486be8385214921.docx> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>12</sup> Official website of the Administration of Severodvinsk, "Statement of support for cooperation and friendly partnership relations between the cities of Severodvinsk (Russian Federation) and Neustadt-in-Holstein (Federal Republic of Germany)", 1 October 2008. Available at: [https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26\\_Partnerzy.zip](https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26_Partnerzy.zip) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Official website of the Administration of Severodvinsk, "Statement of support for cooperation and friendly partnership relations between the cities of Severodvinsk (Russian Federation) and Sumy (Ukraine)", 15 December 2001. Available at: [https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26\\_Partnerzy.zip](https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26_Partnerzy.zip) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>14</sup> Official website of the Administration of Severodvinsk, "Statement of support for cooperation and friendly partnership relations between the cities of Severodvinsk (Russian Federation) and Mozyr (Republic of Belarus)", 15 December 2001. Available at: [https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26\\_Partnerzy.zip](https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26_Partnerzy.zip) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Official website of the Administration of Severodvinsk, "Statement of support for cooperation and friendly partnership relations between the cities of Severodvinsk (Russian Federation) and Administration of the Partizansky district of Minsk (Republic of Belarus)", 2004. Available at: [https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26\\_Partnerzy.zip](https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26_Partnerzy.zip) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>16</sup> Official website of the Administration of Severodvinsk, "Statement of support for cooperation and friendly partnership relations between the cities of Severodvinsk (Russian Federation) and Tiraspol (Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic)", 2003. Available at: [https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26\\_Partnerzy.zip](https://severodvinsk.info/docs/other/Partners/2012.09.26_Partnerzy.zip) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>17</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Sukhumi (Republic of Abkhazia)", 6 June 2011. Available at: <http://www.arhc.ru/data/232/Sukhum.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

gelsk and the first agreement with a partially recognized state. The cooperation of Solvychegodsk with the Bulgarian city of Gabrovo turned out to be short-lived and lasted only five years (from 2001 to 2005).

However, no real progress was achieved when the remaining municipalities of the region entered into similar agreements with cities and districts of European countries. For example, in 2002, Kargopolsky district twinned with the municipality of Nordkapp (Finnmark province, Norway); in 2003, Solovetsky district – with the municipality of Skjervøy (Troms province, Norway); in 2007, Vinogradovsky district – with the municipality of Berg (Troms province, Norway), in 2008 Velsky district – with Alta municipality (Finnmark province, Norway), Primorsky district – with Hammerfest Municipality (Finnmark Province, Norway), Shenkursky district – with Nordreisa municipality (Troms province, Norway)<sup>18</sup>.

Between 2012–2023, Arkhangelsk had 23 twin cities (reduced to 8 by the end of the period). Partnerships with ten cities were frozen, and cooperation was halted. The twinning relationships faced a significant challenge during the Donbass conflict when Sumy, a Ukrainian city, unilaterally ended its cooperation agreement with Arkhangelsk in 2016. This marked the first time a cooperation agreement between twin cities, even if it existed only on paper, was terminated. In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all planned events within the framework of existing cooperation protocols were cancelled, forcing existing forms of cooperation to transition to online formats.

A real crisis in relations with twin cities from Europe and America broke out in 2022 due to the special military operation in Ukraine. Four cities (Ślupsk, Ljusdal, Tromsø and Neustadt) terminated cooperation with Arkhangelsk and Severodvinsk<sup>19</sup>, while ten more cities (Portland, Vardø, Emden, Mulhouse, Oulu, Kiruna, Portsmouth, Waterville, Tarnow and Keutukeinu) froze the implementation of previously signed agreements and refrained from signing new cooperation protocols. This situation led cities in the Arkhangelsk region to seek partnerships either in the post-Soviet space or in foreign countries with significant Russian-speaking communities. The region's leadership instructed city mayors to search for new partners in the Asia-Pacific region and the CIS countries.

During this period, Arkhangelsk was the only city able to expand its network of partnerships. This was attributed to the city being the administrative capital of the region with more resources to sign new international agreements, educational and cultural institutions for the implementation of social and cultural initiatives, and greater number of industrial enterprises attractive to foreign inves-

<sup>18</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "*O roli i znachenii pobratimskih svyazej gorodov Arhangel'skoj oblasti (Spravka) [About the role and significance of twinning relations of the cities of the Arkhangelsk region]*", 1 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/upload/archive/bd59164cfcf3a5d20486be8385214921.docx> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>19</sup> Website: News29.ru, "*Twin cities from Poland and Sweden have severed ties with Arkhangelsk because of Ukraine*", 18 April 2022. Available at: [https://www.news29.ru/m/politika/Goroda\\_pobratimy\\_iz\\_Polshi\\_i\\_Shvecii\\_razorvali\\_svjazi\\_s\\_Arhangel'skom/96323](https://www.news29.ru/m/politika/Goroda_pobratimy_iz_Polshi_i_Shvecii_razorvali_svjazi_s_Arhangel'skom/96323) (accessed 26 November 2023).



