

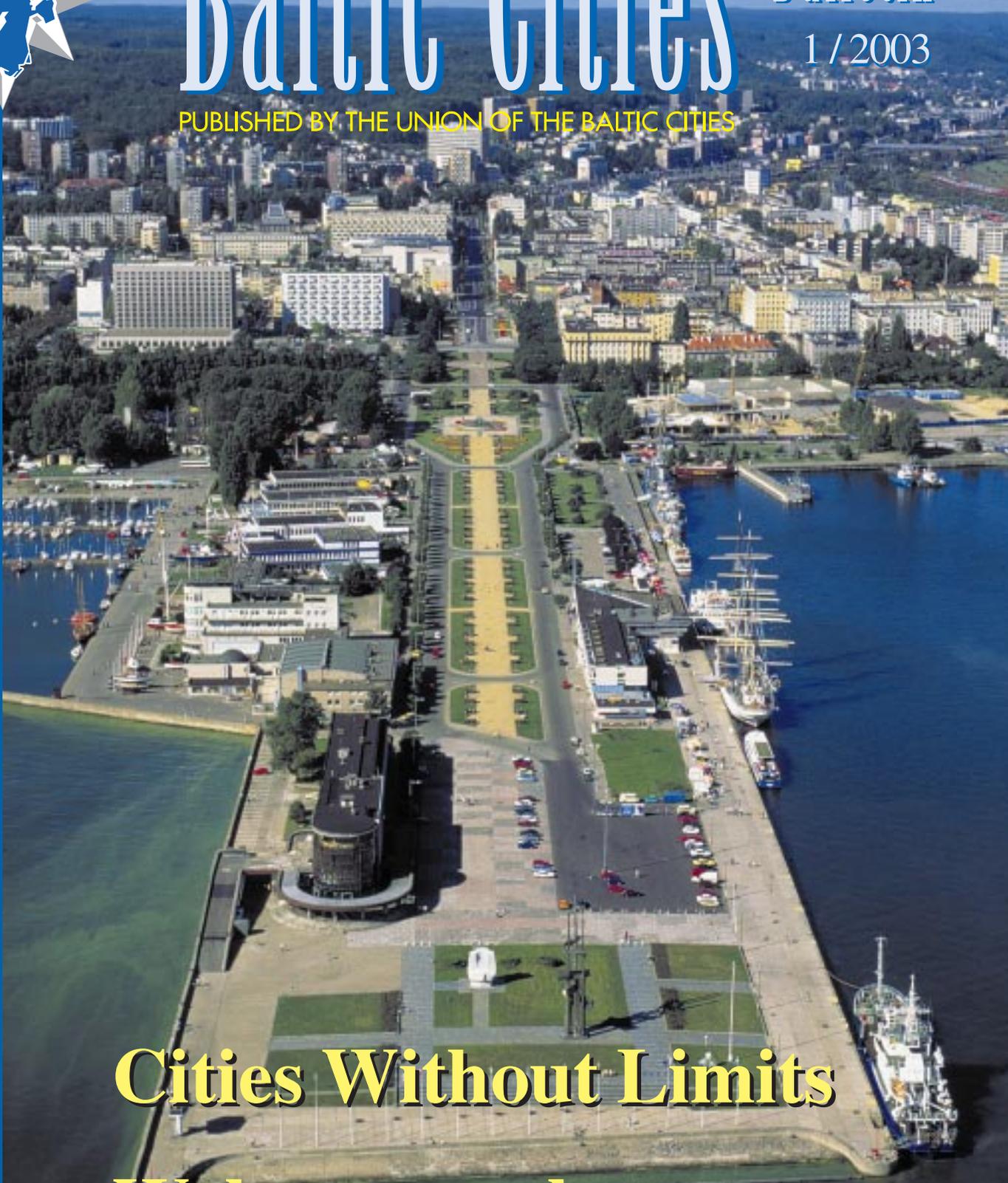


Baltic Cities

Bulletin

1 / 2003

PUBLISHED BY THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES



Cities Without Limits

**Welcome to the
7th General Conference
in Klaipėda!**

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Baltic Cities Bulletin



Dear UBC Friends,

The theme of this issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin is on the situation of the disabled in our cities, as a reminder that the Council of the European Union has declared 2003 as the Year of the Disabled. This is a very important issue, not only for the disabled themselves but also because a society clearly shows its true values by the way it treats its weakest citizens and by the degree of participation by those outside the mainstream of the citizens.

The disabled policies have undergone a tremendous development in our eastern member cities compared with the situation during communist rule. Matters can always be improved, but it is clear that the direction of the policies is towards further integration and participation if the disabled in all our member cities.

Some say that taking care of disabled people mainly is a matter of resources, and only countries at a certain economic level can afford the luxury of having a policy promoting integration and participation of the disabled. In this respect we could learn from our UBC-LVRLAC Co-operation project, as you can read in one of the articles in this issue. Although Uganda is one of the 10 poorest countries in the world, it shows that a lot can be done if you have the heart and a positive attitude.

UBC and the UBC Commissions are expanding their activities all the time, to the benefit of our members. However, expanding activities cost money, and the UBC board will continue to discuss ways of improving our finances. There are several initiatives, but it is unavoidable also raise the membership fee at the next UBC General Conference. Most of the money will come back to the members as contribution to the activities of the UBC Commissions.

We are getting closer to the 7th UBC General Conference in Klaipėda in October this year. We will discuss the role of cities in the positive economic development in our region under the theme "The Baltic Sea Wave - Business Development in the New Europe". Preparations are well under way and we have invited very distinguished and interesting speakers to the conference, so I am certain that it will be a very rewarding and inspiring General Conference.

Welcome to the UBC General Conference in Klaipėda!

Per Bødker Andersen

Kolding, May 2003



CONTENTS



I. Cities Without Limits

- 2 Just like us ...
- 3 UBC Questionnaire on the Situation of Disabled
- 4 As satisfied as the Mayor
- 4 Day of Opportunities
- 5 Gdynia without Barriers
- 5 Accessibility in Aarhus
- 6 Information Centre for Disabled
- 6 Four Cities Cooperation
- 7 Design for All
- 7 Disabled Youth Occupation Centre
- 8 Assistance to the Disabled
- 8 Community Center of Social Services
- 9 Computer and Housekeeping Classes
- 9 Youth Centre
- 10 Disabled Welfare Centre
- 10 Disabled Tourist-Friendly Euroregion
- 11 Barrier-free Rostock
- 11 Better Life for the Disabled
- 12 Mental Health Policy Forum
- 12 Integrate into Community
- 13 Opportunities for Rehabilitation
- 13 Please, do Touch!
- 14 Towards Integration
- 14 United in Serving Community
- 15 Theatre Experiences for Everyone
- 15 Small Funds, Big Hearts-Disability in Uganda



Kristiansand Museum of Art and other public places are easily accessible for the disabled

II. UBC Today

- 16 VII UBC General Conference in Klaipėda
- 17 36th Executive Board Meeting in Umeå
- 18 35th Executive Board Meeting in Panevėžys
- 18 Northern Dimension Second Action Plan
- 19 To Listen to . . .
- 19 Coming next
- 20 Ambassadors of the UBC Social Charter
- 20 Sustainable Urban Planning and Design in reality
- 21 Sport as a Rehabilitation Tool for Integration
- 21 Mobility Management and Commission meeting
- 22 Commission on Culture busy Year
- 22 Work towards Balanced Society
- 23 International Art Competition „Dreams without Limits...”
- 23 EMAS – Peer Review for Cities
- 23 City Pairs Turning Words into Action
- 24 Baltic Welcome Center
- 24 ABC project
- 25 History of Cities in the Region
- 25 UBC going African!



36th UBC Executive Board meeting was held in Umeå, Sweden, on 28-29 March 2003

III. News from Member Cities

- 26 Renewal of the Downtown
- 26 Award for the Partnership between Kiel and Kaliningrad
- 26 Baltic Sea Sun Campaign
- 27 EU Support for Tourism Development in Cēsis District
- 27 Viljandi – a Summer City
- 28 The Tall Ships' Race 2003
- 28 Regional Cross-Border Co-operation in Adjacent Areas



Famous Folk Music Festival is held every year in the city of Viljandi, Estonia



I. CITIES WITHOUT LIMITS

JUST LIKE US

The Council of the European Union has announced the year 2003 the *European Year of People with Disabilities* in order to draw attention of societies from the European Community to the problems of the disabled and motivate them to act for the benefit of people with disabilities. In this way, countries of the European Community endeavour to create proper conditions for the disabled, which will allow them to feel a fully valuable part of Europe's civilization and its cultural heritage. This year will also be a chance for the disabled themselves to discuss their problems and show the social potential they possess. The celebrations of *European Year of People with Disabilities* may become a joint undertaking of the government, self-governments and non-governmental organisations as well as other social partners including economical units. Thus these initiatives may be carried out at local, regional, state and international levels.

It is highly alarming that in the modern world a certain group of people does not have an equal access to education, work, culture and is discriminated in every stage of life the reason being their disability. Although there exist many legal acts that should regulate the issue, the regulations are not obeyed in reality. The disabled live with the stigmata: *disabled means worse* and they remain in the background satisfying only their fundamental needs.

Therefore, it is necessary to create a social policy in particular countries, which will not divide the society into the bodily-able and the disabled (as it is an artificial division) but will take into consideration needs of every person. In case of limited physical fitness (as the result of illness or accident), one should be able to function again in normal life as soon as possible. One should become again a citizen with full rights and come back to professional activity and have a chance to fulfil one's passions and dreams.

The state should compensate disability by means of legal system, provision of rehabilitation and orthopaedic equipment,

creation of infrastructure that would allow the disabled to lead a normal and decent life. At the same time, the above-mentioned factors will reduce the costs of living of a disabled person, who will no longer be a social burden but will make profits; and thus will become a taxpayer again.

Regional self-governments play a significant role; since local authorities make decisions about daily life, create reality and conditions of living for inhabitants of a given region. Self-governments are basic units which in co-operation with non-governmental organisations of the disabled and having the support of state law and policy, are able to solve effectively problems of the disabled as well as remove social and mental obstacles.

European Congress of People with Disabilities organised in Madrid between 20-23.03.2003 was devoted to the activities to be taken at different levels by European countries within the celebrations of European Year of People with Disabilities. Special emphasis was put on self-governmental activities in different domains, taking into consideration specific needs of the disabled.

It is appalling that in the modern world a certain group of people does not have an equal access to education, work, culture and is discriminated in every stage of life for reason of their disability.



Self-governments should create and carry out a social policy whose objective is to remove all the obstacles that prevent the disabled from participating in a normal and active life. Self-governments should exchange experience, support new programmes and projects, as well as implement verified solutions that have been consulted with the disabled before. The disabled need more support from a local society in order to obtain the same conditions of living that other citizens are able to enjoy. This kind of support cannot be treated as a privilege – it is a human right. Self-governments are responsible for the quality of life of all inhabitants of a given region.

The Swedish Disability Federation has compiled the document Agenda 22 that contains guidelines for local authorities within planning policy towards the disabled. Agenda 22 is based on Standard Rules on the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities adopted by United Nations. The document is based





on the idea of human rights and conviction that the best results may be achieved by the co-operation between local authorities and organisations acting for the benefit of the disabled. Agenda 22 sets certain standards regarding the quality of living of the disabled and as well as modern thinking about a social policy, where the rule of universal access is understood as universal access in all aspects of life.

Agenda 22 is based on Standard Rules on the equalisation of opportunities for the people with disabilities adopted by the United Nations. The document contains guidelines for local authorities within planning policy towards the disabled as well as sets standards regarding the quality of living.

The city of Gdynia inaugurated Social Campaign *Without Limits* within Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) in September 2002.

The objective of the campaign is to exchange experience and carry out the projects regarding problems of the disabled.

Questionnaires filled in by representatives of 26 cities (from 8 countries) – members of UBC, have become a basis for the evaluation of domains of cooperation among self-governments. Two basic aspects that may create

self-governmental joint co-operation are job activation of the disabled and care of people with mental handicap.

The year 2003 is thus a great challenge and a chance to improve the quality of

living of the disabled, their education and to make the society more sensitive to their problems. It is the year of setting the modern standards of life and social norms. We hope that it will not be an ephemeral phenomenon but a beginning of long-lasting, effective changes. Our attitude towards the disabled and their problems shows in what stage of life, development, feelings and consciousness we are.

written by

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*Beata Wachowiak-Zwara is a member of Honorary Committee of Celebrations of European Year of People with Disabilities under the auspices of the President of Poland

UBC QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE SITUATION OF DISABLED

In 2001, UBC VI General Conference has adopted the UBC Social Charter declaring cities' will to promote good and dignified living conditions for all the citizens. In connection with European Year of Disabled and UBC Social Campaign a survey on the situation of disabled in the UBC member cities was carried on by the Commission on Sport.

The questionnaire aimed at recognising and approaching the situation of the disabled to identify the most urgent problems of the disabled people and to show which obstacles cities had when solving those problems.

