



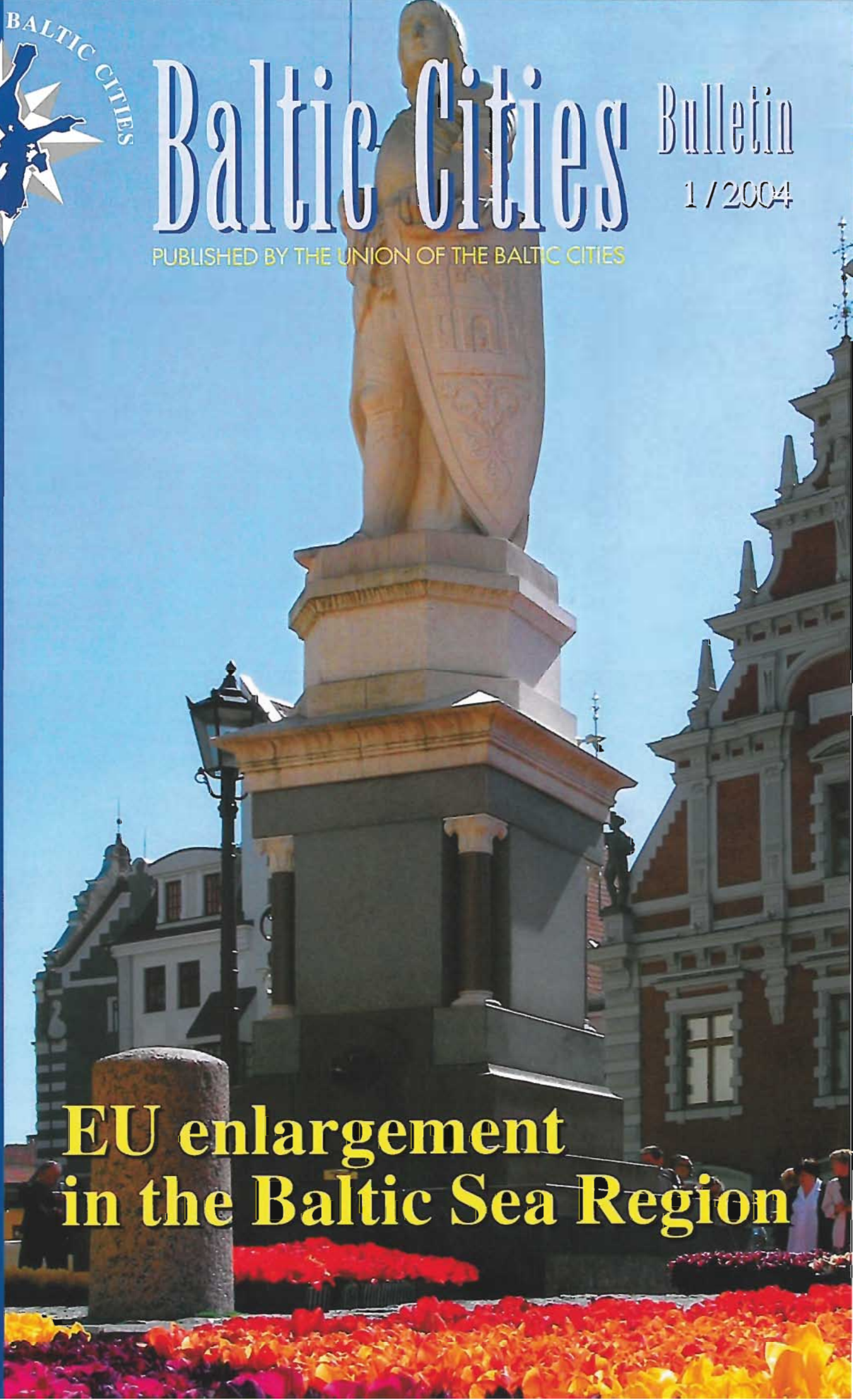
# Baltic Cities

Bulletin

1 / 2004

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## EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region

# Baltic Cities Bulletin



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COVER PICTURE

*City of Riga.*

*Statue of Rolands*

*– symbol of city*

*independence*

*and free trading.*

*Photo: Andris Krievinsh*

Dear UBC Friends,

This issue of the UBC bulletin is connected with the historical moment for our region. On 1 May 2004 Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland are joining forces with Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden in the European Union. The Baltic Sea becomes almost an inland sea of the EU. In the near future we will have free movement of capital, labour and commodities across the Baltic Sea. The national legislations in fundamental matters will be based on a common European legal foundation. We will live in a common area, based on democracy, freedom and human rights, area with stable economic and political system. Stability combined with qualified labour force and good educational system will certainly boost the economic development in the whole region. Already now the Baltic region is the fastest growing region in Europe. UBC will make all efforts to make this development sustainable, taking into account also social and environmental dimensions. Our region possesses strong resources – natural, human, institutional, cultural and financial. In the enlarged Europe the cities of the Baltic Sea Region united in UBC will more effectively utilise all these capacities for the benefit of their citizens.

At the General Conference in Klaipėda 18 October 2003, UBC adopted the resolution appealing to the European Commission for regular consultations with local authorities associations, on EC policies which affect local authorities. In January 2004 Commissioner Michel Barnier sent a letter to UBC informing that on 19 December 2003 the Commission adopted a communication on „Dialogue with associations of regional and local authorities on the formulation of EU policy”. In this communication the EC proposes to give the regional and local representatives an opportunity of expressing their views – via their associations – during annual hearings which will concentrate on the Commission’s annual work programme, and the major policy initiatives that have a significant regional and local impact. UBC and our sister organisation Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities welcome the EC communication as continuation of the work began with the publication of White Paper on Governance. However CAAC and UBC are of the opinion that consultations between the EC and local authorities associations should take a form of a dialogue; it can not be only one-way communication. Both organisations decided to send a joint statement to the EC expressing their views on proposed consultation procedures. Currently the Commission is in the process of identifying the associations to be invited to participate in this dialog. It is important for all of us to lobby and make sure that UBC and other regional associations are included on that list. It would not be good if only pan-European organisations and national associations would represent local authorities in the dialogue with the Commission.

At the last UBC Board meeting in Vaasa in March, CBSS informed about a joint project with the Nordic Council of Ministers aimed at enhancing cross-border cooperation at the “external” EU borders in the region. The goal of the initiative is to encourage local actors, authorities, private sector, NGOs, to establish a constructive dialogue on both sides of the “external” border. CBSS invited other Baltic Sea actors including UBC to participate in the project.

UBC welcomes financial instruments for CBC to be available for new EU member states since May 1<sup>st</sup>, namely INTERREG programs and Norwegian instrument within EEA agreement. At the same time UBC is very concerned that cooperation between local authorities across the Baltic Sea may decrease due to insufficient funding. Since several years UBC has been strongly promoting the idea to give the maritime borders in the BSR the same status as the land borders, which would allow cross-sea projects funding for example through Interreg IIIA. There are few exceptions - Interreg IIIA programs across maritime borders between Denmark-Sweden and Sweden-Finland. UBC encourages the EC and Baltic Sea countries to establish an Interreg IIIA area across the Baltic Sea, to allow cooperation between Denmark-Poland, Sweden-Lithuania etc. Such decision is crucial for development of cross-border cooperation between the local authorities across the Baltic Sea.

I do hope one thing will not change in our region after the EU enlargement – the beautiful Baltic summer !

Per Bødker Andersen

UBC President



Kolding, 1 May 2004



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*On 1 May 2004 the Baltic Sea becomes almost an inland sea of the European Union*



*39<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting was held on 6 March in the Finnish town of Vaasa*



*Studying at summer time - Erken Laboratory invites students*



*Sedov under lights at the passengers quay beside the Cruise Liners Welcome Centre in Rostock*

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# I. EU ENLARGEMENT IN THE BSR

## JOINING DIVERSE CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN ONE UNION



Ms Danuta Hübner, Polish Minister for European Affairs and Nominee for the EU Commissioner

The unprecedented enlargement, which will take place on the 1 May will mean that the hard work done by both the EU member states and the accession countries will be crowned with success. Our joining the 'European family' marks our official return to the European fold, where we always belonged and where our historic roots lie.

Each enlargement makes the European Union richer with diverse political and cultural traditions. Each new member adds its own, sometimes difficult and painful, historical past.

Accession to the EU does not require any changes to its members' traditions, national customs and habits. It only needs more openness and more solidarity with the rest of member nations. It is necessary to learn how to share with others.

When facing new challenges and developing Union's policies we will always be confronted with multitude of national interests. In coping with these challenges we shall never forget about the most important goal: common Europe. Enlargement based on the rule of solidarity is our common good and it is a future-oriented investment.

Despite our diversity, in the future EU it should not be difficult for us to define common European good, because it is based on a set of universal values. As long as the European diversity is managed properly, in the spirit of solidarity and to everyone's advantage, we should be able to successfully solve internal as well as external problems of the Union of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is the role of the enlarged Union of 25 member states.

## INTERVIEW WITH UFFE ELLEMANN JENSEN

### CO-FOUNDER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES AND THE BALTIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM

*BCB: If looking from the time when the iron curtain fell, the development until now would have been impossible to imagine. The EU enlargement is in many ways also a very significant historic moment. Can you give us some vision on the coming ten-twelve years? (we will of course confront you with your reply in ten years time...)*

*U.E.Jensen:* Well, you are very welcome. My overall vision for the Baltic Sea area is that we at some point create a huge free-trading zone between the EU and Russia and in time a real single market. Think what an encouraging and constructive achievement that would be both for Russia and for Europe as a whole.

However, my vision demands action and political leadership. The sooner someone takes action, the better. The first step is WTO membership for Russia.

WTO membership is, of course, no cure for all of Russia's ills. But it does seem well suited to address many of them.

The second step could very well be establishing a Joint Investment Area as proposed by the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Then we can move on from there by drafting a road map for a Baltic Sea Single Market. This road map should use the methodology of Jacques Delors White Paper on the Single Market from 1985. I have been in politics long enough to know that you need concrete deadlines to get anywhere. Jacques Delors White Paper gave us exactly that - so why not just copy that idea?

I truly believe we can create a Baltic Sea Single Market between the EU and Russia - but it can only be done if the politicians can agree upon a scheme with clear deadlines for implementation and

indications for performance. And if they can't agree, I urge the business community to take action. I'm sure that my organisation, Baltic Development Forum, would help them along. It's ambitious but we stand ready to assist.

*BCB: The proposed EU Constitution contained several things that has not been widely discussed in the public and did not cause the failure during the Brussels summit last year. For example new initiatives on dialogue between EU and sub-national governments - this of course is interesting for UBC members. If taking that into account, how does that influence the vision you stated in the previous question? Or is it such a dialogue of minor importance when looking from government level perspective?*



*U.E.Jensen:* The Baltic Sea cities, sub-regions and metropolises are increasingly gathering attention in the region's business community, in the media and within the EU. Therefore, Baltic Development Forum puts special emphasis on the cooperation between the cities in an organisation like your own and also, the Baltic Metropolises Network, which was set up in 2002 in Copenhagen at the opening of the Baltic Development Forum summit. Cooperation is important and the cooperation must have a wide global perspective.

The smaller cities in our region are also important. They also have to be committed to promote the common political interests of the Baltic Sea Region. In that regard, I think the UBC is an important platform for contacts, joint projects and activities. And I hope you share my belief that my vision can be achieved, if we want to. All actors must be involved if we are to succeed.

*BCB:* Russia is one of the future problems in the enlarged EU – or perhaps we should regard Russia as an asset? What role can Russia play in a European Baltic Sea Region?

*U.E.Jensen:* A European Baltic Sea Region? I like that term. And I think that is also how our Russian friends see it. They see the Baltic Sea a gateway to Europe and they see themselves as a Baltic Sea country and a European country. And we need Russia, we need them as partners, we need their engagement in the regional cooperation and, most importantly, we need them to help put the region on the global map.

I believe Russia is a great, great asset for our region. Think about it, despite all the challenges and the setbacks, and despite the enormity of work that still remain for Russia in its social, political and economic transition, the fundamental direction of Russian policies are in general good and moving forward in the right direction. What they have accomplished is just as great as what the Baltics and Poland have accomplished.

*BCB:* And vice-versa, what role can the European Baltic Sea Region play in Russia?

*U.E.Jensen:* The Baltic Sea cooperation can provide a platform for

Russian ideas. For Russian politicians. For Russian businesses. It is important that we have forums where we can discuss our differences and find common solutions. This is among other things what Baltic Development Forum aims to provide.

But Russia is a Baltic Sea country just like Estonia, Sweden, Germany and so on and should not be treated any different. Nor should they behave in a different way. I say, let's cooperate regional when it makes sense and let's do it on equal terms.

*BCB:* Some people fear that the Baltic Sea Region is torn into two parts – one centred on Stockholm-Helsinki-St Petersburg, and with Berlin-Hamburg as the centre of gravity in the other part. Is this good or bad, and if it is bad, what can we do about it?

*U.E.Jensen:* I am glad you mention Hamburg and St. Petersburg. They have increasingly become important European cities. Baltic Development Forum has already had a summit in St. Petersburg and this year we choose Hamburg because Hamburg is a very important centre for international business.

But there's nothing to fear. It's true that we see an emerging but sound competition between German metropolises on one side of the Baltic Sea, with Stockholm-Helsinki-Tallinn on the other side and then the Öresund region around Copenhagen and Southern Sweden in the middle. But that's very good for our area. We shouldn't try to change this competition, rather embrace it. Because it is not a zero-sum-game.

The ability to survive lies in the ability to compete. But the metropolises must remember to cooperate on all reasonable levels and where they can benefit from each other's experiences and competencies. However, I think the Baltic Sea cities, metropolises and subregions know that already.

*BCB:* If looking at EU policy, there are several policy areas, which do not fit very well in the reality of the Baltic Sea Region, such as EU Transport Policy, EU

*Cross-border project policy or the strong local authorities and weak regional authorities compared to other parts of Europe. What can we do about it?*

*U.E.Jensen:* It's true that we need to get better when it comes to telling Brussels that ferry transportation is a vital part of the transport network in the Baltic Sea area. However, let's not forget that road, railway and air transport are also very important in the Baltic Sea region. As I see it, it's all about being better in bringing the Baltic Sea region into focus.



*Mr Uffe Ellemann Jensen during the BDF meeting in Stockholm on 26 May 2003*

We must put the region on the map in Brussels and formulate common visions and strategies and present them to the European Union.

That's why Baltic Development Forum has been in contact with a number of stakeholders with an interest in the development of a coherent transport system. We simply set up a Round Table to get things going. And the mission and the preliminary work of our Round Table actually filled a gap in the activities of many actors in this field.

Today, it is widely appreciated that the Round Table has initiated a process towards a formulation of a policy statement and documentation of a transport strategy backed by actors in the private sector. It's quite unique. And even Brussels has endorsed the initiative. So, as you see, it's not impossible, but it takes an effort and it takes commitment, also financially, from the actors involved.





# ENLARGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GROWTH

During the last decade a tremendous transformation and economic development has been observed in Poland, Russia and the Baltic States. The EU accession process has been vital in the fast transition to market economy in the new member states.

## Fastest growing economy

Over the past few years, the Baltic Sea region has been one of the fastest growing regions in the world. In the last decade the trade in the Baltic Sea region has boomed. Swedish trade with transition economies has quadrupled from the initial levels in the early 1990s. However, exports to Baltic States, Poland and Russia are relatively smaller than to Nordic countries.

Keeping growth going will require substantial investment. The capital stock needs to be upgraded before firms will be able to compete with developed countries. The income gap in opposition to EU member states is large with GDP per capita, therefore there is still plenty of room for these economies to grow. Labour productivity has been growing at a good pace of 4 percent in the Baltic States and 3 percent in Poland. Only productivity growth in Russia has been barely positive.