tors. Arkhangelsk acquired four more twin cities, including Ashdod<sup>20</sup> in Israel and Jermuk<sup>21</sup>, Minsk<sup>22</sup> and Vitebsk<sup>23</sup> in the CIS countries. Ties with eight twin cities remained intact (including three new cities with relations established in 2018–2023). Of these eight partners, relations with two are practically stagnant due to internal political situation in these states. Jermuk, situated near the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, was caught in a new conflict, while cooperation with Ashdod was hindered by Israel's internal political struggles.

In 2022, the Arkhangelsk authorities attempted to establish cooperation with Guilin in China's Shaanxi province, but the corresponding agreement is yet to be signed<sup>24</sup>. There is no indication of initiating relations with other Asian countries. The events of 2023 showed that the region's "pivot to Asia" in the sphere of twinning relations has not yet taken place (see Table 1). It may be therefore inferred that replacing the number of agreements with European and American countries by strengthening ties with CIS countries and the Asia-Pacific region in the short term has proven challenging.

The social and humanitarian sphere includes significant layers of society, such as exchanging experience in education, science, healthcare, and collaborating in areas like culture, tourism and sports. This cooperation plays a vital role, as it helps create a global image for the city, boosting its recognition, attracting tourists, and fostering direct connections among people. Close interaction between ordinary residents of different countries through cultural and professional exchange creates the foundation for international relations development and strengthens ties between states<sup>25</sup>.

As researcher E.V. Kuznetsova notes, "cultural, educational and economic exchange can open the city to people and improve their well-being and the country. Twinning provides an opportunity to use the experience of partner cities in

<sup>20</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Ashdod (Israel)"*, 24 June 2012. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Ashdod.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>21</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Jermuk (Republic of Armenia)"*, 9 April 2018. Available at: <http://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Jermuk.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Administration of the October region of Minsk (Republic of Belarus)"*, 27 December 2022. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Soglashenie%20Okt.%20r-n%20g.%20Minska.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>23</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The agreement on cooperation between the cities of Arkhangelsk and Vitebsk (Republic of Belarus)"*, 18 May 2023. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/data/232/Dogovor%20Vitebsk.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>24</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"The First Online Meeting between the Cities of Arkhangelsk and Yulin (China)"*, 28 July 2022. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=1543/3> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>25</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"Nastojashhaja družba – krepkij fundament. Sotrudnichestvo: V stolice Pomor'ja pobывала delegacija iz pol'skogo goroda-pobratima Slupska [True friendship is a strong foundation. Cooperation: A delegation from the Polish sister city of Slupsk visited the capital of Pomors]". Gorodskaja gazeta. Arhangel'sk – gorod voinskoj slavy [City newspaper. Arkhangelsk is a city of military glory]*, 92, 882 (2019), 4. Available at: [https://www.arhcity.ru/data/455/92\\_27\\_11\\_2019\\_AGVs.pdf](https://www.arhcity.ru/data/455/92_27_11_2019_AGVs.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2023).



many areas, expanding the information space" (Kuznetsova, 2021). Twinning cities as a cultural and social practice also aims to promote cultural tolerance, fostering mutual understanding and trust, primarily at the local community level.

Cultural cooperation holds a significant position in twinning relations not only of Arkhangelsk but also of other cities. This allows for fostering closer ties among residents of cities and promoting the culture, art, and traditions of partner cities.

After 2014, relations between Russia and Western countries became strained, which nullified the agreements reached in the early 1990s on mandatory rules of interaction. This was aggravated by disruptions in arms control and disarmament regime, emergence of new local and regional conflicts, unresolved hotbeds of tension, neurobiological means of influencing an opponent, digital technologies, inability of international institutions to act effectively due to the inconsistency of their procedures with the requirements of the time, the crisis of the world economy, and an increase in the number of entities resorting to terrorism. As history has shown, the most substantial ties are established between the twin cities since close historical, economic, cultural and social relations characterize this type of cooperation. The mutually beneficial partnership allows not only to successfully solve the tasks of implementing joint projects in conditions conducive to cooperation but also to maintain contacts in crises, regardless of whether they are provoked by the will of interested parties or result from objective circumstances.

The period after 2014 posed specific challenges for Russian cities, including the Arkhangelsk region, due to the foreign policy landscape associated with Crimea's reunification with Russia. However, there was no disintegration or termination of partnerships during that period. Various cultural events like "US Culture Weeks", "Days of Polish Culture", "Days of Germany", "Days of Sweden" and "Days of Israeli Culture" were organized in Arkhangelsk up to 2021, involving students and institutions in cultural exchanges.