26 cities have answered the questionnaire. The percentage of the disabled in these cities varied from 1 % to 16 % of cities' inhabitants. The results of the research showed that the most difficult problems for the cities are breaking up psychological barriers, a lack of social acceptance and the question of professional activating of the disabled to make them live independently. The last but not least problem turned out to be architectural barriers which impede access to the public spaces for a part of our society.

The Eastern cities pinpointed equally important problems such as insufficient number of trained specialists and rehabilitation equipment, as well as too

weak social care system. Some cities drew attention to the lack of or too poor information, transport and legal instruments that ensured full participation in social life and equal conditions of living.

Problems faced by the cities are the same, regardless of the country. However, Western cities rarely raised the legal issues or the lack of rehabilitation equipment. Also, the social care system and possibility of education of disabled people seem to be more advanced in those countries.

Even if those needs and problems are identified, the process of solving them is costly and requires a long-run action. Due to the need of engaging highly professional staff or special rehabilitation

equipment cities often face financial problems.

Cities reported the need of establishing co-operation of organisations of the disabled so that they can share with their problems or exchange experiences.

Following cities took part in the survey: Næstved (Denmark); Jõhvi, Kärđla, Kuressaare, Tallinn, Tartu (Estonia); Helsinki, Kotka, Lahti, Tampere (Finland); Berlin, Lübeck, Rostock (Germany); Liepāja (Latvia); Kaunas, Klaipėda, Marijampolė, Palanga, Panevėžys (Lithuania); Gdynia, Koszalin, Pruszcz Gd. (Poland); Kalmar, Karlskrona, Linköping, Sundsvall (Sweden).

	DK	EE	FI	DE	LV	LT	PL	SE
Information		*	**			*	*	**
Transport		**	*	**	**	*	*	**
Social care		*	*	*	*	**	**	
Education		*	*	**	**	**	**	
Rehabilitation equipment	*	**		**	**	**	**	**
Psychological barriers	*	**	*	*	*	*	**	**
Social acceptance	*	**	*			*	**	
Architectural barriers	*	**	**	**	**	*	*	**
Legal issues		*				*		
Professional activation		**	**	*	*	**	**	**





AS SATISFIED AS THE MAYOR

In 2002 Kristiansand received three prizes: Availability Prize from The Nordic Handicap Political Council, Availability Prize from The Norwegian Handicap Organization and City Environment Prize from the Minister of Environment. Kristiansand bases the city development on the universal design and the functionally disabled persons are as satisfied as the mayor.

“The environment city shall be good for all of us”, says mayor Bjørg Wallevik who points out that what is unique about Kristiansand is that availability is included in the planning process. Availability is expensive if it has to be done afterwards but if incorporated in the planning process it makes no difference. “The politicians have discovered this”, says the mayor.

Those who are dependant on wheelchairs know all about not functioning. Then we started to understand how it feels to function. We will not lose this possibility! says Astrid M. Staalesen who for 13 years has been the leader of the municipal council for the functionally disabled persons in Kristiansand. She was one of the first persons who got studded tyres on her wheelchair, and today the city is so well organized that she gets along on sidewalks all over the city.

The council policy for the functionally disabled persons has not been demanded to be perfect, but the best possible



The mayor, Bjørg Wallevik (left), and Astrid M. Staalesen – leader of the municipal council for the functionally disabled persons, are both satisfied with the fact that Kristiansand is so well organized for all people – disregarding their capability of functioning

availability for all groups of the functionally disabled. For example, in the centre the attention is put to construct road intersections in such a way that the passages to the pedestrian crossings are marked by contrasting coatings both regarding colour and material quality. The pedestrian crossings are marked both with large flagstones resulting in small flagstones, and this is a warning. Then comes a granite edge and then starts the pedestrian lane. There are rubber plates on both sides of the pedestrian lane.

The oldest part of the “Markens” street where cars are not allowed, is rearmed with new surface and heat from a distant heating plant. The height is adjusted so that the wheelchairs easily can roll into the shops, which earlier had steps. In the beginning the surveying services denied this, says Astrid Staalesen. The next time they said “well” and the third time they wrote a letter saying it was “interesting”. Now this is definitely their own idea, and nothing is better than that! The nice part is that there are unbelievably many wheelchair users on the streets, a noticeable increase compared to earlier times.

The harbour area is also rehabilitated and upgraded for functionally disabled persons, with an elevator for those who want to go boating. The city beach has the ramp and the wharf with firm surface. The sea front promenade is adjusted to serve the functionally disabled. Along the river Otra there are special places to go fishing and bathing for wheelchair users

“The city and its surroundings are meant for all, disregarding capability of functioning, and the goal must be always to get better”, says Mayor Bjørg Wallevik.

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DAY OF OPPORTUNITIES!

The last Saturday in May is a special day in the City of Karlstad. The yearly event “Karlstads Stadslopp” a running race attracts thousands of people running in the streets or just visiting the town. On the very same day the municipality of Karlstad and the local Disability Federation organise an event to promote the European Year of People with Disabilities.

An outdoor arena will be built in the centre of Karlstad. On the arena there will be different kinds of cultural and sport activities performed by people with or without disabilities. Local organisations

of different disabilities and organisations engaged in issues concerning human rights prepare an exhibition which shall be located close to the arena. The aim of the event is to change the image of people with disabilities and to show that there are no limits for what people can do. The event is one way to increase awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and the potential that they are to society.

The municipality of Karlstad has had a political plan for disability issues for a year now. The plan contains common goals and measures related to information, accessibility, education,

leisure and employment. The plan was worked out in close partnership with local organisations of different disabilities. The vision foresees full participation and equal rights for all citizens.

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GDYNIA WITHOUT BARRIERS

The constantly growing consciousness of equality of rights has helped to notice discrimination of the disabled in some aspects of life. An important moment for the municipality was the appointment of Mayor Plenipotentiary on the Disabled to co-ordinate actions in the municipality. The next step was the establishment of complex service centre for the disabled in the City Hall as well as employment of a person who knows sign language. It is worth stressing here the importance of the programme of complex action for the disabled: Gdynia without Barriers adopted by Gdynia City Council in 2000 and adoption of Agenda 22 in 2002.

In order to facilitate employment search, Job Activation Division has been created. Thanks to its efforts 89 disabled persons have been employed. Additionally, the conference for Gdynia's employers was organised where they learned about legal solutions for those employing the disabled.

Favourable conditions for the development of non-governmental organisations and regular meetings with their representatives allowed for the assessments for the group of the disabled. It has been noticed that services

responsible for observing the law estimated incorrectly needs of the disabled. Hence, workshops for the police, city guards, and security guards of shopping malls were organised. Their main topic was the accessibility of parking place and labelling of the vehicles of people with movement disfunctions. Additionally, Gdynia firemen have been trained in sign language, and an emergency system for the deaf-mute has been created. Gdynia's guide for the disabled with information on communication, education, law regulations and social welfare has been issued. In co-operation with non-governmental organisations, institutions helping the mentally handicapped, the blind, the people with impaired sight and the deaf-mute have been established. Organisations that support the disabled use the buildings owned by the city free of charge.

Moreover, flats adapted to the needs of the disabled have been built. At the same time programme of sheltered accommodation for the mentally handicapped (to enable them to live on



Gala of the competition „Gdynia without Barriers”

their own) has been carried out. Exhibitions and open-air workshops for the artists painting with feet and mouth as well as exhibitions of the best Polish photographers were organised. Performances in theatres, films in cinemas and information programmes in Gdynia TV are interpreted in sign language.

In 2002, Gdynia City Council adopted a document Agenda 22.

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ACCESSIBILITY IN AARHUS

Respect, tolerance and social surplus are measured in terms of efforts made to improve conditions for those who are not a part of the most typical ninety percent of the population - no matter of the measurement.

In recent years, the City of Aarhus has systematically attempted to improve accessibility to all its public spaces for the disabled, the elderly, the blind, and others for whom the mere access to the public spaces can be a challenge.

In 2001, the action programme „Accessibility in Aarhus 2001-2004” was initiated by the City Administration in co-operation with relevant partners from the local organisations. The action programme consists of number of issues related to accessibility; and they devise a number of specific initiatives to be taken to improve accessibility.

A thorough effort has been made to scan the inner city, identifying any obstructions to the accessibility of the public spaces. As all users of white sticks and wheel chairs know, the city is full of such obstructions. However, it has become clear that most of them can be eliminated at modest costs. The better awareness of accessibility that is a prerequisite to future sustainability is more a gain than a cost.

Given numerous initiatives, the central pedestrian street of Aarhus has been rebuilt in 2002. In shop entrances, steps are replaced with ramps for the benefit of wheel chair users, leading lines are laid in the street for the blind, and crossing roads are marked by a slight 2,5 centimetres change of levels. The street surface is forged to prevent slipping, and shop exhibitions are located in zones designed so as not to impede the passage of the blind with the white cane, the disabled in

their wheel chairs, or a parent with a baby buggy. This year, a broad effort is made to improve accessibility in all of the inner city. All zebra crossings are equipped with sound signals. All road crossing steps are eliminated, and passages for wheel chairs, slowly walking people, blind and others are developed.

In August 2002, the City of Aarhus was awarded with the Nordic Council Prize on Disability Policy for the accessibility project. Aarhus City appreciates the recognition thereby awarded, but is even more appreciative of the opportunity it may give to inspire other cities to improve accessibility.

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INFORMATION CENTRE FOR DISABLED

Problems of the disabled persons have remained within the interest of Gdansk authorities since 1996 when the council nominated the Mayor's Plenipotentiary for the Disabled. The action programme against social exclusion was then developed and updated in 2002.

The program covers such aims as raising public awareness about the disabled persons problems or eliminating obstacles in municipal buildings. Providing equal opportunities in education, culture, and sports, creating free access to medical care, rehabilitation and social care, creating a job search support system, developing and implementing a social communication system for finding the disabled-friendly solutions come next.

The majority of Gdansk's cultural institutions re-targeted their offers at the disabled through eliminating the architectural barriers. Likewise, 26 health care institutions adapted themselves to the needs of the disabled. A number of joint classes where healthy and disabled children learn together have increased.

In the school year 2002/2003 there are 138 such classes in 33 schools in total. As for the public transportation system, it gets adjusted to the needs of the disabled. Presently, Municipal Transportation Company owns 91 low-floor buses.

In 1999 the Disabled Service Unit was created. Apart from the county statutory tasks, it initiates and organises a number of projects for the disabled. Namely, these are the cultural events, artistic workshops for children and teenagers. Exhibitions of the artistic photos such as e.g. "Politicians and the disabled", "To See, Hear, Touch and Know", or Hadamarian Exhibition devoted to the extermination of the disabled during the world war II, scientific symposiums and conferences are other examples. Since three years the city organises cruises over the Gdansk Bay for children and teenagers with disability. "Gdansk—a disabled-friendly city" is another literary-artistic competition for all students organised since 1998. Due to co-operation with Gdansk International Fairs, the disabled participate in the fairs and events where they can present their artistic

and craft works. The City Council has developed the report on the status of the disabled persons and has prepared information leaflets for the disabled and their families, and a guidebook. Information Centre for the Disabled - Gdaskon - offers complex information on its website.

In May 2000, City Council organised a series of events "Caravan 2000-Poland Stop" under the scheme of the International Movement for Variety and Understanding – Caravan 2000. Since 2001 the city of Gdansk together with municipal NGOs constitute the Polish Committee "Caravan 2000".

On 2 December 2002 the city authorities solemnly inaugurated the European Year of the Disabled 2003. For this reason the Gdansk Committee prepared the events calendar, numerous meetings and projects.

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Kalmar, Panevėžys, Kaliningrad and Kolding are planning a joint project on participation and accessibility in connection with the European Union year of the disabled.

The aim is to throw attention onto persons with disabilities and their conditions, highlight the wishes of the possibilities of participation of the disabled in relation to the public authorities and to the disabled own organisations, to discuss present development and to set new targets in the field, and finally to create contact between disabled organisations across national borders.

The municipalities wish to promote the user's participation in a targeted and structured way. The status and influence of the disabled varies in the municipalities.

FOUR CITIES COOPERATION

Similarly, the processes of integrating the disabled are carried out on different levels. They can participate in the project based on their local conditions and possibilities, regardless of culture, organisation and resources. The project aims at developing better conditions of the disabled in co-operation with users, disabled organisations and authorities.

The whole project process consists of working seminars with participation from professionals and users from the four participating municipalities, as well as the consultation support by Social Development Centre in Copenhagen, and finally of the internal work within the municipalities.

The method is inspired by the KUBI-model (Quality Development through User Influence), which is an evaluation and development tool that can be used for investigating the living conditions, care and supply of service in order to find out what can be done better. The method is developed in co-operation with the disabled who compile the values that the evaluation and development work is based

on. The aim is to promote a binding development with the focus on user's participation.

The process contains a preparatory meeting, followed by a two day seminar with professionals from the four municipalities. The KUBI model is introduced at the seminar, so is the training to carry out a process together with a group of disabled in the individual municipalities.

