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BALTIC CITIES BULLETIN

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SHARING THE EUROPEAN DREAM

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BALTIC CITIES BULLETIN



Dear UBC colleagues and friends,

In March 2016 we met in Rostock to debate how we could handle the sudden influx of thousands of refugees into the Baltic Sea Region. The people came so fast that we could not act as we would have liked to – we could just react. We provided shelter, food and clothes as good as we could at that moment.

In March 2018 we met in Rostock again, but now, integration was the main topic. We wanted to share our knowledge about how to do that these new citizens - no matter how long they would stay with us – can feel as a part of the society and manage to integrate themselves quicker.

We are aware that there is a migration experience in our collective memory: 70 years ago, after the Second World War, about 50 million uprooted persons were scattered all around Europe and had to be settled under the disastrous circumstances of a destroyed infrastructure, lack of food and housing, with the winter to come soon. So we certainly know the reasons which drive people to migrate to another place and what they have to go through, and that is a big treasure!

Like many cities in the Baltic Sea Region nowadays, Rostock is helping about 1,200 mostly young newcomers into local daily life. It's not just about food, clothing and shelter anymore – it's about teaching our language, offering vocational training or jobs, enhancing the living conditions, it's about an access to our local culture and possibilities to share their own one, it's about taking care of unaccompanied minors, guidance and schools, and a lot more.

We know that many local actors have to cooperate to make integration and mutual acceptance a success: round tables, neighbourhoods, schools, vocational schools and universities, social and health services, business sector and, of course, all governmental and administration levels.

Due to the power of our economies and of our social systems, we basically should be able to make the most important steps within one generation's time. That is what we wanted to debate on and that is why we met together in Rostock in March.

Independently, we really hope that people should not be forced to leave their countries for the wish of a decent life. The European Dream of a safe and better life once should be a perspective for all people in their own countries, wherever they are.

Meanwhile, let's do our best to foster our local societies working together for common prosperity and peace.



Roland Methling
Mayor of the City of Rostock

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NARVA IS RUNNING FOR THE TITLE OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN 2024!

SHARING

THE EUROPEAN DREAM

by Karin Wohlgemuth | karin.wohlgemuth@rostock.de

Since the late 90's, UBC has been focusing on the topic of migration and integration, as an exclusive theme or in connection with the Agenda 21 concept.

Two years ago, massive waves of refugees from the Middle East and Africa reached the Baltic Sea Region. Most of them where trying to get away from war, hunger or lack of chances. But why did they travel so far up to the North? It was the hope to find the best conditions for getting out of their tragic or unsatisfying situation as fast as possible. Many of them had the unrealistic illusion of an easy access to high standards, but all migrants came with the hope that this part of Europe could help them to live a safe and better life.

UBC reacts

UBC reacted with a first resolution adopted at its XIII General Conference in Gdynia in 2015. Then, UBC answered with an open, solution-oriented discussion and exchange of experience at the UBC Migration Conference in March 2016.

In fact, a huge number of municipalities gave shelter and elementary support and so a new target group came into the focus. After a while it was clear that most of the newcomers do not plan to go back to their homeland even when the conditions would be better there. So, the problem is now to make sure that they integrate into the society, that they learn to be a part of it with all duties and rights. That also means the society has to make a further effort lending a hand to give orientation and guidance.

Rostock Conference: we have to reach everybody

In March 2018 UBC cities met again at the UBC Integration Conference in Rostock 'Sharing the European Dream'. It became evident that now the real hard work is coming. The newcomers should be integrated in order to avoid creating parallel societies. So we have to reach everybody.

The discussions were tough. By use of the method of 'Appreciative Inquiry', moderator Piotr Wołkowiński successfully encouraged the participants to confront their opinions and concepts. They agreed, far away from any political discussions on migration policy, that humans are humans, and when we get new neighbours in our town, they should be included in all spheres of local life. Integration can be suc-

cessful only when both sides approach each other.

Experiences from the past help to face the future

It was touching to recall integration experiences from our own relatives 70 years ago in the post-war times. Many citizens in our region had hard experiences, migration is always difficult. But we have it in our collective memory and this can help us to understand what refugees have to go through and how they feel. With this knowledge the participants projected themselves 20 years forward into 2038.

They answered the question what kind of cities they think we could have if we use all common potentials? They did not find Utopia, but something we nowadays call the concept of the Inclusive City! Keywords like public safety, no social and economic exclusion, no target groups but inclusiveness, richness of interaction of all agents of the society, mutual respect towards all individuals and their culture and traditions, free expression of religion as a private decision, high ethical values, all citizens assuming responsibility, ecological culture for a sane environment, prosperous and comprehensive growth are describing the expectations from the future.

And how can the cities get there?

Even people within one culture sometimes have difficulties to manage a balanced living-together. People from different roots and cultures have to render much more efforts. That goes along with respect and education, communication and ability to speak the same language. Vocational training or employment are very important for financial self-sufficiency and contribution to the common social systems! Social skills and competences should not be underestimated – they are crucial for the self-identification of individuals as a part of the society.

What is now the European Dream? For the newcomers it seemed to be a compass direction: go North and your dreams come true. For most of the Europeans it is, maybe, the longest period of peace ever, with security and growing prosperity. Can both share the European Dream? Maybe in 2038? It is up to us all to make it come true!

All workshop groups found safety as one of the most important basic needs.

2020:

APPROACHING THE REALITY

By Bernd Hemingway, Gertruda Uleviciute | cbss@cbss.org

Europe and the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) have a clear picture of how our cities should look like in the near future, we know the ways an integrated and multicultural society should function. Nonetheless, we sometimes fail to acknowledge that the changes, required to reach our goals, must come from within our communities.

We need a better plan and a harder push from ourselves and our neighbours to realize the dreams we shared this March in Rostock.

Local Actors

As an intergovernmental panel, the Council of the Baltic Sea States works with both European and BSR approaches to migration issues. Based on our knowledge and expertise, we believe in the importance of strong local actors and their work on migrant and refugee integration. Even though EU and regional organizations can offer us an overarching strategy, the real work is done on a "ground" level by local government, civil society and volunteers.

Migration and integration are horizontal issues, which are broad and crosscutting. The effects of migrant flows ripple through the whole welfare state. Thus, there is a need to recognize the value of our healthcare, education, labour and security workers when accepting and integrating migrants and refugees into our communities. A single immigrant should be able to have a shelter, to be and stay healthy, to learn the language, to receive education, to be able to communicate with legal apparatus and most importantly to be able to find employment in our cities. As such needs are multiplied by hundreds and thousands of individual cases it puts an immense pressure on local authorities and service providers. Regional organizations need to focus on increasing robustness of local stakeholders.

TRAM Project

CBSS is currently working with municipal actors to help them develop and implement better migrant anti-trafficking strategies. The main work is done by CBSS' Task Force against Trafficking of Human Beings (TF-THB) who are currently involved in TRAM Project (Trafficking along Migration Routes: Identification and Integration of Victims of Trafficking among Vulnerable Groups and Unaccompanied Children). TF-THB aims to strengthen integration efforts for the victims of trafficking among migrants, refugees and unaccompanied children in the current asylum and migration context in Sweden, Germany and Finland. Beneficiaries of the project are police, frontline responders, social services, labor inspectors, healthcare workers and NGOs.

Previous success stories from TF-THB can be an inspiration for more intergovernmental and project organizations to

mainstream and focus on local actor involvement. The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, for instance, created a working group dealing with migration and integration questions.

Political Prioritization

The second issue is prioritization of migration agenda in everyday politics. Lately Europe and BSR have experienced a very poor political communication regarding immigration questions. As a result, public opinion and overall discourse on migrants and refugees is highly negative. We have seen how populist politicians have been successful in utilizing anti-migrant messages.

As we will not be able to eradicate the core causes of the refugee crisis, and also as Turkey and Southern European countries are reaching a saturation point regarding their migrant intake, we need to expect that migratory flows to the BSR will not stop in foreseeable future.

From the CBSS standpoint, two latest ministerial declarations (Warsaw 2016 and Reykjavik 2017) aim to mainstream migration questions across the organization and raise both political awareness and commitment in addressing integration concerns. CBSS' Member States are encouraged to make use of existing networks, expertise and structures across the region when tackling this challenging issue. Integration (amongst other affairs) requires a strong response by all CBSS' Members through enhanced regional synergy and cohesion (Warsaw's Declaration 2016). Similar statements were made in Reykjavik's Declaration 2017, referring to the recent successful CBSS' Conference on Soft Security and Migration. The CBSS was encouraged to further promote cooperation on the topical issues among its Members.

Demographics

Finally, we would like to acknowledge an ever-changing demographic situation in the BSR: with an aging society, integration of migrant work force is one of the answers when filling-in the gaps in labour market and welfare system.

Migration is most of all a family decision. It means that we, as policy makers and practitioners, must take into account the needs of families when developing regional integration strategies. Besides families, we need to focus on qualified and highly educated individuals. Identifying key factors which help future migrants to make a choice between countries, can help putting BSR in an advantage compared to other regions. When accepting migrant flows we are in competition not only with surrounding countries, but globally, too. All countries aim to receive best skill and knowledge set, which can help solving the issues of budget gaps caused by demographics.

We see migration as a win-win situation. If we cannot fight the causes of migration, why not to focus on increasing mutual prosperity?





“I began to wear a hijab when I was nine years old. I take it off only at home. It is nice to wear a hijab in Finland because I feel like people respect me here. The most important thing is your heart, what you do and think. Not what you are wearing.”