Arkhangelsk groups held concerts and participated in the twin cities' festivals, for example, in the Pomor Festival in Vardø (Norway). Conversely, representatives of Germany, Norway, Finland, Azerbaijan and Armenia annually participated in the Margaritinskaya Fair in Arkhangelsk (in the fall of 2022, only delegates from the republics of the post-Soviet space were represented at the Margaritinskaya Fair). Representatives of the Russian Center of the City Public Library named after Maria Dombrovskaya from Słupsk participated in the festival of traditional folk culture "Arkhangelsk Gostiny".

Not only did the libraries in Arkhangelsk collaborate with their twin cities, but museums also played a key role in fostering these partnerships. For example, the museum complex 'Malye Korely' and the Arkhangelsk Museum of Local Lore from the city of Vardø organized fairs, exhibitions and master classes on folk crafts. The exposition of the Pomor Museum in Vardø, focusing on trade with Russia, was prepared with the participation of "Malye Korely". Museums across various twin cities engaged in art exhibitions and collaborative projects. For example, in 2021, The Northern Maritime Museum collaborated with the Portland Maritime Museum to work on a project aimed at preserving and advancing wooden shipbuilding.

A year earlier, in July 2020, an exhibition of 30 art objects created from recycled materials by students of the Arkhangelsk Pedagogical College and the Emden Vocational School Complex № 1 was held in Emden as part of the joint project "Art for Atmosphere"<sup>26</sup>.

Shared history often lays the foundation for twinning relationships. For Arkhangelsk and its twin cities, the Second World War became an important common milestone, the preservation of the memory of which, as well as the role of the peoples of the USSR in victory, is one of the areas of cooperation. Visits of official delegations were often accompanied by laying of wreaths at the monument to "Northern Soldiers who fell during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945".

In the relations between Arkhangelsk and Portland (USA), preserving the memory of the Arctic convoys held importance. In 2000, a memorial to the Arctic Convoys was erected in Portland in memory of 3,000 people who died amid the program's implementation during World War II. Wreaths were regularly laid at the monuments of Soviet soldiers and Norwegian partisans in Tromsø and Vardø. Students of schools and universities in Arkhangelsk and German Emden were largely united by the international labour camp "Reconciliation over Graves". As part of the project, schoolchildren from Arkhangelsk travelled to the burial site of 237 Soviet prisoners of war in the town of Aurich in Germany, located near Emden, and to the cemetery of German soldiers in the French city of Lisieux in Normandy, where they, together with their German peers, worked on historical sites<sup>27</sup>.

Events dedicated to preserving the historical memory of the war were frequently organized for students from twin cities' schools. In 2021, high school students of Arkhangelsk schools participated in an international evening commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. In the same year, the administration of Arkhangelsk facilitated the involvement of twin cities in the 8th International Forum "For the Glory of the Fleet and the Fatherland".

Socially significant projects are another vital area of cooperation in this area. One notable success is the Russian–German school initiative for parents of children with special needs and foster families, known as "Parent Café". This joint project, operational since 2004 in Emden and 2009 in Arkhangelsk, involves multiple organizations like the Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, Emden–Leer University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and Arkhangelsk public organization 'Guild of Specialists in Helping Professions' and 'Parent Cafe in Dialogue' (Emden, Germany)<sup>28</sup>. Through this project, parents could share their

<sup>26</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"Raboty studentov iz Arhangel'ska – v obshchestvennom prostranstve nemeckogo pobratima Jemdena [The works of students from Arkhangelsk – in the public space of the German sister city of Emden]"*, 30 July 2021. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/59223> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>27</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"Arhangel'sk i Jemden: novye grani sotrudnichestva [Arkhangelsk and Emden: new facets of cooperation]"*, 10 March 2016. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/36751> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>28</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, *"Arhangel'sk predstavil proekt «Roditel'skoe Kafe» na konferencii gorodov-pobratimov v Minske [Arkhangelsk presented the project «Parent Cafe» at the Twin Cities Conference in Minsk]"*, 1 October 2019. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/52222> (accessed 26 November 2023).

experiences or receive professional psychological help. An annual Summer Parent School was previously held in Russia or Germany until 2020, when remote meetings with Emden partners became necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that this project has received support from the authorities and various public organizations. Since 2016, a joint project, "There is a way out", has also been implemented to train specialists, volunteers and support parents and their children with autism spectrum disorder based on specialized school № 43 in the city of Arkhangelsk<sup>29</sup>. In 2018, Arkhangelsk and Emden received a certificate of honour by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany for their long-term cooperation<sup>30</sup>, and in 2019, the 30th anniversary of their twinning agreement was celebrated during the "Days of Germany in Arkhangelsk"<sup>31</sup>.