The conference on the theme "Participation and Accessibility" will be carried out at the end of 2003. It will be accompanied by a number of workshops to present development projects for inspiration. All UBC members will be invited to the conference.

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DESIGN FOR ALL

The "design for all" has been established as the key principle for each administrative body of the City of Helsinki. Eliminating architectural barriers to enable free access to public life or make people's life easier is an example of such an activity.

Housing. Already 12 years ago the City Council decided that elevators shall be built in all residential three-storey or more buildings. As still more than 5 000 staircases need new elevators, the city administration launched the Elevator Project. This project guarantees 40-50 % subsidy from the State Housing Fund and 10 % from the City of Helsinki for those companies which build new elevators in residential buildings.

Public Transport. During the past 10 years Helsinki City Transport has built new trams stops. Since 2002 the city has had also 40 new trams designed specially for the city. In new trams the floor was designed about 15 cm lower than in the older ones to be on the same level as new platforms. The similar situation was with the buses. Now the new ones can lower the floor when you going in on board with a pram. Then, the Helsinki tube begun to



Elimination of physical barriers is only a part of activities of the City of Helsinki

operate in 1982. Again, the main principle was to design and construct the metro trains and stations for all. Hence, all metro stations were equipped with elevators, escalators, barrier free paths, and pedestrian sidewalks.

Public Space. One of the Helsinki's projects is "Public space for all". By 2010, all streets, squares and parks will be designed and built or renovated with a purpose to ensure an access for all inhabitants. The pilot areas are Töölönlahti bay area, Aleksanterinkatu and the centre of Vuosaari. A city designed for disabled is a nice place to live for men with children and baby carriages or for a single lady taking care of her old mother in her own apartment.

The article concentrates on the physical environment which is only a part of the activities of Helsinki to make this city for all. The Social Service Department and the Health Department have their own programmes which are financed by the city and by the Finnish Government.

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DISABLED YOUTH OCCUPATION CENTRE

Disability is any restriction or inability to perform actions due to health disorder and cankered functions that are ordinary to a healthy person.

In 2002, Kaunas opened new Disabled Youth Occupation centre. The tasks of the Centre are the following:

- to provide a possibility for the disabled of Kaunas City to integrate in the society,
- to satisfy the needs of the disabled,
- to provide the information, intermediate in protecting the interests and human dignity of the visitors,
- to provide a temporary shelter for the visitors with a severe physical disability when their parents or caregivers are away,
- to train professional skills in various spheres according to the abilities and interests of visitors.

In the Centre visitors are taken care of by social workers and their assistants,

specialists of work therapy and occupation, art therapy and occupation, psychologists, nurses, etc.

Originally, the centre was established in 1997, on the initiative of Disabled Children Care Society, seeking to integrate youth with a severe physical disability into the society. Having partially adjusted the premises in the former infant-school, the Centre invited the first visitors in 1998.

When the Ministry of Social Security of the Lithuanian Republic announced the tender for the social services infrastructure development projects, the project of this Centre won financing both from European Council Social Development fund and from the budget of the Lithuanian Republic. In 2001 the European Council and Lithuanian Government allocated 800 thousand Euros for the renovation of the Centre. The Ministry of Social Security provided the Centre with furniture and

equipment. Kaunas City Municipality gave means to build the recreation zone and sports ground. In 2002 the building was fully adjusted for the needs of disabled people, and the Kaunas Disabled Youth Occupation Centre was launched. Now this institution provides services for the disabled people from the age of 18 and their family members.

The Kaunas Disabled Youth Occupation Centre would like to establish co-operation with similar institutions that would like to share their experience and to co-operate.

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COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

The number of people with disabilities in Klaipėda has a tendency to grow. The reason is not only the increased number of invalid people, but also the general decrease of population.



Spring holiday in the farmstead of the folk artists V. Majoras

Only in 2002, 9.787 out of 194 400 inhabitants (5% of population) turned out to be people with disabilities.

The community wishes and strives to help those people paying social security and providing social services. Social assistance for the disabled comes from the state and municipal budgets, the latter support being much smaller. The

tendencies observed by social workers at Klaipėda Social Assistance Centre are not favourable because the amount of grants per capita among the disabled per month is decreasing. One of the oldest social services in our city, the provision of which

started in 1991, is social assistance at home. In 2001 there were 19 kinds of services provided to 73 persons per month and in 2002, 23 kinds provided to 276 aged and disabled people. A place to live in the Social Care Home is offered for those disabled or elderly persons who can no longer live alone, as they need constant nursing and care. In 2002, 199 applications

to live in such homes were submitted and 97 persons were accommodated (48,7%).

Movement is very important for the disabled elderly people. The demand for the technique which helps to move is satisfied in 85-91%. The most urgent problem is a need of wheel-chairs. The integration of people with movement disabilities is strengthened by providing

them transport services. 420 persons receives such assistance from 19 NGOs involved in such activities.

Social workers not only organize the provision of services, but also strive to diminish social exclusion of the disabled. In 2001 the Center started organizing meetings and holidays for the disabled once per quarter. Such attractions like Kretinga Winter Garden, the farmstead of folk artist V. Majoras, the Hill of Crosses have been visited and major national and folk festivals celebrated.

Since three years the city business circles started granting financial support to social services and two private companies finance feeding of socially unprotected people. At present two projects are under implementation. Our partner at one of them is the Lithuanian Red Cross. Those projects are financed by the USA Democracy Commission and the EU ACCESS program.

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COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The idea to establish the community center of social services has been generated since 1999. Recently the Council of Palanga Municipality has approved the project "Sustainable development of infrastructure of social services" at the Sventoji settlement, a district of Palanga city.

This project was prepared in co-operation with society of disabled people of Palanga following the requirements of the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The final decision about the financing of this project will be known by the end of April.

The main aim of the project is to meet the public needs for social services at

the Sventoji settlement (territory of the city) and to develop the infrastructure of these services "under one roof". The main activities planned within this project are reconstructing an old building and preparing the action plan for the new centre. The target groups of the project are disabled, unemployed, elderly and families with social problems.

Aiming at integrating people with disabilities into urban and communal policy different kind of activities will be organized. The centre will provide psychological consultations, courses to improve professional qualification or consultations and the training for those disabled people who would like to start up their own businesses. The library,

meeting hall and premises for cultural activities of the new centre will also be opened for all inhabitants

In case the project gets financing, the implementation will start soon and the new community center will be opened in the end of this year.

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COMPUTER AND HOUSEKEEPING CLASSES

The computer and housekeeping classes have been equipped in Liepāja Society of the Blind (LSB) this year. The computer class gives the blind equal opportunities. They can acquire computer skills and use internet, follow the training program on the computer sciences taught in comprehensive schools and fulfil the assignments during the studies in the institutions of higher education likewise average students.

With a help of the scanner and the Braille Display the blind can read any non-specially prepared text. The special computer was acquired in 2002 owing to the donation of 13.8 thousand Lats by the USA Embassy in Latvia. It is further supplied with the Braille Display and the sound card which helps even the completely blind people to work with in the Latvian, English or Russian languages, using hearing or touch.

Last year computer skills were acquired by 14 weak-eyed people, but this year - by 7 blind and 9 weak-eyed people.

Applying the acquired abilities, a young man became the author of the newspaper "Pavards" ("Fireplace"), two visually impaired study now, three more are going to start their studies next year. According to the questionnaire, at least 30 visually impaired persons would like to study but one of the obstacles is lack of the appropriate equipment.

Many of the weak-eyed and blind people in Liepāja and its region are in the working age, but only few of them have jobs. In the end of the last year the housekeeping class was equipped in Liepāja in order to teach visually impaired cooking and housekeeping skills, so that they are self-sufficient and less dependent on help of others.

Liepāja is the first Lithuanian city where thanks to the financial support of the City Council 12 out of 19 street crossings with the traffic lights are equipped with sound signals, which make movement of visually impaired easier. The city buses are equipped with large-sized numbers of routes.

Liepāja branch of Latvia Society of the



With a help of the scanner and the Braille Display the blind can read any non-specially prepared text

Blind with the support of the local government has also launched new projects: adjusting of the sports gym to the needs of the blind and establishing a hotel for the visually impaired in Liepāja.

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YOUTH CENTRE

Dailius Ornamentas is one of thirty NGOs of disabled people in Panevėžys, founded in 1998 by the Board of Disabled Centre of Lithuania. It is one of very few organizations in Lithuania that gives priority to the disabled children and youth.

The National Program on Integrating the Disabled in Lithuania for the period of 2003-2012 was adopted in 2001. The program seeks to create systems of rehabilitation, economic and social integration of the disabled, to promote their human rights through full participation and ensuring equality of opportunities and development.

Dailius Ornamentas was established with an aim to implement programs of education, training, employment, "abilities" development, professional activities, integration and rehabilitation. Seven disabled persons are employed by this institution and besides volunteers fifteen students work there as well. The organisation was founded in the premises of NGOs Headquarters and occupies an

area of 150m² with a mini-library, leisure centre and exhibition room. Dailius Ornamentas is well equipped with computers, copying machine, furnace for ceramics, wood processing equipment, loom, sewing, knitting machines. The centre is financed from the resources allocated by state institutions, funds and programs.

Visitors of the Centre use all the equipment and material. Centre provides transportation services for project participants, arranges summer camps, youth forums, international and local sport games, overseas training. The Centre runs projects on partnership with not disabled and organises exhibitions and fairs.

The City Council incorporates national social policy into the planning process and decision making and continuously pays attention to developing rehabilitation, making the physical



... from member's life of "Dailius Ornamentas"

environment, housing, transportation, social and health services, education and work opportunities, cultural and social life accessible to all the disabled. Much has been achieved in these processes, especially in consolidating activities of NGOs of Disabled.

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DISABLED WELFARE CENTRE

Pärnu has developed a strong network of supportive services that help gain dignified and long-term social coping for the disabled. The Disabled Welfare Centre, run by Pärnu Town Government, is the organization that provides various supportive services for people with different kind of disability.

A Day-care centre for mentally retarded youngsters have been operated since 1996. It provides educating and training programs - how to manage with money or how to act in shops, banks, how to take care of oneself, etc. All those daily chores that are usual for us need to be taught and reminded to the day-care center clients every day to help them manage independently. Many of those clients are young persons who cannot work because of their disability. For that reason they

must spend lot of time at home separated from society. The centre gives them an opportunity to get outside. They learn how to work with computers or use the Internet. Cooking and handicraft lessons are also popular with them. But first of all, the possibility to communicate with other persons having similar problems and lifestyle matters the most.

Three years ago the city commenced establishing the work centre for mentally retarded as well as for persons with moving disability. Today the centre is enchanting our clients with the possibility of doing something with their own hands: chairs and car models, Christmas decorations and picture frames.

When the day-care center and work centre clients live usually with their parents or relatives then five clients with psychiatric disorder live all by themselves

in the town apartments. Only a couple of years ago that kind of rehabilitation seemed unbelievable but one and a half year experience has showed that our fears were futile. A lot of work has been done to find jobs for the disabled persons. Regardless of the state subsidy to employers, it is very hard to find enterprises or organizations willing to hire a disabled person. Integrating the disabled and giving them equal possibilities are not new ideas for our society. In fact, it is a long process and we are happy to know that a long step have been taken in Pärnu to transform ideas into reality.

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DISABLED TOURIST-FRIENDLY EUROREGION

Euroregion Pomerania develops the PHARE CBC financed project emphasising the issue of the disabled tourist-friendly city. Municipal Centre for Recreation and Rehabilitation runs the project since September 2002 together with the City Social Affairs Department. Through this project the city endeavoured to create proper conditions for the disabled in the city. It is believed that proper conditions will allow the disabled to feel a fully valuable part of the European euroregion and its cultural heritage.

The CBC partners have already printed out a promotional brochure targeted at all NGOs and institutions active in the disabled persons circles. The main highlights of the project are the disabled tourist guidebook of the city of Szczecin and the city book for the disabled. Both publications have been consulted with the disabled as they know their needs best. The first meeting on the German side of the border took place in January 2003. A framework programme for the publications for guides and disabled tourist animators was developed. Additionally the project will consist in theoretical and practical training sessions for disabled tourist animators on both

sides of the border. As the final outcome of the project, a group of disabled tourists from Germany and Western Pomerania shall be presented the city of Szczecin as the disabled tourist destination point. There is a chance for them to discuss their problems and show the social potential they possess. Since local governments make decisions about daily life, create reality and conditions for living for inhabitants, let us the disabled lead normal and decent life.

The city of Szczecin attempts at removing all the obstacles that prevent the disabled from participating in normal and active life. Through its policy, the city hosts the Polish national team of the disabled athletes before the World Championships and implements verified solutions that have been consulted with the disabled earlier, and great attention to developing a support system for disabled champions is shown here.

As a result of its international experiences, the city administration has started the procedure of awarding the certificates of accessibility of buildings for the disabled, favouring those who fulfil city requirements. The municipal athletic stadium has been completely adjusted to the needs of the disabled. The city pays



for translating the regional TV programmes into the sign language. Also, www guide and info-on line service for the disabled in the Polish and German languages are available in Szczecin. Municipal Centre for Recreation and Rehabilitation together with the START - Sports Club of Invalids created the municipal centre of disabled sports and tourism activities. The international event of championships of Poland's invalid athletes in 2003 is planned in Szczecin. These are only some examples of the city actions.

