

# Multilevel Tourism development strategy of Valmiera city and surrounding area (Valmiera+) including Gauja National Park Tourism Cluster. Vidzeme Region.



Strategies for a competitive and sustainable tourism sector

1. How to shape a successful local tourism development strategy?
2. Solutions to boost sustainable tourism based on the valorisation of the natural and cultural heritage

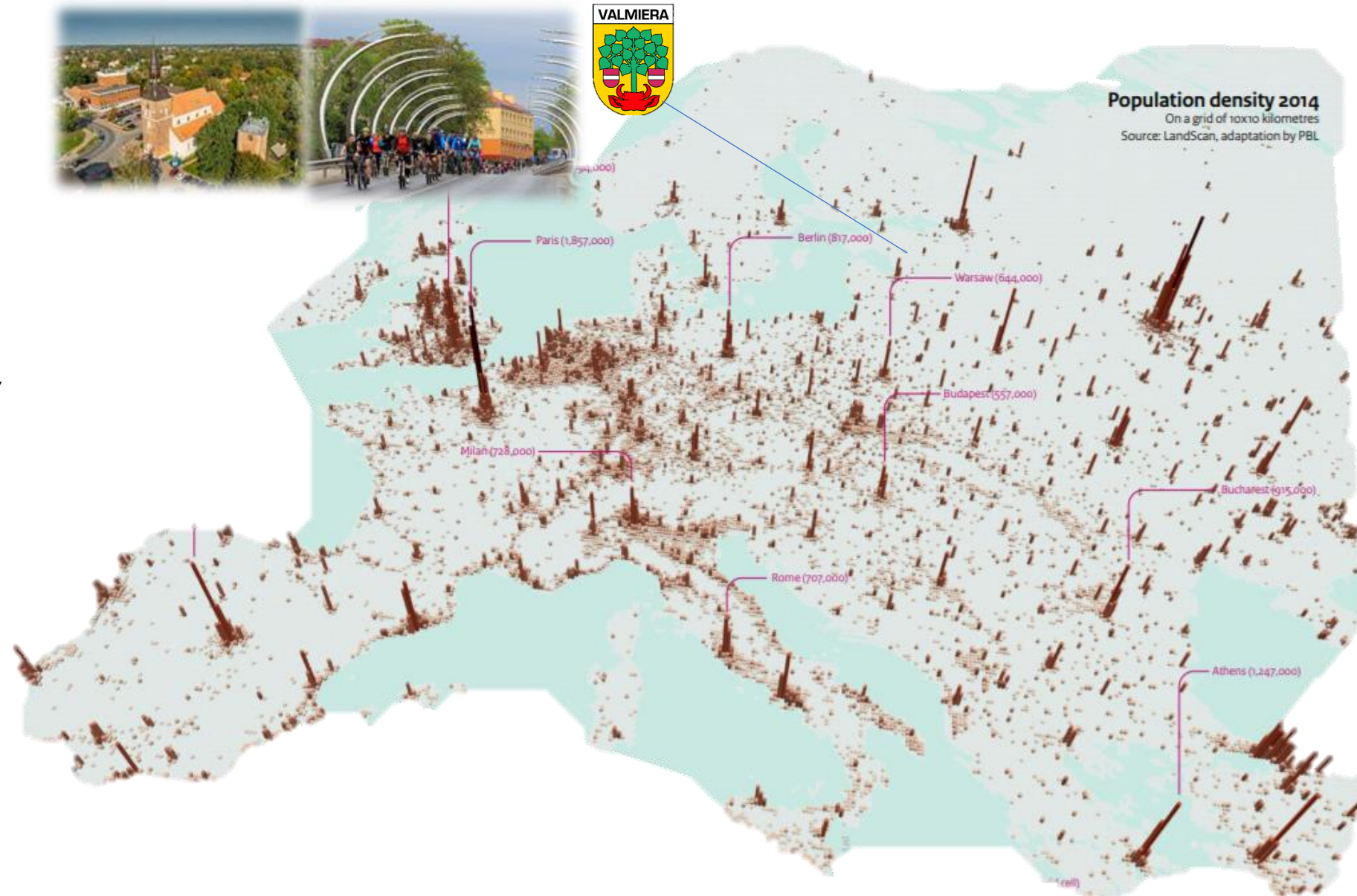
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# Valmiera City as case study of European scale