Education exchange stands out as a vital and promising area of cooperation, enabling the enhancement of educational quality through the application of foreign partners' expertise and innovative research collaboration. Even the Kirkenes Declaration, signed on January 11, 1993, emphasized the need for broader exchanges of school students and teachers as well as university students and lecturers. It was proposed to organize scientific and technical cooperation in the field of geology, oceanography, atmospheric physics, ecology and environmental protection, construction, fishing and aquaculture, forestry, mining, development shelf resources, transport and communications in the Barents Euro-Arctic region<sup>32</sup>. In April 1993, The Norwegian-Pomer University Center was opened in Arkhangelsk by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Norway and the Russian Federation, which subsequently played a considerable role in the implementation of joint projects in education and science. In August 1993, the Pomor State Pedagogical University, named after M.V. Lomonosov, was transformed into the Pomor International Pedagogical University, named after M.V. Lomonosov, with the University of Tromsø (Norway) as a co-founder. It significantly boosted scientific and educational co-

<sup>29</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "*Deputaty Arhangel'skoj gorodskoj Dumy Dmitriy Akishev i Ol'ga Sinickaja prinjali uchastie v XVI konferencii gorodov – partnerov Rossii i Germanii «Ukreplenie municipal'nyh i regional'nyh svyazej – rasshirenie gorizontov» [Arkhangelsk City Duma deputies Dmitry Akishev and Olga Sinitskaya took part in the XVI Conference of Partner Cities of Russia and Germany 'Strengthening municipal and Regional ties – expanding horizons']*", 5 July 2021. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=2/5554> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>30</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "*Vklad Arhangel'ska v razvitie pobratimskih svyazej otmechen na mezhdunarodnom urovne [Arkhangelsk's contribution to the development of twinning ties has been noted at the international level]*", 14 September 2018. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/47826> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>31</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "*O roli i znachenii pobratimskih svyazej gorodov Arhangel'skoj oblasti (Spravka) [About the role and significance of twinning relations of the cities of the Arkhangelsk region]*", 1 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.mid.ru/tv/?id=1464951&lang=ru> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Official website of the Northern Arctic Federal University named after M. V. Lomonosov (Website: narfu.ru), "*Declaration on Cooperation in the Barents Sea/Euro-Arctic region (Kirkenes Declaration)*", 11 January 1993. Available at: [https://narfu.ru/upload/medialibrary/abb/deklaratsiya-o-sotrudnichestve-\\_bear\\_.pdf](https://narfu.ru/upload/medialibrary/abb/deklaratsiya-o-sotrudnichestve-_bear_.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2023).

operation of the twin cities of Arkhangelsk, located in the Norwegian provinces of Troms, Nordland and Finnmark. Reorganized in 1996 into The M.V. Lomonosov Pomor State University, the university has signed cooperation agreements with 45 higher educational institutions and academic bodies in 13 countries (Goldin, 2007).

Arkhangelsk scholars collaborated with Norwegian counterparts across various fields:

1) The study of children with mental disabilities with the subsequent organization of their psychological, pedagogical, medical and social support. Within the framework of this program, a scientific and educational centre "Institute of Child Development" was established in 1998 at the university. It later transformed into the Faculty of Correctional Pedagogy, focusing on training students in special pedagogy and psychology, physiology and pathology of human development, speech therapy, and oligophrenopedagogy.

2) The Research Centre "Centre for Environmental Studies" at Pomor State University has fostered international ties with the University of Tromsø's Centre for Environmental Studies and Development since 1993. In 1995, it joined the Network of Environmental Centres of the Barents region, including similar research centres in twin cities of Arkhangelsk – Oulu and Tromsø.

3) The Centre for Comparative Religious Studies and Ethnosemiotics of the Pomor State University in 1993–1998 participated in the implementation of a full-scale scientific project, "State, Religion and Ethnic Groups in the North" in cooperation with scientists from the twin cities of Arkhangelsk Tromsø and Oulu.

4) The Center for Gender Studies of the Pomor State University in 1996–2007 implemented several projects with the Universities of Tromsø, Oulu and Kiel (Goldin, 2007).

The development of partnerships with foreign cities and universities significantly boosted research funding at Pomor State University (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Financing of scientific research Pomor State University (thousands of rubles)<sup>33</sup>**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total 2000–2006
Norway	3239,8	2335,5	2093,0	4729,1	1861,0	4729,4	5764,2	24752,0
International organisations	0	0	240,0	2377,0	3315,9	556,0	1772,4	8261,3
USA	90,0	286,5	2591,5	814,9	2396,0	839,2	673,0	7691,1
Germany	0	0	34,3	0	1453,7	2770,3	1432,3	5690,6
Finland	28,3	500,7	1271,0	419,4	144,6	210,0	879,8	3453,8
Sweden	382,7	269,8	510,0	371,6	164,3	683,7	803,2	3185,3
European Union	0	0	0	196,0	1178,3	0	0	1374,3
France	0	520,6	151,0	0	26,9	0	99,8	798,3
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	192,7	0	192,7
Other countries	0	0	0	0	0	100,0	0	100,0