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BARRIER-FREE ROSTOCK

The advice centre of “*barrierefreies rostock e.V.*“ is active in the planning and organization of apartment patronage for older people and handicapped persons since 1993.

Through introducing changes in bathrooms or creating barrier-free house entrances, existing apartments are adapted to the needs of the old and handicapped. Over the years a close co-operation with apartment co-operative societies and Rostock municipality has been successfully developed. The co-operation with research institutes and membership in the federal work community for apartment adaptation helps the centre always be informed of the latest developments in this field.

Older and handicapped people are often not capable of arranging the necessary adaptations of their apartments. Therefore, it is important that a qualified personnel is at their side with advice and help. The advice-seeking person directly or via the landlord contacts the advice centre of “*barrierefreies rostock e.V.*“ with his/her request. The staff will then examine the flat and give suggestions as to required changes to the landlord, including a financial scheme. A non-bureaucratic manner is preferred in collaboration with

the tenants as long as all the problems are settled.

As demographic development in Germany shows, the number of older people in the overall population will increase considerably in the future. To enable people of age, as well as in case of illness, to remain in the familiar surrounding, it is absolutely required to have a barrier-free living space. A barrier-free living will be an essential quality characteristic of the housing market in the future and will determine the living satisfaction from the living conditions at a later age.

That is why “*barrierefreies rostock e.V.*“ gives advice before actual planning and constructing takes place. Owing to this technical advice, seminars, training sessions and excursions, especially planners, craftsmen and investors shall be made aware of and sensitive for the particular needs of old and handicapped people. And international exchanges play a significant role here as well.

Also, a significant progress has been made in the implementation of the barrier-free concept of the public urban transportation system. More and more low-floor buses go around the city to ease the disabled in the daily routines.



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BETTER LIFE FOR THE DISABLED

Despite of the fact that the disabled are having restrictions in their life activities, they do not lose belief in themselves and their forces. They more and more actively strive at being integrated in “healthy society”. The main criterion of estimating a disabled person’s life should be not initially equal opportunities, but their equal quality of life in comparison with healthy people.

One of the main goals set both to the state and to our city is creating such conditions to all disabled that would exclude any kind of discrimination and humiliation, not depending on a place of study or work, a degree and character of physical impairment.

St. Petersburg is one of the most vivid examples to be followed, not only in legal, but also in social sphere. Beside the Federal law, St. Petersburg has the law on

“The state support of public associations of veterans of war and work, disabled and victims of political reprisals of Saint-Petersburg”. Accordingly the disabled are released from a rent for using objects of uninhabited fund up to 100 sq. meters. Early 2002 deputies of the Legislative Assembly made changes to the Law of Saint-Petersburg „On tax privileges”. This document has established a lower rate of the profit tax - at a rate of 10,5 % - for the enterprises and the organizations which are in the property of the Russian public associations of disabled that makes 4 % less than standard rate.

In St. Petersburg there are about 300 organizations for the disabled, among them various improvement centres, inter-regional public organizations and societies. Great attention is given to programs of rehabilitation of the disabled children, such programs having helped to

reduce a level of children’s physical inability. In 2002 four regional branches of social rehabilitation and a special centre were opened as well as implementation of the target programs “Creation of complex system of rehabilitation of disabled”, “The accessible environment of life activity for disabled people” was started.

Disabled sportsmen are not neglected and left without attention. In 2002, 47 various tournaments have been carried out in the city. The special merit of our city in this direction is that disabled sportsmen take part in the international competitions where they won medals last year.

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MENTAL HEALTH POLICY FORUM

Mental health service users are amongst the most vulnerable groups in society, even in the midst of people with disabilities. People with mental health problems are very much stigmatised and socially excluded because of erroneous perceptions and fear in society.

Generally, officials and professionals make decisions about issues concerning mental health service users without consulting with them. Often those decisions do not satisfy their actual needs and wishes. Research has shown that users, their families, carers and NGOs want to have a 'voice' in the issues that affect their lives.

'Pathways to Policy' is a mental health program initiated by international mental health organization Hamlet Trust to bring a change to this trend on the basis of above-mentioned research. In March 2002, 'Pathways to Policy' programme was launched in Tallinn, Estonia. It aims to create new participatory policy processes and public action, develop trust and a shared vision between groups and individuals. The programme's goal is to develop in Tallinn a sustainable model of local policy that can be also transferred to a national context.

Forum enables for local stakeholders with an interest in improving mental



Pelagruna Support Centre

health to meet together on a regular basis, share experiences and ideas. Forum is using their expertise to identify problems and to develop creative solutions. It is not merely a 'talking club', but forum members initiate actions to improve mental health. Forum consists of representatives of Tallinn mental health NGO-s, (ex)users of services, family members, social workers, psychiatrists, local officials, academics, nurses, pharmaceutical company, journalists, religious groups, municipal service providers. Users have

an essential and unique contribution to make to effective policies, they make up 33% of the forum.

So far 5 Policy Forums and 2 Pre-Forums have been held to discuss stigma, mental health network and employment. Forum has already achieved notable outcomes. New relationships with the media have been developed and articles and interviews have appeared in newspapers and on the radio. This has raised awareness of mental health and has resulted in more people gaining support, advice and services from mental health organisations in Tallinn. Projects designed and initiated by the forum have enabled users to have a greater voice in policy through leading training workshops and public events such as the Open Forum day and the cinema project.

This new approach to mental health policy has ensured local stakeholders have had a place to participate in the policy process and new relationships and partnerships have been created between the local government and civil society.

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INTEGRATE INTO COMMUNITY

Our objective is to reach a situation where disabled living in Pruszcz, a city of 22 000 inhabitants, shall not live at the margins of our society nor be confined to the four walls. Activities towards children are in the primary focus as well.

In the primary school no 4 in Pruszcz, an 'integration' classes, with both healthy and disabled children were formed. This integration concept is based on joint activities and education for all children. Through contacts between health and the handicapped children they may learn how to become a more valuable part of society. Also, the Society for the Mentally Disabled promotes various forms of activities. One of them is centre for rehabilitation and education which

provides training and individual programme therapy for children and teenagers. The Community's Self-support Centre, was established for teenagers and adults with mental disorders and combined disorders. It offers daily care, therapy and training sessions on how to live independently by professional staff. The Society for Mentally Disabled has for many years organised Integration Theatre Meetings. This offers a very good step for self-expression and forms perfect foundation for further integration of the disabled.

For a long time now the Society has had contacts with schools and the House of Cultural Activities at Pruszcz, resulting in the Olympic Games with the participation of the disabled children.

The fifth of May has been announced as the 'Disabled People's Dignity Day'. On this special occasion all the inhabitants will have the possibility to meet together. The city takes up a massive information campaign, combined with leisure activities highlighting the problems which occur to people who have suffered physical impairment. The event is organised under the patronage of the Mayor of Pruszcz Gdański and Deputy Starosta of Gdańsk.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR REHABILITATION

The Day centre for disabled persons with physical and mental disorders was established in Tukums in 1999. Each day 22-36 disabled persons receive here different kind of social services. The main goal of the centre is to achieve the integration of the disabled in society that is gained by improving the self-caring, communication and working skills of clients.

A special social rehabilitation program was elaborated for each client taking into account his/her individual abilities and wishes. The center offers service of physiotherapist, computer skills training, drama group or vocally-instrumental music band participation, and knitting, sewing, weaving, floristic and wood-working workshops.

In 2003 the development of the workshops for the visual art and wood-working was set up as the main priority of Tukums Day Centre. Painting, due to the lack of financial resources, was offered in a limited way. In March the visual art „I

am” was organised. Works produced during the action will participate in the exhibition of visual arts of disabled persons.

This year the centre has started co-operation with a home for disabled „Kiši”. Once a week we use the clay-modelling workshop of this home. Inhabitants of „Kiši”, in their turn, visit different workshops at our centre. We exchange the exhibitions and organise common activities of amateur art and relaxation.

Moreover, the centre has established co-operation with the private kindergarten in order to organise common integration projects with a goal to inform children about people with special needs, as well as to teach them toleration towards the disabled.

In the future, Tukums Day centre plans to develop a program to approximate the rehabilitation services to the residential



Chairperson of the Parliament, Ms Ingrida Udre together with Invalid Centre employees and clients

places of clients. In order to create a stable and well-functioning system at a highly qualitative and professional level, the Day Centre co-operates with the state, local government and NGOs.

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PLEASE, DO TOUCH!

Gotland has initiated an art project “Please, do touch!” The art exhibition will open for the tactile values and will reach groups of people that today are more or less excluded from the art life. The exhibition is inviting all persons that can be affected by touching art, irrespective of being handicapped.

Usually visitors are expected not to touch the works. We wish to demonstrate that it could be different. The process of arranging the exhibition should give good tools, ideas and training for the institutions concerned. They can get along with in their work to make the art accessible for everyone. The focus will be put on the tactile values in an alternative sort of exhibition - it is true that some of the pieces of art will become more worn and maybe even be used as consumer goods, but this will also give a higher degree of cultural communication.

The selected art works will represent various forms of texture and expressions,

wood, stone, plastic, rubber and other materials. It can also include experiments, for example works that have physical shape, sound, smells and interactive expressions. To make it easier for visitors to get orientated in the exhibition hall, it will be equipped with pedagogical tools, for example, the catalogues printed with Braille text and/or recorded speech, etc.

The visitors will also be welcome to the museum workshop and be given the opportunity to make their own work, based on their impulses from the exhibition. From this workshop a growing and multiplex second part of the exhibition will emerge.

The exhibition will be opened at the Museum of Art on Gotland in January 2004. Thereafter it will be offered to other art galleries and museums. The experiences and new knowledge resulting from the whole process of this project will be presented in the catalogue and the exhibition itself. Here we will be able to certify that it is possible to implement an

increased accessibility that will be – after fulfillment – of decisive guidance for the future work.

The project was initiated by the Municipal Art Consultant on Gotland and arranged by the Municipality of Gotland in close cooperation with the associations of the disabled and the Museum of Art on Gotland. It is financed with grants from the Council of Cultural Affairs of the Swedish Government, the public fund (Allmänna arvsfonden) and the European Commission. The associations of the disabled are involved in the project from its start. The exhibition, its design and pedagogy are designed in consultation with them.

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TOWARDS INTEGRATION

The Strategic Plan of Vilnius City highlights safe social environment as one of the main areas of city development. The high level of integration of different social groups as well as equal opportunities for enjoying the rights to education and employment are very important for fulfilling the above mentioned task.

Some of the groups have specific needs that must be satisfied in order to guarantee their participation in community life. Mentally disabled people is one of such groups. People with mental disability can hardly participate in the competitive labour market. Therefore Vilnius together with non-governmental organizations

takes up every effort to help develop their working conditions and to ease the realization of their production.

Beside material benefits, which are used for the expansion of activities and allow for bonuses, the feeling of being needed and active, is crucially important to the disabled people and to their successful integration with society.

Education and Day care centers for disabled people produce quite a lot of quality goods and souvenirs that could be sold in the market. A professional training centre "Mes esame" ("We are") has opened a souvenir and information shop on a prestigious Pilies street in the centre of Vilnius. All the institutions

working with disabled people have a possibility to display and sell their works in the shop. The shop offers a big choice of goods. One may find pottery, wooden articles, fancy works, wicker works, hand-woven and knitted things and other kinds of souvenirs. Visitors have an opportunity to get acquainted with activities of social institutions and non-governmental organizations working for the welfare of the disabled. Although the shop was opened only a few months ago, it has already attracted frequent buyers, and the turnover is growing relatively fast. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to get more information about the project or share with your experiences.



Piece of works made by the disabled are sold in the centre of Vilnius

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UNITED IN SERVING COMMUNITY

Over the years, the activities and ensuring the sustainability of organisations of handicapped people have been a priority of the city government. In the last 5 years, relations between the local government and those organisations have constantly strengthened.

In 2001, the city government launched preparations of a development plan for creating equal opportunities for handicapped people. Upon satisfaction of the needs of handicapped people the city has moved from institutional welfare services to public services and support. The future lies certainly in active engagement in the employment of handicapped people through creation of assisted work, protected and adjusted jobs.

There are 25 organisations in the City of Tartu which unite and supports handicapped. The entire membership of the organisations amounts to 2.500 people and given the fact that the population of Tartu is 100.000 it is a large figure.

The City of Tartu in supporting the organisations of handicapped people. The city has always supported the organisations by providing them with facilities for the meetings and other events. The organisations can use special means of transport within Tartu and outside the city.

In recent years, identification of services necessary for handicapped people and purchase of services from organisations of handicapped people have become important. The first services purchased on a contract basis were sign language interpretation services for the deaf launched in 1998, which, by now, is accompanied by personal assistants for people with movement and visual disabilities, support of computer training of blind people, support person services for mentally challenged people and autistic people, supporting the elderly handicapped people and counselling and running a day care centre for the elderly and handicapped people.

