

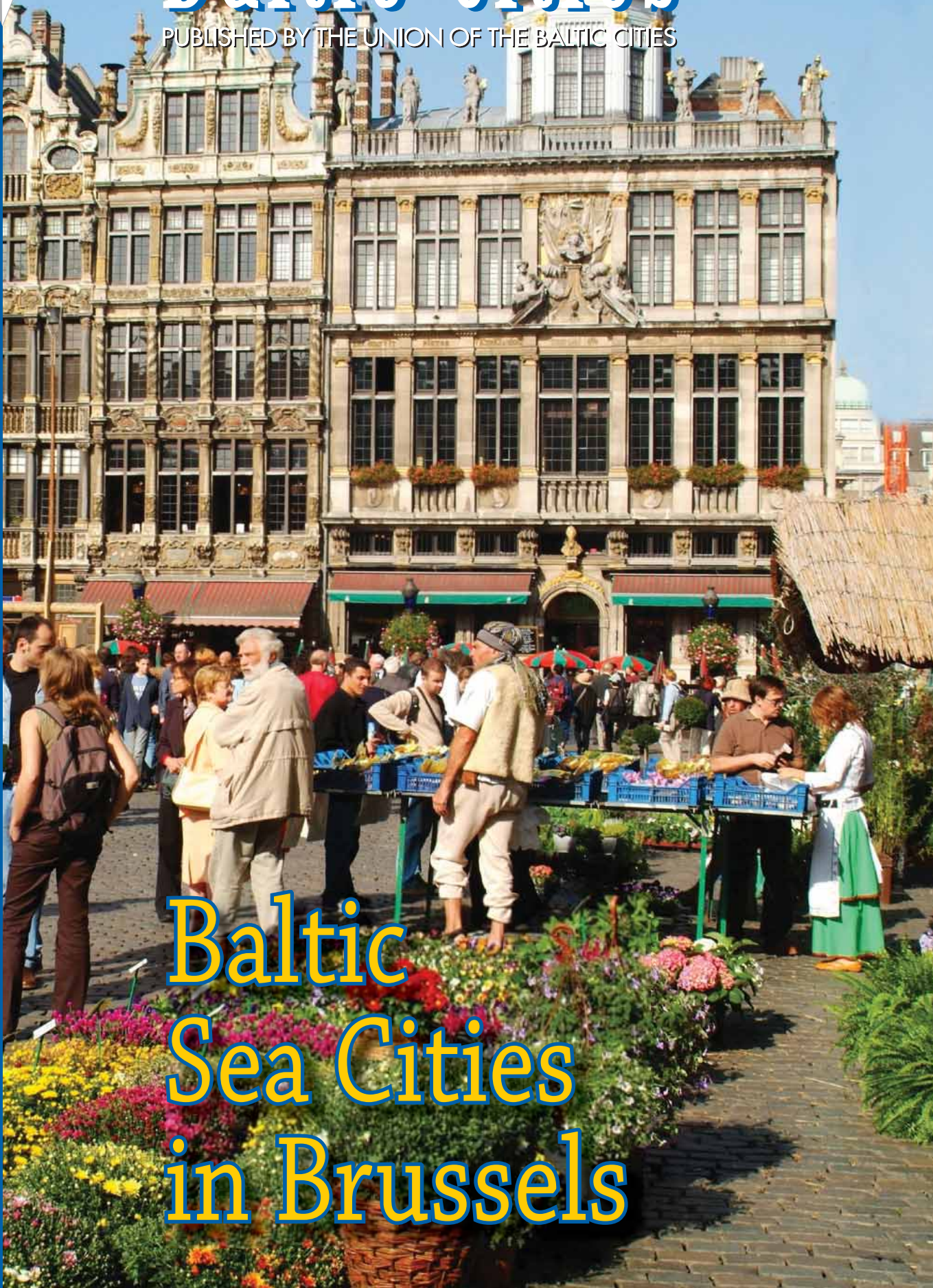


Baltic Cities

Bulletin

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Baltic Sea Cities in Brussels

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COVER PICTURE

La Grand-Place

Brussels

Baltic Cities Bulletin

Dear UBC Friends!

The UBC Antenna Office in Brussels is open. All members now have a great opportunity to be heard and understood during the EU decision-making processes. They can speak through the UBC with one, and thus stronger voice.

The goals of the UBC Representation in Brussels are in compliance with the strategic objectives of the Union. The office will concentrate its work and efforts on strengthening the UBC's presence in the European institutional dialogue and debate. Promoting and lobbying the interests of the UBC member cities and the whole region are the focal activities of the Brussels' office.

To achieve these goals, the UBC Antenna Office, hosted by the Stockholm Region Office, provides numerous services. Administrative support desk facilitates the practical functioning with its working premises, Internet and contact list databases in relation to thematic areas linked to the UBC priorities. The Union and the Baltic Sea Region will be promoted by disseminating the information in the Internet and thematic newsletter and the communication policy. Another important task is policy monitoring and lobbying actions in collaboration with UBC representatives. Additionally, events, meetings and seminars are to be organised by the UBC Brussels' office. Last but not least, assistance in EU-policy and monitoring of EU-funding is provided in order to keep all UBC members up-dated on relevant initiatives, programmes and policies.

The Antenna Office is, moreover, a working space for the UBC members and can be used by each UBC city representatives when staying in Brussels whenever needed.

Many of our cities are already represented in Brussels directly or by the regional offices. We hope for close cooperation with them, exchange of experience and ideas. For those members who do not have own representations, the UBC Antenna Office will serve as a useful, and, hopefully, effective device to influence even more effectively the EU policies which have impact on local authorities.

This issue of Bulletin provides numerous interesting articles describing the work of cities' and regions' representations in Brussels. The authors present the potential of their EU offices, benefits and advantages but also challenges that are connected with being represented in Brussels. The Baltic Cities Bulletin additionally contains information on current meetings, conferences and projects of the UBC.

I hope that the idea of being closer the European Union will soon bring many tangible, positive results for all UBC members and the Baltic Sea Region. The official opening of the UBC Antenna Office will take place in December. The representatives of member cities and European institutions will be invited.

Dear UBC Friends, welcome to Brussels!

Per Bødker Andersen
President of UBC



Kolding, 1 November 2006



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The UBC Antenna Office, hosted by the Stockholm Region, is open



EU Office of Helsinki is a member of the Lisbon Regions Network, here: Political Declaration signing event in Valencia



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I. BALTIC SEA CITIES IN BRUSSELS

CLOSER TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



by Mr Mikael Olsson, Ms Åsa Fornander and Ms Madelen Charysczak

Stockholm Region is an incorporated association which has been set up by public organisations in the Stockholm-Mälardalen Region. The stakeholders of the organisation are the City of Stockholm, the Stockholm County Council and the Stockholm County Association of Local Authorities. The counties of Sörmland, Västmanland and Uppsala are associated to the organisation, as well as the organisation Mälardalsrådet and the County Administrative Board of Stockholm.

The principal aims of the Stockholm Region are to facilitate the international work of the stakeholders and to promote the region on the European level. This means that networking, EU policy monitoring and dispersion of information in the region are equally important in the daily work of Stockholm Region. The activities are carried out by four representations located in Stockholm, Brussels, St. Petersburg and Warsaw.

Networking

Networking is the key to success when it comes to creating contacts, goodwill and influence. We participate in a number of important Brussels based networks involving other European regional and local actors. These include ERRIN, EPRO, WEnlargement, Lisbon Regions Network, Capital Cities Network and Cities for Cohesion. These groupings of local and regional actors are normally based on specific policy areas such as research, environment, urban issues, etc.

Through a common and coordinated approach the

network participants are able to create strong links to the European institutions and in this way make their voice heard. Another reason for cooperating in networks is the possibilities offered for project development and a simplified partner search.

EU policy monitoring

Stockholm Region Representation monitors EU-policies, legislation and EU-programmes that are of relevance to its stakeholders. The organisation also helps to analyse the information and to identify issues that are especially significant for the region. Each year, the Stockholm Region board pinpoints a number of thematic areas which are given the highest priority. During 2006 the following areas have been in focus: economic growth, environment, health care, public health and social welfare, urban issues, research, enlargement, Lisbon Strategy.

In case of initiatives and legislation that have a special impact on our region, the stakeholders can decide to act in order to influence the policies. It is important to receive the information on such policy initiatives as early as

possible, since the possibilities to influence policies are bigger in the early phases of the policy making procedure. Our organisation helps to formulate position papers to express the interests of the stakeholders.

Lobbying in Brussels

An example of our lobbying activities towards the European institutions is the 7th Framework Programme For Research. In 2003 Stockholm Region prepared two Position Papers, with the aim of enhancing the role of cities within the 7th Framework Programme. The first paper was sent to the European Commission DG Research and the responsible Commissioner Philippe Busquin. This paper argued for an inclusion of the programme called "Cities of Tomorrow" in the new framework programme. "Cities of Tomorrow" was an instrument with an urban focus included in the 5th Framework Programme. The second Position Paper was a follow-up of the first one and a response to the direct question from the Commission regarding the Stockholm Region's needs in a new "Cities of Tomorrow". Also,

Stockholm Region argued that the urban dimension should play a major role in the coming framework programme. We consider that areas such as sustainable growth, city planning, transport, cultural heritage and sustainable tourism are of special importance in order to deal with the challenges in an urban environment. We now know that our work paid off. In the new framework programme many of the areas mentioned have received special



The Stockholm Region Brussels' Team: (from the left) Ms Joanna Szyfter, Ms Maria Bredin, Ms Madelen Charysczak, Mr Mikael Olsson, Ms Jessica Rabenius, Mr Thomas Friis Konst – Managing Director, Ms Åsa Fornander, Mr Ferdinand Alonso



attention. The environment field contains funding for sustainable administration and planning of urban environments and in the transport field "urban mobility" is mentioned as a specific action area.

Projects

Project development is another important pillar of the activities of the Stockholm Region. We monitor the call for proposals published by the European Commission and other relevant bodies and transmit the information to the regional and local authorities in the Stockholm-Mälars Region. In case one or more of these authorities is preparing a project in the area of the relevant call, our organisation provides support in searching for partners and assistance in the preparation of the project application. Our organization is presently finalizing applications under the 6th Framework Programme for Research, as well as under the EEA-financial mechanism.

Information

A good information strategy is the key to a successful international promotion. It is also necessary in order to facilitate the work of our stakeholders and to create new partnerships on the European level. To achieve massive and focused information dissemination, we use different tools like mailing lists and our regular newsletters Stockholm Region News and North West Russia. Our website www.stockholmregion.org contains news, information on events, seminars and conferences and call for proposals. We also produce a bi-monthly newsletter on new EU-initiatives and calls for proposals that are distributed widely among our stakeholders and associated members.

Visits and events

Stockholm Region offers its stakeholders and associated members an opportunity to visit Brussels. Last

year our representation hosted more than 3.000 visitors, and in 2006 this number is bound to be surpassed.

In order to promote and attract attention to the Stockholm-Mälars Region, we regularly arrange major events in Brussels and elsewhere. Since the start five years ago, Stockholm Region has participated in the Open Days, the major yearly events for European regions in Brussels hosted by the Committee of Regions. Each December we also arrange the "Nobel Day" in connection with the Nobel Prize ceremonies in Sweden. We also organize seminars and conferences focused on specific areas with relevance for our region. These events include information days on research, seminars on environmental issues, elderly care etc. Recently we hosted more than one hundred representatives from our region on our Program Information Day. This event was dedicated to information on the new EU-programmes that will commence in January 2007.

UBC ANTENNA OFFICE OPENS IN BRUSSELS

by Ms Lillian Westerberg

Competition among regions for the EU funds and attention is increasing with new players within the EU. Therefore, there is:

- an increasing need to profile the Baltic Sea Region as a common geopolitical and economic space
- a need of a co-ordinated approach when safeguarding common Nordic and Baltic interests
- lobbying - "people's work" not "papers' work": growing need of personal contacts
- focus on access to local know-how and competence.

Discussions have been held between the Executive Board of UBC and the Management of Stockholm Region concerning the UBC Satellite in Brussels.

The UBC Representation Office in Brussels is hosted by the Stockholm Region Office in Brussels since October 2006

The aim is to lobby the UBC cities'

interests more effectively, to increase the visibility of UBC among European institutions and to influence EU policies which have an impact on local authorities. The UBC Antenna Office in Brussels will also serve as a useful and effective body for those member cities which not have their own representation in Brussels. Each member city may use the office for a few days when staying in Brussels.

What does the Stockholm Region offer?