The supply of capital domestically for investment is limited due to countries suffering from large account deficits. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has boosted through Economic Zone arrangements but since these will no longer be allowed it is vital to keep the FDI on a high level.

## EU will not better public finances

The structural funds are supposed to be matched with national public investment and this type of government spending may crowd out private investments, which leads to budgetary strain. New research indicates that the past 20 years of structural funds have had little if any impact on regional economic convergence. Therefore massive structural funds do not necessarily lead to sustained growth but sometimes just the opposite.

## Reforms must continue

The domestic issues such as administrative barriers, corruption and the financial market are the most serious threat to economic growth and prosperity. There

are several problems that must be solved and instruments that should function.

Financial systems need to be further developed. There are still high spreads between lending and borrowing rates. Banking and finance in the accession countries is dominated by foreign players, which brought muscle and business knowledge but has not yet transformed into SME lending and financial integration

Growth of small firms must increase. Small and medium sized enterprises (SME) are not growing enough. There are difficulties in getting short and long-term loans so there exists a strong need to rely on internal funds. Poor support from state agencies is yet another problem especially in Russia, where the state rather tends to focus on most tax-profitable sectors such as fuels.

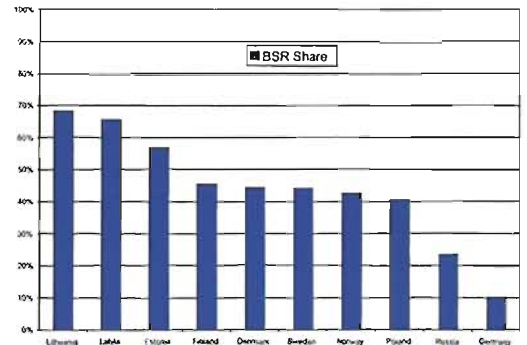
Institutional reform has slowed. The accession countries still lag behind the UE criteria such as rule of law, corruption, government effectiveness. So it is vital not to let the reforms weaken after the accession to UE. The level of institutional reform varies although Estonia is starting to approach OECD levels.

## Baltic Sea Region bridges Russia to the West

Russian trade potential is huge. There is a commonly held view that the Baltic Sea region will be a "bridge to the west" but the evidence show it may appear just the opposite.

A general problem lay in the ability of implementation of the reforms. Russia suffers from an undeveloped SME sector, weaker domestic support for continues reforms. May lack of encouragement such as the UE membership was for the Baltic States and Poland may impede these processes in Russia? Joining the WTO would decrease russian ability to bureaucracy and would provide positive measures such as clear customs procedures, intellectual rights protection or less discrimination of foreign own companies. However the possible joining the WTO or formation of Common European Economic Space looks distant.

In recent years, exports from Russia to the Baltic Sea region have been growing



Dependency of trade in the Baltic Sea Region

more than imports which makes Russia a net exporter. Also an increase of russian foreign investments in the EU and U.S. was noticed.

After the EU expansion eastwards a renewed debate about Russia's relations with Europe is expected.

## FDI in East not detrimental for West

There is little evidence that the parent companies making investments in low cost countries cause reduction of employment in their home country. Research suggests that outward FDI may have a positive effect in this matter. Negative effects should be offset by positive ones such as vertical specialisation. For example, manufacturing industry in Poland or transport and communication of petrochemicals in Russia.

## Getting the most out of enlargement.

The primary benefit of EU membership is removing trade barriers and reducing transaction costs. EU membership has still the capacity to encourage foreign investment. There is still room for substantial growth in investment and trade, but further improvements must come in the investment climate throughout the region and a new strategy must be found for cooperation with Russia.

*Source: "EU Enlargement. Implications for trade, growth and investment in the Baltic Sea Region" - a report by the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE)*

*The report is available at: [www.hhs.se/site/research/other\\_policy/htm](http://www.hhs.se/site/research/other_policy/htm).*





# LOOKING AFTER WEST NORWAY INTERESTS



## Why West Norway is established in Brussels?

Even if Norway as a non EU-member is not directly part of the decision making of the European Union, it is nevertheless involved and needs regional representation in Brussels in order to look on Norwegian interests. EU is west Norway's largest export market and nearest neighbour. The country participates in most EU programs, for example, INTERREG and some cities are in EUROCITIES which has its head-quarters in Brussels. The scope of the European Economic Area agreement between Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and the EU is increasingly stretched.

## Ownership/target groups

The owners of the office are the cities of Bergen and Ålesund together with 15 other municipalities of Western Norway, and the Counties of Hordaland, Møre og Romsdal and Sogn og Fjordane. The main

target groups of the West Norway Office are public sector services, research and development, culture, business and industry.

## What are the objectives?

- to establish and maintain West Norway presence in Brussels and provide services and facilities for the region,
- to promote West Norway as an interesting partner to other European regions.
- to keep our partners informed of policy development, new initiatives and funding opportunities of direct relevance to them,
- to assist our partners and other institutions in efficient participation in EU programmes and initiatives.

## What is achieved so far?

The Office was opened and has been operational since 6 May 2003 and is formally registered as a regional office in Brussels. The office has excellent location in „The Norwegian House” in Brussels. A

substantial achievements are already seen. Numerous concrete inquiries were received: in 2003 around 120 from all target groups. A systematic publication of information followed - 10 issues of a news-letter were published in 2003. A number of proactive meetings with key players in Brussels/the region were held and some networking relation were established. The office organised visitors' programmes, seminars and lectures. Finally, after successful campaign to recruit more members - additional 10 municipalities have joined the office.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

Since Norway has chosen not to be

a member of the EU, it is possible that the enlargement will make it more difficult for us to develop networks which are based on platforms other than the EU. It is my hope that my city will handle the enlargement in a way that will strengthen the connections to the regions and cities that we are cooperating with today.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

I hope so – but it is a great challenge to make that happen, as long as we are not a part of a growing European community.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

It is hard to say, but the enlargement can strengthen the democratic institutions and create more stability in the whole Europe. I also hope that the enlargement will stimulate the European economy and give new opportunities for the business, trade and industry.

*Herman Friele  
Mayor of Bergen, Norway*



*What are your expectation for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

The people will find it easier to get in touch. Kiel will have the chance to become a bridge-head for the Western Baltic Sea region.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Being European is the future of our continent. The people know that. Exchanging thoughts and ideas will soon make people - also in Kiel - accept Europe not only with their minds, but with their hearts. It will be the task of a whole generation.

*In what direction do you think the EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

The Baltic Sea region will come more into the focus of the EU in Brussels. The citizens will take on more responsibility for their own interests. The EU bureaucracy must be reduced significantly. I see this as an important prerequisite.

*Monika Volequez  
Mayor of Kiel, Germany*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

It is my feeling and expectation that the trade between the new countries and the old EU-countries will increase rapidly. Fredericia Port is the biggest port in Denmark. So I expect more trade and goods through our port. Further I expect more cooperation between Frederica and cities in the new EU countries

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

I think that this process is running. Not only European but global. Citizens know that they live in a global world. So the enlargement will promote this European and global development.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

I think that EU will develop in a cooperative way. Trade will increase and the understanding between people and countries will develop positively.

*Uffe Steiner Jensen  
Mayor of Fredericia, Denmark*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

The enlargement includes parts of Europe with old culture that we feel as an important common heritage to take care of in the future. Also, we look forward to increased cooperation with other towns and regions in the new member countries within the areas of

culture, tourism, sustainability, governance, competence building, and business. Especially, we find UBC network and our twinning city Gdynia important for future cooperation projects for common benefit.

*How do you think that the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

As the cooperation with the new member countries increases it will influence our citizens in feeling more fellowship and more relationship with this part of Europe.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after enlargement?*

One can think of different changes in the EU as a result of the enlargement. Some of them could be: a stronger polarisation between South and North; among the leading parts of the world, EU will play a stronger and more powerful role; challenges within EU to bring the new member states up to the same living standard as the other member states; extended possibilities for cooperation in all fields that keep up a society.

*Jan Oddvar Skisland  
Mayor of Kristiansand, Norway*



## LEARNING AND DISCOVERING THE EUROPEAN CULTURE

Jõhvi Gymnasium is taking part in the international project "Our Cultural Roots and its Traces Today". Five schools from Norway, Finland, Belgium and Estonia participate in the project which is financed by the Comenius I Program. The project's idea is by learning and discovering the European culture to form early the courage of communication among the pupils, to help to find friends from the other countries and to enlarge outlook of the knowledge about the Europe.

The project activities have been written down in school curriculum. It makes teaching more interesting for the kids. The mentioned above activities were spread into different subjects such as geography, history, traditions, music, languages, crafts, art, literature, regional identity, etc. The partner schools are introducing their own region and school by presenting pictures, drawings and videos; making the dictionaries for familiarizing their own language and acquainting with other languages. Children do the research about new and old handicraft, what is typical for their country and specially for that region and then making the examples of it and teaching it to other countries, preparing joint exhibitions. Also music is a part of this project - pupils make the CD "Top 25" of the songs of those countries or learning the old and new popular songs of the different countries. Children are getting to know the Europe better and better.



Enlarging the view of children especially on European co-operation is very important for their future. The aim is to get the pupils out of their village or town life and let them meet the European and international ideas. Internationality becomes more important in our society. The project gives the opportunity to confront children with this from very young age. Not only the children's views will be enlarged but also their commitment and good feeling will be strengthen. By making learning concrete their curiosity and their hunger for learning were risen. It stimulated their creativity and their motivation for learning. The Comenius project turned out to be important both for the teachers and for the pupils.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement ?*

City of Jõhvi is a regional centre and close to the future EU border. I hope that our city and region is going to develop quicker. New investments come here which guarantee more and better workplaces and opportunities to the citizens and our cooperation and everyday life is going to be more international. The EU enlargement helps us to fulfil our objectives according to city Development Plan and SPD via reinforced EU Structural aid as Estonia is eligible in Objective 1.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Yes, I do. But my opinion is that we have always been Europeans.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

I believe that the official sector comes closer to citizens and we learn to live in more active cooperation and partnership with other countries and on different levels. As enlargement is generally a peace project then in the united Europe peace will be more secured. I am sure that in the future we can find beside us new member-states, for example Ukraine.

*Aavo Keerme  
Mayor of Jõhvi, Estonia*





## INNOVATIVE GDYNIA

In the XX century Gdynia port and shipyards dominated the city's economy being the major employer. Contemporary trends in world economy allow the city to reveal also its potential to transform and develop. The Gdynia Development Strategy reflects the city's determina-



Clean Public Transport Vehicle on Swietojanska Street (Gdynia)

tion to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based economy. To realise these ambitious goals various projects are carried out and others are planned for implementation in the city.

In 2001 the Pomeranian Science & Technology Park (PSTP) was set up in order to help innovative SMEs in developing their advanced technology projects by offering favourable conditions and infrastructure on preferential terms. At present 12 companies, mainly IT ones are operating in the framework of the PSTP. The conveniently located Park is going to expand spatially and scientifically by opening its new laboratories this summer and providing more space for new innovation-oriented enterprises.

In 2002 Gdynia became the member of the TELLUS – Transport and Environment Alliance for Urban Sustainability project consortium under the CIVITAS I Initiative, 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. The project aims at introduction of bold, sustainable and integrated transport solutions in the cities involved (Rotterdam Berlin, Bucharest, Goeteborg). The successful participation in the TELLUS project enabled the city not only to implement important measures to stimulate the use of public transport but

also to create own project (New Concepts for Clean, Decongested City Transportation - CONFORTCITY) under CIVITAS II Initiative, 6<sup>th</sup> FP.

In 2004 Gdynia became the member of the USE-ME.GOV – Usability Driven Open Platform for Mobile Government research project under VI FP, Information Society Technologies priority. As a result of the two-year project realisation selected public services will become available via modern mobile techniques. Information society solutions are planned to be introduced into the city life also by creation of the planned backbone optic fibre network and infokiosks installation project which is planned to be submitted in the first year of the Structural Funds existence in Poland (2004). The project will directly contribute to the development of public and private E-services and to the usage of Internet potential among the inhabitants.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*



Accession of Poland to the European Union will change a lot, both at a national and local level. So far Gdynia has received EU funds amounting to 40 million EUR designated for the implementation of projects. We have also applied for the financing of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Research Programme. We plan to introduce, among others, an integrated communication system of public transport and internet.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens become more European?*

The question about European identity is nothing else but a question about who we are in a social aspect. Our membership in the EU is an opportunity to enrich European identity with values being so important and close to us. Becoming more European depends exclusively on ourselves, and more precisely on our awareness that we have always been and will be Europeans.

*What will be the direction of EU's evolution after the enlargement?*

The political debate on the European Constitution proves how difficult this question is to answer. The Union has not still defined either its philosophical or political direction. In my opinion it is difficult to anticipate what Europe will look like in two, five years' time and in the more distant future. I am convinced that the future of Europe lies in our hands.

*Wojciech Szczurek  
Mayor of Gdynia, Poland*



*What kind of changes do you expect in your city after EU enlargement?*

Jūrmala is tourism-oriented and resort city. That's why after EU enlargement we are awaiting opportunities to advertise our city to potential guests from EU. Jūrmala already participated in tourism fairs in Finland and Germany which provided gradual increase of tourists. Through developing of informative work, and offering to guests ever high – quality and many – sided services, tourism will increase. It will provide new workplaces for inhabitants

and will promote economic prosperity. Jūrmala has already several twin-cities in the EU. We are convinced, that after Latvia becomes EU member, cooperation will expand.

*Are you thinking, that your inhabitants become more Europeans?*

Certainly, though Latvia has always been European country and Jūrmala – European resort. We have never felt differently, we belong to Europe. Unfortunately, 50 years-long development breach didn't allow people to express themselves so creatively as it is possible right now in free and independent country.

I think that inhabitants will safely involve in different international projects, they will form many private contacts with people from other countries.

*In which way will develop EU after enlargement?*

After enlargement EU will become stronger, will enrich with experience and national contribution of new member states. We expect that in Europe democratization process will continue and new states will rapidly join the Union.

*Juris Hlevickis  
Chairman of Jūrmala City Council  
Latvia*



## MEMBER OF EU CITIES CLUSTER

**Next month Gdansk – the city with long Hanzeatic tradition and one of the principal ports in the Baltic sea – will become a member of a cluster of the EU cities. Since many years liquidation of disparities in development of infrastructure has been a fundamental goal of the city administration policy, but its scope was restricted due to the very limited budget for investments.**

However, financial resources from Structural Funds to be an instrument designed to increase social and economic cohesion in our country, demand important organisational and legal changes in self-government organisational structure as this level of public administration is supposed to be the main beneficiary of the aid.

The beginning of 2004 was a very

challenging time for the new established EU Projects Department. Its main task is to co-ordinate whole the process of absorption of resources from Structural Funds, including preparation of bids for projects to be implemented in the years 2004 - 2006. Another responsibility of the Department is implementation of management system adapted to the European Commission requirements and national regulations related to realisation of the projects co-financed by the EU.

The analysis of the Gdansk's Long-term Investment Plan made possible selection of a group of projects that meet two criteria: having great importance for economic development of the city and stage of preparations guarantees possibility of implementation and realisation of the project until 2006.

Taking into account financial resources



for investments in the city budget – obligation to assure co-financing from 25% to 50% of the project budget - and the city creditworthiness, the Gdansk authorities recommended to apply for the EU funds for the following investments:

Protection of water resources in Gdansk – its aim is to limit sewage introduced to the Gulf of Gdansk and preserve resources of drinking water. Realisation of the project will facilitate establishment in the city and neighbouring municipalities a comprehensive sewage treatment system and also improvement of water sources management. Estimated cost of the project - one hundred million EUR.