The development for satisfaction of the needs of handicapped people has been

fast and the development of public welfare services will continue at the desired pace. This year, the local government has found a way to support readjustment of the dwellings of handicapped people and activities supporting employment of handicapped people should be launched.

It is the organisations of handicapped people who have shown the necessary level of activity by applying for support for their activities and training not only to the city government, but also various foreign funds.

Proceeding from our experiences we can say that the best means of creating equal opportunities for all the people of our city is well functioning cooperation.

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THEATRE EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE

The Association for the Disabled in Turku Region granted the Krykä Award to Turku City Theatre this spring. The Award is presented yearly either to a person or to a community that has for the past year paid special attention to the disabled in their actions. The actions of the theatre have pleased the visually impaired, cancer patients as well as allergic persons.

“Let’s make theatre for everyone” is an idea that appeases both the makers and the clients.

The Play of an Island Gave a Face to Diversity

For the disabled, the highlight of the year in the City Theatre was the play called Saari (an Island) in which all the actors and actresses were disabled or chronically ill. The play was so popular that extra performances were organised. Saari brought out the disabled and chronically ill members of our society, those who are not seen sufficiently in public given their vast number among us.

The play takes place on an island in the summer. Its tranquillity is disturbed by the disabled. There were amusing but also sentimental and touching scenes between the disabled and the healthy. Although all the participants had some kind of a disability or disease, the play was not about lamentation or melancholy. Disablement was dealt with in a refreshingly humorous manner.

Unscented Shows for Allergic Persons, Previews for Cancer Patients

The Turku City Theatre co-operated with the Allergy and Asthma Federation in organising unscented shows for allergic persons. All kinds of perfumes and smoke or other such special effects are forbidden. The previews of the popular Festus and Mercury plays that have been a part of the repertoire for ten years already are often played to children with cancer. For the next Christmas a new show for cancerous children (“Festus and Mercury and the Santa Machine”) is planned. It is nice to see the joy and gladness on children’s faces who are watching the play.

Also the Visually Impaired Enjoy Theatre

If agreed beforehand, the visually impaired have an opportunity to enter the theatre before others. They can go up the stage and familiarise themselves with the actors and actresses who talk about their roles and costumes. The visually impaired are also allowed to touch the costumes and, naturally, discuss with the actors and actresses. The City Theatre of Turku received a prize from the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired.

The intention of the Turku City Theatre is to offer experience for everyone. The unprejudiced actions of the Theatre are continued and developed. Welcome to everyone’s theatre!

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SMALL FUNDS, BIG HEARTS-DISABILITY IN UGANDA

Disability is a major problem for children in developing countries. Up to five percent are born with a disability or become disabled during their childhood. Being a volunteer on a Ugandan school for children with special needs (Entebbe Children’s Welfare Unit) I experience every day many health workers, teachers, parents, politicians, NGO’s and aid-programmes, working hard for a better living for the disabled.

In Uganda, with its high rate of illiteracy (45,8% women, 25% men), one might think that parents are not aware of the special needs of disabled children and leave the children without the stimulation of family love and support. This is far from my experiences. Especially mothers are well aware that their disabled child needs special care. But there is an urgent need for counselling and appropriate schooling of children with physical and mental handicaps.

In 1997 the government implemented a new education programme aiming at

ensuring free primary education for all children in Uganda, also those mentally disabled. However, as most schools – especially in rural areas – have 50-100 pupils in one classroom with one teacher, the advantages for disabled children are doubtful. But school attendance *does* positively affect the disabled – they enjoy going to school. Interactions with other children give them a feeling of being socially accepted. Actually, this is a major step for disabled children in Uganda.

Good intentions and initiatives often face economic constraints, giving slow progress of the development for disabled. Yet I experience from my daily work at the school that in many people’s hearts there are no limits of what they will do - I find caring and encouraging teachers (some not on payroll!) and children with all kinds of disabilities exploring school work and everyday life activities.

The driving force of the school staff is the urge to help and develop these children more than economic incentives.



The Ugandan schools need more people with big hearts, yet there is also a desperate need for financial means for the daily running and for further development of the situation for the disabled in Uganda.

written by

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II. UBC TODAY

VII UBC General Conference in Klaipėda, 17-19.10.2003

Union of the Baltic Cities invites all its member cities and other interested parties to the 7th General Conference of the UBC. This year the theme is „**The Baltic Sea Wave - Business Development in the New Europe**”.

The aim of the conference is to:

- inspire BSR Local Authority Actors to promote business and to utilise the positive economic development
- discuss fruitful connections between municipal and business community actors
- present the Baltic Sea Region as a showcase on how municipalities can co-operate with the business community

The General Conference will take place in Klaipėda, Lithuania, on 17-19 October 2003.

The first day will be fully devoted to the conference theme. Among invited speakers are:

- Mr Rolandas Paksas, President of Lithuania
- Mr Albert Bore, President of the Committee of the Regions
- Mr Erkki Liikanen, EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society
- Mr Leif Pagrotsky, Minister of Industry, Employment and Communication, Sweden
- high-ranked representatives of the business community in the Baltic Sea Region
- and others.

We will also carry out workshops that should trigger your interest in business development. The workshops will discuss inter alia the city role in business development and business opportunities in the new Europe.

The second day will be devoted to UBC internal matters such as reports, elections, finances, meetings of all UBC Commissions and networks.

We will arrange some post-conference tours around Klaipėda and in Lithuania on Sunday, 19 October.

A final invitation will come soon, but please reserve these days in your calendars.

Looking forward to meeting you in Klaipėda !



Welcome to Klaipėda in October 2003!

For more information contact:

UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk
Tel. +48 58 301 09 17
e-mail: info@ubc.net

On the occasion of the VII UBC General Conference, UBC has the honour of inviting its member cities to

The Baltic Cities Environmental Award 2003

Baltic Cities Environmental Award is arranged every second year on the occasion of the UBC General Conference. The intention with the Award is to encourage the cities in the Baltic Sea Region to develop their administration and services in an innovative way for the benefit of the whole municipality and its citizens.

Since the theme of the General conference is “Business development in the new Europe” we would be delighted to get applications covering local businesses in some way. The Baltic Cities Environmental Award will also put special emphasis on the following themes: Air Quality, Bio-diversity, Energy, Environmental health, Information & Education.

The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2003 will be given as honorary award (diploma and grant of 5000 Euro) to one of the UBC member cities. The grant is kindly donated by the Danish company, Per Aarsleff A/S.

Cities wanting to participate should follow the guidelines in the Award leaflet that will be granted in May. The applications should reach the UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat at the latest 1 September.



Gdańsk was the winner in the last edition of the Best Practice Environmental Award. Now it is time for your city to win!

For more information contact:

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UBC EnvCom Secretariat
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36TH EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN UMEÅ

The 36th meeting of the UBC Executive Board was held on the 28-29 March 2003 in the City of Umeå, Sweden, upon the invitation of Ms Marie Luise Ronnmark, Mayor of Umeå. The first part of the meeting (closed session) was attended by the Members of the Executive Board. The 2nd part of the meeting (open session) was open to all Member Cities.

New member cities

The Board decided to accept the cities of Örebro, Gävle and Luleå as new members of the UBC. It was also decided to grant the city of Grodno the observer status. The Board wished all the mentioned above new cities a fruitful cooperation with other UBC members.

VII General Conference

Ms Ina Sidlauskiene informed about the status of preparations to the VII UBC General Conference in Klaipėda, 17-19 October 2003. She informed that the conference organising committee chaired by the Mayor Rimantas Tarasievicius had been established. Klaipėda City Council allocated the necessary financial means for the GC budget. Invitations to VIPs in Lithuania have been sent out and several confirmations received among them from the Prime Minister of Lithuania.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki presented the draft programme of the General Conference. The first conference day will be fully devoted to the conference theme: "The Baltic Sea Wave - Business Development in the New Europe". The second day of the conference will be devoted to the UBC internal matters such as reports, elections, finances, etc.

2nd Northern Dimension Action Plan

Mr Juhan Janusson reminded that UBC was requested by the CBSS to submit ideas and proposals to the 2nd NDAP 2004-2006. He informed that UBC contribution to NDAP has been prepared and sent to the CBSS. CBSS forwarded UBC contribution to the European Commission. The Board underlined the importance of UBC involvement in the NDAP.

UBC policy on sponsoring

President Andersen informed the Board that several applications for sponsorship were sent to large companies operating the BSR. Vice-President Lahoniitty informed that he had applied for sponsorship to the energy company Fortum and the application had been



treated positively. Fortum decided to sponsor UBC with 20.000 EUR within the two-year period.

Financial matters

Mr Żaboklicki informed that UBC financial report for 2002 has been sent to all member cities. The report brings the details on: UBC incomes and expenditure; fees paid by member cities; expenditure of UBC Commissions; cities contributions to the secretariats; UBC projects with external funding; cities contributions to the UBC events. Subsequently SG presented the estimated budget for 2003. The Board adopted the report and the budget. The Board authorised the SG to submit the proposal of new membership fees at the next Board meeting.

Commissions meeting

The leaders of UBC Commissions and Networks held a working meeting in connection with the Board meeting. The leaders submitted activity reports from the period June 2002 – February 2003. The Board praised the Commissions and Networks for their active work and encouraged them to continue their important tasks.

Guest speakers

Mr Hans F. Grönwall, Ambassador in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the Swedish policy towards the Baltic Sea region. Ambassador Hannu Halinen, Director of the CBSS Secretariat, presented an overview of the most important issues for the BSR, the CBSS is currently working with. The Board thanked the distinguished guests for their important contributions and expressed UBC readiness to closer cooperation.

UBC Social Charter

Ms Karin Wohlgenuth, informed about the latest developments concerning the implementation of the UBC Social Charter, adopted at the VI General Conference in Rostock in 2001. She emphasized that Social Charter had been translated to all 10 Baltic languages and sent out to all UBC member cities.

UBC in Brussels

Ms Krista Taipale-Salminen informed the Board about the presence of UBC member cities in Brussels. 44 UBC cities are represented in Brussels by 21 Regional European Offices. Ms Salminen underlined that there is already existing base for building up a network of UBC European Offices in Brussels which could provide support and promotion of UBC interests in Brussels.

„Dreams Without Limits”

Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia, reminded that 2003 had been declared by the Council of European Union as European Year of People with Disabilities. Having this in mind, Ms Depka proposed to organise an International Drawing Competition for the disabled children from UBC member cities, entitled "Dreams Without Limits". The final of the competition will take place on 2 July 2003 in the city of Gdynia.

The Board decided to hold its 37th meeting in the City of Rostock, Germany, on 18 June 2003.

written by

*Mr Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary General*



35TH EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN PANEVĖŽYS

The 35th UBC Executive Board meeting was held on the 9th of November 2002 in the City of Panevėžys, upon the invitation of the Mayor Valdemaras Jakstas.

New members

President Andersen informed about the applications for UBC membership from the cities of Molėtai and Fredericia. The Board accepted the applications.

General Conference

Mr Vidmantas Pleckaitis, Vice-Mayor of Klaipėda warmly invited all UBC member cities to come to Klaipėda for the VII General Conference. He informed that in 2003 Klaipėda will celebrate 750 anniversary of coronation of the king Mindaugas who made the city well-known.

Interreg III

Under the present rules of Interreg, the BSR is discriminated because Interreg is designed for the land bordering regions. The programme is not intended for the countries which possess maritime borders. UBC will strive for the change of rules of the next Interreg programme.

Transport issues

In the EU policy on transportation described in the TEN, the ferry lines, so



vital for the BSR, are not included. The policy includes roads, railways and telecommunications but no ferry lines. In the EU White Book on Transportation issued last year the BSR is hardly mentioned. UBC is of the opinion that the lack of good ferry connections across the Baltic Sea in large parts of the region is a severe obstacle for development.

Revising the UBC Strategy

On behalf of the working group Mr Juhan Janusson presented the ideas on the structure and contents of the new UBC Strategy. The WG proposed that the Strategy document should be concise, easy to read and understand. The main target group should be the present and potential member cities. The Board authorised the WG to go on with the work on revising the UBC Strategy.

NGO Forum in Turku

Mr Mikko Lohikoski informed that representatives of NGOs from all Baltic Sea countries will meet in Turku, in May 2003. Some 400 civil society participants are expected to come to share their experiences and plan joint activities. Mrs Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, has agreed to be the Patron of the Forum.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki presented the Baltic Cities Bulletin devoted to "Governance in Baltic Cities". The bulletin includes articles sent by the member cities, introducing new methods of governance in Baltic cities. UBC position on the latest EU White Paper on Governance is also included in the publication.

NORTHERN DIMENSION SECOND ACTION PLAN

The EU called for a second Northern Dimension Action Plan (2nd NDAP) at the Luxemburg summit October 2002.

The first action plan was rather vague and it is difficult to trace any real results from it. But the Northern Dimension itself is a strong concept, and the process leading to the second action plan has been better structured and also created from the experiences of the first action plan.