- Promoting UBC and increasing its visibility via publications, conferences and seminars in Brussels.
- Informing UBC about relevant events and conferences taking place in Brussels and promoting an active contribution from UBC to these events..
- To have an official location in Brussels and a working space to be used by UBC representatives whenever needed.
- To increase the position of UBC in the EU institutional dialogue and as an official partner in the EU inter-institutional debate by active communication and distribution of

information.

- To distribute information and increase awareness of the EU-funding opportunities and projects primarily within the Baltic Sea dimension together with other geopolitical areas such as the Atlantic Arc, Mediterranean Areas, the New Neighbourhood Dimension, when relevant to UBC members.

The official opening of UBC Satellite in Brussels will be celebrated in Brussels in December.

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TURKU IN BRUSSELS

by Ms Krista Taipale-Salminen

TURKU-Southwest Finland European office is a lobbying, marketing, communications and EU-affairs office of Turku and its partners: Regional Council of Southwest Finland, University of Turku, Turku School of Economics and Åbo Akademy University. The main task of the office is to provide concrete added value for its stakeholders by services in EU-funding, lobbying, communications, training and special assignments. The office currently focuses on the following topics: EU's common maritime policy, funding

programmes 2007-2013, urban and regional policies, innovation, transport and co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region.

The office operates simultaneously on strategic-political and operational level. Strategic-political level includes constant policy monitoring and watching over regional interests towards EU-institutions, including concrete lobbying actions when needed. The most important task is to inform about changes in the EU-environment (early warning-system). A working tool in this respect is our European office newsletter. The operational level refers to concrete support to regional and local actors in their everyday EU-related work, such as services with regard to EU-projects, supporting visiting groups, dealing with information requests etc. The Brussels office also provides concrete support to actors when writing EU-project applications, facilitating contacts with the EU-officials, finding project partners, etc.

From experience, the most successful results with regard to EU-funding or lobbying actions can be achieved by close and strategic co-operation with back-up offices. In some cases, however, the role and expertise of Brussels-based office may be crucial. Our European office has contributed to lobbying actions on, for example,

the Motorways on the Sea-concept, regional dimension in the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Science and the elaboration of common EU Maritime Policy.

The operational volume of Brussels' office is much easier to measure. In 2005 the office received 280 service-requests, organised 20 visits to Brussels and 40 meetings with the EU-officials. Regional presence in Brussels was promoted by six separate marketing and pr-events.

Turku has actively cooperated with UBC in promoting issues important for the Baltic Sea Region in Brussels. Now, when the UBC has its Antenna, we will strengthen this cooperation by actively participating in the Steering Group.



Commissioner Joe Borg and Mr Aleksi Randell (Chairman of the City Board, Turku) in a meeting concerning EU's maritime policy organised in 2005 in connection with Turku's annual seminar in Brussels.

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EFFECTIVELY PROMOTED INTERESTS



by Mr Kari Hietala

The West Finland European Office is a common liaison office for the five regions of the West Finland Alliance (WFA): Central Finland, Ostrobothnia, Satakunta, South Ostrobothnia and Tampere Region. Pori is the capital of Satakunta Region, one of five West Finland regions.

West Finland European Office in Brussels was established in 1997, first as an experiment. Since 1999 it has been operating in its current shape. However, its operations can be traced back to 1994, when the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia founded an office in Brussels to support local business and other actors.

The West Finland European Office's team consists of two regular employees and 1-2 trainees. The office serves the Regional Councils, cities and all the other

actors in the regions of the WFA. Various actors from the regions can often be met in the office during working trips.

West Finland European Office promotes effectively the city of Pori's interests in the EU and its institutions. It also provides us with up to date information about various European co-operation opportunities. We do see that West Finland European Office will have even more meaningful role in the future because of in-depth information on the EU programmes, finance, possible partners, etc.

Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region is a priority for West Finland and for Pori as well. Therefore, we are interested in



strengthening our networks of partners to develop projects in the areas of environment, culture, regional policy, R&D and innovation to increase the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region.

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LOBBYING FOR A STRONG REGION

by Ms Alicja Majewska-Gałęziak

The office's mission is to support dynamic development of Pomorskie and to build its image as a strong region. To achieve its goal, the office provides information, promotion and organisational support to institutions and organisations in Pomorskie and pursues lobbying activities for EU legislation which may have significant impact on Pomorskie.

The office operates within the framework of the association "Pomorskie in the European Union" whose members are: regional and local authorities, the Pomeranian Development Agency and universities. This model proves very successful not only in representing regional interests in Brussels, but also in applying for and effectively using EU funds. The scope of responsibilities of the Pomorskie Regional Office includes:

- Providing information on the EU programmes, funds and initiatives, best practices and EU legislation, which has an impact on our region.

- Promoting the region - the office disseminates information on investment opportunities and tourist



Representation in Brussels provides opportunity to promote the key projects and activities

and cultural attractions of Pomorskie. Exhibitions, seminars and conferences are organised.

- Lobbying - the office monitors development of EU policies.

- Supporting international co-operation.

The areas of special interest to the Office are: the EU regional policy and its instruments, transport, energy, maritime policy, co-operation in the Baltic Sea region, rural development,

environmental and social policy. The Pomorskie office closely monitors maritime policy and takes part in consultations on the Green Paper "Future Maritime Policy for the EU".

One of the most significant events of the year is the European Week of Regions and Cities "Open Days" - organised jointly by the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament, the European Commission and regional offices located in Brussels. Our office were participating in this event for the third time. During the Open Days the experts from Pomorskie invited by the European Commission, were sharing with their experience at numerous workshops on regional development and structural funds. We also promoted our local products and culture.

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by Ms Ewa Wójtowicz-Mój

AN EAR TO THE GROUND IN BRUSSELS

West Pomeranian Region boasts its own regional office in Brussels since November 2004. Located in the commune of Koekelberg, now collaborating officially with this Polish region

since March 2006, it serves as the Region's antenna in Brussels. With its numerous tasks, the office serves Szczecin, the capital of West Pomerania, and the whole region by providing not only useful information but also effectively promoting the whole region and its citizens.

Apart from lobbying the European institutions, the regional office works closely with other European regions searching for partners to develop joint projects. It also channels two-way up-to-date information about the developments within the EU and in the region. Not only does it provide a comprehensive overview of European integration but it also offers

a fresh insight throwing light upon the European institutions, explaining the EU measures, legal provisions and economic programmes e.g. through its E-newsletter received by all interested regional actors.

The Brussels Office represents the

Obviously, the main working targets for the Regional Office are: the Commission, the Parliament, CoR, Permanent Representation of the Polish Republic to the EU and other representation offices.

West Pomeranian Region at the meetings organised by the European institutions, participation in which is a must. Such promotional events as "European Week of Cities and Regions" (2005), the Committee of the Regions' Open Day 2005/2006, "the International Co-ordinators in Brussels - Making Connections" (March 2006), Euroferia Andaluza (2005,2006), the Polish Evening in the European Economic and Social Committee 2006, the Spring Party at the NATO's premises, the Polish Party 2006, to name just a few, help promoting the Region and make it a "buzz word". Besides, the office organised more than

10 official visits of local and regional representatives and civil servants to Brussels.

The Regional Office further provides support to the West Pomeranian COR and MEP members. Finally, its task is to establish and maintain a network of

contacts to develop joint European projects, assist regional and local representatives in making meaningful contacts in Brussels and

lobby for the West Pomeranian projects submitted directly in Brussels.

Up-to-date information on the European issues, or about events in Brussels, calls for proposals, opened Public Consultation processes facilitate better understanding of the opportunities that the EU has to offer and at the same time help increase the region's competitiveness.

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BRINGING AARHUS TO BRUSSELS



by Mr Niels Tanderup
Kristensen

The Aarhus EU-office was established in 1990 with the overall aim of creating additional growth and value for public and private stakeholders in Århus Region. The focus was bringing Brussels to Aarhus, screening information on the EU-funded programmes and finding partners. Since the early nineties the spectrum of objectives for the office has grown in parallel with the diversified and multiplying role of the EU, as well as the challenges and possibilities that the global economy presents for cities and regions in Europe. This means that the core objectives is no longer bringing Brussels to Aarhus but also bringing Aarhus to Brussels and positioning Århus Region as a central player on the international scene.

The shift in focal point from an overall information office to a more strategic and regional representative office has in our case four main reasons. The first

one being the ongoing globalization process, where challenges from cultural to economic, social and political aspects have emphasized the need of a strong regional platform in Brussels. Secondly, the screening and mapping of



information on many of the EU funded programmes is without much difficulty found on the Internet today, and is therefore not fixed to a geographical location in Brussels. The third reason is that the EU-policies may have their offspring on a national level, but 2/3 of all the EU legislation is in the case of Denmark, implemented on a regional basis. This gives the regional political level a strong incentive to be present in Brussels and paves the way for specific regional interest. In addition, a regional representation in Brussels also gives access to a larger network of actors as well as many transregional work-forums and lobby organisations, where a group of voices always sounds stronger than

a single cry. The fourth reason is a new regional set-up in Denmark, where 14 counties have merged into 5 strong regions. This implies that the Aarhus EU Office from 2007 and onwards no longer represents the city of Aarhus and the surrounding region, but in the future it will represent a much larger region of Central Denmark – resulting in a stronger financial, political and organizational base of the office and a more omnipotent approach. The new regional office will be owned and financed by the regional body and the 19 municipalities. There will be a general assembly, where all the politicians on regional and municipal levels can have their voice in the overall setting and mission of the office.

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PERSPECTIVES FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

by Ms Malene Eskildsen

The Copenhagen EU Office is the international office of the capital of Denmark. The office has been active in Brussels since 1992 representing the interests of Copenhagen and carrying the international priorities set for the city. These are the primary tasks of Copenhagen EU Office.

The office is engaged in a number of formal and informal networks such as Eurocities and various Baltic Sea organisations. Through forming alliances and strategic partnerships with other European cities we attempt to influence EU policies and to create a dynamic and sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region surrounding Copenhagen.

The upcoming second Baltic Sea Region Perspectives conference, to be held in

Brussels on 9 November in the House of the European Regions, is one of the major activities the Copenhagen EU Office is undertaking to materialize the above ambitions. The purpose of the conference is to identify what the Baltic Sea Region can do to help Europe reach its goals and vice versa: what Europe can do for the Region.

High-profiled speakers such as Commissioner of DG Regional Policy Danuta Hübner, ex-Foreign Minister of Denmark Uffe Ellemann-Jensen and the Mayor of Riga Aivars Aksenoks will speak at the conference, as well as representatives of the major Baltic Sea organisations and industry

Three themes will be

addressed:

- economy, growth, labour market and mobility
- environment and infrastructure
- education, research and

innovation

The Baltic Sea Region exceeds European standards on a wide range of indicators, and European leaders such as José Manuel Barroso have commended the region for its solid implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and its innovative approach. The BSR in particular seeks to be the model for Europe in achieving sustainable growth based on Innovation, Mobility and Integration - the three crosscutting themes of the conference.

The conference is organised jointly by the Brussels representation offices of Helsinki, Tallinn, Malmö, Oslo, Riga, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, South Denmark House, Stockholm Region and Hanse-Office. Copenhagen EU Office is the main organiser.

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Baltic Sea House in Brussels



by Ms Britt Nordgreen

In May 2003 the West Norway Office was set up in Brussels to make a Western Norway presence in Brussels and provide services and facilities for the region to promote Western Norway as an interesting partner among other European regions. Also keeping our partners informed of policy development, new initiatives and funding opportunities of direct relevance to them, assisting our partners and other institutions, participating effectively in EU programs and initiatives are other aims. The West Norway Office has the following main target groups: public sector services, research and development, culture and business.

The Office is owned by the three counties of Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane and Møre og Romsdal, the cities of Bergen and Ålesund, together



The new director of the West Norway office, Ms Merete Mikkelsen

with several smaller municipalities.

The Board represents all these interests. Out of seven members four are elected among the owners (municipalities/counties) and the remaining three represent all the target groups (business, R&D, culture).

The office has a director and two trainees in Brussels and in the region there is one contact person in each county.

As Norway is not a member of

the EU – so should it have a representation office in Brussels? Through the EEA agreement both the regional and local levels in Norway are affected by the EU decisions and legislation. The EEA agreement also gives Norwegian companies and institutions access to EU's programs. Today there are 6 Norwegian representation offices in Brussel, representing every region of the country.

The West Norway Office is located in Rue Archimède 17, in the same premises as The Royal Norwegian Embassy and The Mission of Norway to the European Union.

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LINK TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET

by Mrs Ingebjørg Sveen Brunborg

South Norway European Office has been operating in Brussels since January 2005 and was officially opened by the Norwegian Ambassador to Belgium on May 2, 2005.