Road scheme - aiming at improvement of road access to the ports of Gdansk. Estimated cost - twenty seven million EUR.

Agglomeration Public Transport Project – represents the integrated programme for the agglomeration public transport system comprising 4 municipalities: Gdansk, Sopot, Gdynia, Rumia. Estimated cost of the Gdansk's component fifteen million EUR.

Hevelianum project – aiming at revitalisation of the historical fortress located in the city centre and adaptation its renovated premises to science promotion centre called *science park*. Estimated cost of the first stage over two million EUR.

The above mentioned investment projects will be accompanied by initiatives intended for social cohesion to be co-financed by the European Social Fund. The main objective of this programme is to decrease unemployment rate and modify employment structure in the city.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement ?*

EU membership is a great opportunity, but at the same time it can be easily wasted. Gdansk has prepared well for that membership. The city has built a framework of the new administration prepared to acquire and handle the EU funds. The city prepared the Long-term Investment Plan and the City Regeneration Programme for the next 20 years. Both plans are necessary when applying for the European funds. Soon we will open a special division responsible for coordination of all European projects prepared by the city. This division will be also responsible for adjusting the routines of city departments to the EU standards.

Proper preparation means also large investments in environmental protection and extensive activity on the international arena. In 2002 Gdansk as the first city in Poland opened its representation office in Brussels. This fact drew attention of many EU institutions. Gdansk strongly supports the efforts of Pomeranian Voivodeship to establish a regional office in Brussels which would absorb Gdansk representative

in order to carry out a joint lobbying for the city and for the region. Gdansk will also continue to be active in the most important international organisations such as Eurocities, Telecities, UBC, as well as in the Union of Polish Metropolies, as such activity brings both prestige and measurable profits.

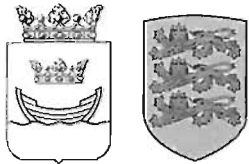
*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Much depends on that what knowledge about the EU our citizens have. In spite of all, I am convinced that Gdansk citizens will find themselves very well in the united Europe. Since ages Gdansk was functioning as international city. Europe has always been here, perhaps except for the Soviet times. Mentality of Gdansk citizens began to change already in 1990, since the creation of the Third Republic of Poland.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

After the EU enlargement we will still have the Europe of motherlands and the Europe of citizens. I think that the countries will maintain their identity and the citizens will feel European. For sure the EU will not become the United States. In Europe the passports will not be needed, but the borders will remain. There will also remain a strong national identity, which is characteristic for example for Poland.

*Pawel Adamowicz  
Mayor of Gdansk, Poland*



# HELSINKI-TALLINN EUROREGIO

**Helsinki-Tallinn Euroregion is a non-profit association established in 2003. As a network it took shape already in 1999. Euroregion unites two regions – Harju County in Estonia and Uusimaa Region in Finland – with the population of almost 2 million and the territory of over 10 000 sq/km.**

The twin-region of Helsinki-Uusimaa and Tallinn-Harjumaa is a coastal area that profits from the economic momentum of the whole Baltic Rim area as well as from its location on the internal and external border of the European Union. The Global Competitiveness Report 2003-2004 of the World Economic Forum ranks Finland the first and Estonia the twenty-second by the growth competitiveness index (GCI) out of 102 countries of the world. Euroregion

that comes from the integration of the two regions. Euroregion as an organization creates an arena for realizing the visions and innovation of Europe in an entrepreneurial environment of the capital regions of Estonia and Finland.

### The joint Region

One of Euroregion's priority initiatives is the Helsinki-Tallinn Science Twin City project where Euroregion forges new partnerships and facilitates co-operation between universities, science and technology parks and private business. It follows the principles of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.

The chances of economic success in the region to develop knowledge-based innovative economy would greatly increase by pooling government, municipal, and private resources to promote entrepreneurship. The priorities include the establishment of high-tech companies that create new jobs. The long-term vision foresees the future fusion of the two regions into a common science, education and high-tech business area.

According to professor Mart Saarma, a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and director of Biotechnology Institute at Helsinki University, both Finland and Estonia are small countries on the global scale but could be great together. One very good example is the integration of Finnish high tech information technology and human molecular genetics with the Estonian Genome Project.



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

The freedom of movement of persons, services, goods and capital can be considered as a possibility or a threat. We see the free movement in the BSR as a huge potential for us to develop. This new spirit of development comes from the integral ties with our new EU neighbour Estonia with whom we have also formed partnerships for handling the inevitable problems related with the open borders. I believe that existing city networks will gain even more importance in the enlarged Europe. I hope that we can continue sharing best practices in city networks in different fields in order to enhance the competitiveness of our region. Helsinki wishes to contribute to the new dynamism of the BSR in the enlarged Union.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

During the past years the identity of the citizens of Helsinki has clearly become more and more European. In my opinion the EU enlargement as such does not make much change. I am sure that this sense of being European will keep growing during the next years. When our neighbouring countries join the EU and the Baltic Sea becomes the EU inland sea, the BSR may gain a new, less peripheral position. As a part of the global economy no place is really peripheral, but it is just the mental maps which make people locate places as distant or remote.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

There are two challenges greater than the others: How do we get a balanced development all over Europe? And how can we raise the competitiveness of Europe as a whole?

I do hope that the common vision of the Europe of Regions will be achieved by constantly developing city networks, which may act as motors for a more innovative and competitive Europe. In my vision the Baltic Sea Region will become one of the best European examples in this sense.

*Eva-Ritta Sittonen  
Mayor of Helsinki, Finland*



*A meeting between Estonian and Finnish governments. Helsinki and Tallinn are among top 24 rising stars of 500 cities worldwide*

has a great potential for future synergy by using the other's strengths to complement one's own. During his visit to the Innopolis Technology Centre in January of 2004, Prime Minister of Estonia Mr Juhan Parts stressed that an exchange of information and experience on various levels between Estonia and Finland was very important. Prime Minister of Finland agreed that the ideas of Euroregion would require political attention and support.

### The role of Euroregion

According to Mr Orm Valtson, the Governor of Harju County, Euroregion is a symbol that carries a common message of Tallinn-Harjumaa and Helsinki-Uusimaa and demonstrates the viable enrichment

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

Being part of the single European market offers numerous possibilities but also threats. We will be able to fully benefit from the EU membership only if intensive efforts aiming at creating most suitable conditions for economic and social development are taken. We look for possibilities to obtain Structural Funds for socio-economic development projects. Our hopes are also directed towards cooperation in the spheres of culture, sports and education. Joint international initiatives and innovative projects are also anticipated.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

In the first period of time, I do not think so. The enlargement bears some threats. Having experienced tragic history Poles fear losing their national identity. It is hoped this fear will diminish gradually and

Poles will identify themselves with the EU.

I do not think this attitude differs much from the one of the EU member countries. In the countries that have been EU members for many years, their citizens feel first of all French, Spanish, Italian or German, only then they feel Europeans. Patriotism exists and will exist as well as national animosities. Through eliminating physical borders, the EU helps fighting against these prejudices. Functioning in the common structure and "European" identity will certainly help in it.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

I think that all EU activities will tend towards the Lisbon Strategy implementation. Thus, certainly numerous funds will be allocated for innovation, research and development, and infrastructure investments. The EU will aim at creating a stable single market, supporting poorer regions through the structural funds. In that way, EU will realize its priority aim, that is creating favourable conditions for increased competitiveness of regions and compensating for marginalization of some areas and hence supporting economic, social and spatial cohesion of all Europe.

*Miroslaw Mikietyński  
Mayor of Koszalin, Poland*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

For my own town and other EU cities, I would like to wish a harmonious sustainable development. To my mind, a progressive communal policy will determine the future of the EU. Having realized this, we have not only taken active steps towards the rapprochement and cognition with the EU, but also rectified our local municipal policy, formulated city priorities and created long-term development strategies. Due to the intense communication we have eventually become an inseparable member of European family. It is our hope that the formal membership will serve an impulse to further development city.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

I can assert only one thing: estimating the life-style of Klaipėda people and democratic forms of the community's self-expression, already today Klaipėda is recognized the most European town in Lithuania. However, the process of globalization causes some anxiety, cities might be too weak to cope with its outcomes. The obvious strife of capital, certain countries or interest groups to dominate can infringe and transgress sensitive systems of cities and become a factor of disintegration.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

I believe in the success of European political dialogue culture and think that after admission of new members the EU – "the Club of European Discussions" will not bar itself up in itself, I mean, it will find ways out from the deadlocks of political arguments, the signs of which sometimes can be noticed. I wish, that before making decisions, politicians in the enlarged Europe would always think about people living in Bremen or Klaipėda.

*Rimantas Taraskevicius  
Mayor of Klaipėda, Lithuania*



## INFLUENCES OF EU

Our city as other cities is in many ways influenced by decisions of the European Union. It is very often at the local and regional level that the European policies and legislation are put into action.

The enlargement will influence the work in the European Union and therefore our city will be influenced. It is though hard to have specific expectations on the enlargement on a local level. Taking into account the location of our city close to the Norwegian border we are also in many ways influenced by and in contact with Norway that is not a EU member state.

There is no doubt that the BSR is important and that the enlargement will in fact make our work across borders simpler. This might result in even more contact and initiatives from our city with partners in the BSR.

Since we have not made any surveys regarding the citizen's feelings for the enlargement or in what way they feel European it is hard to tell if there will be

any change. The enlargement will give us a more diverse union this might give our citizens a feeling that the authority of the European union will increase. Local citizens sense of belonging is mostly attached to the local history but as time is getting on I have a feeling that our citizens will feel more European.

Development of the EU after the enlargement is a hard question to answer. I am certain that new member states will effect the European Agenda as has earlier new member states done. All states and regions have there own priorities and competences and of course everybody wants to influence. In all I believe that the enlargement is a positive development for Europe, the Baltic Sea Region and our city and it will be interesting to follow this development.

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## COUNCIL OF EUROPE PRIZE 2003

Klaipėda is the second city of the UBC after our neighbour and twin-city Gdynia and the first in the three Baltic States to have been awarded the highest possible distinction that can be bestowed on a European city for international activities and propagation of European unity ideas on the local level. In 2005 this Prize established by the Council of Europe will celebrate its 50 years' jubilee.

18 active twinning, membership in international organizations, numerous international projects and traditional international city events served the arena for wide participation of citizens from the local authority, institutions to grass-root level. If you spoke to a family in Klaipėda, you would hear that at least one of the members has at least once participated in an international project or activity. Lots of them have become friends with their former project partners. A common view at the airport is flowers, friendly hugs and kisses meeting official delegations or even tears of farewell. This is the evidence of long lasting, fruitful contacts, interesting and valued by both parties.



*Klaipėdians celebrating receiving the Council of Europe Prize*

Over 15 years of internationalization that started already before restitution of Independence, we became convinced that it very positively influences practical local politics and accelerates urban development dynamics. Whatever international projects we initiated or were partners of, the ultimate goals has always been a reform, integration of Lithuania

into the EU and strengthening of European spirit among our population. The prestigious Prize on the threshold of Lithuania's accession to the European Union is a wonderful gift to the 750 years' long history of our town. Delegates of 25 nations present at the official Europe Prize award ceremony during the 7th UBC General Conference at Klaipėda Drama Theatre on October 17, 2003 shared this exceptional moment of our city life.

In May a new era for Europeans begins. Klaipėda Council of Pupils organises a study visit to Brussels & EU institutions. It is our hope that the enthusiasm and energy of the young, their knowledge and serious work be the engines that drive the life of the united Europe.

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After growing from 6 to 15 members the EU is now preparing for its biggest enlargement ever in terms of scope and diversity. The enlargement makes it possible to unite Europe after decades of division in east and west. Everybody is a winner with a Europe in peace, stability and growth.

A bigger union makes better possibilities to create a safer and secured existence for the citizens of the European Union. EU has with more members better assumptions to solve common problems and e.g. fight international organized crime and smuggling of people. Another evident example is the environment. The enlargement has already implied that considerable investments have been done for purification of environment in the East and Central Europe.

The membership of EU will give the new countries continued social and economic development. EU grows with 75 million inhabitants and forms by that a common market for over 450 millions inhabitants.

Now 13 countries have applied to

become new members and 10 of these countries join on the 1 May this year. Among them are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

What does this mean to South-East Sweden and Karlskrona? Ten new states knock on the door to get into the European Union. A world of new possibilities is opened for Karlskrona. The political map has changed during last fifteen years. Closed borders have been opened, impossible trade obstacles have been erased and projects of assistance have become fruitful cooperation partners.

The enlargement is important for Sweden and Karlskrona. We, of course must be within this connection and I am sure that this is only a West wind of what is coming later.

The unique position of Karlskrona in the centre of the Baltic Sea is very good for the development of business and trade. We have a common interest around the Baltic Sea. New companies will be



established in the new EU-countries as well as with us.

But the cooperation in the enlarged EU is not only economic matters. It is to a great extent human exchange e.g. tourism, culture and town twinning.

The municipality of Karlskrona has arranged a couple of conferences, one about "The Polish view on the EU-membership" and another one with subjects as "European Union enlargement and the free movement of workers" and "The Nordic Countries, the Baltic States and Poland - a common building market" and another subject "An enlarged labour market - possibilities and challenges".

We are inviting early in June our twin cities around the Baltic Sea and from the Nordic countries to a conference "European Union enlargement 2004 possibility of growth"

*Mats Johansson  
Mayor of Karlskrona, Sweden*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement ?*

As you already know, Kolding cooperates closely with a number of cities in the new member countries. The city as well as its citizens and its businesses have known for a long time that natural

cooperation partners and sources of inspiration are not necessarily found within the Danish borders. In this respect, conditions will become even better now.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Identity is something that develops over time, and that goes for the identity of this city as well as for the common European identity. Kolding has a long tradition of getting involved in European and international matters, which is why we feel very European, and I am convinced that this feeling will grow in future.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

The European community is a project for democracy and peace. With the enlargement Europe will move even closer together, and I expect the European Union to become an influential political player in the effort to create a new and more stable world for the benefit of our own population and people in the rest of the world

*Per Bødker Andersen  
Mayor of Kolding, Denmark*

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## FOCUS ON CULTURE

The political and economic cooperation in the EU is crucial to the development of the European community. However, from the point of view of the towns, the overall cooperation in the EU is primarily an "outside" influence because the individual towns are rarely directly involved in the decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the towns play an active role, but their main contribution to the EU is through the communities of interests they are part of.

Kolding has a long tradition of openness and cultural diversity because its politicians have always believed strongly that people share visions and wishes across the borders. Our attitude is that it is through this "inside" influence, through the towns' active participation in communities that the people of Europe unite.

We had the great pleasure of hosting Festival 2003 - theatre for children and young people. This event gave both theatre people and children the opportunity to experience literally all sorts of theatre and to gain mutual, cross-cultural inspiration. For a time, 18,000 visitors and 100 guests from the theatre industry turned Kolding into an international "playground" for children of all ages. Events for children and young people are particularly important since children and young people and their mutual understanding are the foundation of the common European future.

The cultural exchange programme Hamburg to Denmark 2003 (a follow-up on 2000), which presented Hamburg's art and cultural life in Denmark, was another



culmination. The cultural exchange was a fine example of international, national and regional cooperation as it was carried out in cooperation between Hamburg, Copenhagen, The Danish Cultural Institute and the Triangle Region Denmark, which Kolding is part of.

The two events were brilliant examples of art and culture speaking a universal language capable of bringing together people of different nationalities. And to all involved they emphasised that we were more than physical neighbours and political and economic partners - that we are also united by common circumstances and that we share a curiosity which makes us look for new experiences.