A SCARF CAN MEAN A LOT

by Soniya Raissi | soniya.raissi@pori.fi

“Osa minua”, meaning “a part of me”, is a project designed to show how much women from different backgrounds have in common.

Beside international companies, the influx of fled people e.g. from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan had changed the town-scape of Pori in the last 3–4 years. It was time to show the citizens of Pori, who lives with them in the same city.

The city of Pori started the “Osa minua” project in cooperation with the University of Turku in autumn 2017. We gave five committed and highly-motivated students the possibility to gain practical experience. The aim was clear: To show more similarities than differences between the residents of Pori.

A “piece of fabric” should help

Ten women were interviewed, six of them from the reception center of Liinaharja (from Iraq and Afghanistan) and four from Finland. How do they feel with or without a scarf? How should a scarf look like? Why do they like their scarfs or why not? Do they wear it because of cultural and/or religious reasons or just because of fashion?

This project required a lot of confidence-building, finally we heard emotional and private stories. It was a challenge to get the women’s from Iraq and Afghanistan stories.

Among the students, there was one young men. He saw himself confronted with a challenge. Should he shake the hand of the women? Could he pick them up alone? Could he contact them via phone?

Why is it a part of me?

As a result of the interviews, the exhibition was prepared and opened in February 2018. It consists of the portrait photos of all women, each with a few sentences excerpt from the interview, which describe the meaning of the scarf. It has been presented in a shopping centre, promenade centre and library.

The benefits of this project were versatile. The students learned how to implement the project, conduct interviews, do the public relations work, take the photos or to record a video. Also, they got experience in handling with emotional situations and found out more about culture and religion.

The Finnish women shared their picture and personal feelings on what their attitude towards a scarf is. The basic question was: Why is it a part of me? For the audience it was a critical reflection on this topic. It turned out that a scarf played an important role for women in the Finnish history.

Six ladies from the reception centres got a chance to show Pori who they are, from where they come from and why they are here, in Pori. They were faced with themselves, their past and their future.

What is for many of us only a piece of cloth, for others it means a lot, making them feel safe, secure, and happy.

Finally, the exhibition shows that behind every of these ten women there is a strong woman, a mother, a sister, a wife, a daughter, a fighter and a part of Pori.



IT IS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

by Kim Henrik Gronert | kim.henrik.gronert@kristiansand.kommune.no

The municipality of Kristiansand would like to share three examples on how we work with these issues.

It’s all about people!

This is the municipality strategy for equality, inclusion and diversity for the period 2015–2022. It was created through a very broad process when we tried to make sure that all concerned parties could participate. We learned a lot about equality, inclusion and diversity through these discussions. The document was approved unanimously by the City Council (2015). We have later understood the value of having all the politicians on board. Today we can always bring the ideas from this document into discussions we are having on all issues we work in our every day job.

► <https://www.kristiansand.kommune.no/globalassets/strategy-for-equality-inclusion-and-diversity-2015-2022.pdf>

New patterns

Intending to target increasing problems of social inequality, childhood poverty and lack of cooperation between welfare services, Kristiansand Municipality will try out a new methodology for coordinated interdisciplinary efforts for parents and children in selected low-income families. A family coordinator facilitates efforts for all family members, aiming to reduce the risk of transferring poverty and the consequences of poverty to the next generation. The intention is to realize children and adolescents’ potentials to facilitate job opportunities and good health as adults.

My voice out!

The idea of the project “My voice out!” is that we want to try to teach refugees and immigrants how to participate in on-line debates and communities. We have created a Facebook page where school students are encouraged to make their voice known under guidance. To make it interesting to participate – beside the opportunity to make yourself known, we have created a competition – and give smaller prizes for the week’s best comment and once every 6 months we give away an iPad to the best comment.

► <https://www.facebook.com/Min-Stemme-Ut-1304883002903063/>



A GULDBORGSUND WAY TO TO INTEGRATE

by Jan Andersen | jan@guldborgsund.dk

The Integration Department of Guldborgsund Municipality is located in the Labour Market Centre, and the Language Centre is an integral part of the Integration Department.

There are 24 persons in the Integration Department, 18 teachers in the Language Centre, and there are 9 persons of administrative staff, a total of 52 employees.

By January 2018, the Integration Department has authority tasks for 387 refugees and reunited family members of refugees, and for 172 foreign citizens having other legal status.

Free Danish language teaching

All foreigners are offered free Danish lessons up to 14 hours a week for 3-5 years. For refugees and their reunited family members, Danish lessons are obligatory, whereas for other foreigners this offer is voluntary.

The Language Centre provides Danish classes in 3 courses, which again are divided into modules, in a total of 17 different levels. The students pass the 3 Danish courses by passing state controlled tests.

Admission to Danish courses depends on the trainees' educational background. Danish education 1 is for citizens with no or minor school education from their home country, Danish education 2 is for citizens with a shorter school background and finally Danish education 3 is for students with a longer educational background. The students advance through the courses and modules after progression.

▼ **A contact family from Guldborgsund Municipality with their new family member from Eritrea.**



The integration process

The work of the Integration Department takes place in different teams, each having specific areas of responsibility, though the integration work is carried out in close cooperation between all teams.

In Denmark asylum seekers are living in specific asylum centres. If asylum seekers are recognized as refugees they receive residence permit, and these new citizens will then be distributed to the one of the 98 municipalities throughout Denmark. The number of the refugees depends on the number of citizens in this municipality. Refugees must remain there until their 5-year integration period expires, unless they have obtained employment or have commenced training in another municipality.

The receiving municipality is responsible for the arrival process and housing. One of the teams of the Integration Department is responsible for this. The Integration Department is informed by the National Immigration Agency about the citizens that will arrive to Guldborgsund Municipality about 1½ month before arrival.

The reception team is physically receiving the citizens and gets them installed in homes. It is a difficult task to find available housing stock, so housing take place in the beginning in temporary until permanent housing becomes vacant.

Prerequisites for a life in Denmark

When the foreigners are domiciled, they immediately follow a process where they acquire various items that are essential for living in the Danish society: online code card, residence card, travel card etc. Refugees have to do biometrics at the local police, are allocated to a doctor and they are introduced to the hospital. They are also introduced to municipality's largest city, Nykøbing Falster.

These tasks are carried out by a mentor team who is connected to all other teams in the Integration Department. The mentors accompany the refugees to visit citizens' homes, where they are introduced how to live in Denmark, how to relate to your neighbours, how to handle household waste, securing fire safety and much more.

Visitation and Integration Contract

Refugees are attending the Danish lessons, and an examination of their professional qualifications is made. It could either be based on refugees' education or their work experiences. Health conditions are also examined.

An Integration Contract is drawn up with set goals in relation to the completion of Danish language training and obtaining regular employment. The integration contract is revised continuously during the 5-year integration period.

The labour market

The newly arrived refugees should be introduced quickly into the labour market. This introduction is provided no later than 4 weeks after arrival. Several traineeships are established in private companies, where the refugees work in combination with Danish language training.

There must be no more than 6 weeks of break between two traineeships, which each lasts 13 weeks. This work is carried out by a team of labour market assistants. They are also responsible for solving issues that otherwise could create obstacles for the refugees to the establish relations to the labour market. This is done in close collaboration with other departments within the Labour Market Centre. Follow-up to the set goals of the Integration Contract are done four times a year.

Foreigners with education and professional experience

The offer provided in Guldborgsund Municipality is based on the education and work experience that the foreigners bring with them. Therefore, resources are being allocated to assess the educational background of the foreigners; this is taken care of by central offices in Copenhagen. After the assessment, a job search or a plan for further education is developed.

The foreigners' skills and qualification can be important for the development potential of local businesses.

When the newcomers have learned sufficient Danish, traineeships contracts are attempted within the relevant education or work experience of the foreigner. This is to ensure that their qualifications are being utilized.

Guldborgsund Municipality is a rural municipality where normally it is difficult to recruit skilled labour. Therefore, the foreigners' skills and qualification can be important for the development potential of local businesses.

Specially adapted courses

Many foreigners want to get an education, and the Integration Centre also provides significant guidance regarding the Danish education system. This guidance is provided in cooperation with the local educational institutions.

The Integration Department develops labour market projects and especially adapted courses in collaboration with other educational institutions, where the foreigners are trained, supported by interpreters. This service is provided in sectors where there is labour shortage.

Network of volunteers

The integration efforts receive a lot of support from local residents who voluntarily join and support the integration process.

A volunteer-coordinator is employed in the Integration Department, that coordinates the volunteers and various services. This may include help with school homework, it may be a contact family or mentor functions, assistance to refugees for family reunification, or to read official letters from authorities. The volunteers connected to the Integration Centre may attend at regular hours for their assistance.

LET'S START FROM THE LANGUAGE

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MULTICULTURAL PRESCHOOLS

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About one thousand pupils from outside Poland learn in Gdańsk. Most of them come from Ukraine.

Teachers in Gdańsk, who teach migrant pupils, say that unfamiliarity with Polish language is a real problem. Pupils don't understand instructions. It is difficult for them to perform the tasks. Bad grades are degrading for them. That exacerbates mental health and well-being and makes their integration more difficult. It shows how important for migrant pupils is to learn the language to achieve better results at school and for integration with the natives in the school classes.

Extra Polish lessons

The Polish educational system provides a few basic solutions to help foreign school children learn Polish. The students can take advantage of several hours of additional Polish language course. In total, it is extra 5 hours of free education a week. There is also a possibility to create special preparatory units at schools for students coming from abroad.