The background was the considerable interest from local and regional authorities. The objective behind the establishment is connected to the region's strategy for internationalisation and European cooperation.

The office is owned by Aust- and Vest-Agder County Councils, the municipalities of Arendal and Kristiansand and Agderrådet.

The region of South Norway, called Sørlandet, consists of the regional area of Vest Agder and Aust Agder Counties. The region is 16.438 km²

and has approximately 265.000 inhabitants. The main cities are Kristiansand and Arendal. The region is known for its coastline and islands. The inland region has its lakes, forest and mountains.

South Norway is a vital region with world leading competences within many business areas. It has a strong entrepreneurial environment and creative businesses. Exciting and varied business and competences attract high qualified employers to the

region – and make them stay.

Brussels can be an important gate to the European market. South Norway European Office offers access to information and an extensive contact network.

South Norway has interesting research and educational environments that has good knowledge and experience in EU financed projects, and it is a strength to have a regional



Kristiansand has been represented in Brussel since January 2005 photo: Anders Martinsen Photographers AS

representative in Brussels. Brussels is a meeting place for European research partners and participants in EU projects.

South Norway European office is to contribute to the development of a more international business and society that uses the possibilities that Europe offers.

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by Ms Eija Nylund

Helsinki EU Office operates as the information, marketing and lobbying agency in Brussels. The office was set up ten years ago, a year after Finland's accession to the European Union. The City of Helsinki cooperates with the Helsinki Region and the University of Helsinki in Brussels. A series of events will be organised in the coming autumn which are linked to the office's 10th anniversary and the Finnish Presidency. The Helsinki EU Office is an active partner within the Lisbon Regions

Common priorities for the office:

- Urban Policy
- Research and Innovation Policy
- Baltic Sea Cooperation
- Cooperation with Metropolitan Areas
- Lisbon Objectives

Consortium in organising two seminars and Investor's Café activities during the Open Days Events "Investing in Regions and Cities" in October. In November, a seminar on the urban policy called "Competitiveness through Innovative Partnership and Networking- How are Cities contributing to Growth and Jobs Agenda?" will be organised together

with the six largest cities in Finland, followed by a gala reception on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Helsinki EU Office.

The Baltic Sea Group, which consists of Brussels based offices from the Baltic Sea Region, organises the seminar "Baltic Sea Region Perspectives - Innovation, Mobility, and Integration" together with the Baltic Sea Metropolises Network. The events series will end in December when the Finnish regional offices will organise a traditional Christmas Party.

Helsinki is also a member of the Lisbon Regions Network which is a Brussels-based network, launched in March 2004 and includes 9

European regions with a shared interest in the delivery of the Lisbon Strategy at regional and local level. Other members of the network are: Brussels Capital Region, Region Stuttgart, Regione Emilia-Romagna, Regio Randstad, Valencia Region, Region Stockholm, Riga City and Region and West Midlands. he network functions as a platform in



The Helsinki EU Office - Head of Office, Ms Eija Nylund and colleagues

which regions discuss relevant policies and exchange experience about the different tools to achieve the Lisbon objectives.

Another concrete action is a planned EU funded project with the aim of collecting statistical data linked to the Lisbon strategy. The project results will be used to compare and demonstrate innovation and competitiveness in the member regions.

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NETWORKING - A KEY TO SUCCESS



by Ms Tuula Loikkanen

The South Finland EU Office represents three Southern Finnish regions: Häme, Itä-Uusimaa and Päijät-Häme. These regions form an area around Helsinki. This area has a total population a little less than half a million. The office works closely also with the main cities, such as Lahti and other municipalities.

The EU-Office is staffed on a full time basis and represents regional and local partners effectively across a wide range of areas including Structural Funds, sustainable development, environment, social inclusion, culture, tourism, etc. For example, the office works to ensure that the partners in Lahti are aware of development in European policy and legislation. The South Finland EU-Office also acts as a conduit for the establishment of partnerships with other European regions and cities. The office itself is keen to play a full and active role

in ensuring that regions and cities are actively involved in shaping the Europe of the Regions. In the past, this has meant



developing new relationships with regions and cities in Central and Eastern Europe and this is likely to continue and strengthen over the coming decade.

The office operates through its extensive network of contacts with key decision-makers in the EU institutions, including the European Parliament, European Commission, Finnish Government representatives and the wide range of regional, national and international organizations represented in Brussels. This is reinforced by many regional,

national and international networks in which South Finland operates with European partner members.

One of the benefits of being part of the EU is that the regions and cities can easily collaborate on joint projects and learn from each other. This, in EU jargon is known as 'trans-national working' and is often a pre-requisite for accessing EU funding. A large part of activities surrounding trans-national working focuses currently on the existing 25 Member States and those countries in Eastern Europe, such as Bulgaria and Romania, as they wait to join the EU. However, there are also opportunities in Africa, Latin and North America, Asia and beyond.

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HOW TO KNOW WHAT'S UP IN BRUSSELS

by Mr Ingemar Lilienblad

Umeå is very interested in having a clear view of what is going on in the European Union, especially when it comes to new directives which will affect our activities and when it means possibilities to get funding for interesting projects. Our main tool for lobbying is the North Sweden European Office which is the joint regional office for the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, the northernmost Swedish regions. The main purpose of the office is to contribute and encourage Northern Sweden to become an active and competent region on the European level. The founding organisations are the municipalities, the county councils, the county administration boards,



The Ume river at city center of Umeå

Photo: Johan Gunséus

the Federation of Private Enterprises and the chambers of commerce in Norrbotten and Västerbotten as well as Norrlandsfonden, Luleå University of Technology and Umeå University.

The main tasks of North Sweden European Office are:

- developing strategies and competence: North Sweden is working

- for the active participation of representatives from the region through seminars and other training activities to increase the EU-competence in the region.

- monitoring our region's interests: North Sweden monitors

- changes and development within policies at the EU-level that might have impact on the region.

- monitoring of projects and programmes: North Sweden monitors current and relevant EU-funded projects.

The county of Västerbotten and the city

of Umeå are included in the Objective 1 area North Sweden. This will not be the case during the next programming period. This means that we will be more dependent upon North Sweden EU Office to show presence at the Brussels-arena, especially since Umeå, as a university town, has an interest in the framework programme for research.

The mayor of Umeå, Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark, who is also the UBC vice president and a member of the board of North Sweden European Office, strongly emphasizes the importance of being represented in Brussels. It is important that the UBC with its 100 members increases its presence in Brussels through an office of its own. This will make it easier to influence the European Union and also to enhance the possibilities to work for a sustainable development in the Baltic Region, which is one of our main goals.

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by Mrs Laila Nordfors

THE VOICE OF CENTRAL SWEDEN

Central Sweden extends from the lowlands of the southern part of Örebro county to the mountains of Dalarna in the north, from the deep forests inland to the coasts of Gästrikland and Gävle and Hälsingland by the Baltic. The region has world-leading forest products and steel industries as well as a natural and cultural heritage that has resulted in tourism with centuries-old traditions. Through it runs the mining district of Bergslagen, the cradle of Swedish industry, a breeding ground for the ideas and technology of the future, where people from different parts of Europe have for a long time converged.



In Europe that is now emerging, people, local authorities and companies are faced with new opportunities for growth.

Collaboration in Central Sweden increases the chances of benefiting from and influencing the building of the future Europe.

Together we concentrate on informing and educating so that the EU aid for regional development and international projects reaches the region to a greater extent. We arrange lectures and study visits, offer advice about projects and encourage more international contacts.

The Brussels office is the region's face and antenna, targeted at the EU's

institutions and 250 other European regions represented in the capital.

We monitor issues of interest to the region, provide support with applications for EU financing and arrange study visits to Brussels for

everyone from groups of schoolchildren to politicians who require specialised briefing.

We also help to make the needs of the region more visible to the EU's decision makers and to market Central Sweden as an attractive partner.

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by Ms Lena Thorin

COMPLEMENTING THE CITY'S WORK

The City of Karlstad adopted an international strategy in 2004. It points out the importance of international contacts. One way to facilitate European contacts is to be represented in Brussels. A joint European office for the region of West Sweden represents the city of Karlstad and other municipalities in western Sweden.

We use our antenna office for getting information on different EU tasks. Since they have an extensive network it is easy for us to get in touch with the right people at the EU institutions. Even though we are represented in Brussels it is important for our own representatives to visit Brussels and develop networks of their own.

When talking about the city representation in Brussels and the

outputs, one must be aware of the fact that the office does what you ask it to do so you need to be in contact with the office to gain anything from the Brussels potential.

If we really used the West Sweden office extensive network to lobby both thru formal and informal channels I am sure we could have more use of their presence in Brussels. The success is made out of our own possibilities to formulate strategies and priorities that we want our Brussels office to communicate and lobby for. So far our city has not, in my point of view, used the potential of the representation in Brussels as much as we could.

The most tangible results of the EU-work are often the project ideas from our

city that get EU-funding. The Brussels office keeps track of all new calls for proposals and the development of the programmes. Our representation in Brussels also has an office in Sweden that helps the city to develop EU-funded projects and can also help

us matching our projects with suitable partners. The representation office in Brussels is a complement not a substitute to the EU work of our city.

The representation has three main tasks:

- help the city in development of EU founded projects, such as FP7 and Life Long Learning
- information about EU, for example new legislation, interesting conferences
- lobbying.

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by Dr. Markku Valtonen

TAMPERE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Cities play a major role in achieving the goals of the Lisbon Strategy. As a result of the innovation and technology resources available to them, towns and cities are engines of growth and employment as well as centres of learning and culture.

Tampere is an excellent example of this kind of city. Throughout its existence, Tampere has attracted new activities which have evolved to enhance local and national welfare. At the beginning, this involved water power and the Russian markets that attracted foreign knowledge, skills and capital and resulted in industrialisation. In recent decades, leading knowledge has been the magnet for many niche areas of mechanical engineering and automation, ICT, bio- and medical sciences, materials. This magnet didn't appear simply by chance.



Dr. Markku Valtonen

Photo: Annikaisa Knuutila

Its development was a direct result of the city's decision to start investing in education and research in the 1970's. Tampere's two universities and two polytechnic universities of applied science as well as the VTT Research Centre in cooperation with local enterprises have all enabled sustainable growth – a development that Tampere has constantly been catalysing.

When Finland joined the European Union in 1995, Tampere didn't score well in terms of the availability of cohesion funds. As a white spot, Tampere and its neighbouring towns and municipalities decided to focus strongly on locating complementary knowledge centres and actively work with these to seek EU Framework Programme's financing. In a way, we had already started to apply the European Research Area (ERA) principles. Within the frame of development programmes such as eTampere and Bionext, many 5th and 6th Framework

Programme projects have materialised with new European partners. The Tampere Central Region EU Office has been active in Brussels since 1999, helping universities and research centres to locate new partners and to assist in project proposal processes.

With slightly over 200.000 inhabitants, Tampere is a small city in global terms. Nevertheless, it has been able to develop significant knowledge and market-leading industry which has led to a sustainable growth. Several actions to further enhance our knowledge base are currently ongoing, an important area being to increase the extent of cooperation based on complementary knowledge with other leading European cities. Tampere, along with its neighbours and partners, seeks to play an active role in implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

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RIGA PROMOTES LATVIAN TRADITIONS



by Mrs Egita Aizsilniece

Riga and Region Office to the EU is an office jointly established by the Riga City Council and the Riga Planning Region Development Council, launched in September 2004.

The main aims of the office include information exchange on the EU initiatives, assistance in establishing new partnerships, raising capacity of the city in the EU issues and lobbying our interests among the EU decision makers. During the first two years of permanent representation in Brussels, Riga has been part of various initiatives, from hosting European functionaries in schools for 9 May celebrations, to joining European pilot projects and running trainee programs for Riga experts. The first impression, after starting our work in Brussels, was that there is a need for information on our culture and history and on the latest developments in

the Baltic countries.

Riga, together with 5 Latvian Members of the European Parliament, organised on 8 - 19 May 2006 "Ice-Hockey from Riga in the European Parliament", the first event of this kind ever made. The Ice-Hockey championship was to attract attention to Latvia, to show Latvian traditions through the passion for sports. There were photo exhibitions, a reception, games watched on a big screen and other events for two weeks. In the presence of Mr Almers Ludviks, Deputy

Mayor of Riga, the symbol of Brussels Manneken-Pis became a player of team Latvia while wearing our uniform for one day. "There are so many regions in Europe, that's why Riga is using innovative and original methods to attract deserved attention towards the new EU players" - said Mr Ludviks during the ceremony.