<sup>33</sup> Prepared by the authors based upon Goldin, V. I. (2007). *The wealth of the North will grow with science*, pp. 383–388. (In Russian)

Total foreign financial support	3740,8	3913,1	6890,8	8908,0	10540,7	10081,3	11424,7	55499,4
Russian financial support	1646,6	3523,9	4157,0	8479,9	10222,1	12105,2	19743,7	59878,4

Data analysis reveals that active cooperation with foreign universities and research centers has led to a significant increase in international funding for research activities at the university. Between 1993 and 2006, foreign funding for research at the Pomor State University surged by 15.7 times (in 1993 – about 0.4 million rubles, in 1999 – 1.7 million rubles, and in 2006 – 11.4 million rubles). During 2000–2006, the university received foreign funding of 55.5 million rubles, which amounted to 48.1% of the total funding of the university's scientific activities. However, the share of foreign funding gradually decreased from 69.44% in 2000 to 36.65% in 2006. The growth of funding for scientific research by the Russian government and state scientific funds in the early 2000s was influenced by two factors. Firstly, the growing attention paid to Russian research in natural sciences, physics and mathematics, which did not receive support from abroad, but were important from the point of view of the development of the Russian economy. Secondly, the Russian authorities became more sensitive to aware of the danger of funding from foreign organizations and foundations, which could thus have the opportunity to influence the political and ideological orientation of Russian research in the humanities. Of this amount, 82.46% was provided by the countries in which the partner cities of Arkhangelsk are located (44.6% – Norway, 13.86% – USA, 10.25% – Germany, 6.22% – Finland, 5.74% – Sweden).

In 2010, the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, named after M.V. Lomonosov, was established in Arkhangelsk, by merging two previously independent universities – Arkhangelsk State Technical University and the Pomor State University. The new university saw a steady increase in foreign funding for scientific activities, rising from 4.8 million rubles in 2010 to 20.5 million rubles in 2018 (peak values were reached in 2013–2014 when NARFU received about 27 million rubles from foreign sources). Foreign funds accounted for 8–10% of the total R&D financing<sup>34</sup>. As in the 2000s, in the 2010s, the university's largest scientific and educational partners were universities from the twin cities of Norway and Finland.

The scientific and educational sphere most clearly manifested in the twinning relations of Arkhangelsk and Mulhouse, whose cooperation agreement was concluded between the universities. The universities conducted joint educational and research projects aimed at improving the level of competencies, and training students, teachers and other employees, and entrepreneurs. Universities have coop-

<sup>34</sup> Prepared by the authors based upon reports of the realisation of the development of NARFU from 2010–2018 from Official website of the Northern Arctic Federal University (NARFU) named after M. V. Lomonosov, "Reports of the realisation of the development of NARFU", 21 May 2019. Available at: [https://narfu.ru/university/programma\\_razvitiya/2010-2020/](https://narfu.ru/university/programma_razvitiya/2010-2020/) (accessed 26 November 2023).

erated actively in the scientific and technical fields for several decades. Notably, joint research papers in chemistry and energy were published in the journal 'Solid Fuel Chemistry' in 2020–2021, highlighting the potential application of research findings in industrial production.

The promotion of the Russian language globally is a key state objective. For example, there is a program "Concept of state support and promotion of the Russian language abroad". It is relevant to mention here that NARFU, named after M.V. Lomonosov before the COVID-19 epidemic, actively cooperated in this field with the University of Upper Alsace, implementing joint programs for teaching French and Russian languages since 2013, ensuring the mobility of students, and the opportunity to take language courses at the sister university.

In 1993, an agreement was signed with the Emden / Leer University of Applied Sciences, marking the beginning of an innovative partnership model development between the universities. The first projects were carried out in social work and psychology. Within the framework of the agreement, more than 300 students, postgraduates, and doctoral students from Arkhangelsk trained at the German partner university, and implemented their scientific and practical projects<sup>35</sup>. One example is the already mentioned project "Parent Café". Specialists of Emden University conducted advanced training of Arkhangelsk specialists in social work. Courses and internships were held for students studying in the areas of mathematics and information technology. Universities have also carried out many projects related to energy, for example, wind power plants and their applications in the commercial sphere<sup>36</sup>.

Youth policy and fostering connections among younger residents were central themes in many twin city partnerships. For example, the twinning of Portland and Arkhangelsk emphasized schoolchildren delegations exchange, which started in 1989 and continued almost annually. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, high school students and college students from both Arkhangelsk and Greater Portland had the opportunity to study at sister city educational institutions for a month or attend courses and lectures.