The main objective of the 2nd NDAP is to address the opportunities and challenges posed by the EU enlargement. "It will be important to strengthen efforts, on both sides of the borders, to stimulate trade, investment and infrastructure, to create productive employment and to promote social and cultural exchange...".

One very innovative aspect of the 2nd NDAP is the creation process itself, where UBC has been given an important role. The Northern Dimension is considered as a process where all relevant actors were

invited to take an active part. The richness of co-operation fora across our region is mentioned as a positive feature. The guidelines enhanced a division of responsibility between relevant actors: EU Member States and partner countries, regional bodies, local governments, the business community and civil society, academia and the scientific community. A review and monitoring mechanism should be established.

The Council of Baltic Sea States has co-ordinated the creation of the 2nd NDAP. The UBC contribution can be downloaded from the UBC home-page at www.ubc.net

In essence, the UBC contribution enhanced:

- that the new innovative thinking of the process to create the 2nd NDAP is very encouraging for the future

- UBC is ready to participate in the planned monitoring mechanism of the 2nd NDAP

- that it is important to adjust the future Interreg programs to the specific needs of the Baltic Sea Region. The region has access to about 2 % of available financial sources for cross-border co-operation, but has far more than 2 % of the borders. It is especially important to treating maritime borders on the same level as land borders.

- That the future EU policies on transportation should be better adapted to the specific problems of the Baltic Sea Region. The policies must take ferry traffic as integrated parts of a Trans European Network into consideration, as well as the long transport distances, especially between the northern parts of the BSR to central Europe.

written by

*Mr Juhan Janusson
Political Adviser
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TO LISTEN TO

...means to be aware that young people should be involved in the dialogue on decision-making processes. Therefore „youth issues” should be on the agendas of both local authorities as well as of international organisations.

There are many approaches, e.g. Agenda 21, UN Convention of the Right of the Child, even UBC Social Charter underlining the importance of including young people in the building of our common future

However...

§ Do we really consider youth issues within our daily work?

§ Are our cities „youth friendly”? What about UBC?

§ Do young people have the possibility of being heard whenever they want to be?

§ Finally, what are the most important issues for the young in their hometowns? And do these issues reach the agenda of the local decision-makers?

Can all those questions be easily answered? Most probably, not...

Union of the Baltic Cities together with the region and municipality of Kalmar and the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs decided to launch the YOUNG VOICES of the Baltic Sea Region project promoting youth involvement within the Baltic Sea Region and the UBC membership.

On 15-18 May Kalmar hosts the conference for young people aged 15-25, civil servants dealing with youth issues from all 105 UBC member cities, as well as from other interested cities and organisations.

The aim is to develop a motion on the future relations between the UBC and young citizens in the member cities. Both the ways of supporting the youth initiatives in the cities as well as the establishing of a network or a commission dealing with youth participation within the UBC shall be considered.

Additionally, the conference is to highlight the youth participation on the local and global levels and to show the best practices on the youth work and youth initiatives in the municipalities. The conference offers the arena for young people to meet their peers from different countries and to discuss the different and common issues important to them.

It is of great importance that your city is represented in Kalmar! Looking forward to meeting you there!

YOUNG VOICES OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION

WHAT?

International youth conference

WHEN, WHERE?

15-18 May, Kalmar, Sweden

WHO?

Young people and civil servants from all UBC member cities

WHY?

To support youth involvement

To discuss „youth issues”

To exchange experience

To get inspiration

To establish „youth work” in UBC

MORE INFORMATION?

www.kalmar.se/ungdom

Further information:

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Project Secretary

Young Voices of the Baltic Sea Region

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COMING NEXT . . . COMING NEXT . . . COMING NEXT . . .

Commission on Business Cooperation meets in Kaunas on 15-17 May, 2003. The Commission discusses and exchanges ideas and experience about E-City and Public Private Partnership. The meeting in Kaunas is accompanied by many attractions, including the annual traditional Kaunas City Day. The annual international exhibition „Kaunas 2003: Contacts. Business. Science. Investment” will take place at that time too.

* * * *

Commission on Education plans its meeting in Keila, Estonia in May. Invitation will be sent out soon. Please check information at the website, too.

* * * *

Commission on Social Affairs would like to hold its meeting before the summer. The Commissions secretariat is looking for the meeting venue. UBC member cities that would like to host the meeting are kindly asked to contact to the Secretariat in Rostock.

* * * *

The annual meeting of the **Commission on Tourism** will take place on 25-26 August in Cesis, Latvia. The main topics on the agenda are: electing the Steering Committee and planning of the commission’s activities for the next year.

* * * *

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AMBASSADORS OF THE UBC SOCIAL CHARTER

Since the beginning of 2003 a new system of dissemination of the UBC Social Charter has started to work: the Ambassadors of the UBC Social Charter. Everybody in her/his own sphere can be an Ambassador, high-ranking persons as well as actors, project workers, politicians, etc.

Their task should be to create awareness of the Charter on the international stage presenting it at conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings, actions and projects.

The first occasion came in Tallinn 13-14 February 2003 on the Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference on "WoMen and Democracy". UBC Vice-President Liisa Pakosta took the task to present the Charter in two Workshops. Leaflets with the text of the Charter in 11 languages were provided for all participants.

The next one will be the Conference "Young Voices of the Baltic Sea Region" held in Kalmar, Sweden, on 15-18 May 2003. We expect to have a young speaker to introduce the Charter theme in the round tables and discussions.

Prof. Dr. Ingo Richter, promoter and organiser of the Hanse Tour Sunshine for the benefit of the children in the Eastern Baltic countries suffering from cancer and other chronic diseases, will refer to the Charter at each of its about 25 stops on the route around the Baltic Sea in July/August 2003.

Everybody can become a member of the Diplomatic Corps – an Ambassador of the UBC Social Charter. We would appreciate very much your interest and involvement in that important activity. Just contact the UBC Office Rostock – the Secretariat of the UBC Commission on Health and Social

Affairs - and you will get a package of all kind of material you need for your presentation. If necessary we will contact the organisers of the event in order to make sure that you will get a chance and reasonable time for your contribution. We also take care about delivering leaflets for all participants of the event.

So, don't hesitate to become an Ambassador of the UBC Social Charter!

Further information:

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SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN IN REALITY

The UBC Commission on Urban Planning organized 7th Seminar in Kolding, Denmark 24-26.04.2003. The seminar has been prepared within the Work Package no 1 of the ABC Project financed by Interreg III B.

In the Seminar the participants from ABC partner cities and towns (in total 27) and some from other UBC cities concentrated on what sustainability means in urban planning and urban design.

Sustainability is an empty phrase, if it refers to all the good things in planning and building on a regional or city levels or designing a single building. This keyword means decreasing the consumption of energy, hot water, fresh water and high level treatment of waste water. It also means saving raw materials in construction. But does the sustainability also means a principle: designing a city without thresholds, or the long memory of the buildings in the townscape and high quality of architecture? Why has sustainability in dense urban area been so often understood only as a biological diversity? A good example of this is the EU Natura 2000 Directive.

The planners and designers from the



The historical centre of Kolding has been preserved and enlarged in a beautiful way, the scale of architecture is intimate



People strolling in the main shopping centre

UBC cities and towns are tried to define its meaning during the Kolding Seminar. The themes of the workshops were:

- Sustainability in urban renewal
- New use of old building structures

- Restore housing schemes
 - Add quality to urban area
 - Commerce and infrastructure
 - Future for City centre
 - Regional commercial structure
 - Infrastructural consequences
 - Sustainability in new housing schemes
 - Construction and materials
 - Technical solutions, supply of energy, infrastructure
 - Housing, landscape and nature
- Participants brought with them related solutions from their cities - good and bad - but relevant to the workshop discussions.

The co-operation is deepening between the UBC cities and towns in the field of urban planning and public design - that was our seventh seminar.

Further information:

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SPORT AS A REHABILITATION TOOL FOR INTEGRATION

This year the Annual Meeting of the UBC Commission on Sport was held in Aalborg (Denmark) between 11th – 13th April. The meeting was devoted to building a common platform of integration for the disabled and elderly people with the local community by means of sports activities.

Aalborg's extensive experience in the organisation of activities for elderly people known as Senior Sport Project may be a good example and an inspiration for other cities. As it is commonly known sport is a tool, which integrates various social groups as well as assists the disabled in overcoming the obstacles of their own disability. During a study visit in the Association for Disabled in Aalborg the members of the UBC Commission on Sport had an occasion to see what it is like to be a disabled person. The Association representatives presented various forms of sports activities addressed to people of different disability degrees.

Moreover, during the meeting the UBC Commission on Sport members elected their new chairperson – Mrs Beata Łęgowska from Gdynia.

With respect to the celebrations of the European Year of People with Disabilities as well as the realisation of UBC Social Charter, the UBC Commission on Sport chairperson announced the competition for **“Equal Opportunities Prize”**.

The Prize will be awarded for the best sporting event with participation of people with disabilities. The competition is addressed to all UBC member cities. The deadline for submission of application forms is 1st October 2003. The city whose sporting event will be chosen by the Competition Committee as the best organised one will receive the prize of 3000 euros. The presentation of the Equal Opportunities Prize will take place during VII UBC Conference General in Klaipėda (Lithuania) in October 2003.



Members of the Commission on Sport during activities for the disabled in Association for Disabled in Aalborg

The regulations and an application form are available on UBC Commission on Sport website: www.ubc.net/commissions/sport/html

Further information:

Ms Ewa Depka
Co-ordinator
UBC Commission on Sport
e-mail: ubcsport@gdynia.pl

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT AND COMMISSION MEETING

Mobility Management seminar and Annual meeting of the Commission on Transportation took place in Tallinn and Paldiski on 24-26 April 2003.

The Commission on Transportation has in the initial stage focused on three large areas in order to encourage sustainable transport solutions, public transport, cycling and mobility management. The prior meeting treated public transport and cycling, and now it was time for mobility management.

The 24th of April 2003 the Commission arranged a mobility management seminar in Tallinn, to discuss and exchange ideas about mobility management-tools to develop efficient, sustainable transport habits. 35 participants from 15 different cities attended the seminar.

The concept of mobility management is still rather unknown for many people. At the seminar, mobility management was presented as a complement to an already existing infrastructure. Questions concerning increased efficiency in transport systems through new

technique, attractive transport solutions, attitudes and new forms of collaboration were treated. The speakers from Malmo, Tallinn, Göteborg and Helsinki talked about practical examples of mobility management. There was a behavioural scientist treating the questions about aware-ness raising and behaviour changes and a representative from Access-Eurocities speaking about mobility management from a European perspective.

On 25 April, an Annual Commission Meeting was held in Paldiski. The participants discussed how the commission can work and how to use the network as efficient as possible. The conference ended with a sightseeing tour the 26th of April in the city of Tallinn. Next activity on the agenda is a meeting in



Some of the participants outside National Library of Estonia in Tallinn

connection with the General Conference in Klaipėda in October.

Further information:

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COMMISSION ON CULTURE BUSY YEAR

This year promises to be an interesting and busy one for the UBC Commission on Culture (CoC). In addition to its regular meetings, events and publications, 2003 is an election year and will see the empanelling of new board of directors. The CoC also is coordinating the 5th Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art, which will take place in October, as well as undertaking of an interesting new project that will look at the history of the Baltic cities and cultural heritage of the Baltic region.

Annual Session of the Commission on Culture

The Commission on Culture of the UBC wishes to invite all the UBC city members to participate in the 7th working session of the Commission on Culture to be held in Szczecin on 3-5 October 2003. The main purpose of this session is the election of a new Board of the Commission on Culture, the Board's election of its Chairman and vice Chairman, and a discussion about the functions of the Board, the strategy and the activities of the CoC in the forthcoming years.

The session also will be devoted to the

organisations working in the field of contemporary visual arts (museums, galleries, artists-run spaces) with special focus on communication with the audiences, different educational and workshop projects and information-sharing about innovative ways of reaching out to grow their audiences.

A detailed programme of the session, information about regulations concerning election of the CoC board, and, of course, invitations, will be provided by the CoC Secretariat and sent to all member cities later this year.

Mare Articum

Mare Articum, the Baltic magazine of contemporary art, will publish two new issue in 2003. The spring issue, „New Art in St. Petersburg”, will be edited in collaboration with Ekaterina Andreeva, curator of the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.

In the fall, Mare Articum will examine incompatibility of perception and adventures of contemporary art in its public reception. This issue, to be titled “Tested on Art”, will be co-edited by

Aneta Szyrak, a freelance art critic and curator based in Gdańsk and New York.

Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art

From 3rd October, Szczecin will host the 2003 edition of the Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art, entitled “Extra Strong – Super Light.” The theme of this exhibition will look at the ways political changes have reshaped social relationships and intimate interaction between couples and families. Any changes to the social hierarchy of values stimulate new forms of partnership relations. Some of the radical political and cultural changes we experience re-model not only the structure of the social landscape. But they decisively affect the relationships and links an individual develops while contacting his/her most immediate environs.