Regional development centre with ~30 th inhabitants (next level after EU capitals and highest league of 800 cities where >50 th inhabitants live)

Country-side metropolis & micro-city **as the majority in EU**

- Medieval (Hanseatic)
- Economic centre above the state's average
- Next to the popular national park



# Main challenges ⇒ 10 years back

Incomplete sustainable tourism growth because of:

1. **Fragmented destination** management and resources available
2. **SME's** with similar profile and **high local competition, accidental cooperation**
3. **Small** amount of **local** products in **tourism value chain**
4. **Shrinking economy** in state **periferian** areas (impact on local demand)
5. **National park** is mayor tourist attraction, but the **city is out** of it (11 km) | **weak dialogue** between industry and nature conservation administration

# Valmiera+ tourism strategy

Benefit for SME's: succession and purposefulness, using various destination management resources as efficiently as possible in a regularly changing situation

Tripple-Helix type **Tourism Advisory Council** established, incl. 4 neighboring municipalities, motivated Academia/ research members and key-stakeholders of the industry

2010

Solid situation & potential analysis

An **agreement** has been concluded between four municipalities on a joint delegation of money for the development of a single tourist destination

2012

Pragmatic goals and harmonized functions

**Transformation of Tourism information Centres** (first destination in Latvia that closes all TIC moving to the backoffice DMO)

2021

Matched target markets with a tourism cluster

**Tourism strategy 2020** elaborated setting priorities and common vision to develop **joint destination**

Administrative-territorial reform forming new municipalities completed in 2009

Administrative-territorial reform forming new municipalities completed in June 2021

# EXPORT STRATEGIES: DIFFERENT SCALE

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### GAUJA MAP



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# Gauja National Park tourism cluster

Benefit for regional development: efficient export strategies, best platform for co-opetition and regular/actual dialoge about nature/economic/social development issues

**Long-term tourism strategy 2022**  
elaborated setting priorities and  
common vision to develop **joint  
functional destination**



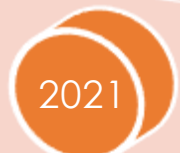
Regional  
Tourism NGO  
established



Various flexible  
thematic working  
groups



Pragmatic goals and  
well co-ordinated  
cluster office work



In seven years the overnight stays  
at *EnterGauja* destination has  
grown by 30% both for domestic  
and export market

In the way to join  
EUROPARC  
Sustainable  
Tourism Charter

Since start ~10 strategic  
development projects  
implemented attracting  
resources additionally

Tripple-Helix type **Tourism  
Cluster launched** incl. ~50  
enterprises, Academia, 9  
municipalities (4 towns) &  
Nature Conservation  
Agency & 13 NGO among  
key-stakeholders

For Valmiera and SME's:  
Export strategies together  
with cluster & nearest  
export regions + domestic  
market within local  
destination



# 6 Advantages | 6 Challenges

1. Strong brand and positioning, Powerfull marketing
2. Cooperation platform within functional destination
3. Knowledge sharing & Innovative environment
4. Product development and more resources for prioritized activities
5. Open dialoge among stakeholders
6. Nature & culture heritage goals integrated in tourism development strategy

1. Formation of cluster require the critical mass of enterprises who are ready for development and have ambitions to grow
2. Coopetition challenges
3. Coordination of functions between several cluster office and several local DMO's
4. Politicians are changing, should repeat again and again the reasons for joint development
5. Financial challenges incl.
  - Cluster membership fee
  - Interruption between cluster project calls
  - capacity and resources for development of SMEs
6. EUROPARC Sustainable tourism Charter is a must for fragile national park destination to be harmonious in a long-term perspective