The international project work of Riga is expanding every year and the importance of our Brussels presence in the EU policy developments is very significant. Riga has learned its strong sides through cooperation projects and benchmarking exercises in the Baltic Sea Region. Via our Brussels Office, we will be able not only to get benefit from our membership in the EU, but also to offer valuable solutions to other municipalities and to assist the EU policy makers with the experience on the ground.



Dressing Brussels Symbol Manneken-Pis in Latvian Ice-Hockey player's kit, 10 May, 2006. Delegation from Riga - A. Ludviks, deputy-Mayor of Riga City, B. Brigmane, councillor of Riga City Council, Latvian MEPs - I. Vaidere, A. Kuskis, R. Piks

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by Ms Ilze Borovska

Jūrmala is represented in European Union by the Riga City and Riga Region Office in Brussels that is open since September 2004. The official partners of the office are: Association of Latvia's Local Governments and Association of Latvia's Big Cities. The organisational administration of the office is carried out by Riga Region Development Agency. The office is working with quite a wide range of institutions, including 74 local governments, regional enterprises and the Association of Latvia's Big Cities.

The office is dealing with popularising projects that helps to develop region's cultural potential, economic and social environment, assists with the action of EU institutions' offered fund resources,

JŪRMALA IN BRUSSELS

and coordinates information exchange processes, represents interests of local governments and entrepreneurs, implements the tasks defined by the Association of Latvia's Local Governments, etc.

Some of the Jūrmala activities in cooperation with Riga City and Riga

Region Office in Brussels are:

- In 2005 presentation of Jūrmala tourism materials during the Information Day in Brussels. The representative of

Jūrmala City Council's Department of Tourism and Foreign Affairs offered a presentation about the city.

- In 2006 a traineeship programme of 5 weeks was implemented - 2 participants of Jūrmala City Council's Department of Economics and Development participated in this programme. Also, two-week image

development campaign was carried out in the European Parliament before the ice hockey championship that took place in Latvia in 2006.

Tourism brochures, booklets were available, and special tourism routes around Riga, Jūrmala, and Latvia of 3, 5 and 7 days were promoted.

Cooperation is becoming stronger and stronger. Several activities to increase the competence about the EU activities, and to help attracting new partners will be carried out.

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BRUSSELS OFFERS AN ARENA OF CONTACTS



City of Malmö

by Mr Ola Nord

Malmö has been developing its international organisation since 1995 with one EU coordinator in each department and two persons in the city hall. Some 25-30 persons in Malmö have been involved in the international work. Such an organisation could be compared to an internal network. The city of Malmö's EU office was opened in 1999.

Malmö has had a very clear ambition since entering the EU to target funding opportunities for the development of the city. One of the key factors has been the INTERREG Öresund Program, allowing for close cooperation between Sweden and Denmark and not the least to develop relations with Copenhagen. That is why the office in Brussels is located in the same house as the Copenhagen EU office and the South Sweden's EU office.

Making the EU funds available for the city has been a key objective in the work for the Brussels office. Malmö has had approximately 300 projects funded annually from the EU over the past couple of years.

Malmö EU office provides services

to anyone working for the city administration and should assist in all matters on demand that is best dealt with in Brussels. This covers technical assistance (TA) to identify funding opportunities, help to develop project partnerships, co-write project applications and do budgetary work. Supporting existing projects is also part of the work including contract negotiations.

A newly approved international strategy clearly states that the international work should contribute to "the development of the city", focus on "strategic influence" or lobbying and to market and promote Malmö. The plan and strategy is decentralised within the organisation, allowing each department to develop their priorities. The Brussels office is an integral part contributing the overall success.

Working with projects has contributed to the creation of strong alliances with other city or regional offices in Brussels

where the urban agenda and problems are being targeted. It has also helped to develop the lobbying and promotion activities run from the Brussels office, involving benchmarking actions with other cities in Europe on topics such as governance, city branding, employment policy etc. Brussels offers an arena of contacts and opportunities but it is important to stay focused on the issues that matter most.



Malmö Office, Palmerston Av. 26

Developing relations with partners who have similar objectives is crucial and for Malmö this means cooperating with our Baltic Sea partners and other partners such as Cities for Cohesion and members of EUROCITIES.

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MID SWEDEN IN BRUSSELS



Mid Sweden

by Ms Elisabeth Engqvist

The Mid Sweden region including two counties of Jämtland (130.000 inhabitants) and Västernorrland (250.000 inhabitants), has high ambitions of participating on the European arena and to take part in the international development.

Therefore, an office has been established in Brussels as well as offices in both counties. The Mid Sweden Office

has built a complex network both in the region and on the EU-arena and serves as a link between the region and the European Institutions.

Focus areas:

- Development of industry and trade
- Environment
- Infrastructure and Transport
- Innovation and Research & Development
- Health Care
- Cohesion policy, structural funds
- Future of EU and development

The main objective of the Mid Sweden Office is to increase regional growth by various EU-related activities. One of our main functions is to provide information of the EU policy to the region as well as promotion of the region on the European level and thereby influence policy- and decision-making on the EU-level. Other functions are to inform actors in the region about

various EU-funding opportunities and to help them to find project partners.

The Mid Sweden Office:

• Influences the shape of future EU-activities

• Promotes networking, exchange of knowledge and partnerships between the region and organizations, companies and citizens in other

European countries

- Enhances the flow of information between the region and the EU-institutions
- Helps the region to a greater extent to take advantage of the opportunities the EU- membership offers.

The Mid Sweden Office represents:

- 2 counties
- 15 municipalities (among them City of Sundsvall)
- 2 county councils
- 2 county administrations
- Mid Sweden University

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EYES AND EARS OF ESTONIAN CITIES



by Ms Anne-Ly Reimaa

The Representation of Estonian National Associations of Local Authorities was established on 13 October 2005 with the support of the Estonian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Representation functions as a Brussels-based resource for the Estonian members of the Committee of the Regions and two Estonian local government associations – the Association of Estonian Cities (AEC) and the Association of Municipalities of Estonia (AME).

The Brussels Office works to assist Estonian local authorities in influencing the development of EU legislation before implementation. The activities of the Office focus on helping to maintain local governments' awareness of developments within the EU, highlighting issues of relevance, assisting participation in the policy-making process, identifying relevant funding opportunities as well as providing a direct communication channel to EU institutions, organisations and networks.

The ACE/AME Office is perfectly positioned as a link between the EU institutions and the sub-national level. The Office has a close working relationship with the Estonian Permanent Representation, Estonian MEPs and departments of the European Commission. With the trend towards regional consortia, the Brussels Office provides an important link with other national and regional associations from the Baltic Sea Region and other.

The main tasks of the office are to participate in meetings, conferences, seminars, to gather information on current and future policies, legislation and programmes from EU institutions with direct implications for local authorities, to provide Estonian local authorities up to date information on EU



The Brussels Office organises meetings and seminars, offers support in building transnational partnerships and helps with partner search.

developments of specific relevance for them, for example via a weekly Newsletter.

The Representation assists the members to the Estonian delegation of the Committee of the Regions, including support for members in meetings and in

liaising with other national delegations, political groups and the CoR Secretariat.

It helps to provide opportunities for lobbying and possibilities to act as the eyes and ears of the Estonian local governments in respect of EU developments.

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by Mr Andero Uusberg

Tartu has funded several important projects from EU funds. The city government has a separate foreign project co-ordination service composed of three young people who make it all happen.

A year ago, there was only one specialist in Tartu city government responsible for foreign projects. Today, there is a separate service for foreign project co-ordination employing Pille Kams, head of the service, and two specialists, Kristjan Sahtel and Siim Läänelaid.

Those three young people write around 100 projects a year to apply for EU grants. Last year, the city government gained roughly

SPECIAL EU SERVICE IN TARTU

3,5 million EUR. Their work is quite unique, since most local governments in Estonia don't have a special service for project writing.

European funds have enabled Tartu to carry out several necessary environmental researches and build a new waste management station. Several cultural expenses have also been covered with the help of the funds. For example, the toy museum, one of the most unique museums in Estonia gained the necessary resources for its expansion from the EU. Recently, another very important

cultural object – the National Song Festival Museum – got a positive decision for more than 1,3 million EUR. More projects reaching the sum of almost 10 million EUR are still waiting for approval.

The most

expensive project currently in store is the reconstruction of the Dome Hill, the biggest park and former fortress of the city, which Siim Läänelaid has been working on for more than a year by now. "Renovating one of the symbols of our town will cost us 4,5 million EUR at the most optimistic estimations" - he explains. "I haven't heard about any other organization applying for funds for such a large-scale park renovation" - says Siim. The analysis shows that the success rate of the projects so far is 70%. "The town has set their priorities and even if the first application is not successful, the project will be completed a bit later with the town's own funds or with the resources of another opened fund. So none of the projects is ever wasted" - all three assure.

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Foreign project co-ordination service of Tartu City Government in action. From the left: Kristjan Sahtel, Pille Kams and Siim Läänelaid



A BALTIC INTERFACE IN BRUSSELS

by Dr. Reinhard Boest

The Information Office (established in October 1991) is a unit within the Department of European and External Affairs of the State Chancellery of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The activities of the office are therefore first of all determined by the responsibilities and main sectors of interest of the government of the Land. The Information Office is also a contact point for the local authorities, enterprises, associations, educational, training and research institutions, and the citizens of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. As Baltic Sea issues are also on the European Agenda, it has become particularly important for the regional actors to be present in Brussels.

The importance of the work of the European Institutions and its impact on the regional and local level are often underestimated. This is certainly one of the reasons for the weak participation in the European elections. In fact, Brussels is today more than ever the place, where

decisions are made. The policy-making in Brussels is the European domestic policy. The German Constitution



The team of the Information Office in its new premises - the genuine Baltic Sea feeling

guarantees an important role to the Länder in European affairs where their powers or interests are affected. Early information and the evaluation of the developments at European level are an important pre-condition to make use of these participatory rights and justify the presence of regional offices in Brussels.

The tasks of the office are:

- to inform government of the Land and public authorities about current developments, measures and

- proceedings taken at European level
- to prepare visits of members of the government of the Land, Parliament or administration in Brussels
- to support and advise private and public bodies, in particular local authorities, in their contacts with EU institutions, including acquisition of European project funding
- to organise seminars and meetings in Brussels
- to represent the Land at EU level and draw the attention of the institutions to specific interests and concerns of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- to present Mecklenburg-Vorpommern providing information about economy, research, tourism and cultural diversity of the Land
- networking.

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by Ms Ina Sidlauskienė

Before 2004, with limited local allocations, Klaipeda mastered the art of utilizing EU financial instruments, so that trans-national cooperation could reach almost every sphere of municipal activity. The efforts were directed to back national strategic goals of the EU accession, and to improve the quality of life for the citizens.

Currently, Klaipeda carries out 10 INTERREG projects in the spheres of environment, energy efficiency and water tourism. In 2006, the total direct EU support to the city is



Mayor of Klaipeda Rimantas Taraskevicius on the day of Europe Prize award

approximately 25 million EUR. And that does not include allocations for the port infrastructure development, etc.

According to the City International

AN ACTIVE CITY

Strategy, Klaipeda strives to be an active city - visible in the Baltic Region and the world, ready to use numerous international contacts to turn Klaipeda into a secure, competitive and modern European harbour city. Participation in two major international organizations - the UBC and EUROCITIES - opens ample possibilities to reach these goals. East-West axis in our foreign relations is important. Klaipeda Region borders with the Kaliningrad area, which is one of our twin-cities. Cooperation with Kaliningrad aims at good neighbourhood relations and its faster integration. Klaipeda was the first Lithuanian city

which organised its presentation event in Brussels at Schleswig-Holstein EU Information Office in 1998. The goal was to introduce the city's economic-

cultural potential to representatives of EU directorates and regional EU offices. Another, one-month lasting mission was arranged by the Department of Foreign Relations in cooperation with the West Sweden EU Representation Office in Brussels to make direct contacts with various EU institutions. Klaipeda had ambitions to open its own representation office in Brussels, but now the Lithuanian Association of Local Authorities plans to establish it. The UBC antenna office in Brussels will be a valuable instrument for lobbying interests of the Baltic cities. It is clear that European structural assistance will be one of the most challenging issues. Lobbying together for the Baltic cities will make us stronger and eager to remain more partners than competitors.

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by Ms Ewa Kurjata

THE EU COMPASS

The European integration is said to be the best way to ensure the prosperity of Europe's peoples. Recent historic achievements such as the introduction of the euro and the reunification of Europe through the accession of the CEE countries seem to prove the case.