With the EU facing a significant and promising Eastern enlargement, my personal advice is the following: Focus on the communities of interests and cultural cooperation. It is through them that the European people meet and find mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement ?*

My expectation is that we will see economical growth due to increasing trade with the new EU-members or that Växjö special competence in bioenergy will be asked for among the new members. The Baltic countries need to get rid of their dependence of oil and natural gas from Russia and they have a large potential for use of domestic biomass. I hope also that we can import ethanol for vehicle fuel because Sweden lacks production capacity today. This will also of course decrease the emissions of greenhouse gases. I also hope that people from the new member countries will come here and work. Forecasts say that there will be lack of labour in Sweden in the future, especially in the public sector.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Only time can make the Swedes Europeans.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

I think and hope that with so many countries, EU will become a looser organisation, more cooperation and free trade than common laws and taxes, except for the environmental area where common laws and taxation are necessary to obtain a sustainable development. Asylum is another area where common regulations are needed. I don't think that the very different EU-countries will benefit from for example common financial politics.

*Carl-Olof Bengtsson  
Mayor of Växjö, Sweden*



*As far as the needs of the town are concerned what are your expectations regarding the EU-enlargement?*

Leba has many international contacts. We are developing foreign co-operation mainly within the Baltic Sea Rim. The idea of our co-operation is solving common problems with towns from other countries. We are pleased that our contacts motivate the inhabitants to further co-operation. We are striking up personal friendships, we understand other's problems and we try to reach the set goals jointly. We also try to apply good solutions from other towns.

Poland's accession to the EU should tighten our contacts. I do not keep the secret that I set my hopes on gaining financial means for big urban investments. If we are to be competitive and equalise the chances of development, we have to make basic investments. Communication, environmental protection, clear management structures are the basic subjects in which sphere there is still much to do.

*Do you think that the identity of inhabitants will become more 'European' after Poland's accession ?*

Leba slowly becomes European. The inhabitants are more and more taking care of their estates and are trying to make use of good examples. In the summer we receive many foreign guests who are very satisfied with the stay. I think, that we have to accept the advantages of Europe with goodwill but also keep our individual features. The crucial thing here is communication and therefore we put the emphasis on learning of foreign languages at schools.

*In which direction will evolve the European Union after the enlargement?*

European regions should preserve their individual culture, however, many areas of our life should be accessible for everyone. The standard of life of the Europeans should be equally high in most of the regions and knowledge should be within the reach of every person irrespective of someone's descent. The Baltic Sea Region has an indubitable chance to become the most consolidated European region and the hitherto existing co-operation within the Union of the Baltic Cities creates a sound basis for further development of our towns.

*Halina Klińska  
Mayor of Leba, Poland*

## SMALL TOWN CO-OPERATION

**Shortly before the accession to the EU, the Polish society is beginning to understand the meaning of the big European family and what it means to be European. In Leba this process has been occurring for years – among the administrative staff and the inhabitants.**

The town of Leba has been maintaining friendly contacts with the cities around the Baltic. In 1999 two contracts were signed: with a German municipality of Hohnstorf on Elbe and with a Swedish town of Borgholm on the Oland Island. Those contracts were about the co-operation in the field of sport, tourism, culture, history, municipal economy and environmental protection. The contracts are maintained through the frequent mutual visits of the representatives of the local authorities, businessmen and inhabitants.

In consequence of the satisfied bilateral relations, the Leba town authorities decided to find new partners. The municipalities of similar natural resources of tourist activity and located on the Eastern Baltic Coast, were of the biggest interest. After some time of investigations, the Russian town of Zelenogradsk, which is a partner city of Borgholm and is located in the province of Kaliningrad, and Lithuanian town Neringa were selected. Apart from the similar natural features, but also the person of Max Pechstein is common for Leba and Neringa.

In the second half of the last year the



*Signing triple contract: Wladimir Szegeda Mayor of Zelenogradsk, Lisbeth Lennartsson Mayor of Borgholm, and Halina Klińska Mayor of Leba*

preliminary contacts between the town of Leba and of those towns were signed. Thanks to the formal contacts between Leba and Zelenogradsk, and also the fact that the cities of Zelenogradsk – Borgholm and Leba – Borgholm were co-operating, gave the basis to form new triple contact. This is how, before the enlargement of the EU, the idea of the Baltic Sea as the internal sea of the EU has become real. After many years of beneficial co-operation with the partner cities, Leba will continue to improve it because it has given the monument to the local development and it creates the perspectives of positive changes.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement ?*

*Expectations?-*

Dynamic development of our town realizing UE projects. I hope - and I will do everything - that Pruszcz Gdański will take a chance which joining the EU gives. Even today we are realizing Phare Projects, for example "Amber road across Pruszcz and Lowlands". I think that these experience will be useful in the hard work of gaining UE funds. I think that we are well prepared to realize new enterprises.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

Inhabitants of Pruszcz Gdański are Europeans for a long time but they also have very strong feelings of their own identity. Inhabitants of Pruszcz Gdański live in one of small homelands of the United Europe. Keeping own identity is of the same importance as obtaining new examples. But, of course, to open for new European experience is very important

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

I think that economic integration will be still developing, but political integration will proceed slower.

*Janusz Wróbel  
Mayor of Pruszcz Gdański, Poland*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

The bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen has represented the beginning of the creation of a new region. This is not only a matter of a short geographic distance. With the increased knowledge about other cities and contacts between different parts of Europe which will follow the enlargement possibilities that we experience similar affinity between Malmö and cities in the candidate countries.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

Malmö is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual urban society. Almost one fourth inhabitants are born in another country and all in all 165 nationalities are represented in our city. Malmö's citizens therefore share a global identity rather

than a national. The enlargement might strengthen Malmö's identity as a European city as a great number of its inhabitants originate from the candidate countries.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

The enlargement is a challenge as well as a possibility. It is my firm belief that this reunification of Europe will promote the development of economic and social cohesion across the Union - if the social dimension is placed high on the agenda together with issues concerning sustainable development.

The enlargement also provides an opportunity to reform the European Union, its treaties and institutions. This is of course a complex process, which is clearly shown by the recent course of events. It is my firm belief that this issue must be thoroughly and widely debated. I however hope for increased possibilities for regions to be active in shaping policies in the new European Union.

*Ilmar Reepalu  
Mayor of Malmö, Sweden*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

The EU is not a wand tool that would change our lives in a second, but we will certainly gain broader opportunities for regional development. With EU funds we have already accomplished several practical matters – drinking water is clean and sewage is not discharged into the sea; a modern sanitary landfill is under construction; the main roads are fixed. Thus it has been possible to allocate a bigger part of the city budget to the other important fields - education, social care, culture. The EU enlargement is certainly the way to future welfare of the city.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

The results of the referendum on Latvia joining the EU ranked Liepāja in the first place among the cities according to the positive vote – so even now we feel ourselves “European”. When Latvia was part of the Soviet empire this identity was distorted and defeated. I believe that people living in the EU countries will never lose their own national identity, maintaining respect to the other nations.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

The increase of national development tempo but also the overall economic development of the EU is in the interests of Latvia. At present the EU is working out new policy for the relations with Ukraine, Russia, Belarus. Latvia has significant experience in cooperation with each of these states. We are able to contribute to the content and further development of this policy. We are and will be a Northern Europe state – it is rooted in our history and the previous extensive cooperation with the Baltic and Nordic states. Our Nordic neighbors provide stability and high welfare standards in their own countries, and they are one of the most active support providers for the countries that need such assistance. The new co-operation policy with the other regions will be shaped more clearly in the nearest future and we will be active partners in it.

*Uldis Sesks  
Mayor of Liepāja, Latvia*



*Międzyzdroje with its partner towns are jointly striving for financial means for education and investment projects.*

The bilateral co-operation have been started in the fields of youth exchange and joint promotion and planning of joint investments. The city would like to make use of the experience of the partners from the EU and appoint common experts with considerable knowledge of the law of the EU/EC and experience in town and country planning, planning of investments that will help to prolong the season, promote tourist service and in preparation of the whole programme in the field of environmental protection.

Social and economic development is seen in the development of tourism. That is why the tourist identity of the city and particular elements forming it should be noticed and taken into consideration on all levels of the local government. Improving tourist infrastructure and quality of tourist services will give the local community the feeling of greater security, moreover, the economic stability will grow as well. The

strong position of the local community will protect it from the influence of foreign culture.

Poland's accession to the European Union brings both a lot of apprehensions and expectations. At the same time we would like to preserve the local character of our identity since there is the apprehension of the domination of German investors and of the take-over of tourist services in favour of their representatives.

After the accession the European Union is going to evolve towards the East with big opposition of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, we will come across such barriers as religion, culture and economic development of the Far-East countries. This will sooner or later bring to the confrontation with the USA, which would like to keep its dominant role in the world. The process of integration and of socio-political changes is long and will require wisdom and mutual trust in order to keep sound relations of co-operation on the platform of common membership in the EU. We, as a state, are another nation in the confrontation with the EU and therefore we can make use of the already checked patterns that will help us keep our national identity.

*Bogusław Tomczyk  
Vice-mayor of Międzyzdroje, Poland*





## WE ARE READY !

**1 May - a day when ten countries become part of the united Europe. But how do young people in the candidate countries see this day, what are their hopes, fears and aspirations? We invited a group of youngsters from Liepāja city and District, and asked them to express their vision of their future in the European Union.**

Liepāja is an internationally active city, and it can be felt also in the attitude of participants of the discussion. They see the upcoming European enlargement as a natural process and do not believe the 1 May to be a great frontier - they already have felt as an integral part of Europe. They would like to use the opportunities provided by the EU mainly for their education as there are certain study programmes not available in Latvia.

The participants of our discussion do not agree that young people would start to leave Latvia. Yes, they would like to see other countries; yes, they would like to study, but – they want to return to their country and participate in its

development using their skills and knowledge. Another factor erasing geographical borders is the development of information technologies allowing working for international companies from your home in Latvian countryside.

How about those, who will not have EU citizenship? Oleg and Artyom represent the Euro Club from a Russian language school. It is interesting that this Euro Club is one of the oldest pro-European organisations in Liepāja. Boys say that, although there are some concerns, the EU will provide possibilities for all people regardless of nationality, age, gender or citizenship. Also, with the opening of borders representatives of many new nationalities will come to Latvia and bring the local population even closer together. Young people see assets of Latvia – unique cultural heritage, nature and intellectual potential of people. There are also several spheres of economy where Latvia could be successful – for example, bio-production. Liepāja is known as a textile and lingerie producing city, and



*Young people meet every day at Liepāja Youth Centre*

international fairs have proven that local production is competitive also in the European market.

Active young people believe that Latvians do not expect anything for free – they are ready to study and work hard in order to improve their life, as well as to contribute to development of the whole Europe. So, Europe, get ready for young and active people with innovative ideas being glad to return to the family!

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## CITY BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES IN THE NEW EUROPE

**The City of Šiauliai, its community clearly recognize that by only making joint effort the city is able to compete and to be more advanced. Its is evident, that the business community is the city's driving force. Having a high entrepreneurship within the city, in the parallel, culture, science and city economy will be developed too.**

The Šiauliai authority challenge to participate in the EU structural policy can be considered as one of the most attractive of the EU accession aspects related with the funding from the EU budget. This is extra money allocated for investment into manufacturing, infrastructure development and modernization, support for labour force training programs, environmental management, etc. The EU structural support will substantially boost the economic and social development.

The Siauliai companies actively participate in the EU integration process having a possibility to strengthen their competitiveness producing improvement

in quality and speeding up the rate of innovation, to ensure business possibilities for consumers and city development, to create new jobs and as well to use the EU Structural Funds for manufacturing and infrastructure development, investment projects, education programs and vocational training in accordance with the Single Programming Document of Lithuania.

Šiauliai City Council constantly discusses and approves decisions regarding business promotion policy, stimulation and support of entrepreneurship, encouragement of foreign direct investment in the city. Investment development and promotion system is under elaboration. The local authority has launched a program supporting small and medium business promotion within the city .

The Municipality is ambitious with already launched Sustainable City Development Plan for the period of 15 years with the strategic aim to assure the city community's qualitative living



environment while minimising negative impact on resources, integrating social, environmental and economic progress.

The EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region will bring huge opportunities to enhance the collaboration among governments, business and citizens. Our core aim is to make the most out of these opportunities and to maximise win-win situations.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with enlargement?*

There will be more chances for development. Especially our harbour will gain importance. We expect an increase of goods transfer across the Baltic Sea. This will give an impulse for new settlements of enterprises in the harbour area. Also branches like ferry traffic, tourism, IT and other services will increase their business volume. But now we will have to compete more with other cities. The cooperation with cities from the BSR, especially within UBC seems to be helpful. And, we will focus, more than before, on joint EU projects.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

One should mention that some citizens feel certain fear and distance concerning

the EU enlargement. That's why we have to promote it publicly in a political campaign. On 14 April 2004 a Promotion Bus of the Information Office for Germany of the European Parliament will stop in Rostock in order to inform about „Europe – a good Choice“. In fact, with the European Elections in June the role of an united Europe and the political authority of the European delegates will attract more public attention than ever.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

Europe is becoming larger and its centre moves Eastward. Exactly this fact brings enormous chances for Rostock, due to its location in the North-East of Germany. Of course, we will take care that Europe will be forever democratic and economically liberal. But I don't worry, because this is the concensus among all EU countries.

*Arno Pöker*

*Mayor of the Hanseatic City of Rostock, Germany*



Finally a big step for Europe - new countries joining - closes the gap that for so long kept our continent divided.

For our region it also means four new countries that can now fully contribute to a prosperous and peaceful future. This is after all great challenge for Europe. Will integration run as smoothly as we hope for and will the European in us be stronger than the national? Sweden has advocated the enlargement issue as strongly as anyone else. To us it has been important and as new members ourselves we have perhaps not quite understood as yet all the implications and complexity of the tasks ahead. Our population itself feels rather distant and confused about the meaning of membership. There are political parties in this country, united and divided in accepting that membership is a part of our own future and that pulling out of this cooperation would not benefit anyone.

Sweden differs from most other member states in that we have experienced neither dictatorship nor war. These factors are still important. Let's hope that the newly independent status of the new countries will not be an obstacle to finding real European solutions on a citizen's perspective rather than the prevailing international cooperation. The tests will soon be presented when the constitution comes to the negotiating table.

To us in Sweden it should bring a boost for our economy to see more prosperous neighbours. Until then we realize that many investments need to come about in communication, infrastructure and environment. The richer countries need to contribute to this at the same time as local initiative need to continue to develop. A better economic stability in our region should benefit all. The relatively high level of education in the new countries should be a positive factor. My hopes are that the new countries integration does not result in nationalistic demands but instead on a will to advance to a common European identity based on human values and tolerance for differences. This can be achieved and the region where we live and work has everything to win by it!

*João Pinheiro*

*City Council of Sundsvall, Sweden*



## SEBTRANS LINKS

SEBTrans-Link (South East Baltic Transport Link) project identified strong demand for improved infrastructure in the South-east part of the Baltic region. In the North-South Corridor, building the A1 motorway (Gdynia – Lodge) in Poland is a first priority together with improving the section within Sweden (Göteborg–Borås–Växjö–Karlskrona).

Road improvements promote local, regional and interregional cohesion most efficiently in the short term, though rail also needs improvements to be able to reach long term sustainable transport networks. Port infrastructure should be developed in co-ordination with the hinterland links.

This project will provide an opportunity to develop the ideas and findings of the former SEBTrans project with a certain focus on the North-South corridors. Partners from Sweden, Poland, Lithuania and Russia/Kaliningrad region are participating in the work with the Municipality of Växjö as Lead Partner. The ambition is to support a fast and qualified preparation process for investments and

other initiatives to improve accessibility in the road, rail and sea transport networks.