At the same time, pupils who do not know Polish are educated equally with their Polish colleagues. They learn mathematics, geography, etc. Teachers use their own learning methods. Sometimes they ask other pupils for help.

A guide in a class helps a lot!

In September 2017, a 11 year-old boy from Ukraine joined the class in one of the Gdańsk primary schools. He had

been in Poland only for two days, he did not know Polish at all. The boy was scared. Fortunately, a girl from Ukraine was already in the class. She became a guide for him. After a week, the boy was sociable, smiling. He began to integrate with the class mates.

Older pupils and students often use a translator on their smart phones to communicate with those colleagues who do not know Polish.

Native language is important

The teachers emphasize that pupils must not be prohibited from speaking in their own language. This may cause an opposite reaction. The teacher should show that the migrant's language is important.

Also, the attention should be paid to the student's self-esteem. The tasks have to be understandable so that the pupils with little Polish knowledge could solve them.

Along with the advances in Polish learning, the pupils from abroad make friends with Polish colleagues, become more successful in education, take part in competitions.

Gdańsk for migrants

The City of Gdańsk supports also the adult newcomers. It provides and finances the Polish language courses for foreigners. About 700 people participate in the courses every year.

The pilot project "Multicultural preschools" started as a response to a request from the Child and Youth Department in Kalmar Municipality for more qualified child care workers. There was a need to employ preschool staff with high multicultural and multilingual skills to be able to keep high quality and service deliverance.

The project aim was to test a new model for training newly arrived immigrants and give them a fast track to the labour market, but also to meet an urgent need for skilled pre-school staff. In this specific case the focus was on child-care workers. Though, the purpose has been to establish a new method that could be used as a model for training and match making in any other field of the labour market.

A focus on communication skills

The implementation has been managed by Kunskapsnavet - a department within Kalmar Municipality responsible for organizing vocational training for adults. The project has been based on a rather unique cooperation between different organisations such as the municipal school departments, The Swedish Public Employment Service, labour unions, the teacher training faculty at the Linnaeus University, and private companies. Part of the project is funded by the EU Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

Practically, the training has included classes on methodology and theories of teaching and children's development combined with language training a focus on communication skills. Each student has had a personal mentor with a background in teaching. They have met at least once a month,

meetings which have had an important social function and open up important social networks for the participants. The training has also included 7 weeks of internship within a municipal preschool. There have been a close cooperation and common activities together with the students at the faculty of teacher training at the Linnaeus University.

The cooperation model will be transferred

The project has shown really good results both on the individual and organisational level. 20 participants from 12 different counties have participated. 100% have passed the exams and completed the training. Six participants have got a full time employment and eight are currently working part time in municipal preschools. The cooperation model and the training methods will be transferred to other professions and implemented in the regular service of Kunskapsnavet.

The project has gained a new momentum to the integration process. The results meet the need for multilingual staff in preschool and an increased cultural understanding of children, parents and staff. There has been a great interest from the national level and the project has been presented on various occasions all over Sweden.

A number of success factors which are mentioned in the evaluation are: highly competent teachers employed by the project; a close cooperation between language teachers and the vocational trainers; engaged and active mentors; common planning and cooperation with university students; well prepared supervisors during internship.

A NEW LIFE IN KARLSKRONA

Interviews conducted by Camilla Erlandsson | camilla.erlandsson@karlskrona.se
Photos: Andreas Blomlöf



THE ARTIST WHO STARTED PAINTING A NEW CITY

His eyes are warm, curious and dreaming. Sometimes he disappears into a lecture on the significance of art, sometimes he depicts the beauty of his childhood city Hamaa with its soporific mill wheels. Ghassan Shaabie is a passionate person, a proud Arab who feels much warmth from the reception he has received in what he calls his new home town, Karlskrona.

He mentions the woman from Saleboda, Birgitta, who bought him artist materials for thousands of crowns and supported him towards the goal of his first exhibition at the city library in Karlskrona. According to Ghassan she is a typical Karlskrona resident, which he refers to as friendly people.

Ghassan came to Sweden in 2015 and is currently 63. In early 2018 he joined Entreprenörskompassen, a programme to motivate and inspire recently arrived people to take the next step towards supporting themselves. Here he was also given the opportunity to exhibit his recent paintings.

"I'm so happy I got to join Entreprenörskompassen, which opened my eyes and my heart in so many ways. I have met many new people, feel passion and motivation and I now want to give back as much as I can, to whole Karlskrona."

TATIANA IS HAPPY AMONG THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Born in Ukraine with Ukrainian and Russian as native languages she is married to a Syrian man, has three children and lived in Syria for more than 15 years. She fled with her family to Sweden in 2014 and ended up in Karlskrona in 2015. This is a short summary of the life of very positive and clever Tatiana. But there is so much more.

Tatiana currently studies Swedish and works extra at the after school centre Fyrklövern at the school Rödebyskolan.

"I'm not a trained teacher but I'm an experienced and secure mother so it works well. The children I look after are kind and very good."

Tatiana is a trained civil engineer within food production. She is now putting a lot of effort into learning Swedish fully and she has already got far. It is evident that she has an ear for language, perhaps it can be the key to a new career, who knows?

For Tatiana Karlskrona it is a little bit like her home town in Ukraine located by the Black Sea.

"It is a very beautiful city and the Swedes are generally friendly and helpful people. But perhaps a bit too shy and cautious", she adds briefly and smiles.



THE CYCLING COURSE FULFILLED GENET'S CHILDHOOD DREAM

When she talks, she often gesticulates with her hands and her smile is contagious. Genet definitely radiates harmony – perhaps it is thanks to cycling? She came to Karlskrona in summer 2017 and soon after visited the municipality's integration centre. That is where she first heard about a learn how to cycle course.

"I couldn't believe it was true! Since I was little in Sudan I had wanted to learn how to cycle but I never thought I'd get the chance."

With encouragement from the course leader Hala, in barely three weeks Genet had control of the bike and experienced the magic of floating through the streets of the city. She genuinely did not think she could learn how to do it. And then it happened so quickly. In the autumn she bought her own bike and almost became eager when she fishes out her key ring, finds the bike lock key and holds it up.

"My key, my bike!"

Her dream now is to experience cycling with her three-year-old daughter, even it is going to be in a few years.

"I get lots of energy and feel happy when I'm on the bike. And you can cycle all the time, even in winter, as I have. A relative thought I was foolish to cycle when it was snowing and tried to take my bike key but I did not give in. Nothing can stop me from this!"

ALAA SETS NEW GOALS IN SWEDEN

Tenacity is probably an important quality, perhaps even crucial for those who flee from their country to a new one. Alaa al Turh definitely has it. Ever since he came from Turkey to Sweden in 2016 with his goal set for Karlskrona, it has been his guiding light.

"Karlskrona is a beautiful city with many nice people, many of which have become my friends", Alaa says.

In Karlskrona he studied Swedish at SFI while also participating in Entreprenörskompassen where he learned a lot about enterprising, built up his network and practiced his Swedish in a natural context.

"It was also there I started thinking about starting a web agency. I received a lot of advice and tips and I could say that my dream is to start my own business in time."

For Alaa it was important to have his own apartment so when he did not manage to get one in Karlskrona he sorted one in the neighbouring town of Ronneby where he is now studying Swedish remotely. The aim is to come back to Karlskrona.

"The Swedish language is the key to integration and that is why I spend a lot of time and energy developing my language. Then I want to go back to Karlskrona and perhaps start studying at Blekinge Institute of Technology. After that I hope to get a job or perhaps even better - my own company. The important thing is that you keep on fighting and never give up!"



A CONSTANT WORK ON INCLUSION

by Carina Lindberg | carina.lindberg@umea.se



FROM RECEPTION

TO RECRUITMENT

by Bethina Danielsen | beld@kolding.dk

In Kolding we receive refugees with a belief that they can contribute to society and we see them as citizens with a potential that can help to meet the needs of the labour market.

Already in the asylum phase, we check the refugees' skills to match them with the right company and we introduce them to the industries with the major labour shortage.

Fast track to employment

In Denmark there is a particularly shortage of labour in industries that do not require so many professional skills, but there is also a lack of e.g. engineers.

We provide courses specifically aimed at learning certain professions, the language, the way of transition and, of course, the job content.

Within 4 weeks from arrival at Kolding, refugees must be in a company and the job consultants assist in that process.

If a company wishes to get a refugee for an internship or hire them, we pay for the necessary qualification courses so that the refugee can perform the job.

Cultural understanding

As the first municipality in Denmark, we also offer our refugees participation in a cultural understanding project. They attend a course and subsequently receive 2 coach sessions where they can talk about what is difficult in this regard. The teacher at the course is a cultural provider and even came

to Denmark as a refugee 31 years ago. Our own employees and local businesses are offered the same course.

To become a part of the society

The municipality of Kolding allocates 400,000 dollars each year to initiatives that can help refugees become a part of the civil society. Everyone can seek money from the pool and there has been a great deal of interest in it. Examples of projects include:

- 80 refugees must learn to cycle.
- Fitness Project.
- Gardenhood - a project that teaches refugees how to use the Danish gardens to grow vegetables, etc.



Umeå is a town in the northern part of Sweden with a good growth during the last 50 years. The city is growing and the university is a strong engine which is recruiting students from all over the world.

In this context the question of immigrants has been in the margin and the conclusion was often that we couldn't accept more immigrants because of the lack of housing.