For Szczecin entering the EU meant first of all new development impulses and good motivation for faster modernisation. The enlargement brought increased competitiveness, infrastructure upgrade, new jobs, and better education of the youth. Szczecin's new geopolitical position brought unprecedented political, legal and financial conditions, as well as offered new challenges and chances for development.

The City International Policy was formally confirmed in 2004. 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 more competitive and 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.

It is clear that new efforts are necessary to restore the role of the city as a place of social and cultural integration, as



Town-twinning relations are important part of the Szczecin's EU Policy. Here: Mayors and councillors from partner cities during the Sea Days Festival in Szczecin in June 2006.

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.

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by Ms Magdalena Frohwerk

EUROPEAN GDYNIA FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Gdynia is one of the leading Polish agglomerations in terms of attractiveness for businessmen and investors. The Pomeranian Science and Technology Park is a significant element of the "Strategic plan for Gdynia 1998 – 2013", addressing all three of the plan's priorities: space, people and economy. In the course of its five year existence, PSTP has managed to develop a modern infrastructure

designed to serve as a basis for innovative entrepreneurial activities, supporting the commercialization of innovative technologies and scientific research, as well as the creation and strengthening of relationships between Polish and foreign business partners, R&D and business related institutions.

Today PSTP provides its tenants with modern office areas for over 50 companies and their 200 employees, conference and training halls of 350 persons capacity, prototyping and exhibition areas, and a unique Biotechnological Laboratory. The key to the dynamic development of Gdynia and Pomeranian Region lies in close cooperation with foreign and domestic institutional and academic centers. An example of such good practice is the INTERREG funded

and currently being carried out project: "Baltic Innovation Bridge – strengthening

business and technological cooperation of Gdynia and Klaipeda", targeted at facilitating trans-regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. A future

PSTP project - the creation of an Active Educational Center for children, students and adults – has already received financial means from INTERREG IIIA and is being co-subsidized by the City of Gdynia and Regional Fund for Environmental Preservation.

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Pomeranian Science and Technology Park in Gdynia. Photo: Tomasz Kamiński



II. UBC TODAY

46TH UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD IN ST. PETERSBURG

Territorial cooperation within the new EU Cohesion Policy, UBC Antenna Office in Brussels and the Maritime Logistics Policy Paper were the main topics of the 46th UBC Executive Board Meeting which was held in St. Petersburg – Kronstadt on 9 – 10 June 2006.

The Board summarised the results of the UBC statements on the new EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. Although the European Commission kept the

limit of 150 km for maritime border cooperation unchanged, the cross-border cooperation programme for the Southern Baltic Region will be established. The so-



Participants of the 46th Board meeting

lution is Bornholm located less than 150 kilometres from Sweden and Poland. Apart from Bornholm the southern regions of Sweden and northern regions of Poland will participate in the programme. Probably Kaliningrad Region will also be eligible to cooperate within this programme (10% of the project budget).

During its 46th meeting, the Board decided to adopt the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper. Moreover, the Board authorised the Logistics Task Force to start the work on the UBC's contribution to the Green Paper on EU Maritime Policy. Mr Per Bødker An-

dersen stressed, that it was very important to inform other city organisations about the policy.

The participants also discussed the goals, tasks and main activities of the UBC Antenna Office in Brussels. The Board authorised the Presidium to make the final agreement with the Stockholm Region Office.

Among the other important matters discussed in St. Petersburg, there was also the establishment of new UBC Commission on Energy. The author of the project – the city of Oskarshamn, prepared the progress report and invited all members for the Energy Forum which will be held in November in Oskarshamn.

The participants also had a chance to listen to the priorities of the Swedish CBSS Presidency July 2006 – July 2007 presented by Mr Kent Härstedt, Swedish Prime Minister's Emissary for the Baltic Sea issues.

47TH UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD MET IN GDYNIA

The 47th UBC Executive Board meeting was held in Gdynia on 19-20 October 2006. The meeting was attended by the Board members, leaders of the Commissions and the delegates of member cities.

Secretary General Pawel Żaboklicki on behalf of the task force presented the possible themes to be discussed at the General Conference in Pärnu, 27-28 September 2007 – security and threats, communication, culture as driving force for development, youth involvement in democracy.

Peter Wretlund Mayor of Oskarshamn submitted the proposal to establish the UBC Commission on Energy. The Board decided to create the Commission on Energy.

The Board accepted Robertsfors and Jyväskylä as new members of UBC and wished them fruitful cooperation.

President Per B. Andersen reminded that on 2 October 2006 the UBC Antenna Office in Brussels began to operate. The goal is to represent the member cities' interests more effectively, to increase UBC's visibility in Brussels, to influence

EU policies which affect local authorities. The Board encouraged member cities to attend the opening event which will be held in Brussels on 6 December.

Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, presented ideas for UBC further development. UBC shall constantly discuss how to improve its structure and operations in order to serve better the citizens of our cities. Member cities will be asked to comment on the ideas for the Union's development.

Earlier this year, at the UBC initiative, major Baltic Sea organisations issued a 2nd statement on new EU Cohesion Policy 3rd objective – the territorial cooperation, questioning the 150 km limit for cross (maritime) border cooperation. The limit was finally maintained by the EC but thanks to the lobbying of Baltic Sea organisations, regions and cities, the cross-border cooperation program for southern Baltic will be established next year. Currently the relevant regions are preparing the contents of the program.

President Andersen informed about the positive reactions of President Barroso and

Commissioner Borg on the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy. Both EC executives strongly encouraged UBC to contribute to the Green Paper on future European



maritime policy. UBC will submit its contribution.

UBC Secretariat will produce a publication called "UBC Business Mixer". The aim is to encourage the cities' business environment to effectively use the Union as the economic forum for establishing partnerships and initiating ventures.

During the open session the commissions leaders presented annual activity reports. The Board appreciated efforts and actions carried out by the commissions.

The next Board meeting will be held in Gävle on 9 March 2007.



UBC ENDORSES ITS MARITIME POLICY

The maritime transport is one of the crucial development factors for the Baltic Sea Region. Since the recent EU enlargement, the growth in maritime sector has become even more significant. The rapid changes bring positive impulse for economic development of the whole region. However, the growth of maritime industry is also a challenge in terms of environment and safety. There are still many unsolved problems that the maritime industry, ports, cities and other Baltic actors have to cope with.

The UBC has been aware that all the problems and difficulties of the Baltic Sea transport cannot be tackled without an integrated approach. Therefore, the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper was prepared which covers the entire scope of maritime logistics in the BSR, including matters such as development of transport and infrastructure, safety and the environment and logistics information technology in the region.

The first recommendation of the UBC Policy Paper - a need to promote co-operation and co-ordination between

different regions in planning and developing transport infrastructure – seems to be especially significant as far as the European maritime transport policy and the Cohesion Policy are concerned.

The basic aim of this document is to ensure the sustainability as well as the competitiveness of the maritime transport sector of the Baltic Sea Region. It tries to define and highlight the most important areas for development in maritime logistics in the region. It also offers common guidelines for UBC member cities on how to deal with the maritime logistics issues.

Without regional and pan-European co-operation all actions undertaken at the local level will only be inefficient.

The UBC document stresses also a need for harmonisation of transport infrastructure and standardisation of cargo equipment to facilitate intermodal transports. The UBC member cities should at the same time support the development of port-hinterland connections and encourage public private partnerships investments in port and port-hinterland infrastructure. Developing research applied to maritime transport, creation of an open information flow, guarantee

optimum safety of transport and care for environment are other important matters raised by the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy and which are in accordance with the major current

priorities of the European Union expressed in Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies and the new Cohesion Policy.

The UBC Policy has a limited scope of influence as it is addressed to the Union's members. But it is also a voice

of Baltic cities in the discussion about the future European maritime policy.

The Maritime Logistics Policy Paper was prepared by the UBC Logistics Task Force chaired by Mr Christian Ramberg, Director of the Port of Turku.

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UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper is available on www.ubc.net

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TOWARDS THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

The Annual Meeting of UBC Commission on Transportation took place in Gdynia (Poland) on 29 September 2006. In the course of the meeting the Commission members reviewed recent initiatives such as transport questionnaire and redesigning the website, discussed future activities and the choice of the venue for next year's meeting.

Apart from organisational matters, the progress in the BUSTRIP Project in which the Commission participates as one of the core partners was presented as well. During the meeting there was also a presentation of SEBTrans-Link project – “Modern Ferry Terminal in the Eastern Port of Gdynia

as an important link in the Transport Corridor North-South” which was an initiative of the Port of Gdynia Authority, the Office of the Marshal of Pomeranian Voivodship, the Voivod Office of Pomeranian Voivodship as well as Gdynia City Hall.

The meeting was combined with a seminar devoted to the question of transport system integration in the Baltic Europe as well as intelligent transport systems. Speakers from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany (Mr Ulrich Peters, Department of Railways/Public Transport, Ministry of Economy of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Region), Stockholm, Sweden (Mr Björn Dalborg, AB Stockholms Lokaltrafik, European

Metropolitan Transport Authorities) and Tri-City, Poland (Mr Olgierd Wyszomirski and Mr Marcin Wołek, University of Gdańsk) presented the experiences of their regions connected with public transport planning and the integration of transport systems. They discussed managing, operating and financing different modes of transport in the cities. Representatives of European Commission, DG TREN (Mr Keith Keen), Göteborg Traffic and Public Transport Authority (Mr Daniel Ulfheden) and University of Gdańsk (Mr. Jacek Oskarski) talked about the deployment, functioning and practical benefits of intelligent transport systems in EU.

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Annual Meeting of the Commission - Integration of the Transport Systems in Baltic Europe took place in Gdynia on 29 September



ENERGY IN FOCUS

Energy is currently a high priority all over the world and many of the UBC cities have a diversified and great knowledge in this field. The urge to find new solutions for our communities to manage the existing turmoil in the energy market has driven Oskarshamn to start the process of establishing a new commission within the UBC.

The working group within Oskarshamn municipality has been composed of three persons working in unison to build up the structure and to identify common focus areas for the new UBC Energy Commission. Contacts have also been established with the Commission on Environment

and other UBC cities, the EU-commission and different NGOs and industrial structures to get all the necessary input before outlining the proposed strategies. The work is divided into three integrated areas: coordination and communications, policy and organisational structures and academic platform for future R&D.

When it comes to coordination and communications the focus has been on the efficient use of the Internet. We need to create a proper electronic infrastructure for fast and efficient communication between the meetings. An "Energy forum" will be a useful tool

to discuss online between meetings and within different working groups. From a policy point of view the work has been more to grasp the diversity and find the common ground upon which we have to base our Commission.

The organisation has been outlined to be small, efficient and able to reflect fast changes we deal with in our common geo-political environment. At the same time it needs to be a firm administrative structure that can communicate, initiate and respond to various issues.

Since UBC has now a representation office in Brussels, we will try to establish ourselves as an influential lobby group in the EU-structure.

To enhance our R&D efforts we have formed a "competence board" that shall be a supporting structure to the Commission. This group shall consist of leading scholars and researchers that can provide new visions, extended knowledge and future insights. The current work of this group is today financially supported by the Swedish Energy Agency.

Welcome to the UBC Energy Meeting 2006 in Oskarshamn

The very first UBC Energy Meeting takes place in Oskarshamn, Sweden on 21 – 23 November 2006. This meeting will give you a great arena to discuss and share knowledge in the energy field. Prominent energy policy makers and experts will present their views and the latest findings. We will discuss local perspectives on heat, power, light and energy in general. We will also set the agenda for the future work of the Commission.

Mr. Gregg Butler is Professor of Science in Sustainable Development at the University of Manchester will give a lecture on "Sustainable development; often quoted, often misunderstood, often taken in vain". Mr. Björn G. Karlsson, Professor in Energy systems at LIH University Linköping will speak on the theme "How energy savings can empower local industries." Professor Karlsson analysed 11 plants in Oskarshamn and found that they can reduce their electricity use by almost 50%. Mr. Gunnar Hovsenius' headline will be: "Integrate the local energy systems and create win-win situation". For information, travel arrangements, practical information and to register for the UBC Energy Meeting, please visit our website www.ubcenergy.org. We also call for presentations from your UBC city. More instructions are also available on our website.

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INVITATION TO THE CoC SESSION

The UBC Commission on Culture (CoC) would like to invite you to discuss cultural festivals as strengtheners of local identity in the 9th CoC working session to be held in Vaasa on 24-26 November 2006. The main subjects to be discussed are

- image
- identity
- specific features of cultural festivals
- global and local

The following key speakers have been invited to give a speech in the session:

Senior curator Gun Westholm (County museum of Gotland) has since the very



Vaasa will host the next CoC Session

beginning of 1984 been involved in the organization of The Medieval Week. She is also one of the organizers of Gotland –the Viking Island, which is a new festival that started in 2005.