Further information:

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WORK TOWARDS BALANCED SOCIETY

UBC meetings

During 2002, the UBC Women's Network has continued its work aiming towards balanced societies in the Baltic Sea Region, organising two meetings and one seminar. The Šiauliai seminar (25-26.11.02) gathered more than 60 participants from Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Its main objective was to familiarise the women from NGOs and municipalities with the financial and economic possibilities that a future EU membership brings. The special focus was on the European programmes supporting development of gender equal societies. The theme proved to be a very hot issue as presently some of the applicant countries are under the process of outlining their principles on that issue. The awareness rose during the seminar and the contacts given opened the possibility for active women in the municipalities and NGOs to influence and guide these processes in a gender equal direction.

Contribution to the International Conferences

The first 2003 meeting took place in connection to the Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference on Women and Democracy in Tallinn, 13-14 February 2003. The four main topics of the conference were women in power and decision-making, violence against women, women and the economy, and women and the media. The conference gathered 608 representatives of public institutions, researchers and NGOs from the core BSR, Belarus, Slovakia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the USA. The workshop's chairs delivered, based on his/her respective workshop results, an address or an appeal to the public. The workshop appeals and the speeches will be published in the conference report and on the website <http://www.sm.ee/women>. The national co-ordinator for Germany, Ms Karin Wohlgemuth, Co-ordinator of the UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs and the co-ordinator of the

Women's Network, Ulla Lundqvist, took part in the Planning Committee. The UBC Social Charter was introduced and distributed to the participants of the conference.

On 8-11 May 2003 Turku hosts the Third Baltic Sea NGO Forum which was planned with the active participation of the Co-ordinator who contributed to the programme for the Human Rights group. The Forum theme is Northern Dimension - Human Dimension? Strengthening Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region. The Human Rights theme is Gender Equality and Human Rights in Changing Societies. Please visit the web-site <http://www.cbss-ngo-fin.org>.

Further information:

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Co-ordinator
UBC Women's Network
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UBC INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION „DREAMS WITHOUT LIMITS...”

In order to continue the realisation of both the Social Campaign and the UBC Social Charter as well as in response to announced by the Council of European Union the European Year of People with Disabilities, UBC Commission on Sport has announced an International Art Competition entitled „Dreams Without Limits.”

The competition is addressed to disabled children and youth at the age of 10 - 16, coming from the 105 Union of the Baltic Cities members. It is undoubtedly an ideal occasion to show artistic potential of children with disabilities, and to let them express their own desires and feelings hidden at the bottom of their hearts. The

main objective of the competition is to raise consciousness of UBC member cities in respect to the rights of disabled children and youth to equal education. Moreover, the competition aims to support full integration of the disabled with the society as well as to promote their development by means of art.

The competition will be organised in two stages: local and international ones. Each city chooses one Local Coordinator who will be responsible for collecting works and then sending them to Gdynia. The international stage will be co-ordinated by the UBC Commission on Sport whose Secretariat is located in Gdynia.

After the final which will take place in

Gdynia, the works of young Baltic artists will be displayed in September within a post-competition exhibition in Gdynia (Poland), then in Klaipeda (Lithuania) during VII UBC General Conference. It is also our intention to demonstrate this „itinerary” exhibition in other UBC member cities.



Ms Ewa Depka
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UBC Commission on Sport
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EMAS – PEER REVIEW FOR CITIES

“EMAS - peer review for cities” project that started in December 2002 has been proceeding well. The main focus of the two years project is on developing and extending the use of EC Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in local authorities. An important outcome of the project will be the start and broadening of an EMAS process in 16 European cities - eight cities from EU member states (Leeds, Newcastle, Bristol, Düsseldorf, Porto, Palermo, Athens and Barcelona) and eight from accession countries (Tallinn, Viljandi, Liepāja, Jelgava, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Sopot and Gdańsk).

The EMAS-peer review method as an

innovative approach will be used to encourage cities to work together. EMAS registration needs the independent third party audit, which is costly. In this project we plan to use another city to be an independent and critical reviewer. In doing that, the project builds upon existing experiences in the framework of LIFE projects, including the EURO-EMAS project and the Municipal Environmental Audit (MEA) project developed by the UBC. Project also seeks to assist in delivering actions in the European Union 6th Environmental Action Plan (EAP). *Linkages between 6 EAP and EMAS will be researched and tested.*

Cities will be supported in implementing EMAS and conducting peer review by the guidance and toolkit developed during the project. Training sessions will be organised to share international

experiences and provide the forum for cities to learn from each other. The first training session on EMAS implementation for the project partner cities will be held in May 12-13 in Tallinn.

Project will issue several newsletters and open web-site to inform all interested stakeholders about the developments and experiences of participating cities.

The project is co-ordinated by the UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat in Turku. It is mainly financed by European Commission DG Environment. The project team members are EUROCITIES, University of West England and the city of Newcastle.

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CITY PAIRS TURNING WORDS INTO ACTION

The TBestC project aims at transferring good environmental practices between five city couples in the Baltic Sea region. This will be done through in-depth co-operation between the city pairs and financial and other support from the UBC EnvCom secretariat. The project also aims at disseminating and promoting municipal good practices in the region in the project themes: Air Quality, Bio-diversity, Energy, Environmental Health and Information

and Education.

On the occasion of launching the project and starting the city coupling process UBC EnvCom is inviting all UBC member cities to the Launch seminar in Kaunas, Lithuania the 22-24 May. A part from the crucial city-matching process the event will be attended by a number of highly interesting guest experts from the Baltic Sea Region as well as the United States (through our co-operation with the

U.S. Baltic Sea Regional Environmental Office). Also ECAT Lithuania, UNEP Grid Arendal and Healthy Cities are co-operating on the seminar and the project.

Cities interested in participating in the project should submit an application form before June 15. Welcome with your city application!

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BALTIC WELCOME CENTER

In December 2001 the project application Baltic Welcome Center for a high quality sustainable development of cities and regions in the BSR in the frame of spatial planning aspects was approved by the Steering Committee of the Interreg IIB programme. One and a half year later the participants are half way through the project. The project has also grown numerously from the original five member cities and regions working in the Interreg IIB programme to 9 members altogether. The latter mentioned members receive their European funding through the programmes Tacis (Kaliningrad, RU) and Phare (Ivangorod, RU, Narva, EE and Cēsis, LV). The original members are Kalmar (Lead partner) and Växjö, SE, Halden/Østfold len, NO, Turisme Region Syd, DK and Schwerin, DE.

The overall aim for the project is to form an international standard for Baltic welcome centers in the Baltic Sea region. The standard will be the basis for what can be defined as a Baltic Welcome Center. The project is divided into five modules,

or work packages (WP) as it is called in the Interreg world. The five WPs are: International standard; Spatial planning; Investments; IT and Marketing & communication. As you may understand from the WP titles the project is provided with some means to invest in existing or new welcome centres. The reason why the conception Tourism Information Centre, TIC, is not used here is that the project aims at creating something beyond or more than a traditional TIC.

So far, the activities in the project have focused on the international standard discussion. It is not an easy task to bring different (variant) opinions into line with each other, especially when the opinions are coming from partners from different cultures and history. Research, study visits and surveys in all existing welcome centres are the basis for the future discussions. Some investments in IT and reconstructions have already been done. Two coordination meetings have taken place after the kick-off in Nykøbing F., Denmark in January 2002. Halden, Norway



(May 2002) and Kalmar, Sweden (September 2002) have had their chances to show the best of their regions during coordination meetings.

At the time of writing there is a third coordination meeting going on in Schwerin, Germany. This time there are members from the Tacis and Phare side of the project for the first time. There are also representatives from the national tourist boards present, to be able to give their opinions on a new standard for the Baltic Sea region.

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ABC PROJECT

ABC – Alliance of Baltic Cities is a project run by UBC Commission on Urban Planning and supported by the INTERREG IIB with 255.957 EUR. This project develops ideas and methods of city planning and development tested at the six common seminars held during 1999-2002.

The project will be run for three years (2003-2005) and engages 27 cities. 15 of those cities belong to the EU and 12 are non EU-countries. The project will engage city planners and architects working in municipalities and local regions. The ABC-project will be targeted at local questions and regionally working colleagues as well. Six joint seminars for some 50 participants have been planned.

Each seminar will include three main issues such as:

- Local circumstances in the host city and country,
- advice on how to solve local city planning problems,
- special common planning items.

The six seminars will be held in Kolding,

Vaasa, Liepaja, Viljandi, Gdynia and Malmö. The participants of the ABC-project will visit six countries and six cities of varied size. It will allow obtaining information and discussing the planning legislative system in those countries and following the implementations according to the size of the planning situations.

We can discern three common items to be studied carefully in the project:

- developed urban management,
- cities as regional engines,
- renewal of city districts.

The project will result in

- regular contacts between colleagues,
- six examples/proposals on how to deal with city planning problems of today and tomorrow,

- forming of some "patrols" which can help other cities with planning problems,
- six or more small scale investment proposals.

It is expected that more than one city representative will participate in the project, to get the project going in case one leaves the project. The group of colleagues presently participating in the UBC Commission on Urban Planning has

much to learn from each other. Proposals on how to deal with the planning problems of today at our seminars in Gdansk, in Riga and in St. Petersburg have been presented. We will develop this way of working and form "patrols" which will be sent to cities with planning problems. We believe that we as a group of experts have something to offer in such situations, beside the normal consulting agencies used as project experts. Such agencies work mostly with the Project, showing the Wanted Planning Results, Pictures of The New Eldorado or so. We can add basic and useful comments to the Process towards the Results as well.

The BSR wants us to state Small Scale Investment Proposals to be financed in a certain order further on. We will try to formulate such proposals for all our six seminar cities, which might be of some interest if they can put forward planning activities of certain value for the host city and its inhabitants.

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PROJECTS ... PROJECTS ... PROJECTS ... PROJECTS ... PROJECTS ...

HISTORY OF CITIES IN THE REGION

The CoC's newest undertaking will explore the rich and diverse heritage of the Baltic region in a project entitled "A Strand of Baltic Pearls: A History of Cities in the Region." This project will look at the roles played by key cities throughout the centuries in a series of essays, a proposed series of lectures and the compilation of a resource base of new, archived and specially commissioned materials.

Written by scholars from around the Baltic, each essay will be devoted to a century of Baltic history and the city or cities that exerted the most influence during the period. The essays will examine the rise to prominence of each city and the ways it influenced regional development during its century of dominion.

Among the proposed cities to be profiled are: Haithabu and Reric -

important for the Baltic region in VIII century; Wolin in XI; Lübeck in XII; Visby in XIV; Gdańsk in XVII, St. Petersburg in XVIII or Helsinki in XX century. Szczecin also will receive treatment with the theme of 'city of 21st century'.

The essays will provide detailed accounts of maritime activities, daily life, the roles of women in those societies, as well as the relations among ethnic segments of the population. The commission will then publish these essays in book form, as well as leading symposia in each of the cities profiled in the essays. The book will also include a geologic and topographic history of the sea and the lands around it.

The book will conclude with a timeline of Baltic history and predictions for the future of the region, including the environmental, political and social threats it faces as it enters this new era.

The commission has begun the first step in the process and is currently working to empanel an editorial board of authors from each city and create an administrative secretariat to support the project. The board then will collect commissioned and historical writings, photographs, drawings and other significant archive materials that will be entered into a computer database. This information-gathering phase will provide an opportunity to stage seminars and symposiums on local history in those cities. The first edition of the book will comprise Polish- and English-language versions and will be launched at ceremonies in cities around the region.

The commission encourages interested parties to participate in this project and all its activities.

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UBC GOING AFRICAN !

The UBC is supporting and cooperating with the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC), a sister organisation in East Africa. Is UBC far out of area? Maybe not, as there are many experiences to give and to gain.

UBC has had a close cooperation project with LVRLAC since 2000. In October 2002, the project entered a new phase involving a number of activities, which will initially run for a year. The reason is to build the capacity of LVRLAC as a network organisation of local authorities around Lake Victoria.

Development in Africa

LVRLAC comprises of approximately 50 member authorities of the three Lake Victoria littoral states, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Its aims are very close to those of UBC, with main focus on poverty alleviation, improvement of the environment and development of the lake region.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida has decided to finance the cooperation project and involve UBC in African development to utilise the experiences of a well functioning network organisation of local authorities, which may boost

development to the benefit of the citizens on the ground.

LVRLAC-UBC Cooperation Project

The cooperation project between the two organisations is organised in different activities. The most direct evidence is the stationing of a UBC Technical Support Officer (TSO) at the LVRLAC Secretariat, to strengthen the administrative capacity of LVRLAC.

A number of sub-projects are running during this phase of the cooperation project. These include the creation of a communications network between the LVRLAC members, the creation of and strengthening of a LVRLAC Women's Network and the construction of Environmental Pedagogic Centres in the Lake Victoria Region. A City Council Exchange Programme will organise mutual visits between city councillors of Lake Victoria Region and Baltic Sea Region cities. Read more about the activities on the UBC homepage.