The settled objectives are:

- expanding, merging and linking local labour markets
- stimulation of business renewal by improved accessibility in transport networks
- protecting the natural and urban environment and promoting cultural assets
- strategies and plans to improve infrastructure and channel spatial development
- developing a "breakpoint" system based on rail transport

The project uses sources from Interreg III B programme and is a direct continuation of the former SEBTrans which was financed by Interreg II C.

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## THE BALTIC AMBER ROUTE

Municipality of Palanga is implementing the project "Baltic Amber Road: heritage, tourism and trade". The project has been developed in association with municipalities of Liepaja and Jurmala (Latvia) and Neringa (Lithuania), with the Palanga Amber Museum and with the Guild of Palanga Amber Masters.

Objectives of the project are to develop and advertise the concept of the tourist route along the Baltic Sea shore adapting cultural heritage and natural resources. The project's aims are also enhancing cross-border cooperation and developing sustainable tourism in the Baltic region. At the utmost important is also fostering small and medium amber business in Palanga.

The project will develop an idea and some action to market the tourist route "The Baltic Amber Road" will be taken. There is an idea to creating information stands and tourist signposts. Among activities implemented during the project are actions undertaken in Palanga like: equipping and operating a demonstrative amber processing studio or developing and marketing strategy for the Guild of Palanga Amber Masters.

Thanks to this route information about tourist sites on the Lithuanian, Latvian



The Sventoji treasure at the Palanga Amber Museum

and Kaliningrad seacoasts will be disseminating among tourists, travel agencies and mass media. The route will draw attention to natural resources, cultural heritage, history, amber processing, arts centres as well as tourist services in the south-east region of Baltic.

The project is funded by the European Community under the PHARE 2001 program to improve international cooperation within the Baltic Sea region. The project will last till November 2004.

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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

From the enlargement of the EU

Riga awaits an equal partnership with other member states. The Riga City is interested in the possibilities of applying for the European Union funding, which would allow us to develop faster the infrastructure and to better the population living standards. Another important fact is that the foreign investment attraction and the economic development of Riga should increase.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

Riga has always been a European city, and its membership in the Hanseatic

League, although interrupted for some period, proves it. Since the very beginning Riga was founded and developed as a multicultural and economically active city. Therefore we can state that the citizens of Riga have never opposed their identity to the identity of Europe, quite contrary – these identities supplement each other and exist in excellent concord.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

There is no doubt that Europe, like the entire world, will be affected by definite globalisation processes. The new EU member states have to arrange their national economies, population living standards have to be raised to equalise them with the rest of the member states. It is also important that the European Union continues to develop relations with the countries, which are not EU member

Gundars Bojars  
Chairman of Riga City Council, Latvia



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

I believe that we will find great perspectives. My belief is strengthened by the development of the Dipole Vilnius-Kaunas which coincides with the directions of the regional development of the EU. Today we can offer our infrastructure, talented youth, creative potential and knowledge. We are happy that companies of Kaunas are successfully preparing themselves for the competition in the EU, seeking higher quality and correspondence to international standards. In our vision we see Kaunas as a European city that successfully unites the efforts of businessmen as well as scientists and attract both foreign investors and tourists.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

I am sure that Lithuanian nation is becoming more and more European. Last year in the EU referendum we expressed out strong decision and determination for the future. During 14 years of independence, Lithuania has already achieved a lot, and I am positive our nation has made the right decision for the future.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement?*

We see that the development and enlargement of the EU is constantly in progress. The accession of the new members will raise new challenges, problems and possibilities, the main issues of which are the following:

One of the main objectives of the EU is becoming more competitive in economic terms worldwide;

The questions of the EU geographic map - the boundaries of Europe;

EU regional policy encourages the sustainable development of regions, socio-economical cohesion, support for developing areas;

The strengthening of effectiveness of the common foreign and security policy;

The internal market of the EU will guarantee free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

Arvydas Garbaravičius  
Mayor of Kaunas, Lithuania



The EU-enlargement will facilitate communication and co-operation with the Baltic states and

Poland, and strengthen the existing networks around the Baltic Sea Region.

Since Finland joined the EU in 1995, our European identity has considerably been strengthened and deepened. The present EU enlargement will undoubtedly again deepen European identity, not only in the new member states and the BSR, but in the EU as a whole, because it will gradually tear down the barriers that had been erected between Europeans.

The enlarged EU and Europe as a whole stand in front of great challenges. We have to increase cohesion in Europe, which requires great efforts. Development of co-operation with the Russian Federation demands special attention to ensure that mutual understanding co-operation in all fields of life will grow.

The European Union also faces great challenges in the field of governance and legitimacy. Structures have to be simplified, transparency increased and citizens voices heard better. Enhancing the role of local and regional authorities in governance could significantly help to achieve these goals

*Armas Lahoniitty  
Mayor of Turku, Finland*



*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

Our expectations are highly positive. International cooperation, especially on the EU level, is an important element of the Tampere city strategy. Tampere has a wide and active twin city network, also reaching many of the new EU member states, for instance, Tartu and Kaunas. And the Estonian and Lithuanian EU memberships will certainly offer us new opportunities to further develop our partnerships. Also in the Eurocities the attitude to the enlargement is very favourable and encouraging. We are confident that Tampere will be a highly attractive and competitive operating environment for knowledge-intensive businesses and residential environments for experts also in the enlarged EU.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European?*

Tampere is a world-class centre of expertise, business, education and research, and an active partner especially in European cooperation. After the EU enlargement our institutions and individuals will be provided with enhanced opportunities to operate Europe wide. Organizations such as the UBC and Eurocities are important forums for such kind of European cooperation in which the citizens are the direct beneficiaries. Tampere has excellent experiences from both of these organizations, and I believe that their role as organizations promoting the European identity will be only accentuated by the EU enlargement.

*In what direction do you think the EU will develop after the enlargement?*

Naturally the EU will become an increasingly important global power. What is especially interesting to see is how the EU-Russia partnership and the EU's new neighbourhood policy will develop. The Baltic Sea cooperation and the Northern Dimension can play a significant role in this respect. Tampere will follow these developments closely and be an active partner in the Baltic Sea cooperation also in the future.

*Jarmo Rantanen  
Mayor of the City of Tampere*



## CITY INTERNATIONAL POLICY

For Szczecin entering the EU means first of all new development impulses and good motivation for faster modernisation. The enlargement brings increased competitiveness, infrastructure upgrade, attracting foreign investors, new jobs, better education and career chances for our youth. Szczecin's new geopolitical position brings unprecedented political, legal and financial conditions, as well as offers new challenges and chances for development. With the Baltic becoming the EU's internal sea and part of the Regional Policy, Szczecin, will be no longer peripheral in the EU.

In the eve of Poland's accession to the EU, the City International Policy has been developed. It aspires for Szczecin to become a leading European city in the south Baltic coast on the Polish-German border, effectively using opportunities to become pan-regional cross-border centre for international activities. As a Polish gateway to Europe and the world, Szczecin should enable people to benefit from their European citizenship and to exchange ideas and information with leading and comparable cities in Europe and beyond. These exchanges include learning from other port-cities and understanding those processes, both physical and institutional, that have helped create an urban renaissance in similar or comparable cities. To be a leading city in the Region, Szczecin needs to be a

competitive city and be responsive to the changing nature of the economy. Investment has occurred in recent years including numerous housing, office and commercial developments, yet Szczecin continues to experience slow development. Although the city is the driving economic force of the area, there remain pockets of serious deprivation and Szczecin is a city of contrasts. Initiatives seek to strengthen and develop the economy in key areas. Policy efforts in Szczecin already address many of the problems affecting European cities.

It is clear that new efforts are necessary to restore the role of the city as a place of social and cultural integration, as source of economic prosperity and sustainable development, and as the base of democracy. Here the challenges related to urban development provide an opportunity for the city to become a more meaningful body for its citizens by bringing tangible benefits to daily lives in the enlarged EU. It also recognises the importance of local democracy and the level of political authority closest to the citizen. In particular, some attention is given to the youth questions, especially as the Szczecin's Youth City Council actively wants to join the UBC Youth Network offering numerous projects and ideas.

Ms Ewa Kurjata  
City of Szczecin  
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*What are your expectations for your own city in connection with the enlargement?*

*J.Stopyra:* As a balanced development of all the regions determines success of the Community's economy, we, local government leaders must prepare to participate in the structural policy. We have to develop innovative projects that will serve local communities and find partners in the EU. We know that our membership in the EU shall not change our reality as if touched with a magic wand. The Poles can expect hard work, but I believe in its sense as it shall produce new good possibilities. We can be a strong and well-recognised partner. We should make better use of our attributes - geographical location, rich traditions and culture.

For Szczecin entering the EU means first of all new development impulses and good motivation for faster modernisation of our city. The enlargement brings increased competitiveness, infrastructure upgrade, attracting foreign investors, new jobs, better education and career chances for our youth.

*T.Hansen:* For centuries the Baltic Sea was the element that tied together the surrounding state. Nevertheless, for the longer part of 20th century the Baltic Sea was divided. The inclusion of Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the EU is a matter of restoring normality around the Baltic Sea. A normality, which allows us to resume our close relationship within the fields of trade, industry and culture. However, the enlargement of the EU also represents a fresh start. The importance of the Baltic region in relation to environmental and social policies as well as job and education opportunities for our youth is obvious.

With Køge's infrastructure key position it is natural for our city to see itself as a key player in the development of industry, trade and transport in the new Baltic region within the EU.

*A.Zuokas:* We have great expectations. Over 80% of Lithuanians are in favour of this important step! We expect to have all rights and freedom resulting from the EU's free movement of capital, goods, services and people. We will definitely



*Torben Hansen  
Mayor of Køge  
Denmark*

insist on opening of the job markets to our citizens by the present member-states.

With a consumer having a larger choice of enterprises having a new potential, both will be a great asset for Lithuania - one of the best-prepared accession countries. Also, common border controls, fighting organized crime, and exterior relations with the neighbouring countries are very important to us.

As the successful state has a unique impact on the city, Vilnius offers one of the most favourable investment possibilities, and is a unique example of preserving the cultural heritage, science and modern technologies. It becomes the meeting point and centre of political forums between the North, North-East and Central Europe.

*Do you think the identity of your citizens will be more European ?*

*J.Stopyra:* The szczecinians are Europeans. Entering the EU can only contribute to better understanding of own belonging and regional identity.

*T.Hansen:* Denmark has been a member of the EU for more than 30 years. Decisions made by the EU

affect our everyday lives and we enjoy greater opportunities, particularly in terms of mobility. More and more young Danes study and work in other EU countries and they undoubtedly think of themselves as having a European identity as well as a Danish identity. However, most people's lives revolve around issues and concerns like school, jobs, health care, child care, and local cultural activities, which is all provided locally by local and national authorities. It is in relation to these local and national political structures that people identify themselves.

*A.Zuokas:* As of 1 May, the EU will have 25 member states with peoples of different cultural traditions, speaking different languages, having own faith, and distinct national and cultural characteristics. No doubt there will be a tendency for Europeanization, and globalization in Lithuania. But with more

active intergovernmental affairs, the EU will experience the impact of Lithuanian national culture. I am sure that both the present and the new member states will skilfully keep their unique national identities intact.

*In what direction do you think EU will develop after the enlargement ?*

*J.Stopyra:* The EU shall not evolve in the direction of the United States of Europe. It is likely that a fully federal system shall be built. The public opinion wants the effective European Union, and not the Union that destroys national diversities and traditions. Looking from this perspective, the Union is a European network with decentralised power located in many centres.

*T.Hansen:* I think that the present enlargement of the European Union over time will widen our perspective. For the past 50 years we have focused on our near and distant neighbours to the North, West and South. The „old” and the „new” Baltic EU-members constitute a new geographical region within the EU but we may also come to represent a new region in terms of our perspective. Perhaps in time we will have a „Baltic perspective” to match the „Mediterranean perspective”.

*A.Zuokas:* All new member states will contribute to the growth of European economy and its productivity augmentation and attraction. The EU will open new-fangled possibilities for cooperation for Russia which should be interested in these opportunities. Former Soviet countries in SE could have prepared to integrate with the EU. It is also likely that the economic zones for the East will be formed.

The EU support strengthened local authorities in Palestine and contributed to restoration of the West Cost and Gaza. Considering the support that was given for Medi-terranean region countries, it is believed, that the EU have already built the foundations for peace, regional cooperation and economic prosperity in these countries.

There are three whales that hold the EU, i.e. security, democracy and respect for the human rights. I do truly believe that we will be going this way.



*Arturas Zuokas  
Mayor of Vilnius,  
Lithuania*



## II. UBC TODAY

### 39<sup>TH</sup> UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN VAASA



**The 39<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board Meeting was held in Vaasa, Finland, on 5-7 March 2004, at the invitation of Mr Markku Lumio, Mayor of Vaasa.**

The Mayor of Pärnu, Mr Vaino Hallikmägi, sent a letter to the UBC President applying to host the UBC General Conference in Pärnu in 2007. Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Norway has not yet hosted the UBC General Conference. The Board endorsed the application from Pärnu, but reminded that the decision about the venue can be taken only by the General Conference. The next GC will be held in Turku, Finland, in October 2005.

The Board re-elected Mr Pawel Żaboklicki as UBC Secretary General for the next four-year period.

Mr Tiit Naber, Chairman of the Council of Baltic Sea States Committee of Senior Officials, informed about a joint project with the Nordic Council of

Ministers aimed at enhancing cross-border cooperation at the external EU borders in the BSR. The goal of the initiative is to encourage local actors, authorities, private sector, NGOs, to establish a dialogue and cooperation on both sides of the external border. CBSS invited other Baltic Sea organisations including UBC to participate in the project.

Mr Jan Odegaard, Kristiansand, informed about Norwegian contribution to economic and social cohesion in new EU-member states, as a result of EEA agreement. In the period 2004-2009 Multilateral EFTA Financial Mechanism will provide annual contribution of 120 million eur (94,5% from Norway) and Bilateral Norwegian Financial Mechanism will provide annual contribution of 113,4 million eur. The two new financial arrangements will enter into force on 1 May 2004.

Mr Pawel Żaboklicki presented the draft of UBC Action Plan 2004-2005. The Board authorised the President to set up a working group responsible for the preparation of the action plan.

President Per Bødker Andersen informed about Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) proposal on joint statement on European Commission proposal to hold annual consultations on EC policy with local authorities associations. First

meeting with Commissioner Michel Barnier was already held in Brussels on 23 February. UBC was invited and was represented at the meeting by Vice-President Gundars Bojārs. UBC called for such consultations in the resolution from the General Conference in Klaipėda, October 2004. EC responded positively in a letter of 27 January from Commissioner Barnier to Secretary General Żaboklicki. UBC Board shared CAAC opinion that these consultations should take a form of a dialogue, not only one-way communication.

Mr Esa Kokkonen, Tampere, presented the draft Action Plan 2004-2005 of the UBC Commission on Information Society. The action plan was compiled jointly by Tampere and St.Petersburg. The document was sent out for comments to all member cities.

President Andersen reported from the Council of Europe's conference "The role of Baltic local authorities in responding to major oil spills" held in Helsinki, 9 February 2004. The cities message to the conference was that in case of major oil spills the local authorities are ready to cooperate closely in rescue action with respective state services.

Secretary General presented the financial report for 2003. The Board approved the report. The next UBC Executive Board meeting will be held in Kristiansand on 16-17 May 2004.

## COMMISSION ON BUSINESS WILL MEET IN VÄXJÖ

**Växjö invites members and representatives from cities interested in membership of the Commission to a two-days meeting held in the Science Park Videum on Växjö University Campus in days 11-12 June 2004.**

The subjects to be covered include Business Incubators, Science Parks, the IT-cluster InternetCity and the Web Service Competence Centre, other Triple Helix clusters, such as Bioenergy Småland - Expo Växjö, Entrepreneurship and Växjö's strategies in various areas, for example Fossil Fuel Free Växjö, and

Dynamic Växjö, a network of 800 citizens interested in contributing to the expansion of the city (you will find more about Växjö in the previous bulletins).