But during 2015 the picture changed dramatically and in 2016 it came a new law which enjoined every municipality in Sweden to receive a fixed amount of immigrants. Umeå with strong labour market is today expected to receive more people than a smaller municipality, which is in numbers: from 36 immigrants in 2015 to 360 immigrants in 2016 and 430 in 2017.

A big challenge

This has been a big challenge which today turned out to be a reason to be proud. Inside the municipality, the new structures for collaboration between different functions were established. The impact on the whole society is also noticeable, just to mention health care and non-profit organizations. Many people have mobilized themselves and made great deeds when Umeå has changed to be a town with capacity to receive a bigger amount of immigrants.

An inclusive city

Umeå has many advantages when it comes to integration. For example, there are no distinctly segregated neighbor-

hoods and the apartments are distributed equally to the immigrants who live among other inhabitants.

Today the city is working on how to guide people into the society and include them into the labour market. Unemployment is low and the demand for labour is high. The employers are interested and want to employ migrants, but sometimes they don't know how to do it. This is the critical point where the solutions need to be found that help to match employers and immigrants.

Umeå believes this will be a significant contribution to its growth. It means a lot of work, but also a change of values and a way of thinking.





THE WORLD CAME TO KEMI

by Marja Kynsijärvi | marja.kynsijarvi@kemi.fi
 Johanna Axelsson | johanna.axelsson@toivola-luotola.fi

The successful cities are led by forward-looking local governments. The city of Kemi promotes the welfare and vitality of the citizens and organizes services as sustainable as possible, including immigrants.

The city of Kemi has a very good cooperation with local organizations which work with immigrants. Together we have got through for example a Lean process improvement and results were good. All persons involved in the Lean process will now understand better the whole picture of immigrants process: who is doing what and why, etc. The process also pointed out some overlapped activities, that helped us to improve our work effectively across different organization levels.

Last year the municipal council accepted the Integration Programme of Kemi. The programme is adopted at least once every four years.

Activity Centre Mikseri in cooperation with Kemi

Founded in Kemi in 1923, the Association of Toivola-Luotola Settlement House runs different forms of activities, including work with the elderly, child and youth work, multicultural work, the development and production of communal forms of housing for the elderly, food and restaurant services and domestic help and cleaning services.

Mikseri is an open activity centre for anyone from any culture or nationality to visit. It is financed by STEA and the City of Kemi. Mikseri's programmes and activities are supervised by the Association of Toivola-Luotola Settlement House.

Mikseri's objective is to promote multiculturalism and multicultural interaction. The word *Mikseri* means cultural blender. Mikseri enhances cooperative work with the community, other organisations and the government. The goal is to arrange integration activities for the immigrants. There are interactive social groups and clubs such as handy-crafts, hobbies, games, language skills and talent development.

Mikseri provides guidance and counseling services and information about living in Kemi and in Finland. Mikseri's clients ask questions and express concerns about contracts of household, economy, residence permit and Finnish citizenship. Mikseri offers opportunities for volunteering for both immigrants and the local community members.

Volunteers can conduct their own (peer) groups or act as assistants. Many events are also organized by volunteers. Every autumn Mikseri's staff and volunteers with help of the co-operation partners organize a big event called "World Came to the City". Various cultures are demonstrated by dance, music, food and information sharing. At the event the immigrants and local citizens can mix, mingle and get to know each other and learn about different cultures.



JOB MARKET INCLUSION IN NÆSTVED

by Rebecca Stephanie Dalhoff | rehel@naestved.dk
 Else Pedersen | elhpe@naestved.dk



In order to ensure a fast track to integration, access to the Danish labour market and self-sufficiency, we start the intensive integration program as soon as the refugees arrive in Næstved.

The day after arrival the refugees meet with a caseworker and make a plan for the fastest way to get a job. The following Monday Danish courses begin along with preparation for a work placement. It includes making a CV, perhaps a video CV, training how to present oneself in a job interview situation and learning about do's and don'ts in an ordinary Danish workplace.

Danish legislation states that a refugee must enter the labour market within four weeks of arriving in a municipality and registering at the local job center.

How to enter the job market?

- There are four main ways to enter the labour market:
- A work placement of 4–26 weeks where the refugee receives an integration benefit and the employer doesn't pay a salary;
 - A work placement of up to one year, usually of 3–6 months, where the refugee receives a full salary, half paid by the employer and half subsidized by the municipality;
 - A two-year integration education – this consists of 80 weeks of work placement and 20 weeks of courses, where the refugee is paid a lower training salary by the employer;
 - An ordinary job with an ordinary salary;

The first job for a refugee will typically be through the model 1: refugees will start with a period of 3–6 months, when they work 3 days a week and spend 2 days at a language school. The philosophy is that the language is learned partly in the encounter with colleagues at the workplace.

Also, the following results are furthermore emphasized:

- Achieving knowledge of a workplace culture: the unwritten rules, hierarchy at a Danish workplace, demands and expectations.
- Development of social skills: initiating contact with colleagues, spending breaks with colleagues, adapting to attitudes and behaviors, being able to receive constructive criticism.
- Assessing realism: gaining insight into expectations and demands, making an independent assessment of their own appropriateness for a role.
- Language development: subject-specific Danish, conversational Danish, language curiosity.
- Developing the individual's motivation: involvement, responsibility and initiative.

Often a colleague is assigned to help the refugee settle in and help with the above listed issues. Our experience is that if they understand the need to help the newcomers, then the integration is more successful.

The Danish labour market is very different from the labour markets of the refugees' countries. Once the above skills are mastered, most refugees will integrate in the Danish labour market.



INTEGRATION IS PARTICIPATION

by Marie Andersson | marie.andersson5@karlstad.se

The work with unaccompanied minors in the municipality of Karlstad is focused on inclusion and active participation.

In 2008, when Karlstad first started working with unaccompanied minors, there were only 1,510 of them in Sweden. In 2014 Karlstad was caring for 32 individuals and by the end of 2015, 292 unaccompanied youngsters had arrived in Karlstad. Despite this challenging situation the municipality has managed to keep a very flexible approach with staff that have been highly qualified and motivated. Many new tools and methods have been developed assuring a high level of quality of care and support for.

Our basic tools

- Motivational Interviewing (MI) focuses on exploring and resolving ambivalence and centers on motivational processes within the individual that facilitate change.
- Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of trauma. TIC also emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for both target group and staff and it helps the target group to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.
- Hitta rätt (Find your way) is a tool for teaching and talking about everyday life, societal orientation and personal development.
- SeSam (Sexuality and cohabitation) is a method and tool for talking about the body, feelings, sexuality, gender equality, norms and values.
- Meaningful leisure time is a tool for active participation

in society and it involves a network of about 20 actors from the civil society and other organizations. The network of partners offers activities in the fields of sports, needlework, culture, music, art, dance, youth participation, democracy, animals, gym, driving, homework, yoga etc. More than 90% of the youngsters are actively participating in various leisure activities every week. A contract is signed with each actor ensuring equality and gender equality, solidarity, human rights and liberty and integrity of the individual.

Meeting place Galaxen

Galaxen is a new meeting place for unaccompanied minors and youngsters in newly arrived refugee families with residence permits aged 13–20. Together with Save the children and many other organizations, Galaxen will focus on building networks giving the youngsters better opportunities for influence, active participation and inclusion in society. Galaxen will develop a platform for networking, coordination, cooperation, guidance, information, activities and support to the target groups with focus on independence, health, networks, motivation, participation, self-organization, studies and work.

CREA DIEM is a new model for strategic and systematic cooperation, self-organization and empowerment that will be developed in cooperation with Save the children. The model comes from Save the Children's model Re:Act which is about mobilizing, organizing and empowering asylum seekers in order for them to initiate, implement and coordinate activities themselves by creating a support group.



COMPETENCE FOR THE FUTURE

by Ryfete Mustafa | ryfete.mustafa@vaxjo.se

Växjö Municipality runs the project "Competence for the future", co-funded by the Swedish ESF Council.

In the project five neighbouring municipalities co-operate. They want to focus on creating good conditions for newly arrived children and young people by developing the skills of staff who meets the target group.

The overall objective of the project is to improve and ensure the skills of employees in the integration and treatment of children and young people. Furthermore, the ambition is to provide occupational safety for employees who lack adequate education or employees who have no previous experience in the field of integration.

Staff will be trained

During the project period, which is October 2016 – August 2019, the goal is to offer training to approximately 250 employees. The target group is staff working within the school system such as counselors, psychologists, special pedagogue, school nurses, guidance counselor, administrators, speech therapists, native language teachers, etc. Other target groups are recreation teachers and supervisors working at residential care homes for children and young persons.

The training program contains ten different courses within different fields. The program comprises a full-time education, where theory and practice are varied. Also, practical exercises and discussions are included.

The development program consists of competence development efforts in the following areas:

- Introduction day containing Environmental Analysis, Information on the Asylum Process, Honor-Related Violence and Repression and Inter-cultural approach.
- A deepening in inter-cultural approach.
- Crisis and trauma course.
- Attachment-based approach.
- Communication methodology related to cultural understanding .
- To counteract stress and promote self-care in the work with new arrivals.
- Integration, identity and values.
- Gender equality linked to cultural understanding.
- Language developmental approach.
- Closing workshop and reflections.

Ryfete Mustafa is working as a Project Manager at Växjö Municipality and is leading the project "Competence for the future".



ÖREBRO INVESTS IN EDUCATION

by Susanna Eriksson | susanna.eriksson@orebro.se

Örebro municipality is working to further deepen education in integration for the employees.

The education program is targeted towards employees who in their daily work meet immigrants. The program is financed by the European Social Fund.