Benefits for all

So why is UBC operating so far from the Baltic Sea Region? Basically, by handing experiences to others, the UBC will learn a lot itself. Being in a different environment, where problems are dealt



Mr Rietz at your service

with differently, will give many experiences. All in all, UBC is getting a lot of good will from this cooperation project. And that may also be to the benefit of UBC members. In the next years to come more activities are expected to take place, including twinning between LVRLAC and UBC members. Already now, several twinings exist or are in the making. Among those are the cooperation between Kalmar and Entebbe in Uganda, and between Tampere and Mwanza in Tanzania. We hope to develop many more within the next few years.

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III. NEWS FROM MEMBER CITIES

Renewal of the Downtown

In January, 2003 Vilnius City Board approved Capital's Old City Renewal Agenda for the current year.

The Agenda 2003 is based on experience gained during the implementation mechanism of the previous years. It certainly pays great attention to sustainable development and the program needs. Attention raises towards social development and this helps to build up social conscience and responsibility through implementation of the program "Development of the Society".

The largest part of the budget will be devoted to rebuild or renovate the old city's parks, squares, streets and other public spaces. Based on a program of visual arts, ethnographic businesses and markets, preparation work will be done to realize the Little Town of Handicraft and Trades project. The implementation of the "Lost Vilnius" will be continued this year as well. The efforts are put to reconstitute old buildings. The exposition project showing the debris of the most important historical city objects will be ready to welcome the visitors. Work will concentrate of renovation of a fragment of the historical ghetto of the City of Vilnius.

Vilnius Old City Renovation Agency is going to keep on regional cooperation. The Agency will organize an international conference for World Heritage Cities and will maintain ENTRUST program, financed by the European Commission and will take part in series of programs such as "Historical Cemetery", and "European Gothic Brick Road".

The estimated grand total of the program is almost 17.2 million Lits (almost 5 mln EUR). The Government of the Republic of Lithuania is expected to contribute with 2 million Lits. The Old Town of Vilnius program dates back in 1997.

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High Award for the Partnership between Kiel and Kaliningrad



Gerd Müller, Head of Kiel Press Office (right) and Wolfgang Thierse, President of the German Parliament (left) with the Award

Going back over ten years, the long-standing partnership between Kiel, the capital of Schleswig-Holstein, and the Russian city of Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg) has been awarded a top prize in the cities' co-operation category. Gerd Müller, Head of the Kiel Press Office, which is responsible for city partnerships and foreign relations, was presented with the prize of 2,500 EUR by Wolfgang Thierse, President of the German Parliament, in Berlin on 17 March 2003. Kiel is one of twenty institutions, groups and individuals that received prizes for their civic commitment to Russia. Altogether, over 200 initiatives took part in the competition. Sponsored by the Robert Bosch Foundation, the German-Russian Forum gives prizes in support of such efforts every year. Last year, Kiel was awarded a certificate. This year, the city has been awarded financial support for the first time.

In 2002, Kiel and Kaliningrad celebrated the tenth anniversary of their city partnership with a grand ceremony in the Russian city. Over the years, the partnership has developed into the basis for innumerable private contacts between the people, the associations and the institutions of the two cities. Kiel was

singled out for this honour in recognition of the lively partnership between the two cities and the contacts that exist on many different levels. The prize money will be used for work in connection with children and young people from Kaliningrad. This summer, 50 street children from the "Kruglovo" children's home, which is supported by Kiel, will have the chance to spend a holiday at the Falckenstein youth camp in Kiel.

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Baltic Sea Sun Campaign

Since many years the Hanse-Tour Sunshine – a cycle tour – is on the way to help children suffering from leukemia and other chronic diseases.

Until now the annual goodwill cycle tours were exclusively organised for German children. In the year 2000 the Hanse Tour Sunshine was organised for the first time in aid of the three Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In 2003 our route will go around the Baltic Sea. We will bring donations from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the district of Kaliningrad and Poland.

We would be very glad to welcome participants from all countries around the Baltic. The donation of money and goods will be organised.

On this goodwill cycle tour around the Baltic Sea three great aims shall connect us:

1. We would like to give humanitarian help to ill children.
2. We would like to build a bridge between our neighbour nations around the Baltic Sea particularly to the Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the district of Kalinigrad and Poland.
3. With our goodwill cycle tour we would like to contribute to the European integration of these states for which they have been longing for so many decades.



Possible donations are: hospital equipment, medicaments, vehicles, medical emergency and technical equipment, rehabilitation equipment, consumables, sport articles, shoes, toys, consumer electronics.

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EU Support for the Development of Tourism in Cēsis District

In September 2002, Phare Small project facility granted three projects prepared by Cēsis City Council and Cēsis District Council. Two of the projects named "Baltic Welcome Centers LAT" and "Sustainable regional development - High Quality Tourism 2" will foster the development of tourism sphere in Cēsis and the third one entitled "PIPE, LATVIA" will ensure youth participation in the local and regional development processes.

"Baltic Welcome Centers LAT" - a part of UBC project. The main aim of the project is to develop tourism sector in Cēsis district and to strengthen the image of Cēsis and the whole Vidzeme region as attractive tourism destinations. During the project implementation period, the feasibility study on the establishment of Vidzeme Visitor Centre (VVC) within the complex of the Stone Castle of the Livonian Order will be carried out. The Cēsis Castle complex where the future VVC is foreseen will consist of the Stone Castle, Cēsis History and Art Museum, Exhibition Hall, Tourism Information Centre, Castle Park with an open stage and surroundings

– the most popular attraction in the region. However, today the Castle complex services do not meet the demand of visitors and guests. The complex should be developed into the meeting point and entertainment centre. The objectives are not to build a visitor centre as such but also to create a complete welcome centre area, whereby single facilities will be integrated in the existing buildings and can be experienced as one attraction, providing tourist more than only information.

"High Quality Tourism 2".

Development of tourism sector was defined as one of the main priorities of Cēsis district already in 1994. Since that time, several tourism projects have been implemented. In 2000 considerable Phare/Interreg financial support was allocated for the project "High Quality Tourism – sustainable development in sensitive areas in four regions".

Interreg IIIB/Phare Project "High quality tourism 2" is an outcome of successful cooperation among Germany, Sweden, Poland and Latvia. The aim of the project is to develop new tourism products – three thematic routes in Cēsis district and to improve tourism services by training of guides. In order to ensure efficient tourism development and promote tourism possibilities, the Tourism Marketing Plan will be prepared. In cooperation with EU member states, Latvian tourism actors and municipality officials will get acquainted with partners' experience in regional planning and development and discuss opportunities to improve regional economy and promotion of natural and historical resources.

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Viljandi – a Summer City

In the year 2003 Viljandi celebrates its 720 anniversary. In 1238 town was mentioned for the first time, and due to its location at the crossroads of trade routes it became a member of Hanseatic League in the 14th century.

The most famous event in town will be the Folk Music Festival. 11th festival takes place in July 24-27, 2003. There will be



Hansa Market is very popular in Viljandi

about 500 performers from Estonia and abroad and total expected audience will be over 10 000. For Estonians it is already impossible to imagine their summer without Folk Music Festival. The quiet small town changes totally during those days. Numerous concerts take place all over the town and you can hear a beautiful sound of different instruments and singers everywhere. The music instrument fairs, workshops and dance parties are also a traditional part of the festival.

Another annual tradition. Viljandi Old Music Festival takes place in July and brings an old music to the concert halls, churches and streets.

Days of the Hanseatic League together with handicraft fair, exhibitions and performances on the Hanseatic scene have been organized in Viljandi since 1991. Sport programmes, cultural events and activities for children have always been a part of the Hansa Days. 12th Viljandi Hanseatic Days take place on the 29th of May till 1st of June. At the same time Mulgi Fair which shall present local economic life will be organised. All kind of enterprises are welcome to this fair to introduce their products and services.

Song concerts and dance festivals are natural part of the summer season in Viljandi. The castle ruins, lake in the primeval valley, cultural events as well as sport events. Running race around Lake Viljandi is the most famous sport competition. The first race around the lake took place in 1928. The race takes place on the 1st of May and participants have to cover the distance of 12 kilometres. If you are already here, you can feel that here is something what makes you to come back again!

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The Tall Ships' Race 2003

The gathering of the large sailing ships along the River Aura will be the greatest event in Turku this summer. The ships sailing from all corners of the world arrive in Turku and are open to visitors at the end of July.

The annual Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Races are a well-established concept among sailors all over the world. In the Baltic Sea, the race takes place every four years. The event is spectacular, and harbours rival to host the race.

The ships sail to Turku from the port of departure Gdynia in Poland, and from Turku they continue to Riga, the capital of Latvia. The port of arrival is Lübeck, the old Hanseatic town in Northern Germany. The leg between Turku and Riga is sailed Cruise-in-Company in other words, the ships are not racing.

In spite of its name, racing is not the issue of the event, but the opportunities

offered to youth. For the thousands of young people serving as crews onboard the ships, the annual Tall Ships' Races provide an opportunity to work together and make contracts with other young people, regardless of their nationalities or backgrounds. Sailing together builds up solidarity and collaboration across the borders.

The nature of the event is best characterised by the fact, that on the basis of a vote by all participating ships, the silver Cutty Sark Trophy, the most important prize in the race, is awarded to the ship whose crew has best contributed to international understanding.

The Tall Ships' race is a spectacular maritime experience that offers everyone a lot to see.

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Regional Cross-Border Co-operation in Adjacent Areas

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) has since 1970's supported and co-ordinated cross-border co-operation (CBC) of regions between Nordic countries. The necessity for co-ordination of existing CBC or euroregions also in the Baltic states and North-Western Russia was raised and formulated during a NCM conference in May 2001 at Birštonas, Lithuania, using the Network of Nordic CBC regions as an example.

The EU Enlargement, role of border regions, and changes in Interreg program are only a few new challenges for the CBC in the Baltic Sea area, which have to be met with new ideas and forms of co-operation. NCM started a new project in the spring 2002 called *Regional Cross-Border Cooperation in Adjacent Areas*. The main goals are: strengthening cross-border co-operation in the adjacent areas in the framework of EU enlargement; facilitating creation of a network of euroregions in adjacent areas, to be linked with a CBC network existing in the Nordic countries.

Since its beginning, 12 CBC regions/euroregions indicated their interest to participate in the project network:

1. Euroregion *Karelen* (FIN, RUS);
2. Finnish-Estonian co-operation (FIN, EE);
3. Baltic Sea Seven Islands co-operation *B7* (EE, FI, SE, DK, DE);
4. Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (EE, RUS);
5. Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio (EE, FIN);
6. Council for Co-operation of Border Regions (EE, LV, RUS);
7. Euroregion *Bartuva* (LV, LT);
8. Euroregion *Country of Lakes* (LV, LT, BY);
9. Euroregion *Saule* (LV, LT, RUS);
10. Euroregion *Neman* (LT, RUS, PL, BY);
11. Euroregion *Šešupe* (LT, PL, RUS)
12. Euroregion *Baltic* (LV, LT, RUS, SE, DK, PL).

The main activities of the project were formulated during the first meeting of the network in Anykščiai, Lithuania, in November 2002:

- Creation and coordination of a network of CBC, co-ordinated with networks in the Nordic countries;
- Keeping in touch with the European Commission and other organizations, and spreading of relevant information;



- Capacity development and transfer of knowledge from Nordic CBC regions.
- Dissemination of information about euroregions in the adjacent areas;
- Preparation of a strategy for further development of network of euroregions in the adjacent areas.

More information about the project can be found at: <http://www.nmr.lt/Projects/CBC/main.html>.

You are welcome to the NCM conference *Cross-border Cooperation after the EU Enlargement: Experience of the Nordic and Baltic countries, and Northwestern Russia* which will be held in Tartu 16-18 June 2003.

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CITIES - MEMBERS OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD:



Executive Board members and chairmen of the Commissions getting ready for the hard work, Umeå, 28 March 2003

ATTENTION Member Cities !!!

The theme of the next bulletin "BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT POLICIES OF BALTIC CITIES" is connected with the 7th UBC General Conference in Klaipėda.

Everyone is welcome to send material to be published in it.

The deadline for contributions is 12 September 2003 - please respect it.

The Editorial Board wishes following contributions to the bulletin:

- Stories related to the theme
- Short news about activities in the cities
- Vivid and creative photographs to the stories

Please do not hesitate to contact the UBC Secretariat in any questions relating to the Baltic Cities Bulletin!



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Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of over 100 member cities from all 10 Baltic countries, with an overriding goal of contributing to the democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Union has based its operational activities on ten working Commissions on Business Cooperation, Culture, Environment, Education, Health and Social Affairs, Information Society, Sport, Tourism, Transportation and Urban Planning. The Commissions coordinate and execute specific projects, activities and special events. Each city is capable to have its own creative and fully independent input to the Commissions' work.

The Union has an observer status with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE).

The Union is open for new members. Any coastal city of the Baltic Sea or any other city interested in the development of the Baltic Sea Region may become a member of the Union by making a written declaration of its will to enter UBC.

Please contact the Union's Secretariat in Gdańsk for more information about the UBC work and the rules of entering the Union.