Växjö, with 76 000 inhabitants, is located right in the middle of southern Sweden and can be reached by flights, train and ferry to Karlskrona. Växjö is known for the entrepreneurial spirit and the ingenuity of the citizen, which has resulted in thousands of SMEs, which in turn has resulted in a very low unemployment rate. Because people are apt to take initiatives and then to take

action there are always a great number of projects going on, run by various groups. The projects are listed and sometimes coordinated, but rarely managed, by the city. By being first in several areas the city has managed to attract national and EU financial support for the projects.

Further information:  
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## EUROPEAN YEAR OF EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT 2004

In 2004 Commission on Sport responded to the decision of the Council of European Union, hence the annual meeting was devoted to the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES).

The 2004 Annual meeting of UBC Commission on Sport was held in Narva (Estonia). The meeting gathered representatives of 12 cities from 7 countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

Presentations made during the meeting showed the best practices of education through sport on the example of sailing, rugby and kick-boxing. The aims of all mentioned sport activities are to encourage young people to develop their physical as well as social capabilities e.g. teamwork, solidarity, tolerance, fair-play.

In EYES 2004 Commission on Sport has decided to allocate the grants for sport initiatives with a special focus on promoting the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups through sport and



*Commission on Sport met in Narva, 2-3 April 2004*

education. "Move your body, stretch your mind – grants" will help to raise awareness among educational and sport organizations of the need for cooperation to develop education through sport as well as to take advantage of values conveyed by sport, to increase knowledge and skills, to promote the educational value of mobility and pupils' exchange.

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## PROMOTING INFORMATION SOCIETY IN THE BSR

The UBC Commission on Information Society, chaired by St. Petersburg and coordinated by the Baltic Institute of Finland, aims at promoting and accelerating development of information society in the UBC member cities by facilitating exchange and dissemination of experiences, information, best practices and successful applications of technical innovations acquired in local information society activities. The goal is to enhance knowledge and capacities of the local authorities responsible for information society issues to design, develop and manage innovative information society policies and activities.

IS COM activities will follow and support the guidelines, strategies and general objectives set out in eEurope, eRussia, Northern eDimension and various national e-initiatives promoting the Information Society development in the BSR.

IS COM has a full agenda for the next couple of years. The coming IS COM activities will include e.g. a questionnaire to the UBC member cities concerning local information society development activities, preparation of a database/Internet portal for Baltic best practices on local information society development, preparation of an Interreg III C project proposal "Promoting eGovernment Actions in the Baltic Sea Region" and a seminar on local information society development in the Baltic Sea Region. The Action Plan 2004-2005 was presented in the UBC Executive Board Meeting in Vaasa on 6 March 2004.

The IS COM chairman Mr Sergey Zhdanov, St. Petersburg, and the IS COM coordinator Mr Esa Kokkonen, Tampere, were also invited to present the IS COM in the CBSS SOIS meeting in Riga on 23 April 2004.

## NEW TASK FORCE

On 19-20 January the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs took place in Rostock. Representatives of the cities of Riga, Klaipėda, Riga, Helsinki, Turku, Stockholm, Gävle and Rostock and social scientists from Vilnius and Rostock met to define the next working direction and methods.

The representatives exposed the special situations of their cities. As a result of this analysis two working groups were set up which will push forward the exchange of experience and the project development in the next future: the Working Group on Children and Youth on Risk, chaired / co-chaired by the cities of Riga / Gävle and the Working Group on Employment is chaired / co-chaired by Klaipėda and Helsinki.

After having discussed the UBC Social Charter a charter working group was set up, in charge to find a way how to

implement its goals within UBC cities.

Further interesting themes under debate were:

- the EU Strategy on Poverty and Social Exclusion broken down to National Action Plans how to work with it,
- experiences in transnational EU project design, application, implementation and follow-up and
- the Open Method of Co-ordination as an Instrument of international co-operation work.

The next task force meeting is planned for 14-15 May 2004; details will be announced in due time. Cities ready to take responsibility within the Commission are invited to send their representative to the task force.

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## AN OPEN LETTER

If you have a Strategic Planning Problem in your city and need advice on how to proceed, you are very welcome to contact us in the Commission on Urban Planning. Hopefully we can help you.

*Competitions* - One often used way, when the leaders of a city face a problematic situation is to arrange competitions between planners and architects. Mostly the winners present elegant models and pictures showing the new situation in the city when the program is fully realized. Then the city leaders ask themselves: how shall we now proceed?

*From Project to Process* - Now you have to turn from Project to Process. And it is in this situation we can offer you our service. As a very early example, we can offer you a group of three or four city-employed architects and planners from different Baltic countries to come to your city for three or four days. They will analyse the planning situation and then give you useful advice and presentations on how to proceed with your planning problems.

*The ABC-project* is co-operation engaging city-employed architects and planners in 27 cities around the Baltic Sea. During three years 2003-2005 we carry out through six common seminars, one in spring and one in autumn each year and all in different countries. As a matter of fact, we started the work with our first common seminar in Malmö, Sweden, already in 1999. At our seminar in Gdansk in 2001 we tested work with substantial city planning problems and we managed quite well. In 2002 we arranged similar seminars in Riga and St. Petersburg.

EU comes in - We have now managed to get financial EU-support through Interreg IIIB. Unfortunately we haven't received the expected added support from Phare and now Phare is leaving the scene when the Baltic countries joining the EU. Anyhow we have decided to bring our project to a successful end. Maybe we can get some extra support from UBC instead.

*Our way of working* - If your city has not joined the ABC-project already, you are hereby invited to visit us during one of our coming seminars by sending city-employed architects or planners. During

last seminar in Liepaja and in Riga our leading colleagues have formulated the following 3 items: revitalisation of mass-housing blocks from 80-ties, revitalisation of historical blocks at Old-Portside and revitalisation of former navy port.

*Are you interested to join us?* - Do these items sound interesting to work with? Does it seem interesting to take part in one of our coming seminars? Is your city interested to take even stronger part in our coming seminars? Does your city want any support from our group of experts to discuss and hopefully also solve one or two strategic planning problems in your city? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, please tell me or Jussi or Tomas or Inara (members of the Commission's Board).

On behalf of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning and the ABC-project

### Further information:

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## NETWORK ON YOUTH ISSUES



Young people from the UBC Network on Youth Issues

At the UBC General Conference in Klaipeda, in October 2003, a new Network on Youth Issues was created. The Network will work towards increased participation from youth within the UBC and its member cities. We will focus on young people's possibility of influencing their society, in parliamentary process as well as in their everyday lives as pupils, students, consumers of culture and entertainment, employees, teenage parents, and so on.

Young people today are of course as individual as their parents' generation,

but there are factors that differentiate them from their fathers. Youth today is prolonged: the young study longer, so they are older when they get their first permanent jobs, and when they start their own families and have children. And they are older when they are finally considered independent - for example, in many of our countries they are not represented in the parliamentary system.

The main aim for the network is

*Dialogue* - to encourage dialogue between the UBC and youth living in the member cities;

*Influence* - in order to include young people's opinions, and let young people's important issues influence the agenda of the UBC;

*Co-operation* - to promote youth co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region, youth involvement, exchange and participation in the UBC member cities.

The network will work towards these aims by:

Creating a Working Group to promote youth co-operation, involvement, and exchange in the UBC member cities of the

BSR. The Network is in the process of forming a working group with one youth representative (age 18-25) from local youth organisations, and one municipal civil servant with responsibility for youth issues. The working group will meet 3-4 times during 2004; our next meeting will be held in Kolding, Denmark on May 17-18, 2004.

Working towards a Youth Conference in 2005 - The conference should be a forum for young people of the UBC cities as well as other interested cities, to exchange experiences, find partners, and discuss common issues such as youth participation, EU and Baltic Sea co-operation, and youth influence on local levels.

Maintaining a dialogue between the UBC executive board and youth - the UBC Executive Board contacts young people of every city they meet in, with the aim of learning about the views and ideas of the young generation concerning the life in and the future of that city.

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## THE PROGRESS OF THE EMAS PEER REVIEW FOR CITIES PROJECT

The project has progressed well to its second year. First peer review was carried out in Leeds in January. Peer reviews in Jelgava, Liepaja, Panevezys, Siauliai, Düsseldorf, Rostock, Bristol and Barcelona have been carried out in March. The remaining peer reviews in Gdansk and Sopot will be carried out in April. Göteborg, Tallinn, Viljandi and Newcastle peer reviews will be carried out in May. Porto and Athens peer reviews will take place in June.

Desktop study on EMAS and 6EAP linkages has been concluded and first pilot studies in project cities have taken place. The survey questionnaire to complement the pilot studies is being prepared and will be sent out to European cities in April/May.

The tool kit of the project – workbook – is being tested by the cities. All cities have given their feedback on developed workbooks to guide the EMAS implementation. After peer reviews the final part of the workbook that guides EMAS peer reviews will be evaluated.

Valuable comments and suggestions will be integrated into the final workbook during the summer.

The final event of the project will be the forum to disseminate the project experience and it will take place in Autumn 2004. The program, exact timing and the place of the event are currently under preparation and the information will be released as soon as possible the decisions have been made.

This project will provide our member cities with valuable tool kit and experience to better manage the environmental concerns and possibilities in our cities. UBC Commission on Environment team is utilising the experience gained in this and earlier projects and is currently preparing a new project proposal to the European Commission to further develop EMS to manage the environmental challenges in the whole urban area.

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## UBC EnvCOM AT SUNDSVALL 22-25 APRIL



The EnvCom and UBC Agenda 21 event in Sundsvall will consist of several elements. On 22 April, directors on environment and city development will gather for the Directors' Forum to discuss the responsibilities and opportunities of environmental leadership and management of cities in the European Union. At the same time, TBestC cities will exchange good practices at their own workshop.

On 23-24 April, everybody will join together for an open conference on environment and city development. This conference will be dedicated to the five thematic focus areas of the Roadmap of Sustainable Baltic Cities – UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009: Good Governance and Management, Resources and Energy, Living Environment and Nature Protection, Transport and Economy, and Social Integration and Health. At the conference working group sessions will analyse the trends and developments in Baltic Cities, excursions will provide practical “lessons learnt” from Sundsvall and as an outcome new activities and projects will be designed.

The Union of the Baltic Cities is committed to support sustainable development in its member cities. The Roadmap of Sustainable Baltic Cities – UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 shows us practical ways towards good city development. The Sundsvall event is expected to boost the implementation of our programme. As Sundsvall has over ten years experience of resulting sustainable development process, it is an ideal place for this kind of a meeting and learning experience.

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## BALTIC CONTEMPORARY ART BIENNIAL

The last edition of the Biennial organised under the auspices of the UBC Commission on Culture was organised at Szczecin National Museum, 3 October – 16 November 2003.

The program of the biennial which included the main show *EXTRA STRONG SUPER LIGHT*, and a set of accompanying art events was enriched by the organisation of the annual session of the UBC Commission on Culture. The session devoted to contemporary art as a tool of social communication was attended by artists, critics, curators and representatives of the art institutions and municipal culture administrations.

*EXTRA STRONG SUPER LIGHT* presented works of 15 internationally renowned artists from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Ukraine. The show was based on such artistic messages that investigate the meaning of the most primary existential questions like life and death, and human position within the

realm of nature and culture. The exhibition's name reflected the span of emotions expressed through raised issues, the amplitude of which ranges from corporal practices with intensified emotions to poetic gestures distilling the surrounding area from superficiality.

Art & Social Communication organised with the biennial program was devoted to the presentations of new methods of adopting to the changing social environment implemented by the art institutions around the Baltic Sea.

The presentations of the seminar participants as well as the set of critical essays can be found in the last MARE ARTICUM 13/2003.

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## SUMMER IN ERKEN LABORATORY

The main objective of the Research School is to let the students work with scientific research. This was done in the projects, which were coupled to on-going research at the Erken Laboratory.

In the summer of 2003, the Erken Laboratory had a course for 16 students from Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Poland. The course included a strict introductory week with lectures in general limnology and a concluding week where we summarized the students' work. In between, the students worked independently with their Research Projects at the frontline of limnology, under the protective wings of our young international supervisors.

The students themselves were responsible for asking and answering the scientific questions that appear. They planned and designed field- and laboratory work, they worked independently in the laboratories, and they reported their results.

The Research School is a kind of boarding school or "scientific monastery". All students lived together and worked together at the laboratory with the intention that scientific discussions would become a part of life. However, as we recognize that science after all is not everything, we also offered other types of activities: sports, a barbecue, a visit to the historical village of Storholmen, or a trip to Stockholm.

We had four terrific weeks with a wonderful group of youngsters and we do look forward to the coming summer when 15 new students will meet at the Erken Laboratory.

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## EUROPEAN TRANSPORT PROJECTS SEMINAR AND ANNUAL MEETING

The Commission on Transportation would like to welcome you to a seminar in Kaunas 10 June about European Transport Projects. Since the Baltic countries are entering the EU, it is now the right time to discuss and exchange ideas about what funding possibilities there are in the sustainable transport field. There will be representatives from the commission and from Interreg to discuss priorities and programmes. Guide-maps, a project developing a manual for European Transport projects will present their work and there will also be practical examples from different types

of projects where the goal is efficient, sustainable transport habits.

On 11 June, there will be an Annual Commission Meeting to discuss our future activities and the new working group. Latest date for registration is the **18 May**.

If you are interested in taking part at the seminar and the Annual Meeting, please contact the Commission.

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## PLANNING FUTURE OF CoC

Over the next two years, the UBC Commission on Culture (CoC) will help member cities develop, fund and promote projects at the local level, as well as to share experiences and improve co-operation on a regional basis.

Board members elected in October set out the CoC agenda for 2004-06 during their first meeting, which was hosted by the Tukums Museum on 20 March. Among the highlights, the new board proposed the topics and sites for the CoC's upcoming annual general meetings.

With the accession of several Baltic border countries to the European Union in 2004, the centrepiece of this year's meeting will be an exploration of the means available for local cultural events and programmes from EU funds. Bergen, Norway, is proposed as the host city, though Brussels and Strasbourg – the twin seats of the EU government – also have been mooted as possible venues.

In 2005, delegates will examine the models and structures for museum operations, including the development of educational programmes and ways to boost cooperation with municipal governments. The Museum in Isvara, Russia and city of St. Petersburg are proposed as host.

The city of Vaasa, Finland, has offered to host the CoC's 2006 meeting, which will look at the ways member cities and



*Members of the Board of the Commission on Culture met in Tukums*

local institutions can better manage international co-operation. Vaasa will celebrate its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006.

In addition, the board was updated on the progress of 'A Strand of Baltic Pearls: A History of Cities in the Region.' A special meeting is set for 30 May – 1 June in Szczecin at which contributors to the book and lecture series will discuss their efforts in greater detail. The board also heard about a new project – the Water Energy Festival – that will take place in Gdynia, Poland, next year.

The meeting was extremely enjoyable and eventful. The board visited many cultural institutions in the Tukums district.

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## ANCIENTIMES

The joint Interreg IIIB and Phare project ANCIENIMES is on how to integrate culture, history, education and tourism in one concept. The project aims at developing cultural heritage sites into attractions, where the visitors not only learn about their history but also actually take part in the activities in an authentic environment.

The relation of the site to the history of the region as well as to European heritage is an important aspect in building up these attractions. Their development will be integrated with the spatial planning strategies of the partner's regions, in the long run fostering the economic development of the regions involved.