PhD Timo Cantell works as a professor in the department of the arts management in Sibelius Academy, Helsinki. He is a sociologist and his researches have been focused on the meeting points of culture and urban planning and economic and social impacts of festivals.

PhD Yrjö Heinonen is a researcher who has studied the Tango-festival in Seinäjoki, Finland. The main topics in his research are the image of the

cultural festival and the community, identity and local in relation with global.

We will also meet representatives of the Hanse Sail Maritime Festival (Rostock), the Festival of the Baltic Cities (St. Petersburg), the Night of the Arts (Vaasa) and the city of Umeå, candidate for the European Capital of Culture 2014. There will also be space for everyone who is willing to make a presentation.

Deadline for registration is latest by 8 November.

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NOT ONLY WORDS, BUT ACTIONS NEEDED

Between April and September 2006 the Urban transport plans and policies of all 12 partner cities in BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation and Planning) project have been peer reviewed by transport experts from other partner cities. The BUSTRIP cities use the findings and the best practices identified in the reviews in next steps of the process

of developing Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP) and in starting the implementation of the plan by pilot actions.

The Peer review assessments have been done against a SUTP benchmark. It is an ideal that describes the characteristics that should be evident within SUTP. The findings of the reviews show that the cities despite of different size, society

and stage of transport planning share rather common strengths and are facing similar challenges on their way to develop sustainable urban transport plans, policies and behaviour.

The findings show that many cities have great visions and plans for sustainable transport, but they are not integrated, and very often there are just nice words without any actions taken. Another key finding is that a real cross-sectoral cooperation within the city and on regional level is a necessity for succeeding in the development and implementation of SUTP. BUSTRIP continues until the end of 2007, and while the cities take the next steps towards SUTP and its implementation, the project coordination team has started the preparations of the main outcome of the project, the SUTP toolbox. This practical tool will give comprehensive guidance on SUTP and will enable other BSR and European cities to follow the BUSTRIP model towards Sustainable Urban Transport.



Björn Grönholm, 39, has been nominated as the new Head of Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat as of 1 October 2006. Before nomination Grönholm was working as a coordinator for SUSTAINMENT -project. He has also cooperated with the UBC for 10 years. Grönholm was a development manager in waste management company for Finnish archipelago, a coordinator in Keep Archipelago Tidy Association and in Keep Baltic Sea Tidy Network.

Grönholm graduated from Åbo Akademi University with a Masters degree in Political Sciences in 1999. He has worked as a researcher for several years in the field of international relations, political and administrative structures with focus on environmental policies.

Altogether 27 candidates applied for the vacancy. Four were finally interviewed by the Commission's co-chairman Guldbrand Skjönberg, Mikko Lohikoski, and Olli-Pekka Mäki from Turku, and the former Head of Secretariat Risto Veivo, who is currently working as the head of Unit in the Baltic 21 Secretariat in Stockholm.

Our environmental problems are similar and we need to find solutions. How do we get all sectors of the city to strive for a common goal the sustainable development? - said Kari Porra, Head of Environmental Unit, Lahti.

The city of Lahti, Finland, hosted the third training session of the project Managing Urban Europe- 25 (MUE-25) in the end of September. Altogether 59 environmental experts from ten countries participated in the event, which was held during the Lahti Environmental Week.

The purpose of the MUE-25 training was to prepare 25 participating cities to meet the challenge of moving towards an integrated management system which is regarded as an essential part of advancing sustainability issues. Although

experience in this project" - said Kari Porra.

"If sustainable development was easy, we wouldn't need projects" - reminded Thomas Knowland, who represents in MUE-25 the city of Leeds, United Kingdom.

MUE-25 combines the best parts of the current environmental management systems with the intention to better serve the needs of the local governments. A vital part of the project is developing and implementing a management system that supports the introduction of social and economic aspects as well as environmental ones.

Thus, it enables cities to fulfill the 10 Aalborg commitments starting from good governance and local management system ending with global responsibilities.

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TO MEET THE CHALLENGE

the organizational structures in partner cities of MUE-25 are different there are fundamental similarities.

"In Lahti, we are willing to learn from city networks and gather practical



59 environmental experts participated in the MUE-25 training session in Lahti

MUE-25 includes 25 partner cities across Europe and the lead partner is the Union of the Baltic Cities Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat. The project is part funded by the European Commission DG Environment, German Federal Environment Foundation, the German Federal States of Baden-Württemberg and Bayern and participating cities. The total budget is 2.9 MEUR.

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MY FRIEND IN MY CITY - A PHOTO COMPETITION

UBC Commission on Education organized the International Youth Photo Competition for young people aged 13 - 16. It was open from May to September 2006 and was organised in co-operation with Kärđla Municipality. 15 youngsters from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were registered the Competition.

When choosing the theme for the Competition, the organizing team searched for a slogan which could be understood in many ways. The theme „My Friend in My City” was eventually approved.

- Who is my friend in my city? A boy/girl? A dog/cat? A computer? A TV-set? A new and an expensive car?
- In which city is my friend: In this city where I live? Or there where I would like to live? Or in the city where I was born?

So this theme gave plenty of room for phantasy.

55 photos were sent in, lots of very good ones. The jury had a very difficult task, because the level was very equal. The jury had to face the problem what to do if many photos have the same amount of points and rating. To ensure objectivity, the members of jury were invited from



1st place - Valdur Roosenvald from Estonia



2nd place - Roberta Tranizaite from Lithuania



3rd place - Anna Hodjutsenko from Estonia

different countries - Poland (2), Sweden (2), Finland (1) Latvia (1) and Estonia (4) and international experts from the UK (2). After long and exhausting work the winners were announced:

1. place - Valdur Roosenvald from Estonia
2. place - Roberta Tranizaite from Lithuania
3. place - Anna Hodjutsenko from Estonia.

The UBC Commission on Education printed the top 30 photos and organized a photo exhibition. The exhibition „My Friend in my City” was opened in Kärđla on 8 October 2006. During the opening ceremony, the prizes were also handed in. A video clip from the opening will be also displayed on the UBC homepage.

Anyone interested is welcome to visit the exhibition. After the tour in Estonia it may also visit other cities if requested.

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TOWARDS A GREATER YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Commission on Youth Issues held its second meeting in Tallinn on 12-14 May with about 30 participants from 15 cities attending.

The Commission meeting started with a reception hosted by the deputy mayor of Tallinn, followed by a presentation of Tallinn on youth work and youth policy by Jaak Raie, Head of Tallinn Sport and Youth Department.

One of the main points on the agenda



Commission on Youth Issues working group, Tallinn, 12-14 May 2006

was planning the next youth conference, planned to take place in Pärnu in 2007 at the same time as the UBC General Assembly.

"The interest for, and the engagement within the Commission on Youth Issues is amazing! Almost every week we are contacted by cities around the Baltic Sea who would like to get more information on the time, place and theme for our next Commission meeting. I am so pleased to see that so many cities are actually adopting the youth policy and recognizing children and youth as a resource for local city development. To find new ways to have a dialogue with youth and to build and "reinvigorate" the society with the focus on the coming generation, is a necessity for a sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region" - says Charlotte Gustafsson, Chair of Commission on Youth Issues, City of Kalmar.

The next city to host a meeting for the Commission on Youth Issues is Liepāja in Latvia. The Commission core group will meet on 7 November followed by an open meeting on 8-9 November open to all UBC cities.

The programme includes further planning of the next youth conference, a workshop on "The future and importance of youth NGOs for youth and society" as well as study visits to youth centres in Liepāja.

The full programme and registration form can be downloaded at the new website of the Commission on Youth Issues: www.ubc-youth.org.

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SUSTAINABILITY IN BROWNFIELD REGENERATION

More than 20 colleagues from Sweden, Finland, Denmark Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany got together in Rostock on 20 – 23 September 2006. On the basis of examples from Rostock different experiences in handling of waste land were discussed. The guests presented their impressions and proposals how to deal with these problems at the end of the workshop.



The participants on board of the Ship - the Museum of the Shipyard Industry

Independent experts worked on three different types of waste land. The experts at the UBC workshop developed a synthesis of the long lasting preliminary work of Rostock

municipality and the inputs from INTERREG III C operations such as "Brownfield development – BERI". The UBC supervisors proposed e.g. a green corridor leading from the botanic garden to the Warnow bank. There is already the extension of the pedestrian precinct at the riverbank under way. The appointed UBC workgroup emphasised the direct position of the river as the decisive quality criterion for the future development. Therefore the references to the water became clearer, rifts were broadened, and a rangy mix of functions of high-quality urban living and water sports were highlighted.

While two out of the three workshops dealt with conventional waste land of former life and trading estate, the third workshop had to pay attention to the urban location of the "Maritime Museum Rostock". The UBC experts were spunkier than all previous planners of Rostock and found a solution. The message of the workshop was clear: Rostock has been over centuries one of the most famous centres of commerce, culture and science in the

Baltic Sea Region. The storerooms of the museums are brimful; due to the lack of space merely 1 % of the treasures can be shown. Under these circumstances it would be unwise to close such a valuable building and to offer it for sale without any criticism. Rostock should put its efforts into creating an economic company of a museum of city history and art. An additional building of glass, which accommodate a museum shop, a museum restaurant and for example a private gallery could make up for a functional deficiency of Rostock museum

At the end of the consultations all colleagues agreed: They will continue to meet every six month. An established team will be in charge of acquisition of EU grants to support the work of the commission.

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COMMISSION ON TOURISM MET IN JŪRMALA

The annual meeting of the UBC Commission on Tourism was held in Jūrmala, Latvia on 27-29 September. The meeting was devoted to a debate on Commission's work during the last year, as well as to presenting the next year actions.

The guests were welcomed by Mayor of Jūrmala, Mr Raimonds Munkevics. The meeting was attended by 14 delegates from 6 countries – Finland, Norway, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland.

The sessions were chaired by Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski, Chairman of the Commission who is also the director of the Department of Development and Foreign Cooperation, Koszalin. Mrs Gunta Uspele delivered the presentation about the development of tourist infrastructure, spa history and the biggest attractions of Jūrmala. Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski presented the report from the Commission's working meeting held in May 2006 in Koszalin, the adopted new Commission's objectives and projects. Additionally, the achieve-

ments in tourism of the cities as well as the problems hampering the development of tourism, actions and projects were presented and discussed. The following persons took floor: Ronny Andersen (Kristiansand), Liisa Lemmetyinen (Turku), Aivar Nikol (Võru), Triin Toompuu (Haapsalu), Eda Toomsalu (Pärnu), Irena Satkauskienė (Palanga), Liutauras Kraniuskas (Klaipėda) and Davis Kalnins (Liepāja).



Participants of the meeting in Jūrmala

Mr Zdrojewski also presented accomplishment of two projects – the International Competition of Knowledge about Poland and Scandinavia and Fotosuch-Quizfahrt. He announced the continuation and development of these projects next year, as well as the publication of the UBC member cities information tourist centres catalogue. The use of the EU funds available in 2007 was considered.

It was decided that the Commission should call all the UBC sea-side members to obtain the "Blue Flag" status for their beaches. The Commission also paid a number of study visits that enriched the meeting with tourist practice dimension: to Dzintari Concert Hall, Jūrmala City Tourist Information Centre, Art. Theatre, Livu Aquapark and Kemerī National Park.

The next working meeting will be held in March or April and the annual meeting - in September 2007.

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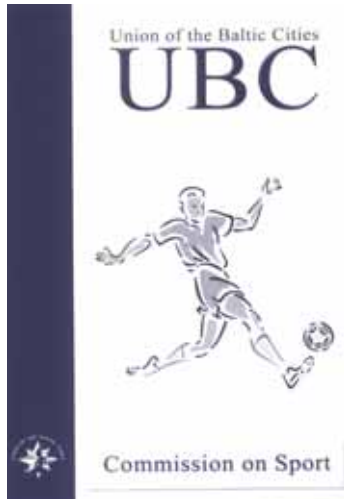


ACTIVE LIVING

The UBC Commission on Sport Annual Meeting entitled "Active Living", held on May 5, 2006 in Gdynia (Poland) gathered representatives of 17 cities from 11 countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and Belarus.

The meeting consisted of two thematic blocks: the first one was devoted to multifunctional sports arenas. There were presentations of sports arenas in the cities of Gdynia, Rostock, Karlskrona, Gladsaxe near Copenhagen. The presentations consisted in demonstrating a management system of sports facilities as well as ways of promoting sport among inhabitants of all age groups from the a/m cities.