The education program is divided into four courses that have different themes. The themes are: the migration and establishment process, health factors and health hazards, reception and cooperation and holistic views of the migration and establishment process.

"We are arranging really exciting courses with great lecturers about important topics such as migration, cultural differences and the refugee situation in the world", says Susanna Eriksson, project manager for the education program.

The first course has already started and will go on until summer. The lecturers on the first course are: Lennart Balkstedt, who is a specialist on migration and integration issues, Claes Hagelvik from the Swedish Public Employment Service, who shares his knowledge about integration in the labor market and Jonatan Malm, who speaks about cultural similarities and differences.

Seminars to deepen the knowledge

Before the summer there are also two seminars planned. The first is with Dr Leif Stenberg who has a PhD in Islamic Studies. He will lecture about how everyday life is for people in the Middle East. The second seminar will be held by

Linda Johansson and Sophie Gestranus from The Swedish Migration Agency who will discuss settlement and Karin Davin from UNHCR who will speak about the refugee situation globally and how UNHCR works with refugees.

"The reception from the employees that have participated in the program has been so far overwhelmingly positive. They are looking forward to getting more knowledge about these topics and also being able to use that knowledge in their daily work", adds Susanna Eriksson.



Special institutions providing services to newly arrived inhabitants are no longer needed. Officials understand difficulties and limitations of people who start their lives in a new place, and at the same time they are able to recognise in every person resources useful for efficient setting up homes.

Decisions are taken quickly at local offices, as responsible persons are aware of the fact that uncertainty of the future is even worse than unfavourable solutions. Nobody who has come to the city and wants to settle down here has to be hungry, because there are social stores run by food banks. Nobody needs to be worried about being homeless, as the city maintains a network of supported apartments with flat rent co-payment mechanisms on the open market.

The city rapidly provides its visitors with information. Relevant services make efforts to include a broad range of updated tips regarding the city offer in social media, information websites and traditional media.

Open social space

Strong NGOs are good guides, while their multitude and openness let people find their passions, interests and new contacts in a new place. Every district or perhaps every housing estate in the city has an open social space – a neighbourhood centre offering activities for the young and for the elderly, a local activity centre or a garden full of life, where all generations, neighbours from close and more distant districts meet. New libraries represent a crucial part of the city offer – there are many various ways to spend time

there – searching for information, having a cup of coffee, reading books (also live ones!) and improving Polish.

Children and young people naturally, without prejudice, engage in relationships with new friends. Schools develop education paths showing colourful social phenomena and ways to playing an active role in and having an impact on them. Classes are something that young people always wait for eagerly, appreciating the fact that they are interesting, unconventional and taking place at various institutions and organisations operating in the city.

The city and people who create it are aware of newcomers' needs and expectations of citizens living there for many years towards new residents arriving. Research and reliable analyses are conducted. Conclusions are drawn from the research and plans of continuous improvement of Open and Inclusive City are developed. The city implements self-learning ideas for organisations – it arranges space for sharing knowledge and experience available to persons employed at local institutions, participates in international cooperation and education networks.

Is it just a dream?

This is just a quick draft of a dream city, with not many details provided. Is it really that remote? Many of the above-mentioned elements can already be found in Tri-City and in Gdynia! There is still much to do, but it is worth stopping sometimes and taking time to dream, so that you can later see that dreams can actually come true.

Looking into 2038 – how to become integrated cities and societies?



Being a follow-up of the conference on the impact of the European refugee crisis in the Baltic cities, organized in Rostock in March 2016, the UBC Conference on Integration “Sharing the European Dream” addressed the questions of the role of migration in the cities development.

78 participants from the Baltic Sea Region tried to answer the questions: How should our cities be in twenty years? How to master the integration of new citizens as full members of the society? How to live, work and learn together to share the European dream?

During six workshops, using modern analytical methods and equipped with the lessons of the past, the participants including migrants worked out new concepts.

“It is essential for local societies that old and new citizens learn to live together. In Rostock we jump together into the time machine, and see what we can learn from each other to make the dream come true. We all want a high level of quality of life and to guarantee the future for our grandchildren”, states President of the UBC Per Bødker Andersen.

During the conference in Rostock, all the participants were part of actively creating the reality of our well integrated societies for the year 2038.

“It is an honour for us that UBC chose to hold the follow-up conference of the UBC Migration Conference in Rostock as well. All actors of the local society have to work together to make integration a success. A harmonic society is a win-win situation for everybody. That is why it is so important that cities show and share their experiences”, says Roland Methling, Mayor of the City of Rostock.

Participants shared their enthusiasm about the conference during the final session:

- ▶ “We got the chance to dream and hope and to focus on solutions, not only problems. I was very inspired.”
- ▶ “There is real added value in cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.”
- ▶ “The core is the human, the one who is in the middle – we need to make 2038 more human-centered”.
- ▶ “After this conference, I feel responsible to go into a new direction when I get home.”
- ▶ “We should discuss with people, not about them.”

The participants had also a chance to listen to the Expat Philharmonic Orchestra from Rostock and to co-create a Ship of Tolerance project.



WORDS AND THE FUTURE THAT TAKE US FORWARD

The method used at the conference workshops was “appreciative enquiry” – a US business method, which concentrates on creating a future reality through words, stressing that we all have positive capacities and capabilities to act, and bringing the doing reality closer, through words, creative dreams, future planning and seeing the milestones covered.

The workshops focused on the following themes: communication, gender & minorities equality; education; economy and job market; creating and designing the city together; safe and healthy life; cohabitation of religions and traditions; culture.

By talking in the present tense, the participants got closer to that reality they created. Then, they looked back to see how it was possible to achieve such successes, creating milestones and plans.

Some highlights from the workshop moderators

Matti Mäkelä, “Equal Access to Education”:

“In the Equal Access to Education workshop the target was set to year 2038 with a vision that in that year everybody has an equal access to education regardless of their gender and social or ethnic background. The workshop participants from five different BSR countries decided that this means the following things: totally free education, individual plans and paths for everybody, new learning environments and new technology that supports education and breaks the borders, more co-operation locally and globally, change of mind-set (education and immigration means more skillful work force, which means better productivity and more innovations, which means more wealth”.

Anu Parantainen, “Creating a Stronger and More Inclusive Economy and Job Market”:

“In 2038 we don’t have to discuss about this matter anymore because the job market is equal in all ways. Language is not anymore the reason for not hiring work force because new technological solution make possible to use your own language. There is a tinder that matches immigrants and jobs. Education is more related to working life, and skills and knowledge of immigrants are better taken into account. Companies are more social responsible and they get tax reliefs / benefits for that”.

Kim Henrik Gronert, “Sharing Culture”:

“The idea of inviting us to dream up our dream society in 2038 and then make us try to explain how we achieved this society was very refreshing. The workshop I moderated came up with this dream: A society built on shared values based on human rights, where equality is a norm and where people feel welcome and want to live. We could all agree that this is how any society should look like – but we soon found out in the discussions that it is not so easy to achieve”.



Rostock hosted the 81st UBC Executive Board meeting

by Paweł Żaboklicki | pawel.zaboklicki@ubc.net



UBC cities open to cooperation

by UBC Secretariat | info@ubc.net

Information from the Commissions concerning planned activities for 2018, inquiry on cities' needs and interests, EUSBSR Horizontal Action 'Capacity', financial statement and budget, were the main topics on the agenda of the 81st meeting of UBC Executive Board, held on 13 March 2018 in Rostock, in connection with the UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens "Sharing the European Dream".

Roland Methling, Lord Mayor of Rostock, warmly invited UBC member cities to participate in the celebrations of 800th Anniversary of Rostock to be held in 2018. More than 200 different events are planned in five fields of action: culture, sports, urban development & sustainability, international and academic events.

Commissions' plans for 2018

Niels-Peter Mohr, Chair of Planning Cities Commission, invited all member cities to the next seminar of PCC to be held in Visby in autumn 2018. Mr Mohr encouraged the cities to sign up for hosting seminars in the coming years.

Carsten Adamsen, Chair of Youthful Cities Commission, Kolding, informed that YCC together with Euroregion Baltic, BSSSC and CBSS applied to prepare a seminar at the EU Strategy for BSR Annual Forum in Tallinn, 4-5 June 2018, as a follow up of joint seminars held at the forums in Stockholm (2016) and Berlin (2017). The headline of the seminars has been 'Nothing about us without us'. Organizations are applying for Erasmus+ funding to be able to bring together approx. 50 youngsters from the region for a 36 hour seminar before the forum.

Jarosław Józefczyk, Chair of Inclusive and Healthy Cities

Commission, informed that Commission will try to find 2-3 concepts how to improve social life in cities, what topics are most vibrant.

Vice-President Mantas Jurgutis, informed that as of 1 January 2018, Kaunas took over from Pori the leadership of the Cultural Cities Commission.

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed that the Secretariat asked the member cities to answer five questions to get broader knowledge about cities' needs and interests. 43 cities have responded so far to the inquiry sent out in November 2017. Some 50 posts have been published on the UBC website and on Facebook.

Strategy Coordinator Mikko Lohikoski highlighted the Horizontal Action Capacity latest activities. The Core Group prepared a work programme for the period 1 June 2018–30 August 2020. It is divided into three areas of activities: capacity building, promotion of involvement and participation, coordination & communication. The Core Group was called upon to present the work programme for the Interreg Baltic Sea Programme Secretariat in February 2018. The decision is to be made late spring 2018.

The Board approved the financial report for 2017 and the budget for 2018.