The project includes five component work packages. WP History Research is to discover historical facts about ancient times in the BSR. WP2 Preservation/Conservation aims at creating authentic cultural attractions and interchanging experiences regarding reconstruction and conservation methods. The goal of WP



Time Travelling/Edutainment in history is to make the exhibitions more alive, with for instance educational activities. The concept "learning by doing" characterizes the whole project. The ambition of WP 4 is to improve existing exhibitions on historical themes with interactive concepts. The objective WP5 Marketing by history and Products is to promote European cultural heritage by using common historical themes to establish an increased identification of citizens with their European roots.

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## AFRICA TO KOLDING - CITY COUNCILS EXCHANGE

African mayors visiting Kolding were impressed by the Danish pupils' ability to use a foreign language actively. In August 2003 the African guests visited Kolding as part of the "City Council Exchange Program" – a project managed by UBC together with LVRLAC - union of municipalities situated round Lake Victoria.

African guests were very interested in studying how a Danish municipality works with democracy on all levels – right from kindergartens, over schools, to the sector of the elderly. Other issues that were constantly on their minds were our efforts to further respect of nature and the conservation of the environment. Here they saw a link to the way we look upon our history and our culture. They saw that the knowledge of our roots is fundamental for the future. If you do not acknowledge and respect the environmental and cultural basis on which you live, how can you engage yourself in tomorrow? These were the contemplations that our guests had. And exactly

such contemplations were the purpose of the exchange program. Also in the Baltic Region we might profit from asking ourselves such questions. Do we work hard enough for democracy, do we secure on-going dialogue on the basic values of society, do we remember our roots and traditions, do we discuss our visions of the society of tomorrow?

Visits like the above mentioned gives great benefit and much inspiration both to visitors and hosts. It is very important to be given the opportunity to have a look at your own community and its practise "through African eyes". It gives new perspectives. The guests have brought back new ideas that can be further developed in their own communities.

In the same way there have been visits by African delegations in Kalmar and in Tampere, as well as there have been similar follow-up visits in each of the three African countries by councillors from the three participating Nordic cities.

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## NEWS FROM WOMEN'S NETWORK

During 2004 UBC member cities in four countries join European Union. They have the advantage of belonging to UBC network together with countries who already have some experiences to share in many fields. How to promote equality between men and women in their administrations is one. The Amsterdam Treaty, together with other treaties and papers supported development which can be seen in EU partner cities.

UBC Women's Network has devoted this year to enlighten and map the situation of equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities in UBC member cities. It turned out that EU membership evidently had promoted municipal equality. Some cities can present an example of good practices in realizing goals which affect the municipality's operations and service for citizens as well as the employees. Some cities have included their statements and equality plans on their homepages or, like Växjö, has translated their programs to other languages. Vaxjo City Commissioner is chairman of the gender equality committee with 20 years long traditions. Many cities have politically appointed committees working for gender equality and some of them have special budgets and employed personnel.

Important issues during 2004 for the Women's Network are:

- to promote standards and norms for municipalities for combating violence in families and trafficking in human beings,
- to promote women's participation in decision-making bodies within UBC and the member cities.

It is important to remember that the participation of women in UBC is connected to women's positions in their cities and in many cases women still are underrepresented in higher decision-making bodies.

In 2004 Women's Network intends to have 3 meetings and also 3 national meetings. The first network meeting will be held on 14 August 2004 in connection to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Seminar of the Nordic Forum in Turku.

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## Two programmes - one direction

The BSR INTERREG III-B programme and the INTERREG IIIC North programme are supporting transnational and interregional co-operation in the northern part of Europe and beyond. With the EU enlargement both programmes face new challenges. The integration of the new Member States increases the number of actors on programme as well as on project level and thus, brings new experiences, opinions and knowledge into the programmes.

## Equal representation

In both programmes, Monitoring and Steering Committee representatives from the new EU Member States, Belarus and Russia have a status equal to representatives from the old EU Member States and this has been the case since 2001. Also in the area of Financial Control officials from the new Member States are permanent participants of meetings and task forces. In this respect the programmes are ahead of EU Enlargement.

## Two new INTERREG IIIA priorities

The BSR INTERREG III B programme is facing additional challenges. With the EU enlargement two INTERREG IIIA

priorities have been established in the Eastern BSR (Estonia-Latvia-Russia and Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus). These IIIA priorities are integrated into the management structure of the BSR INTERREG III B programme.

## Enlargement of staff in Joint Secretariats

The Joint Secretariat of the BSR INTERREG III B programme and the Joint Technical Secretariat of the INTERREG IIIC North programme have a common office in Rostock, Germany. An office of the BSR INTERREG III B programme secretariat is situated in Karlskrona, Sweden. In 2004 an additional office will be established in Riga, in order to manage the new INTERREG IIIA priorities and to expand the activities to the new Member States, Belarus and Russia. The future office in Riga will have additional 3-4 international staff members.

## Info-activities: looking and acting eastwards

In autumn/winter 2003 the Joint Secretariats carried out a series of joint information activities in order to promote the two programmes in the new Member States. Organised in Estonia, Latvia,

Lithuania and Poland, the various info seminars were attended by participants from local, regional and national level. Information on funding opportunities were disseminated and many new project ideas from the new Member States were discussed.

## Perspectives

Altogether 2004 will be an interesting and challenging year for both programmes. The implementation of the New Neighbourhood Initiative, the new INTERREG IIIA priorities and all other tasks related to EU enlargement will widen the experiences with transnational and interregional co-operation in an enlarged Europe. Another additional challenge for the INTERREG IIIC Joint Technical Secretariat will be the management of the INTERACT Point "INTERREG IIIC Coordination".

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## NORWAY AND EEA ENLARGEMENT - NEW FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

On 1 May 2004 ten new countries will become members of the European Union. These 10 new members will at the same time become parties to the EEA Agreement that makes the EFTA EEA countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, part of the EU internal market. In the negotiations on extending the EEA Agreement, it was decided that two new financial arrangements should be established. One is the EEA financial mechanism, and the other is a separate Norwegian bilateral financial instrument. These arrangements will mean that Norway's contribution to economic and social cohesion in the enlarged EEA will be 10 times larger than it was before.

The EEA financial mechanism applies to the new member countries and Greece, Portugal and Spain. The main priority areas are the environment, promotion

of sustainable development, securing the European cultural heritage, education, health and child care. The budget for this mechanism is EUR 120 million (about NOK 996 million) a year.

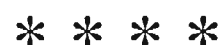
The Norwegian financial instrument applies only to the new member countries. Its purpose is to enable these countries to participate fully in the internal market and to reduce the social and economic disparities within the EU after enlargement. Priority areas include projects to assist the 10 new members to adapt to the Schengen co-operation, justice and home affairs, environmental measures, regional policy, regional policy and cross-border activities and technical assistance relating to implementation of EU legislation. The total budget is EUR 113.4 million (about NOK 941 million) a

year. A joint secretariat for the two arrangements will most likely be established in Brussels when the arrangements enter into force. The recipient countries will themselves be responsible for proposing, developing and implementing the projects. A continual dialogue will be maintained with the recipient countries on the use of the funds. Recipients will have to pay a share (15-40 per cent) of the project costs. Project support will be allocated in accordance with EEA rules relating to public procurement, state aid and competition.

The two new financial arrangements will enter into force on 1 May 2004.

### Further information:

<http://www.dcp.no/ud/engelsk/eu/financial/index-b-n-a.html>





## III. NEWS FROM MEMBER CITIES

### Tall Ships' Race in Aalborg

In 2004 Aalborg will host the annual Tall Ships' Race from 30 July to 2 August. In 1999 Aalborg was the final harbour and the event was a great success. The aim of The Tall Ships' Race (former "Cutty Sark") is to enable young people of all nations to race together and to celebrate in friendship and competition the challenges. It is also a contribution to developing worldwide relations and understanding between different nationalities.

Among four cities (Antwerp, Aalborg, Stavanger and Cuxhaven), Aalborg is the second harbour for the ships to visit. In order to make it more attractive for the big ships to participate and to ensure their earnings, private enterprises, associations and private persons are now being offered to hold receptions, staff arrangements on board the beautiful large ships. It's a unique chance of an unforgettable experience. Furthermore there will be a number of various activities and arrangements at the harbour and elsewhere in the centre of Aalborg, to guarantee four memorable days for visitors and crew members. The citizens are proud to be able to show their festive city to all the guests – hospitable and sociable as they are.

Apart from The Tall Ships' Race our city hosts a wide range of regular events such as Scandinavia's biggest carnival, 4 July Celebrations, and Youth Games for thousands of young people from our twin cities. With 26 twin cities and our own EU office in Brussels, Aalborg is accustomed to international life. We have developed a strong network of authorities, private companies and cultural institutions. And we can draw on a large group of volunteers. This makes organisation and implementation of major events extremely efficient.

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### Volvo Youth Sailing

This year, on 8-17 July, Gdynia will play host to a historic event in Polish sailing, namely 34 Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championship. This is the first event of this kind to be organised in Poland.



The decision to choose Gdynia as a host to the world championship was made by International Sailing Federation in November 2001. In its bid for the organisation of this event Gdynia conquered many cities leading in the sailing world. This decision undoubtedly adds to the city's prestige and importance. The Youth Sailing World Championships provide an opportunity for sports competition among young sportsmen as well as teach them fair play. The sailing competitions organised within championships give participants the opportunity not only to compete but also to gain new experiences, face new challenges, and make new friends!

This year's championship, to be organised for 34 time, will be held from 8 to 17 July. The best sailors from all over the world, representing about 50 countries, will come to Gdynia to compete in waters of Gdańsk Bay. The competitors will try their hand at the following classes: 420, Hobie 16, Laser Radial, Laser – Single-Handed Dinghy Open, Mistral – Windsurfer Men and Mistral – Windsurfer Woman. So, if you are interested in sailing, Gdynia is the best place for your holiday destination this year!

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### Cleaner Water

Water quality and its accessibility for inhabitants and tourists are important in Jurmala. Also Lielupe river and Riga Sea Bay on which coasts several swimming places are located would benefit on it. Therefore implementation of Jurmala water services development project has been started.

During short-term investment programme new wastewater treatment plant in Jurmala will be constructed, which will treat wastewater from half of the city. Wastewater from the other side of the city is pumped to the nearby located wastewater treatment plant in Riga thanks to support from PHARE programme. Long-term investment programme indicates changes until 2015, when practically all houses will be provided with the possibility to connect to water supply network with high quality water as well as to unified sewerage network.

Currently the tender documentation is prepared in order to begin the construction of new wastewater treatment plant in October 2004. After its completion several small local wastewater treatment facilities as well as whole Kemeru residential area will be connected. It will diminish infiltration of wastewater into the ground-water. In the largest residential area iron removal plant will be constructed, which will provide good quality water to approx. 22500 inhabitants. Two existing iron removal plants will be renovated. Part of gravity sewers will be rehabilitated and flushed. New sewerage network will be constructed in the living area in which small-store buildings dominate. In other city area water supply network will be extended.

Grants from ISPA, SIDA and NEFCO covers 60% costs of implementation of short-term plan. The rest is covered by Jurmala, municipal company and by the State.

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Jurmala City Council  
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*Environmentally safe buses run on the streets of Kristianstad*

## Use of Biogas

The executive committee of Kristianstad municipality has decided to declare it a Fossil Fuel Free Municipality. The reduction of fossil fuels is to be achieved primarily by the use of bio-fuels, both biomass as fuel for heating and production of electricity and biogas as fuel for local buses and other vehicles.

In 1997 the local Municipal Waste Company established a biogas plant with the aim to improve sustainability and energy production. The plant in Karpalund is using manure and organic waste, not only from households but also from food industry. The biogas plant of Kristianstad is the first in Sweden to co-digest solid urban waste, sewage, and other biomass into energy and organic fertilizer.

From 1999 the biogas production at the water treatment plant has been upgraded and used as fuel for busses. Using the produced biogas, together with biogas from the water treatment plant, as fuel for buses and other vehicles now reduces fossil fuels in the transport sector. The Public Transport Company has played an important role in the project by introducing biogas in the city transportation and has also contributed to the establishment of a new depot for all buses in Kristianstad. The municipality has established a car pool with biogas cars and private companies use biogas vehicles.

The target population is the local market, local companies as well as private persons. The project is a result of successful co-operation between the municipality, private Sydkraft Gas, farmers, industry and consumers.

Kristianstad, a capital of Region Skåne, has been awarded several times during the past years: Campaign for Take Off Award 2001, Climate Star 2002, Energy Globe Award 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize 2003.

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## Łeba - Town in Action

One of the most important rules of development of NGOs are international contacts. They enable to increase the attractiveness of the region not only for its inhabitants but also for national and foreign investors. Since many years the town of Łeba has been co-operating on many levels with a range of towns which makes easier, among other things, subsidising from different EU funds.

One of the first of such projects was the construction of the Yacht Marine in 1998 which contributed to the increase of tourist attractiveness of the town. Since then, the town of Łeba has started treating the funds as a chance for creation of new perspectives of development.

At present, a new project "European Integration Panel" aims at creating the youth way of European integration. The youth from the partner cities is going to acquaint themselves with the town and its surroundings and in the latter part of their visit to write a publication in their mother tongues on the biggest attractions of the town and its surroundings.

Another idea is the suppression of barriers and stereotypes through personal contacts with people of the same age from different countries, acquaintance with and bringing closer to culture and tradition. It all is going to be achieved through artistic evening meetings organised by and under the supervision of the participants.

This year in autumn a conference 'European Rapprochement of Local Governments' is planned. Its aim is to bring the participants closer to the idea of European integration and simultaneously emphasise the preservation of their own national identity. Representatives of the participating countries are going to 'create' a civil society and develop the idea of joint activities and form co-operation between local governments and NGOs.

However, the most important day for Poland and for the town of Łeba is 1 May On that occasion and coming celebration the town's authorities have planned a

meeting of fire brigades' representatives from the partner cities. Participants are going to share their problems and exchange experiences regarding saving people's lives through seminars and rescue-displays.

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## Kieler Woche

Taking place every year in the last week of June, it combines the biggest yachting event in the world with the biggest summer festival in the north of Europe. It is the meeting place for more than three million people from all over the world.

Kieler Woche is the oldest regular occurring yachting event in the world called by someones "the great-grand-daddy of all yachting regattas". It has its origins in the first big yachting regatta sailed on Kiel Ford on July 23, 1882. The current affairs, cultural and funfair elements have taken their place as peers alongside the yachting event in 1949.

Every year more than 6000 sailors in 2000 yachts and yawls set sail on Kiel Ford and the open Baltic Sea. Four yachting clubs are responsible for the perfect organisation.

Regatta escort cruise is the way of watching the sailors close-up. Amidst the yachts and yawls everyone can literally live the fascinating experience "sailing". And whilst strolling on the banks, you can look at the regattas.

Kieler Woche has an outstanding reputation. Foreign heads of state, federal presidents, ministers and politicians visit the festival week. They give speeches and discuss new forms of cooperation.

On large and small stages, Kieler Woche turns into an open air festival with more than 300 concerts of German and international stars. Everywhere you see performances by street theatre groups, conjurors and folk groups. Charming atmosphere, open-mindedness and broad diversity are the characteristics of the grand festival that the people of Kiel annually celebrate with their guests from all over the world.



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## Sailors' Metropolis

**Tourism is one of the most important branches of the town of Rostock. The figures for overnight stays in Rostock have more than doubled in the last few years. Additionally Warnemünde has become one of the most important ports for cruise liners in the Southern region of the Baltic sea.**

All tourists and people who arrive by sea pass by the new marina 'Hohe Düne' which is under construction now. With an investment total of about 100 million Euro, the marina is being built East of the sea channel on the peninsula-like dunes. Space to moor about 750 boats with all required facilities, lay-up areas on land for rowing-boats and building complexes with maritime tourism services and hotels will be completed in April 2005. The first yachts and ships can already berth from May 2004 on.