Cooperation also played a role in bridging ties among the youth from different countries. Delegations of Arkhangelsk athletes took part in competitions in the twin cities. For example, the youth team traditionally participated in the Nordic Yukigassen Championship in Ward and the Maine Marathon in Portland. In 2018, the basketball teams of Arkhangelsk and Portland held joint training and

<sup>35</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "*Universitetskoy druzhbe Arhangel'ska i Jemdena ispolnilos' 25 let [The University friendship of Arkhangelsk and Emden turned 25 years old]*", 30 October 2018. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/48305> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Website: [russia-germany-cooperation.ru/](https://russia-germany-cooperation.ru/), "*Universitety-pobratimyy kak drazvery razvitiya territorij [Twin Universities as drivers of territorial development]*", 30 October 2018. Available at: <https://russia-germany-cooperation.ru/pub/site/winner-1061> (accessed 26 November 2023).



competitions<sup>37</sup>. After the events of February 2022, athletes of the Arkhangelsk region participate in international competitions, primarily featuring teams from CIS countries<sup>38</sup>.

As part of the ongoing collaboration between the twin cities, regular professional exchange have played a crucial role in the development of personnel in other spheres as well. For example, during the long period of cooperation between Arkhangelsk and Portland, many city officials, lawyers, judges, social workers and law enforcement officers travelled to get acquainted with the best practices in the partner city. In 2003, three lawyers from Arkhangelsk worked in the Arkhangelsk Committee of Portland: Deputy E. Belokorovin, an employee of the Prosecutor's office T. Elsakova and lawyer E. Kalinin. They received a grant from the Library of Congress for seven thousand dollars in the "Open World Program" framework with the help of the International Organization of Twin Cities.

In 2016–2017, a series of events were organized to facilitate the exchange of experience among fire and rescue specialists of Portland and Arkhangelsk. Rescuers shared their experience in fire prevention and participated in joint exercises. In June 2019, three firefighters from Portland spent a week in Arkhangelsk, where they conducted joint training with the Rescue Service named after I.A. Polivany. The cooperation of fire and rescue services and Arkhangelsk and Emden's ambulance stations, which began in 2000, was also very productive and valuable. The parties exchanged experience in introducing new fire extinguishing technologies, forming a voluntary fire protection infrastructure, improving the culture of fire-safe behaviour of the population in both cities and improving the quality of emergency medical care to people<sup>39</sup>.

Tourism emerged as a promising industry reflecting the positive outcomes of interactions between the cities in the Arkhangelsk region and their twin counterparts during the 2000s. Their well-developed recreational infrastructure has primarily contributed to attracting a substantial number of visitors. Inter-municipal practices implemented to improve the quality of tourism projects were also an important point. These practices included holding joint tourist forums and seminars, establishing working contacts between travel agents of the Arkhangelsk region and travel agencies of the twin cities, developing special tourist programs

<sup>37</sup> Website: [archangelportland.org](http://archangelportland.org), "The Year in Review. 2018 Greater Portland Archangel Committee", 2019. Available at: [https://www.archangelportland.org/\\_files/ugd/9533b9\\_baeffe0fcfab40edba11472b7978cc02.pdf](https://www.archangelportland.org/_files/ugd/9533b9_baeffe0fcfab40edba11472b7978cc02.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>38</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "Mezhdunarodnye sorevnovaniya po parusnomu sportu [International sailing competitions]", 8 November 2022. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=125/1654> (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>39</sup> Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "Arhangel'skie spasateli obsudili s kollegami iz goroda-pobratima Jemdena perspektivy sotrudnichestva [Arkhangelsk rescuers discussed the prospects of cooperation with colleagues from the twin city of Emden]", 30 September 2015. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/34446> (accessed 26 November 2023); Official website of the Arkhangelsk city administration, "Arhangel'sk i Jemden: novye grani sotrudnichestva [Arkhangelsk and Emden: new facets of cooperation]", 10 August 2017. Available at: <https://www.arhcity.ru/?page=0/43158> (accessed 26 November 2023).



and routes of the Arkhangelsk region for citizens of the twin cities. Thus, many travel agencies registered in the Arkhangelsk region, up to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, actively participated in international exhibitions, including those held in Finland and Norway. The Arkhangelsk region also organized training events under the tourism development program. Back in 2012, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism of the Arkhangelsk region held four field seminars, the topics of which were devoted to research in tourism projects and ways to attract investment, management and marketing in tourism, organization of a guest house, etc. (Osipova, 2012).