The second block dealt with best



New leaflet of the Commission

practices connected with active living programmes - "Cities on the Move". This part of the Annual Meeting was prepared in cooperation with the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The first presentation entitled "One step - better than nothing" showed

how Turku promotes healthy lifestyle as well as encourages its inhabitants to be active. Moreover, the representatives of BRHCA presented the programme "Schools on the move" whose objective is to make schooldays (especially school breaks) more active physically. Next, a representative of Polva (Estonia) presented the town's experience in developing healthy and active strategies. The

following presentation was focused on "Exercise and Diet on Prescription" - the initiative implemented in Copenhagen.

Moreover, a representative of the Commission presented 2006 grant awarding procedure entitled "Cities on the Move". By allocating the grants the Commission wished to award those projects which allowed people (especially sedentary ones) to keep fit all the year round as well as to encourage people of all age groups to be active and to develop their active living habits.

The next year's annual meeting will be held in Karlskrona (Sweden). The Commission on Sport wishes to devote this meeting to the issues of fair play and an antidoping policy in sport.

The new leaflet was distributed which presents activities of the Commission as well as projects realised with the Commission's financial support.

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UBC CITES TALK ABOUT

The meeting of the Commission on Business Cooperation was held in Turku on 14-16 June 2006 and the representatives from the cities of Turku, Tampere, Kaunas, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Gdańsk, Tallinn, Viljandi, Vordingborg, Kolding and Næstved were present. They participated in the seminars, workshops and other events of the European Day of Entrepreneur. It was an international event closely connected with the work of the Commission.

The European Day of Entrepreneur was opened by Mr Kalle Euro, the Director of Business Development of Turku Area Development Centre. After the opening speeches of other honorary participants the morning seminars on environmental protection and Sea Tech started. There was the Environmental protection business-to-business meeting, seminar on Innovations and Cultures in Entrepreneurship, Sea Tech Workshop and Networking and Discussion Forum developing EDE into co-operation involving the Baltic Sea Region.

The Meeting of the Commission was held on the next day and was chaired by Mr Kalle Euro.

Many interesting presentations were delivered. Mr Vyngintas Grinis, Head of the Development Programmes Management Division of City Development Department of Kaunas, presented the project of the science park "Technopolis", which is planned to be built in Kaunas. After the presentations a lively discussion about the activities of the UBC Business Commission took place. The Senior Consultant of the Industrial Development Council of Kolding City Mr Erling Winther suggested that it would be good to improve the work of an organizing committee consisting from three cities - past, present and future host of the Commission meeting. One more idea was to develop the activity of a permanent secretariat in Kaunas. It was also offered to involve entrepreneurs and relevant actors in the activities and meetings of the Commission.

Two cities from Denmark - Næstved and Vordingborg had kindly offered



Mr Kalle Euro, Chairman of the Commission on Business Cooperation

BUSINESS

themselves and were elected as the hosts for the UBC Business Commission meeting in 2008.

Conclusions: There is no significant gap between Eastern and Western European countries anymore. The development in the Central and Eastern European countries is very fast and Western countries can learn from their

achievements as well. Few years ago western members of the UBC were only providing information to the eastern partners, but now there is an exchange of information on equal basis. It is very important to develop the activities of the UBC Business Commission involving more relevant actors and improving its organisational system.

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CHALLENGE OF eCITIZEN REACHED ITS MIDWAY

Challenge of eCitizen - Promoting eGovernment Actions in European Cities project has been ongoing since early 2005 and has now reached its midway. The project, bringing together 12 partners from 11 partner cities from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond, has continued its well-established cooperation with concrete activities.

Many of the partner cities are also members of the UBC IS Commission. Such eGovernment and eCitizen related issues as cities' document management systems, smart card solutions, eDemocracy and eParticipation have

on implementing eDemocracy and eParticipation activities by producing a training package for all partners. A collection of best practices and lessons learnt from eDemocracy and eParticipation activities in Sheffield and EU-wide was prepared and published on the project website. In addition, Tartu has published a study on existing mobile services, best practices, methodology and suggestions for future development, "Mobile services in Tartu".

Challenge of eCitizen has offered the partner cities a framework to continue developing and implementing their eGovernment and eCitizen plans and

strategies, developing concrete services and applications for different purposes. One of the most exciting activities in the project lately has been starting the preparation of a joint study on European best practices and experiences of eGovernment actions and in related



Project partners have met a few times in various cities - here in Sheffield in November 2005

awareness raising strategies. The study, prepared by eGovernance Academy from Tallinn under the guidance of project partner IS FYN/city of Odense, will be of interest to a wide audience also outside the project partners. It will be available on the project website next year.

eCitizen partnership met this year in Tartu, March 2006, and in St. Petersburg 19-20 October 2006.

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Vaasa is developing its card with new services and Tartu is concentrating on mobile services for citizens. On the other hand, for example Turku aims at paperless office with its eGovernment desktop for city administration.

been addressed with research and studies. Existing smart card applications in the cities of Tampere, Bologna, Vaasa and St. Petersburg were introduced in a thorough study, available on the project website. Partner city Sheffield has shared its long and wide experience

BALTIC CITIES AND MIGRATION

The UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs met for its annual meeting on 5 -7 October, 2006 in Rostock. This year's meeting titled "Baltic Cities and Migration - Problems, Potentials, Perspectives" raised the issue of migration. Participants came from Karlskrona, Sundsvall, Tartu, Kristiansand, Vilnius and Klaipeda. Also, members of local associations dealing with the topic were present.



The University of Rostock contributed significantly to the Commission's workshop. Here, Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Werz delivering his speech

The Workshop aimed at discussing the wide range of migration issues in the region as a non-classical immigration area from different angles. Were there

any differences in the migration policies? What could be said about the difficulties and experiences when it came to the integration process of foreigners? The exchange of ideas and perspectives should help answering those questions and draw the public attention to the issue.

An introduction to the modern urbanization in the region, followed by a short overview of its migration politics were delivered by the Faculty of Philosophy and Economics of the University of Rostock. The representatives of Sundsvall informed about the integration situation in their community emphasising the need for immigrants as means of important economic resource. They presented two different projects that attempt to integrate immigrants to let them feel valuable and accepted by the society. Kristiansand demonstrated the importance of a working place for the integration of people with foreign background. An example of how to create public campaigns to create awareness for foreigners' contributions

or needs and how integration and democracy go together was given by a representative of the Rostock association "Bunt statt braun". The participants from Karlskrona exposed their own experience with xenophobia. Finally, a representative of the International Organization for Migration from Vilnius raised a very specific and painful issue: the trafficking of humans, especially women in Lithuania. A publication will be prepared including the contributions and materials of all speakers.

It was decided to continue the Commission's work with a common project on exchange of experiences in combating xenophobia in the urban population. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the local EU antennas, was charged with the development of project possibilities for 2007 the EU Year of Equality of Chances.

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III. NEWS FROM MEMBER CITIES

EUROPE CLOSER TO PEOPLE

The Europäisches Integrationszentrum (EIZ), located in Rostock, is a publicly recognized institution of further education in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Since 2005 the EIZ is one of the organisations responsible for EUROPE DIRECT. The EIZ has several years' experience in the work on European political issues and has the necessary knowledge to cooperate with several bodies, institutions and non-profit organisations. It works closely together with the administration of Rostock and cooperates with members of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Bundestag, the European Parliament and the European Commission.



A good communication and understanding of the decision-making in EU is the basis for a better acceptance of Europe by people and for any kind of cooperation between the authorities, the citizens and the EU. That is why the EIZ constantly tries to get in contact with the

citizens and to advise and inform them about the EU.

The national, regional and local levels have to be taken into account in order to implement the European communication policy in a successful way. In order to enable the city administrations and the citizens to realize the European dimensions of generally

important issues and to talk to people and to involve them actively in the EU issues, information of common interest has to be available for them at any time. Therefore, the EIZ organizes events and discussions on the European issues, for example the Council Presidency of Finland (succeeded by the

German one) or a possible European free-trade area with Russia, and tries to intensify public relations.

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THE CHINEESE IN KALMAR

The Chinese company Fanerdun Group AB will build a 70.000 square meter exhibition and trade centre, where 1000 companies – mostly Chinese – will display their products. Beyond the wholesale enterprise Fanerdun has plans to build hotels, restaurants and a spa. During the past two years the company has carried out market surveys in several northern European cities. "Kalmar is ideal from a business standpoint. Corporate taxes are low, as are investment and housing costs. I also find laws and norms in the Swedish society admirable. Sweden has a good reputation among Chinese business executives"

- says Mr Luo, managing director of Fanerdun. - "In addition, there is an airport, train connections and a harbour. A well-functioning infrastructure is a



prerequisite for attracting business from all over Europe". "In addition to a large number of visitors, we will have to plan for 1000 people, who will work in the trade centre. This will entail a substantial boost for Kalmar Airport" - says Kyrre Dahl, Head of the Development Office of Kalmar. At the same time new demands will be placed on the municipality. Kyrre Dahl is therefore conducting a study to determine effects upon society as a whole to see which resources might be mobilized. "The analysis will provide a basis for future development. We need to know as much as possible about the development we are about to embark upon, both in the short term and the long term" - says Kyrre Dahl. For more information, please contact Mr Kyrre Dahl, phone: +46 48050160, e-mail: kyrre.dahl@kalmar.se.

location and a map specifying availability of utilities for each piece of land.

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CĒSIS OPEN FOR INVESTMENTS

The Cēsis City Council has prepared an informative material on the plots of land belonging to the municipality and has announced tender for investment attracting. Cēsis is rich in the nature and cultural heritage. Thus, the most typical types of entrepreneurship are: light industry, tourism, information technologies and services. Basing on the City Development Plan, tourism, wood-processing, food-processing and IT will be the city's priorities in the future. There are 30 enterprises per 1000 citizens of Cēsis, and it is quite a high rate in comparison to the average situation in Latvia. To promote the development of economic environment and entrepreneurship in the city, the City Council has gathered information on investment areas and offers them to the interested persons.

There are several plots of land in Cēsis belonging to the municipality and individuals, however, they are not managed. During the organization

of sustainable development of these areas, the Council has decided to attract investors (physical and legal entities), interested in expanding or starting their enterprises directly in Cēsis.

The informative material on the areas belonging to the municipality is prepared, and a proposal is announced for investment attraction for several plots of land.

Thus, the City Council calls all the interested persons to submit their investment proposals. Full information is available at the city web page: www.cesis.lv, section "Investment areas". There is general information on each piece of land, on its



CITY DIPLOMACY

Järvenpää was one of the first and few cities in Finland to create a position and recruit an EU-project planner in 1994, later renamed as EU-coordinator, and finally Manager of International Affairs. The consultative unit in international affairs deals with the information and training on EU-programmes, policies, and financing in project planning and management. The first pillar of the international affairs of Järvenpää consists in

/Norway, Rødovre/Denmark in 1956. The similarity in cultural, geopolitical or other regional issues has been the main selection criteria of twinning. Culture, sport, youth, business, local administration have been the main themes of exchange. Järvenpää has been also active in international projects, and the project partnerships. EU-projects have been done in infrastructure, social and health affairs, employment issues, sport education, culture and in development of municipal administration.

Town twinning relations of Järvenpää: Täby/Sweden, Lørenskog /Norway, Rødovre/Denmark, Volkhov/Russia, Pasadena/USA, Vác/Hungary, Jõgevamaa/Estonia, Buchholz in der Nordheide/Germany, and Zelenogorsk/Russia.

cooperating with nine twinning towns, "city diplomacy", the second pillar is international project cooperation and the third: communication, contacts and participation.

Official town twinning relations of Järvenpää started with the Nordic cities of Täby/Sweden, Lørenskog

Now, on the doorstep of new programming of 2007-2013 two main planning processes and proposals have been

fulfilled by the City International Unit. An application of one year INTERREG funding in order to disseminate the concept of "Job Market" to Estonia has been submitted. Another current application is the implementation plan for the cooperation between Järvenpää and the city of Ho in Ghana.



Ghanaian delegation in Järvenpää with Director of Administration Aimo Komonen and City Lawyer Esko Nuutinen

The North-South Programme, a sub-Saharan oriented cohesion programme is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, coordinated by the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, and expected to build up local government capacities and

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TWINNING

Narva together with the Russian twin-town Ivangorod, as well as 4 more town pairs located on the external state borders of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Poland, has since 2004 participated in the international project "City-twins Co-Operation Network". Recently the participating towns have initiated the dialogue on establishing an association of European border towns.

One of the main goals is to better represent themselves on the European level.