The calendar for 2004 has in agenda the European Championships of the boat classes 470 (1-10 June), laser boats (16-24 July) and the Flying Dutchman World Championships (27 July - 3 August) and one of the largest international events in Germany, 67 Warnemünde Week (3-11 July). This summer the junior championships of all olympic classes are on the programme. Also for the first time, some of the yachtsmen will be leaving from the new 'Hohe Düne' marina. The Warnemünde Week has much to offer to land and beach visitors apart from the thrilling regattas music, entertainment, culture attractions.

Rostock will host also Baltic Sail (part of the Hansa Sail) which promotes



Marina Hohe Düne to be finished in 2005

international understanding and represents Baltic hospitality. Five Baltic cities, Gdańsk, Karlskrona, Rostock, Helsingor and Lübeck, will be the hosts of the exciting harbour festivals between 22 July and 22 August. And the Baltic Sail family is still growing: recently, the city of Klaipėda/Lithuania became a new member. In summer 2005 it is expected to be one of the destinations of the itinerary.

The captain of the 83-year-old four mast bark Sedov from Russia already confirmed that the windjammer will be in Rostock again in August 2004 at the 14<sup>th</sup> Hanse Sail. During the winter, a project group put into practice an arrangement of red, blue and white lights under the theme 'The Colours of the Hanseatic City of Rostock'. Students from Germany, Turkey and India, as well as the Russian crew, arranged all the lights in up to 64 meters of height in only two days. On Christmas Eve, all lights turned on giving extremely beautiful picture.

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## Castles and Museums Co-operation

**The Association of Castles and Museums around the Baltic Sea was founded in July 1991, which makes it the oldest cooperative relations established after the fall of Iron Curtain. The originator of the idea was a French businessman who was inspired by the enormous structure of an old castle founded in the 1270s by the Teutonic Order in Malbork.**

The purpose of this association is to increase cooperation between related institutions in the countries in the Baltic area. At the annual general meeting, which takes place in Malbork, members discuss problems and share opinions. The co-operation of castles and museums has emphasised the fate shared over the centuries by the Baltic countries. Trade has united us and wars and borders have divided us. Those of us who work at the castles and museums have a special obligation to impart the broad historical knowledge held by our old buildings and the

collections of our museums. Our goal is to present to the future generations the dramatic history from our common past and preferably in a way providing the opportunity to form a colourful and fertile basis for a common, peaceful future in stead of serving narrow, national purposes and sustaining old enemy images.

The best example of our activity is a poster display on 41 castles in the Baltic countries, which has previously been exhibited in Malbork. In the autumn of 2003 it was on view at Koldinghus Castle and subsequently at Sønderborg Castle. This summer, it will be shown at Nyborg Castle.

The members are presented in the book "Castles around the Baltic Sea".

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Museum at Koldinghus Castle  
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## Sport and Music Days

**The German city of Bützow and the Estonian city of Sillamäe will celebrate their first joint Sport and Music Festival from 18 to 19 September, 2004. This project shall strengthen the friendship between the people of both cities foster the European identity.**

Sport and music will be the background of a meeting that will help the people to learn to know each other and to make friends. A delegation of about 30 Estonian guests from Sillamäe will visit Bützow. Different sports matches will take place in athletics, shot-putting, sprint and long jump as well as volleyball and soccer. This day will be finished by a Youth Rock Night for everybody. Under the motto 'Just for Fun' a lot of activities take place i.e. a dragon boat race, skittles, etc. The musical and cultural frame will be performed by the schools, kindergartens, the leisure time clubs of Bützow and, of course, by the guests from Sillamäe. We believe that our meeting will be very successful and happy - and already now we are looking forward to the next German-Estonian Sports and Music Days in 2005 in Estonia.

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## Wildlife Nature Film Festival

This year the festival will take place on 3-6 November 2004 and will include a nature film competition consisting of 5 different categories: Best Festival Film Overall, Best Long Film, Best Short Film, Best Children & Youth Film, Best Film containing an environmental message.

Soon after establishing the Nature Centre in Vaasa arranged an international nature film festival called Wildlife Vaasa 2002. This was the first time such a festival had been held in Finland, and it was a great success. The event hosted 81 nature film entries from 14 different countries around the world. Wildlife Vaasa 2002 festival was organised together with Wildlife Europe Ab from Sundsvall – Sweden, with whom it was agreed to continue organising and hosting the festival on alternative years in Finland and Sweden respectively. This year it is Vaasa turn to organise and host the festival.

From an educational perspective, Wildlife Vaasa 2004 will also be celebrating the Finnish Art Commission's Year of Children and Youth Film. One of our educational objectives is to help to integrate nature films into schools by introducing them as effective environmental educational tools. Therefore, Wildlife Vaasa 2004 will add two more weeks of school screenings to the festival programme (one week before the festival and one week after). Panel discussions, seminars and wildlife presentations will also be included in our educational programme during the festival.

Wildlife Vaasa 2004 is also a multi-cultural event that will be widely accessible to both the local public and visitors from around the world. Cultural events, parties and a nature tour into the pristine Finnish wilderness will be organised during the festival days to help celebrate the theme of Nature.

Nature filmmakers from around the Baltic region and especially from Cities of the UBC Network are mostly welcome to participate or come to Vaasa.

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*Orange Tree project for immigrant women is carried out by the Women's Centre in Turku*

## Orange Tree Project

**Appelsiinipuu-Orange Tree is a project which helps the immigrant women to integrate into Finnish society and a way of life, gives the opportunities to share common experiences, learn from them and to have control over one's life and discovers skills and knowledge of immigrant women living in Turku. We also try to help the immigrant women to find job or place to study.**

Finland is still quite closed and immigrants have difficulties to start a new life. For female immigrant the situation is even more difficult than for men because women may have spent a lot of time at home taking care of the children. Therefore, they have poorer knowledge of Finnish, culture and social structure compared to men. This in turn influences considerably in jobs.

There are also a lot of prejudices towards the immigrant women. The attitudes can also be sexist and a woman has to bear besides racism behaviour from the men and the other women. Many immigrant women feel that they are not appreciated as individuals and for the things they have done, but only as representatives of their own ethnic background.

In Orange Tree there are four immigrant women working as guides for other women. Their role is to give support and be an intermediary. Their task is also to give information and enhance team work skills. Furthermore they are ready to participate in multicultural co-operation.

Our working methods are small groups, personal guidance, different kinds of workshops (handicraft, theatre, nature, ICT) international co-operation, producing radio programme, participating in fairs, visiting in work places, job supervising and making reports of the

activities. The culture evenings are organized once a month. Here both the immigrant and Finnish women are welcome to exchange ideas, to discuss and to get to know each other. In culture evenings women make food together and get acquainted to the customs of different countries.

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## The City of Good Thoughts ?

**Tartu introduces itself as the City of Good Thoughts. Tartu has invented and applied solutions in public administration that have made governance more transparent, efficient and innovative.**

One of such examples is the Digital Document Management System. The peculiarity lies in the fact that the system was not limited to the requirements of the law but also fulfils the tasks of simplifying activities of civil servants and citizens.

Application of the DDMS started at 2001 and the system was introduced in May 2002. By today paper handling has already given way to electronic administration. In communication between the city's institutions, paper documents are not being used any more, as a rule. All documents are reflected in the DDMS. To keep it functional, we provided almost 400 people the access to the DDMS.

The greatest benefit of the solution is that everybody can see and link necessary documents, which reduces dubbing, increases work speed and, documents do not get lost any more. To compare the current situation to the pre-DDMS era, most significant changes have occurred in civil servants' work speed, especially in concerting documents. The system we use does not require civil servants sitting at their desks. It is possible to use the DDMS at your home PC or laptop, wherever you are where Internet or GPRS is available. The members of the City Government actively take advantage of this option and it substantially increases their mobility.

Citizens benefit from Tartu DDMS through the principle of publicizing and faster processing of their requests, which may also be digitally delivered. Our





DDMS is able to receive and register also digitally signed documents.

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### New Canal Harbour

**The municipality of Nykøbing Falster, Denmark is building a new canal harbour which will form a new part of town with apartments, shops, restaurants and culture attractions.**

The realization of the canal harbour which has been named Slotsbryggen means that Nykøbing Falster to an even higher degree will benefit from its extraordinarily attractive position at the beautiful strait of Guldborgsund. The town is currently developing rapidly. For instance the municipality expects a growth of population as well as enlargement of the housing market. Around 130 apartments are planned for Slotsbryggen with the possibility of even more in the near future.

Slotsbryggen is a very important part of the municipal strategy for the continued development of the dynamic city. It creates an urban area with a beautiful waterfront which links the city centre to the water. Nice vantage points and promenades along the canal constitute essential and attractive features. The realization of the canal harbour creates the foundation for a varied and eventful citylife for instance in regard to cultural, recreational and maritime activities and much more.



Slotsbryggen is set to become a gateway for pleasure boats and sailing ships to the inner Danish waters. The construction of Slotsbryggen began in January 2004 and the canal harbour is expected to be completed by April 2006.

Further information:  
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### Tourism Information System

**Palanga tourism information centre (TIC) is the most important actor in whole tourism information system in Palanga resort which hosts almost a half of million guests yearly.**

Palanga TIC collects information about the resort, organizes excursions, publishes guidebooks, participates in international tourism fairs and has established offices in Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Russia. Results of the research of tourists' flows have shown the increase of tourists from Germany, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland. There is a need to prepare the tourism marketing strategy orientated to above-mentioned countries.

Palanga Municipal Fund for Tourism Development has initiated the project "Development of Tourism information system in Palanga resort while integrating into the network of Baltic Welcome Centre". It aims to enhance tourist attractiveness of Palanga resort, to improve quality of the activities of Palanga TIC, to increase flows of tourists. The project was granted from the EU PHARE 2001.

Objective of the project is to prepare the strategy for the development of tourism information system. The project has been implemented by Palanga Municipality in association with Municipality of Kalmar, the Lithuanian Tourism Fund, and the Tourism Information Centre at Jūrnala. During the project an evaluation of the current tourism information system will be done and later a feasibility study of development of the tourism information system will be prepared. A high-quality and attractive tourism marketing campaign will be organized and implemented. Activities, implemented during this project, will determine effective and qualitative development of tourism information system of Palanga resort and its integration into network of Baltic Welcome Centre.

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### Modern Art Festival VIRUS

**For 9 time Šiauliai City will be hosting the International Modern Art Festival VIRUS - a major annual event of modern art in Northern Lithuania aiming at introducing new trends.**

The VIRUS Festival is a project of modern visual art, theatre, pavement-art, modern dance, fashion and electronic music. Youthful and pilot creative spirits dominate. Beside the theatre, modern dance, visual art, theory, music, digital technology and entertainment industry educational events, such as conferences, seminars, discussions, various presentations, take place.



A fresh program was presented at the VIII International Modern Art Festival in 2003. Four various exhibitions of modern art were held promoting topics of modern pictorial art, feminist art exhibition, architecture interaction and personal exhibitions. Non-uniformly Scientific Multidimensional Conference "Anthropology of the Journey" was held. It was focused on the Journey of the Soul, Pilgrimage, Pathfinders, Life styles, etc. In the field of traditional VIRUS cinema the early cinematic vanguard was presented as well as premieres of pilot theatre performances took place.

Keystone of the IX Festival in 2004, will be the Days of Western Countries Literature, literature conference and transfer of the events. The Festival will react to various innovations and will be opened for vanguard classics and nascent art movements. The future plan of the Festival is expansion of art to the city streets and neighbourhoods. Educational program and international co-operation will be developed as well.

The annual Festival VIRUS is of great importance developing modern art traditions, and providing new challenges for the cultural co-operation.

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# FORTUM CORPORATION - FIRST UBC SPONSOR



Fortum's Head Office

## Fortum Corporation

Fortum, which has its headquarters in Espoo, Finland, is a leading energy company in the Nordic countries and the other parts of the Baltic Rim. Fortum's activities cover generation, distribution and sale of electricity and heat, production, refining and marketing of oil, operation and maintenance of power plants as well as energy-related services. The main products are electricity, heat and steam, traffic fuels and heating oils. Fortum's core expertise also covers the management of environmental issues and the use of new technologies.

### Nordic energy

Fortum's power generation portfolio is diversified and flexible. It consists of hydro, nuclear, coal, peat, biomass, natural gas, oil, waste and wind power. Some 14% of the total electricity consumed in the Nordic countries is generated by Fortum.



Juvvuln hydro power station (in Sweden)

Fortum is a forerunner in the environmentally benign cogeneration of power and heat (CHP) and has its own advanced technology for exploiting biofuels in heat production. One of the focus areas in the heat business is the development and use of waste and recycled fuels.

In power generation, the volume of Fortum's CO<sub>2</sub>-free production has steadily increased and in 2003, as much as 78% of the power generation was already CO<sub>2</sub>-free.

As a leading distributor of electricity with some 1.4 million customers Fortum is also a major retailer of electricity and



Porvoo refinery

heating oil with 1.3 million private and business customers in Finland, Sweden and Norway.

### Clean traffic fuels

Fortum is the number one oil refiner and a remarkable retailer of clean traffic fuels in the Nordic area. Environmentally benign traffic fuels and other oil products for domestic and industrial customers are produced at the two oil refineries in Finland. The product range consists of gasolines, diesel fuels, light and heavy fuel oils, aviation fuels, base oils, lubricants, gasoline components, solvents and liquified petroleum gas (LPG).

Clean traffic fuels and other oil products are also exported to countries outside Europe. To ensure safe marine



## Fortum

transport Fortum accepts only double-hull or partly double-hull tanker vessels in its tanker fleet. In 2003, Fortum started oil production in north-west Russia, where it owns an oil field jointly with Lukoil, a Russian company.

Fortum's goal is to maintain its position as the leading refiner of clean traffic fuels. To support this, Fortum has decided to separate its oil business into a new company and to list it on the Helsinki Exchanges.

### Finances

In 2003, Fortum's net sales totalled EUR 11.4 billion and operating profit stood at EUR 1.4 billion. The average number of employees was 13,300. Fortum's shares are quoted on the Helsinki Exchanges.

### Key Figures in 2003

Net sales, EUR billion	11.4
Operating profit, EUR billion	1.4
Balance sheet total, EUR billion	16.5
Average number of employees	3,300

### ELECTRICITY

Generation capacity, MW	11,329
Sales, TWh	59.5
Distributed electricity TWh	21.9

### HEAT

Generation capacity, MW	9,688
Sales, TWh	23.7
Refinery capacity	14,000,000 tonnes
Refinery production	12,500,000 tonnes
Deliveries of oil products	13,400,000 tonnes
Oil retail outlets	1,100

### POSITION IN THE NORDIC MARKET

Electricity distribution	#1
District heating	#1
Refining of clean traffic fuels	#1
Power generation	#2
Number of electricity customers	#2

Further information:  
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UBC Executive Board at the meeting in Vaasa, 6 March 2004

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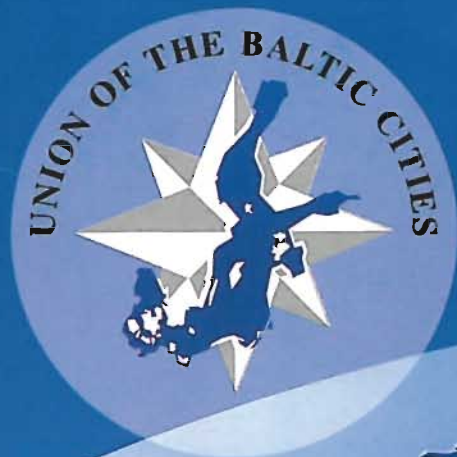
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**Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of over 100 member cities from all 10 Baltic countries, with an overriding goal of contributing to the democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic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