**Table 3. Outbound tourism from Arkhangelsk region (2007–2019) (number of people)<sup>40</sup>**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russian tourists who visited foreign countries	39399	60779	58997	75972	92511	140901	137485	119221	84416	45159	68784	80615	88279
Country-wise:													
– Germany	24	94	74	232	96	66	126	0	30	37	58	52	104
– Norway	52	218	156	83	133	97	37	59	83	13	34	15	97
– Finland	520	711	566	699	1029	890	644	551	531	201	172	323	461
– Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	16	11
– Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
– France	217	431	337	499	629	491	530	386	107	142	75	125	150
– Abkhazia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	427	435	625	866
– Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	137	67	100	100	74	94
– USA	17	29	30	97	71	29	43	0	0	0	8	5	8
Total to countries with twin cities	830	1483	1163	1610	1958	1573	1380	1133	818	920	903	1235	1798

The partnership between cities has significantly influenced the tourism sector, leading to notable changes in the dynamics of travel. Statistical data from 2007 to 2019 (see Table 3) indicate that during this time, 1.09 million people went on tourist trips abroad from the Arkhangelsk region, including 16.8 thousand (1.5%) – to countries with twin cities. The most popular among tourists from the Arkhangelsk region were Finland (43.4%), France (24.5%), Abkhazia (14.0%), Norway (6.4%), and Germany (5.9%). This ratio is absolutely atypical for Russia as a whole. France and Germany are very popular European holiday destinations amongst Russian tourists, and Turkey, Egypt and Abkhazia are the cheapest. It could be inferred that the high demand for tours to relatively expensive Finland and Norway (in total almost 50%) could be a direct consequence of the development of partnerships with these countries, notwithstanding other factors mentioned subsequently. The largest indicators of outbound tourism to partner countries were observed in the period 2007–2011, as well as in 2016 and 2019 (over 2%). It is noteworthy that with the increase in the total tourist flow abroad, the demand for holidays to partner countries fell sharply – in 2012–2015, it froze at the level of 1.0–1.1 % due to Russian

<sup>40</sup> Prepared by the authors based upon statistics of the Departments of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Arkhangelsk Region and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, 2023. Available at: [https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Туризм\\_АО.xls](https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Туризм_АО.xls), [https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/publication\\_arh](https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/publication_arh) (accessed 26 November 2023).

tourists' preference for sunnier destinations offering affordable beach vacations (Turkey, Thailand, Vietnam, Egypt, Greece, Spain and India with relatively cheaper tourist infrastructure)<sup>41</sup>.

**Table 4. Foreign tourists to Arkhangelsk region (2007–2019)<sup>42</sup>**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Foreign tourist arrivals in Arkhangelsk region	486	103	141	25	993	1132	644	34	0	15	203	99	82
Country-wise:													
– Germany	145	44	36	5	30	5	2	0	0	0	29	12	0
– Norway	130	12	27	7	10	19	43	2	0	13	33	12	0
– Finland	0	0	0	8	12	12	505	0	0	0	1	1	0
– Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
– Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
– France	62	30	19	1	21	4	31	2	0	0	22	1	0
– Abkhazia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
– Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
– USA	33	0	0	0	400	459	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total from countries with twin cities	370	86	82	21	473	499	581	4	0	13	87	26	0

Inbound tourism, on the other hand, saw more modest numbers (see Table 4) in 2007–2019 with 3,957 foreign tourists visiting the Arkhangelsk region from 2007 to 2019, with over half (56.7%) coming from partner countries. This indicates the impact of partnership relations on the region's image and the desire of foreign tourists to visit the Arkhangelsk region, which is located away from major transport hubs and the important tourist centres of Russia. Tourists from the USA (39.8%), Finland (24.0%), Germany and Norway (13.7% each) visited the region most actively. The most productive years for visits by foreign tourists, including from partner countries, were 2007, 2011–2013. The share of tourists from partner countries exceeded 44 % from 2007 to 2013 and in 2016<sup>43</sup>. It is important to note that the statistics did not include foreign tourists who arrived in Arkhangelsk on cruise ships because they did not rent rooms in hotels in the Arkhangelsk region but lived directly on board their ships. Every year, one to four cruise ships accommodating 55 to 700 passengers came during summer when the climate is favourable and unhindered navigation is possible. Here it may be noted that statistics on foreign tourists who arrived in Arkhangelsk on cruise liners are not so representative in terms of interest in the region we are considering. For example, a cruise ship whose origin was one of the German ports and during its voyage visited different ports of Norway, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions of Russia. Hence, we do not

<sup>41</sup> Prepared by the authors based upon statistics of the Departments of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Arkhangelsk Region and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, 2023. Available at: [https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Туризм\\_АО.xls](https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Туризм_АО.xls); [https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/publication\\_arh](https://29.rosstat.gov.ru/publication_arh) (accessed 26 November 2023).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

know which country or region of Russia was the primary reason for tourists to buy a ticket. Data on foreign tourists arriving by train or plane offer more insightful perspectives as tourists actively chose to visit this region over other alternatives.