The overall objective of the project is to foster local development by promoting cooperation between different border towns, by introducing and disseminating best practices and action models in different sectors of local administration, e.g. welfare and health care, local economy and business, labour force, education, culture, etc.

The partner cities have clarified the

best practices and action models in border areas and developed a permanent communication and cooperation system between themselves. The idea is to transfer best practices from one town pair to another and thus improve the local and regional administration in all partner cities.



but also for goods. Cooperation with Russian partners is focused on strategic development and promotion of entrepreneurship. During the project long-term strategic plans between Imatra (FIN) – Svetogorsk (RUS) and Narva (EST) – Ivangorod (RUS) will be elaborated. The project also focuses on spatial planning and exchange of experts between partners.

One important result of the project



will be an association of the European border towns. The main task of the association will be to look after the interests of the border towns. It will promote the exchange of experiences, ideas and opinions of frontier towns, develop and coordinate international projects, promote multicultural aspects and encourage youth and culture exchanges. The association will arrange one international meeting every year where the issues linked with border regions will be discussed.

The establishment will take place at the final conference of the project, which will be held in Imatra on 12-13 December 2006.

The cooperation of projects partners will continue within the new association. Other border towns are welcome to join the new association.

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TARTU OPENS A SCIENCE CENTER

Tartu awaits all the knowledge fans to see and experience scientific innovations in the science center AHHAA. It will be the first science center among the Baltic cities. The 13.000 square meter center will hold a 3D cinema and a planetarium with European top-science technology. Three rooms will host permanent expositions. "One of them is the tunnel to Australia, where people see what's happening on in the other side of the globe" - says Tiitu Sild, the manager of AHHAA science center.



The board of scientists from various fields of science has been planning the exposition for a year. Experience visiting other scientific museums in Europe, USA and India have given the planners plenty of ideas about which mistakes to avoid. "The most common problem is that the expositions are hectic and lose their conception" - says Sild. The aim was to alternate intensive scientific getting-to-know with more relaxing expositions. AHHAA center is unique. "The big advantage of AHHAA is that we are a part of the University of Tartu, which means that we have competence to invent original exhibitions" - Sild explains.

The estimated 13-mln EUR building and 2-mln exposition will be mainly supported by the Government of Estonia and the city of Tartu. Grants will also be applied for from the European Union funds and private companies. If everything goes according to the plan, the visitors are welcome at the end of June 2008.

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OPEN CITIES – BUILD FOR ALL

On 8 September 2006 Gdynia organised a seminar "Open cities – build for all. Implementation of best practice in accessibility in public procurement". This seminar was held within the "Build for All" pilot project concerning implementation of accessibility to the built environment through Public Procurement. The main objective of the project is to mainstream disability policies through the EU Public Procurement Directives.

Apart from the seminar in Gdynia, similar workshops were organized in Germany, Italy and Spain.

The organizers of the meeting were Info-Handicap (The National Disability Council of Luxembourg) – coordinator of the "Build for All" project – and Gdynia. The representatives of local authorities, city hall employees, architects and potential users were present. The participants could get acquainted with the public procurement requirements in Poland, expectations of the natural environment users (including mostly the disabled) as well as experiences of architects designing in accordance with the universal accessibility rule. Speakers from Germany and Italy presented the implementation of best practice in accessibility into public procurement

in their countries. In the course of the meeting the experiences of Poland in the field of municipal disability policy were also presented.



The exhibition "Cities without barriers"

During the seminar its participants could see the exhibition "Cities without barriers". The exhibition consisted of photos and architectural projects prepared during the architectural workshops "Cities without barriers" that were held in Gdynia last year. These workshops organized in cooperation with the University of Technology in Gdansk were aimed at sensitizing students of architecture to the problems of the people with reduced mobility.

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UMEÅ AIMS TO BE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Umeå aims to be the European Capital of Culture 2014. The objective of this venture is to step by step, year by year, strengthen and develop Umeå's cultural profile. In a decision, the Municipal Council in May 2005 resolved that Umeå would submit an application as a candidate for the European Capital of Culture 2014. You will be able to follow this exciting journey all the way to 2014 on the web site. This web site will also contain suggestions about events and happenings, articles etc. In short: everything about Umeå's candidature.

Why should Umeå become the European Capital of Culture? There are many reasons. Here are just a few:

- A strong cultural profile attracts cultural workers and key employees to the business community, the public sector, and the universities; and it enhances the quality of life for all of Umeå's inhabitants.

- An active cultural life makes children,

young people, the elderly, and all ethnic groups visible and creates a community that is characterized by diversity, tolerance and broad-mindedness.

- Culture is conducive to the development of revitalization and expansion.

We work together to form a European Capital of Culture Work with making Umeå the European Capital of Culture 2014 demands broad approval and great commitment from the community's inhabitants, cultural workers, public institutions, the business community, and partners. The initial period deals with conveying the idea and the vision to Umeå's inhabitants and partners, as well as the rest of Sweden and the world.

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SAFER CYCLING

Project "Traffic safety near schools" envisages enhancement of safety, while decreasing the number of traffic accidents and improving quality of education programs for training of cyclists. Three training fields for cyclists have been set up so the pupils have a chance to acquire skills for safe cycling down the streets of Jelgava.

The project is implemented in cooperation with the partners from Sweden. The necessity for such project can be justified by the statistics of the road accidents in Latvia. Children suffer in every fifth road accident. The municipality pays much attention to the development and promotion of the public transportation and cycling opportunities.

Two of the newly set up training fields are situated in the area of Jelgava elementary school. One of them is an imitation of crossroads so that pupils will be taught how to behave on road. At the second, the pupils and everyone else can try riding hurdles, special

equipment helps cyclists to learn how to keep balance while driving.

The work is also continued with developing a training program for cyclists, drafting technical projects for two bicycle routes in the city and spreading information about traffic safety.

In cooperation with experts from Road Traffic Safety Directorate, a special course for pupils regarding safe cycling is developed. Such important issues like cyclist's duties, road signs and their meaning, organization of traffic, driving rules, maneuvering and stopping, instructions for crossing crossroads, first medical aid and other topics will be definitely included in the training programme.

Project is co-financed by PHARE 2003 programme for Cross-border



cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region; this financing constitutes 175.701 Lats.

This project is inwrought in a project from INTERREG III

B programme – "Baltic Sea Cycling", which foresees analysis for cycling development opportunities in middle-sized cities of the Baltic Region, thus ensuring competitiveness of the region. This project aims to integrate cycling in the transportation network of city. The Leading partner for the project is Örebro (Sweden).

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ADVENTURE UNDER TALL SHIPS' SAIL

Six youngsters from Klaipeda participated in the 50th Anniversary Tall Ships' Races 2006 sailing from Saint Malo, France, to Lisbon, Portugal.

During the Sail Training International annual conference, a vision of cooperation between Klaipeda and "Ocean Youth Trust Ireland" representatives was borne. The vision developed into a reality and the Irish invited ten Lithuanians to sail on their training vessel: "Lord Rank".

The first group from Klaipeda and other Lithuanian towns embarked "Lord Rank" in Saint Malo, France. Their adventure ended up in Lisbon. From there, the fleet with another group of Klaipedians cruised in company from Cadiz to La Coruña, Spain.

Monika, a first timer-trainee, remembers that her sailing adventures

started during the first minutes in the open sea. She was caught by sea sickness. A number of her young colleagues soon joined her. She kept asking herself, how she dared to set on a voyage like that. Yet, she was simply overwhelmed by the experience and wished to register for the next year, too.

Real sea challenges appeared, when together with a UK crew, they had to learn, work, clean, cook, eat, rest, sleep, and live on the boat for eight days. Without a shower, in damp clothes and beds, struggling with the high waves all the time.

Algirdas, a boy from Klaipeda, explains that "watches" were the funniest. This was the time when their group was responsible for the

whole ship and her success in the race. Algirdas says, he enjoyed taking the log of the ship the most. However, taking up and off the sails and learning sailing

knots was also very interesting. Night watches were the most romantic, yet – the hardest, especially when there was little action at sea and one just had to sit and stare at the distance.

"Lord Rank" reached the finish line sixth in her class.

Lithuanians spent four memorable days in Caiscais and Lisbon, sightseeing, shopping, making friends, attending boat parties and having a splash during the traditional water fights among the Tall Ships' teams.

During the flight back home, the youngsters were somewhat more silent than on their way to Saint Malo. Wonder why? In their heads they were scheming a new sail training project with "Ocean Youth Trust Ireland" and The Tall Ships' Race. This time in Klaipeda and the Baltic Sea.

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The young sailors on board found some time also for fun



AN INTERNSHIP IN UGANDA

LVRLAC is still in its inception period and during my time there I could sense its potential for becoming a major actor in the Lake Victoria Region and East Africa. It was established in 1997, on the initiative of the Mayors of Entebbe/Uganda, Mwanza/Tanzania and Kisumu/Kenya. The reason for the establishment was the awareness of the many various environmental, economic and social challenges the Lake Victoria Basin is facing and the recognition of similarities in the problems. Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of services such as water supply, sewerage systems, housing, roads, primary health care, social service, and education. Those services, which may seem a matter of course in the UBC region, are still underdeveloped in most parts of Africa and the Lake Victoria Region. The urban areas are relatively advanced. The roads are good and there are many clinics and enough hospitals. However, even in Entebbe, for instance, sewage and constant water supply seem to be a continuous problems. And in the more remote areas some towns cannot

even be reached on a tarmac road. LVRLAC has managed to promote local authorities as key players in the sustainable development of the Lake



Victoria Region. To improve the situation it is vital for the organization to have a well functioning management. LVRLAC members and their staff need appropriate technical equipment for their work and communication between the members. Some time ago many places did not even have an internet connection. The secretariat faces enormous challenges to communicate with other members. Usually it is a high effort for the staff at the secretariat. It is costly both in time and money. Therefore, LVRLAC needs

help to improve its infrastructure.

However, besides all difficulties, LVRLAC is a very ambitious organization – employees are very well motivated, hard working and determined to make a change. Help from more experienced and advanced network organizations like UBC is very important for them in order to be successful and reach LVRLAC goals in the long run. Continuous support, especially in terms of technical co-operation is in demand. However, on the technical side, there is still a lot UBC can do to help LVRLAC stand on its own feet.

Maria-Elisabeth Schmidt, a student at Leipzig University, Germany, and listener of African Studies with a specialization in politics, economy and society, got the chance, via mediation of UBC actors, to obtain practical experience inside LVRLAC from March to June, 2006.

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ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY FARMING

The environmental "Green Network" is a voluntary, regional collaboration working towards sustainability, involving authorities, private companies and farmers. The network has developed a large number of tools for creating an overview of environmental and natural conditions at individual farms, in order to implement environmental control with a view to achieving ongoing improvements, as well as the protection and improvement of the nature in and around the farm. The nature conservation and environmental work at individual farms is described and documented in the 'farming environmental statement report' which is approved individually by the network and involves biannual renewal of the report. The report includes a requirement that the farmer outlines whether the goals for the preceding period have been met.



One of the approved Green Network farms

In order to develop, adapt and improve the tools and concept of the 'farming environmental statement report', a new development project has been carried out over the past three years. It has involved selected farmers, the local agricultural society and the environmental authority.

The result of the development project is a simple environmental control tool which will quickly show where more active efforts for the protection, conservation work and re-establishment of nature can be made on the farmer's property. In addition, the information gathered can be reused for the environmental casework which the authority has to undertake. The 'environment statement report' also fulfils the legislative requirement of 'green accounts' for certain farms.

The report itself provides the

farmer with an overview of the farm's consumption of resources in relation to yield. The report also provides an overview of the property's natural and culture-historical assets. This gives the farmer a tool for optimising the use of the area by, for instance, turning overgrown meadow and common land into range land. The initiatives for a farmer who wants to establish, change or expand his livestock production may meet the criteria set out in the environmental authority's environmental impact assessment by laying out borders along watercourses and lakes, preventing the erosion of sloping areas, protecting ammonia sensitive areas, etc.

The report can also be used directly for the authority's case processing, as it constitutes an environmental description of the current production.

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CITIES - MEMBERS OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD:



The 46th UBC Executive Board Meeting, St. Petersburg/Kronstadt, 9-10 June 2006



More than 60 participants attended the 47th UBC Executive Board Meeting in Gdynia, 19-20 October 2006

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Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of 100 cities from all ten Baltic Sea 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 twelve working Commissions on Business Cooperation, Culture, Energy, Environment, Education, Health and Social Affairs, Information Society, Sport, Tourism, Transportation, Urban Planning, Youth Issues. 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), the Committee of the Regions 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.