The Task Force on UBC development discussed and suggested more involvement from the Board Member city of every country – eg. the creation of a "National Coordinator" to strengthen the work between the cities from each country and the secretariat. City of Växjö offered to make a description of this idea to be presented at the next Board meeting.

43 cities have responded so far to the inquiry sent to the UBC cities in November 2017. More than 50 posts have been published on the UBC website and on Facebook.

The aim of the inquiry was to get broader knowledge about cities' needs and interests. The cities and city institutions still can send their exchange proposals, partner or investor search queries, etc. to the UBC Secretariat.

Open to cooperation

According to the responses, all cities are open for investments and start-ups. Most common sectors are: industry, tourism & wellness, energy, ICT, maritime and logistics businesses, sustainability, circular economy, creative businesses. The companies in the UBC cities are usually open for cooperation in new markets and with new partners from BSR. The cities provide support to businesses e.g. through investments/start-ups agencies, science parks, special economic zones, business incubators, chambers of commerce, local grant programmes for companies.

Exchange of experiences

Most of the respondents are interested in exchange, especially in the fields of culture, youth or sport. In their opinion, staff/teachers exchange would be beneficial (e.g. libraries, art schools and other cultural institutions) but there is a question of funding to be solved.

According to the inquiry results, the cities have a lot to offer and are eager to share their knowledge and experiences, but also to learn from others. The most popular fields mentioned in the survey are: civic participation, youth involvement, city planning, safety, integration, sports, gender equality, social services, entrepreneurship.

Also, the cities had a chance to express their expectations towards the UBC. The responses show the variety of needs. Most often, the respondents want UBC to be a platform for collaboration and development of cities around the Baltic Sea, a forum to find partners for projects and interesting best practices, and also an agent that spread out the cities' innovative solutions.

UBC should be in active dialogue with its member cities to support and facilitate development of the city and its areas. Also, more tangible results from cooperation and project work are expected. In the cities' opinion, UBC should encourage member cities to be more involved in its activities.

Questions asked:

1. Is your city open to investments and startups? If so in which sectors?
2. Are companies in your city looking for new markets / partners in the Baltic Sea region? Do you have an investment agency?
3. Do you wish your cultural (philharmonic, opera etc) institutions, sport and education institutions, to establish exchange with counterparts in other UBC member cities?
4. Do you need or can you offer expertise in such areas as: civic participation, initiatives for youth, refugees integration, gender equality, sports, environment, city planning, safety issues, entrepreneurship and other?
5. What expectations towards UBC does your city have?



How is the security made?

by Kaspars Vārpiņš | kaspars.varpins@liepaja.lv

The UBC Safe Cities Commission next meeting will take place in Lahti on 12–14 June 2018.

During the meeting, participants will have the possibility to get some insight in regional government, health and social services reform in Finland, as well as find out how the security is made in the international orienteering relay competition (case Jukolan viesti).

Also, the new police station in Hennala will be visited to get the first hand information about the police in Finland and their cooperation with customers, military and other authorities.

Based on the youth suggestions made at the UBC General Conference in Växjö, discussion regarding the highlighted topics of the youth safety and security issues will be taken. Broad spectrum of discussed information will be concluded with the presentation about climate change, risks and vulnerabilities.

Register by 25 May 2018 at: <https://bit.ly/2Gf1YqI>

WG on Gender Equality meets in Tallinn

The first meeting of the UBC Working Group on Gender Equality in 2018, will be held in Tallinn in connection with the 9th EUSBSR Annual Forum. The meeting will take place on 5 June, at 8:30-12:00.

Kalmar is to coordinate the Group's activities in the next two years. At the meeting in Tallinn, it is going to discuss e.g. the action plan and the project proposal from Pori.

Please inform Katarina Johansson Storm, Katarina.Johansson-Storm@kalmar.se, about your participation by 21 May at the latest.

Digitalization from an urban perspective

by Cathrin Truckenbrodt | cathrin.truckenbrodt@kiel.de

The Smart and Prospering Cities Commission will hold a meeting on 29 May 2018 in Malmö, during the Fehmarnbelt Days 2018 in cooperation with Baltic Development Forum.

The meeting will be held under the theme: Digitalization from an urban perspective: Potentials through city collaboration and regionalization. Its motto would be:

“Come gather around people wherever you roam and admit that the waters around you have grown. You better start swimming or you'll sink like a stone for the times they are a-changing.” (Bob Dylan).

The increasing digitization is changing all municipal processes and redefines relations between city to society and city to region. UBC and BDF are looking for answers to this disruptive revolution:

- What are the main challenges and opportunities for modern cities?
- Are cooperation and regionalization factors for successful digitalization?

At the meeting the cities, digitization experts and young people will discuss the key questions:

- What opportunities and challenges face cities as digitalization processes increasingly integrate all sectors of city administration, planning & operations?
- What benefits are imagined for why cities should collaborate on digitalization issues?
- What barriers face cities in regional 'digitization' collaboration given the fact that cities compete to attract and retain new digital industries and labour?

Registration: <http://fehmarndays.com>

Save the date also for Digital Week Kiel

The Smart and Prospering Cities Commission organizes a workshop on digitalization and city collaboration that will be held in Kiel, Germany, on 8–15 September 2018. More information will follow.



Planning Cities Commission Seminar: Urban transition zones

by Christian Hegardt | christian.hegardt@gotland.se

Region Gotland and the UBC Planning Cities Commission are pleased to invite you to a seminar in Visby that will be held on 21–24 October 2018.

Visby is located on the northwest coast of Gotland, the largest island in the Baltic Sea, about 100 km from the Swedish mainland. As a former Viking site, Visby became the main trade hub for the Hanseatic League in the Baltic Sea between the 12th and the 14th century. Its 13th-century city wall, medieval church ruins, warehouses and wealthy merchant homes from the same period make it the best preserved fortified commercial trade town in Northern Europe.

The Hanseatic town of Visby is a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995. The majority of Visby's 23,000 inhabitants live in the modern city districts that have evolved since the city expanded beyond the historic town from the late 19th century onwards. Today, the tourism industry is rapidly growing, while expanding connections to the mainland also give better opportunities for people to move to, live and work in Visby.

“Urban transition zones - Sustainable urban transformation in the context of a small historic city”

The main aim of the seminar and workshop is to reflect and give suggestions on the development of two areas, the Inner Harbour and the East Centre, in direct proximity to the historic town and the medieval city wall. We will, for example, look at:

- How we can create and develop urban space for seasonal flexibility,
- How we can create and develop urban space in the

transitional area between the historic town centre and the modern city.

Proposals for the two workshop areas will be developed and presented to local politicians, colleagues and the press by the end of the seminar.

We are looking forward to see you in Visby in October!





Digital tools for better involvement

by Carsten Adamsen | caad@kolding.dk

On 19–22 March the representatives from youthful cities around the Baltic Sea met in Narva, Estonia for the first in 2018 Youthful Cities Commission meeting.

38 participants (youth and civil servants) from 13 cities made their way to Narva, where the main theme was “Involvement of youth using digital tools” as well as a cultural experience of Narva City. The work was arranged in two workshops each having 5–6 smaller groups dealing with various sub-themes related to the main theme.

The main theme was selected as it has a direct link to the 2018 European Strategy Forum, where the UBC Youthful Cities Commission together with BSSSC, ERB and LSU for the third time is coordinating the workshop “Nothing about us – without us!”. The 2018 workshop focuses on which digital tools can and should be used to create better involvement of youth in decision making processes. The EUSBSR Forum takes place in Tallinn, Estonia on 4–5 June. Also, in connection with the forum, the partners hosts a 36 hour youth camp with the same topic.

A chance to be creative

During the meeting the participants were greeted by Narva City Mayor, Mr Tarmo Tammiste, who gave a short welcome and presentation of the city. The Narva Youth Parliament gave an introduction on youth work organisation in Narva and the city itself. Also on the first day we – in smaller groups – discovered on ourselves the different services Narva Youth Center offers the youth, e.g. we got to be creative in many different ways...

During the evening we had the opportunity to experience some of the history of Narva City as we entered in an interactive tour of Narva Castle.

On the second day we continued our work on the main theme and later we visited the Narva Bastion Casemates and had a study visit to a hobby school where we discovered yet another aspect of the youth work in Narva. Children and youth of the hobby school had prepared a small performance for us including dancing and singing. In the late afternoon we all had fun at a bowling game before dinner.



Deepening co-operation in supporting youth employment and well-being

by Matti Mäkelä | matti.makela@turku.fi

During the last two years the UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being has strengthened a cooperation with the EUSBSR (European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region) Flagship School to Work (S2W).

The Flagship aims to strengthen transnational cooperation between stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region in the field of education and works in order to prevent early school leaving and develop new support methods for vulnerable groups of students/youth, which means that their goals are parallel to the ones of the Task Force.

The cooperation develops

The cooperation has worked well and given added value to all partners. BSR Integrate Now, a joint ESF project to support the integration of newly arrived refugees, started in Turku, Stockholm and Malmö in March 2017. In April 2017 the Task Force and the Flagship arranged a study visit to Hamburg and in November to Turku. Moreover, in October 2017 a Knowledge Platform S2W was opened. This website offers a place to share good practices, learn from the others, join study visits, workshops and find partners for new projects.

Activities in 2018

In 2018 the pace has even accelerated, and during the first three months of the year we have already arranged two study visits (Turku in February and Gävle in March) and held dissemination and cooperation workshop in Riga (themes: youth guarantee, attractiveness of VET). Moreover, at the UBC Conference on Integration “Sharing the European Dream” in Rostock, we held two workshops entitled: “Equal

access to education” and “Creating a stronger and more inclusive economy and job market”.