Thus, visits of official delegations, exchange of students and teachers, experience and achievements of scientific and technological progress, creation of joint ventures, projects and training programs, organization of various exhibitions, competitions, concerts and festivals – that was the essence of cooperation between the Arkhangelsk region and twin cities. However, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the events of February 2022 related to the military actions in Ukraine “froze” these international contacts, affecting all cities and countries.

## Conclusion

The Arkhangelsk region stands out as a key player in fostering interregional cooperation and spearheading various projects across different sectors. As of 2021, more than 20 cooperation agreements were signed with the region's cities, with 12 of them being with the city of Arkhangelsk. The peak of twinning relations occurred in the 1990s when the region's cities began to participate in external relations actively. Many projects were implemented during that period, and an active exchange of delegations took place. Notably, the majority of twin cities of the Arkhangelsk region are situated in Northern European countries, owing to their close geographical proximity and longstanding history of collaboration pre-dating formal agreements.

The region's cities engaged with their twin cities in three directions: socio-humanitarian, economic and political. Most of the projects centred on humanitarian and cultural initiatives, significantly enhancing the image of the region abroad.

Thus, twinning relationships between cities serve as a promising avenue for fostering social, economic and paradiplomatic ties. The promising areas for the development of twinning ties include cooperation between related enterprises, increasing trade volumes, seeking joint project financing sources, sharing expertise in local government and urban planning, healthcare, tourism, education, and addressing environmental problems.

The twinning relations of the Arkhangelsk region and many other regions are going through a difficult period. Factors such as the 2014 sanctions, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the end of 2019, and the events of February 2022 have all posed setbacks to the development of cooperation, leading to the curtailment of many projects or twinning relations. The authorities have commenced efforts to find new twinning relations in CIS countries and Asia, but these are not likely to yield immediate results.

Сравнительная политика, Том 14, No 1-2, сс.57-78  
DOI 10.46272/2221-3279-2023-1-2-14-57-78

## СОЦИАЛЬНО-ГУМАНИТАРНОЕ ИЗМЕРЕНИЕ СВЯЗЕЙ ГОРОДОВ-ПОБРАТИМОВ АРХАНГЕЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ В 1988–2023 ПТ.

**Роман Юрьевич Бодырев** – кандидат исторических наук, профессор кафедры всеобщей истории, Северный (Арктический) федеральный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова, Архангельск, Россия.

ORCID: 0000-0003-4262-7285. E-mail: r.boldyrev@narfu.ru  
163002, Архангельск, пр-т Ломоносова, 2.

**Славяна Юрьевна Болдырева** – кандидат исторических наук, доцент, кафедра регионоведения, международных отношений и политологии, Северный (Арктический) федеральный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова, Архангельск, Россия.

ORCID: 0000-0003-0677-6312. E-mail: s.boldyreva@narfu.ru  
163002, Архангельск, пр-т Ломоносова, 2.

**Бхагват Джавахар Вишну** – кандидат политических наук, доцент, кафедра регионоведения, международных отношений и политологии, Северный (Арктический) федеральный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова, Архангельск, Россия; доцент, Университет Мумбаи, Мумбаи, Индия.

ORCID: 0000-0002-8100-9976. E-mail: jawahar.bhagwat@gmail.com  
163002, Архангельск, пр-т Ломоносова, 2.

**Андрей Олегович Подоплекин** – кандидат исторических наук, доцент, ведущий научный сотрудник Лаборатории социокультурной динамики развития арктических регионов Российской Федерации, Федеральный исследовательский центр комплексного изучения Арктики имени академика Н.П. Лавёрова Уральского отделения Российской академии наук, Архангельск, Россия.

ORCID: 0000-0001-9939-6153. E-mail: podoplekin@mail.ru  
163002, Архангельск, Никольский пр-т, 20.

Поступила в редакцию: 27.11.2023      Принята к публикации: 21.02.2024

**Конфликт интересов:** Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

**Аннотация:** В статье анализируется социально-гуманитарное международное сотрудничество, а именно связи городов-побратимов Архангельской области в период с 1988 по 2023 год. Используя концепцию парадипломатии, авторы рассматривают побратимские связи, выделяя ключевые этапы, формы и сферы международного сотрудничества с помощью сравнительно-исторического метода. Используя проблемно-хронологический метод, авторы прослеживают становление и изменение этих отношений. Для анализа социогуманитарного аспекта применен системно-структурный метод. Установлено, что сотрудничество городов-побратимов способствует взаимопониманию и доверию, формированию социально-экономических и гуманитарных связей, а также выступает одним из факторов развития городов-побратимов. Тем не менее авторы отмечают, что побратимские связи Архангельской области переживают кризис, связанный с влиянием пандемии коронавируса, специальной военной операции и антироссийских санкций.

**Ключевые слова:** города-побратимы, межрегиональное сотрудничество, приграничное сотрудничество, культурные связи, парадипломатия

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