And there’s still much more to come: during the spring we will publish a brand new 2.0 version of Knowledge Platform S2W, plan study visits, workshops and seminars for next autumn, and arrange a conference in Stockholm in June.

More information: www.s2wflagship.eu





Baltic Sea Region tops the World in Climate Ambition

by Jutta Mäkinen | jutta.makinen@turku.fi

UBC kicks off second year of cooperation with world's leading climate reporting organisation CDP. After the first year of cooperation UBC more than doubled the number of member cities using the platform and the goal for 2018 is to get up to 50 UBC cities involved.

Climate change has led to a situation where cities have to define their roles in the face of a changing environment. Modernization of cities is also another strong ongoing process. Today, many cities have incorporated ambitious sustainability goals into their city strategies. Currently, some 530 cities, 70 states and regions, and more than 5600 companies use CDP's system to report, share and take action on climate change every year.

CDP launched a new reporting platform

Good news for our UBC member cities is that CDP launched a new and improved reporting platform in 2018. The new platform will allow cities to report their climate data in a simpler and more intuitive way. Also from 2018 on, the CDP reporting platform brings together several previously separate surveys. This is an initiative that aims to save time for cities.

Each city reporting will receive a two-page overview of its response compared to regional averages and access to an interactive tool, which allows cities to access all publicly reported data since 2013 and benchmark their climate efforts.

The best outcome of measuring and reporting city environmental data, is increased and ambitious climate action

development and more feasible transition to sustainable economy.

"We encourage all cities in the region to join this shared cause. Firstly because this new and improved CDP reporting platform offers cities an easy way to report city development and environmental plans and data and secondly the responses give the cities tangible results and offer better understanding on their climate transition, not to mention global visibility for them and the whole region" says Björn Grönholm, Head of the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission Secretariat.

Throughout the reporting period, both the CDP and the UBC will be offering guidance for the member cities, to help cities collect and report their climate data.

The reporting period this year will be open from 30 April until 20 June 2018

CITY NEWS



E-RESURS (ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCE) IN ÖREBRO

How to create a more inclusive economy and job market that allows all people to use their competences and potential?

The E-resurs project aims at people interested in entrepreneurship and business start up. Immigrants, who have the competence and potential to become entrepreneurs, can get help through E-resurs.

The project includes three main parts:

- 1. Entré**
This phase covers business consulting in the five most segregated areas in Örebro, counseling and lectures in entrepreneurship.
- 2. Campus Risbergska**
Three days a week the meetings are held with immigrants who study Swedish to inspire and teach about entrepreneurship.

- 3. The business school**
People who want to start their business and are immigrants or receive social welfare can apply to the business school. In the business school they have:
 - A salary from the municipality,
 - Business education,
 - Business counseling,
 - A mentor,
 - An office with equipment, computer, etc.

Outcome
During the first 16 months of the project 30 persons have registered their own company.

by Janis Lancereau | janis.lancereau@startcentrum.se

Basem is one of the entrepreneurs who has started his company through the E-resurs Business school. Basem was an entrepreneur also in Syria. He is an artist doing sculptures and renovation of churches, etc.





SKATING ON THE FROZEN SEA ICE OF LULEÅ

Luleå is a city that loves ice. Centuries of winter and frozen seas have made ice a natural part of Luleå as a city and consequently the people of Luleå have developed a particularly strong relationship with ice skating.

The interest is further heightened by the successful ice hockey teams, always fighting for medals amongst Sweden's best teams and also by Alexander Majorov, Sweden's best figure skater in modern times, who hails from the city.

However, maybe it's the ice track, the 13 kilometer ice skating paradise that surrounds central Luleå that really earns Luleå its name as an ice skating city. For both visitors and locals alike, the ice track may well be the most popular destination in the city. For more than 15 years, it has encircled Luleå in winter and offered the people of Luleå world-class ice skating on natural ice.

The fact is that the locals themselves did not fully appreciate the greatness of the ice track until 2016, when suddenly world famous ice skaters from the Netherlands showed up,

trying to set a world record for fastest skating on natural ice. The visiting skaters all said that it may well have been the best ice track they had ever seen and that they would be happy to come back.

News of the amazing ice track spread all the way to the Ice Skating Association in Amsterdam who upon inspection concluded that the rumours were true and decided to organise events in the major KPN Grand Prix series on the ice outside Luleå. In 2017, many of the Netherlands' best skating runners came to Luleå to compete. The event has grown after the success and in 2018 there were a large audience in place and an even bigger TV-broadcast millionaire in the Netherlands.

Something shared by both professionals and hobbyists is the fascination with the fact that the ice track is so close to the city centre. One moment you can sit in a trendy café or lie in your hotel bed and only minutes later you can be out skating on sea ice. This makes Luleå's ice track something very special.

by Maria Wahlberg | maria@visitlulea.se



DISCOVER THE BALTIC SEA UNKNOWN

The project "Baltic Pass - Maritime Heritage Tours", implemented within the Interreg South Baltic Programme, aims at promoting lovely but not well-known places in the Baltic Sea Region with heart-touching stories behind.

Local attractions, cultures, art, cuisine, and friendly people, all these can be discovered from the board of a sailing ship.

New sailing paths

The overall idea of the project is to create the new sailing paths, taking into account maritime heritage of the whole South Baltic Region. Sailing would be combined with visiting attractive places on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea in different countries.

The project activities are planned in work packages dedicated to:

- Developing new touristic products.
- Testing of the products by the partners' vessels. The partners will recruit participants for testing cruises from the potential target groups: youngsters, repre-

- ▲ **The project involves such sailing ships as "General Zaruski" from Gdańsk (on the picture), Lithuanian "Brabander" and Swedish "Sarpen".**

sentatives of business, tourists, etc. Each cruise will be evaluated to meet the expectations of tourists and tour operators. Additionally, the products will be enriched by examples of sail plans dedicated to different tourist groups.

- Promotion of the Baltic Maritime Heritage Tours product. The project promotion strategy will be prepared by the project partners. The expected project result is to increase tourism attractiveness of the South Baltic Region by creating and developing a new eco-friendly tourist product based on the historical Baltic trade routes (regional and international).

The main target groups involved in the project activities are: local actors, like tour operators and representatives of maritime heritage sites, youngsters, tourists and business.

The project involves five project partners: from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania and Poland, as well as ten associated partners covering all five programme countries. The Gdańsk Sport Centre (PL) is the lead partner. Partnership consists of local authorities, universities and tourist/sport organisations.

The project will last until 31 October 2019.

by Krzysztof Dębski | krzysztof.debski@sportgdansk.pl



Follow Narva on its path towards becoming the European Capital of Culture 2024:
 narva2024@narva.ee
 Facebook: @Narva2024
 #Narvaisnext
 #Narva2024

Narva 2024

Photo: Tonu Tunnel

SAKURA PARK TO BE ESTABLISHED IN KAUNAS

This year, the Nemunas Island – a place in the central part of Kaunas loved by people for walks, entertainment and sports activities – will be enriched with fifty Sakura trees donated to the city by the Japan Cherry Blossoms Association. This donation symbolized the friendship between Japan and Kaunas.

The special bond of Kaunas and Japan was started in 1939-1940, when Chiune Sugihara, who officially served as a Consul of Japan residing in Kaunas city (the then capital of Lithuania), used to issue visas for thousands of Jews so that Jewish families could escape the Holocaust. Wishing to commemorate these solemn actions of the Japanese consul, the Japan Cherry Blossoms Association decided to donate the Sakura park to Kaunas city.

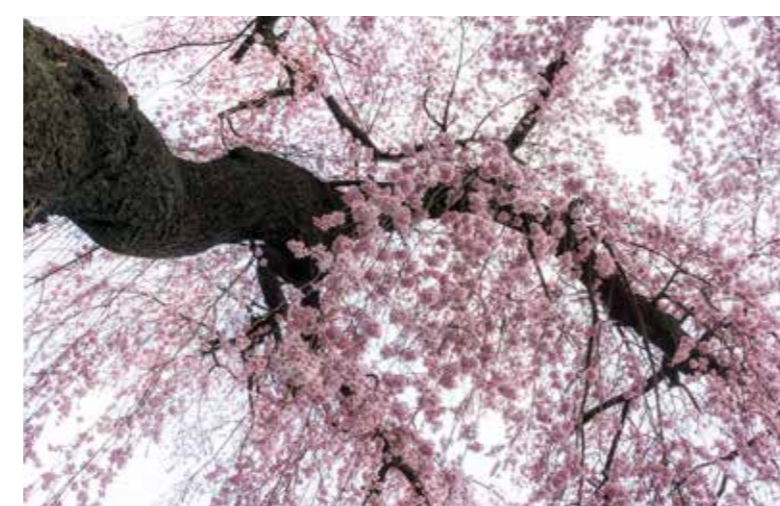
Various organizations in Lithuania and Japan are also invited to join this initiative. The concept of the project is to

bring together the communities of Kaunas and Japan, enriching the city with a spectacular park. It will invite people to come together and enjoy the blossoming of Sakuras every year, as well as remember the brave and solemn deeds of the consul Ch. Sugihara.

The annual series of events “Sugihara Week” will be held in Kaunas for the second time on 3–8 September 2018. Last year, these events attracted a lot of attention of Kaunas citizens as well as many foreign guests.

During “Sugihara Week” on 8 September, the park of Sakuras – around 50 trees of 3–4 meters height – will be planted on the coast of the Nemunas Island.

by Lina Duobaitė | lina.duobaite@kaunas.lt



NARVA IS RUNNING FOR THE TITLE OF EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN 2024!

Tallinn, was the first Estonian city to bear the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2011, but in 2024, the title will once again reach Estonia. And to everyone's surprise, on 23 January this year, the Eastern-most Estonian city and one of Europe's largest border towns, Narva, has decided to run for the title.

The official launch ceremony was held in the Narva's historic City Hall and was attended by the President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, ambassadors of Finland, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Denmark and Austria, members of Narva City Council, representatives of cultural initiatives and entrepreneurs.

What is the big deal?

Narva is a complicated city, simultaneously dividing and uniting two civilizations: the European North and the Slavonic East. It was an important trade port and an aspiring second capital of the Swedish Empire during the XVI-XVII centuries, as well as an important industrial hub during the

Soviet times. However, given its traumatic history, a pattern of post-industrial decline and 96% of its 58,000 inhabitants (down from 82,000 back in 1992) speaking Russian as their mother tongue, the city has been struggling to find new meaning ever since Estonia regained its independence in 1991. Never the darling of the media, the city became especially notorious after the annexation of the Crimea in 2014, when noticing its geopolitical location, demographical buildup and structural problems, the foreign press flocked to Narva, asking “Is Narva next?”

Narva is next!

The city recently decided to turn this perception around with a confident reply “Narva is next!” re-framing itself not as a fragile geopolitical time-bomb, but as Estonia's next big success story, a creative hot-spot, making the most of the advantages of being a border city between the tectonic plates of Russian and European cultures.

Bidding for the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2024 will create a time window of valuable 6 years to develop a clear vision and a strategy to reinvent the border town, eventually encouraging the local community to make a leap from the industrial era to the post-industrial one. The city believes that culture, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking could help it turn the next page. Given its unique history, post-soviet quirkiness, difficult geopolitical location and plenty of space for radical improvement, Narva might be one of the most important ECoCs in the history of the project and an extremely timely one, as well.

by Tatjana Laanvee | tatjana.laanvee@narva.ee



KOMUNALWOOD 2018 IN GDAŃSK

On 21–22 May 2018, the Forum for ecological municipal building construction 'Komunalwood 2018' will be organised in Gdańsk.

The idea of the event is to promote modern standards in buildings construction: wooden, passive and energy efficient, in the context of construction of public facilities.

The forum aims at exchange of experiences and presentation of technologies and good practices in this field.

The target group are: self-governments and their units, municipal companies, architects, designers, contractors, companies, materials producers, system manufacturers.

Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, will be one of the main speakers, presenting city's vast experience in wooden construction industry.

UBC member cities are very welcome to take part in the forum to share and gain experiences in wooden housing. Study tour on wooden constructions developed in Gdańsk will be organised during the event.

The conference is co-organized by: City of Gdańsk, Institute of Regional Products, Pomeranian Employers, Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities, Association of Pomeranian Municipalities and Union of the Baltic Cities.

Registration: www.komunalwood.pl
More information: biuro@ekostrateg.pl

MODERNISM IN GDYNIA

The City of Gdynia is pleased to invite you to the 6th International Scientific Conference „Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia”, organised in cooperation with the Faculty of Architecture of the Gdańsk University of Technology.

The Conference will be held in the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia on 24–26 May 2018.

The „Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia” series is currently the most important periodic event of this kind in Poland. Main themes of the forthcoming conference are research and popularization of modernist architecture. The contents of the conference will be supervised by the Scientific Committee consisting of prominent experts from Poland and abroad.

Conference admission is free of charge. Please note that all participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation. There will be simultaneous translation into English and Polish at the plenary sessions.

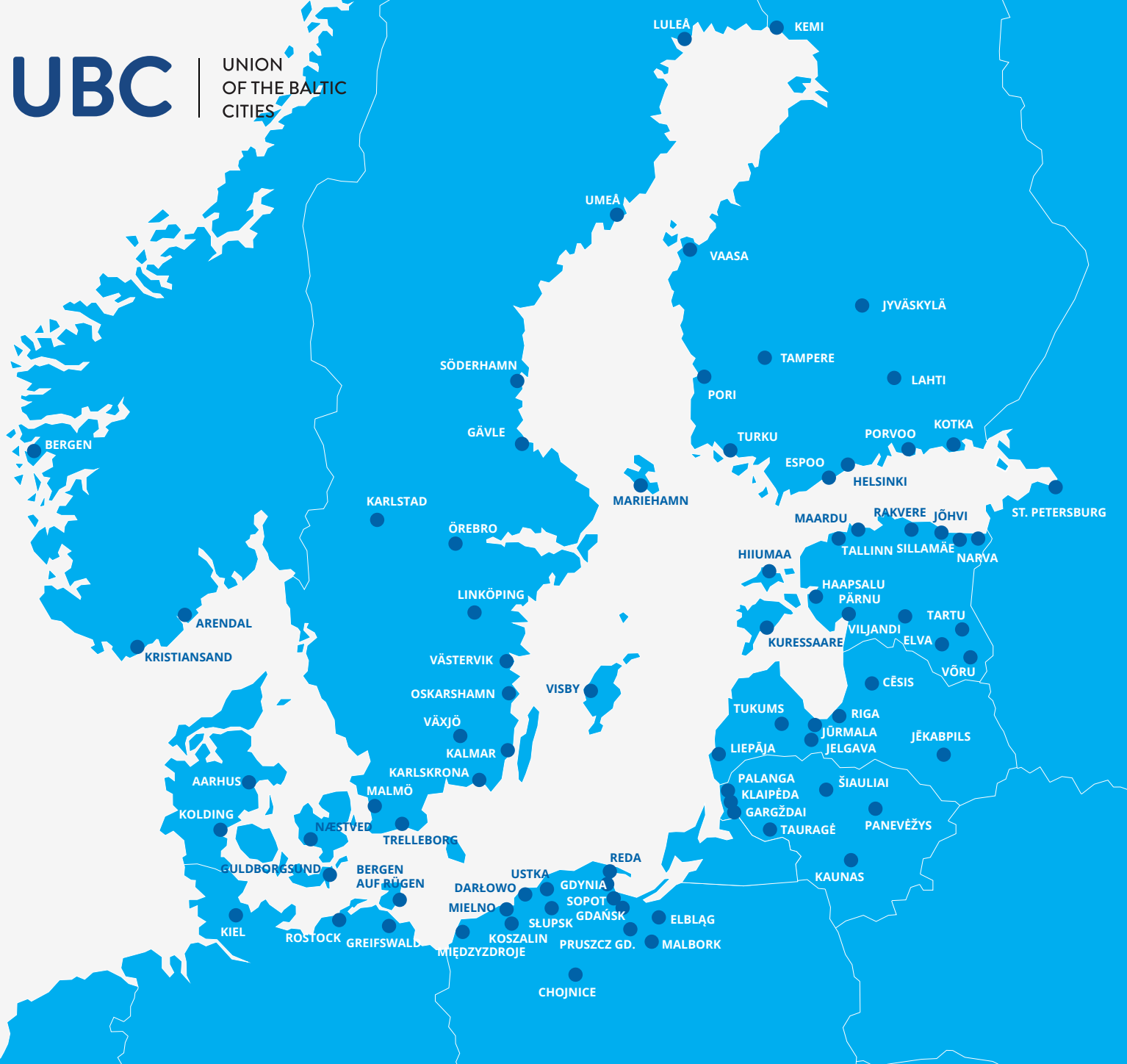
A detailed programme of the conference as well as a registration form (to be sent back till 15 May) are available at www.gdynia.pl/modernizm. Registered participants will receive free conference materials.

Should you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact City Monuments Protection Office in Gdynia, e-mail: monuments@gdynia.pl.



UBC

UNION
OF THE BALTIC
CITIES



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UBC – working together to foster sustainable, smart and safe cities

Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is the leading network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region with around 100 members from all ten Baltic Sea countries. Founded in 1991 in Gdańsk, UBC is a voluntary, proactive network mobilizing the shared potential of its member cities for a safe, smart and sustainable Baltic Sea Region. The UBC cooperates with numerous Baltic and European organisations.

The UBC's practical work is carried out through active cooperation of the member cities in seven thematic Commissions: Cultural Cities, Inclusive and Healthy Cities, Planning Cities, Safe Cities, Smart and Prospering Cities, Sustainable Cities, and Youthful Cities. The Commissions coordinate and execute specific projects, activities and events.

In addition to the Commissions, significant work is carried out in the UBC Working Group on Gender Equality and UBC Communications Network.

Any coastal city or any other city interested in the development of the Baltic Sea Region may become a member of the UBC – please contact the UBC Secretariat.

www.ubc.net

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

for the upcoming UBC events!

Check www.ubc.net and follow the UBC
in social media.



**FEHMARNBELT
DAYS 2018**
MALMÖ
28-29 MAY



Join the Smart and Prospering Cities
Commission and BDF Joint Workshop

Malmö, 29 May 2018

The meeting of the UBC
Working Group on
Gender Equality
will be held on 5 June in Tallinn
in connection with the 9th Annual
Forum of the European Union
Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
4-5 June 2018



Save the date!

The UBC Safe Cities Commission
meeting will be held
in Lahti (Finland)
on 12-14 June 2018

Planning Cities Commission Seminar:
"Urban transition zones – Sustain-
able urban transformation in the
context of a small historic city"

Visby, Sweden, 21-24 October 2018

