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# BALTIC CITIES BULLETIN

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UBC

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CITIES



## CITIES' CO-OPERATION BEYOND THE BALTIC SEA REGION

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# BALTIC CITIES BULLETIN



Dear UBC Friends,

We all want to live in inclusive, safe, well-designed, well-connected cities whose growth is based on participation, dialogue, transparency and knowledge. That is the vision the cities strive for. How far are we on the way to fulfill our dream?

One of the main challenges to face nowadays is the loss of public trust. Investing in trust should be considered as a central approach to ensure economic growth and to reinforce the social cohesion. The role of the cities in restoring the public confidence in democratic organizations and values is crucial. How to empower the citizens' involvement and participation? How to get the youth on board and make them feel responsible for their future?

Actually, this year we have a great chance to meet and discuss these questions. The XV UBC General Conference, held in Kaunas on 15-18 October, would be a perfect forum for the UBC cities to bring their best practices and solutions along. Together we will try to outline the vision of the Inclusive City based on dialogue between inhabitants and decision-makers.

Meanwhile, you can read the spring edition of the Baltic Cities Bulletin that features the examples of co-operation beyond our region. Why do the cities look for alliances far from their borders? Obviously, there is no single response. There are many reasons, e.g. historical or cultural, that determine the choice of the city's partners. Very often, the BSR cities establish contacts with peers from other regions facing comparable sustainable development challenges. Through bilateral or multilateral projects they work on solutions to particular problems, share knowledge and best practices. This co-operation becomes very often a long-standing one, taking a form of twinning.

I wish you a good reading. Get inspired and join the XV UBC General Conference in Kaunas!

With the Baltic Sea greetings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Per Bødker Andersen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Per Bødker Andersen  
President of UBC

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# PEOPLE TO PEOPLE

## IN KAUNAS

by Emilija Šakalienė | [emilija.sakaliene@kaunas.lt](mailto:emilija.sakaliene@kaunas.lt)  
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When we start talking about Kaunas relations with Japan, first of all the historical visit of Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, to Sugihara House in Kaunas in 2018, should be mentioned. This event defines best the significance of co-operation between Kaunas and Japan. Of course central figure in this story is Chiune Sugihara – world-wide famous Japanese diplomat who issued “Life saving” visas to thousands of Jews while he was Vice Consul in Kaunas in 1940.

## Town twinning as a tool to develop co-operation

Kaunas city actively develops cooperation with Gifu Prefecture and Yaotsu Town located in this prefecture, as it is Sugihara's birthplace. There are more cities to mention like Tsuruga, which is a part of Sugihara route in Japan, as well as Hiratsuka, Izumiotsu and Toyohashi. On 16 February 2019 official town twinning cooperation agreement was signed between Kaunas City and Yaotsu Town. Main goal of this co-operation agreement is to organise various activities dedicated to memory of Chiune Sugihara's deed cooperatively striving for world peace and promoting the values of humanism, especially focusing on youth. Already in 2017 and 2018 groups of pupils from Yaotsu visited Kaunas, and Pupils from Kaunas visited Yaotsu in 2017 with partial financing of Young Ambassadors Programme. This programme initiated by Kaunas City Municipality is dedicated to pupils international exchange projects enabling them to become ambassadors of our city and enabling them to learn more about different cultures and traditions.

Kaunas – Japan relations gained momentum in 2015, when movie based on the story of Chiune Sugihara "Persona Non Grata" directed by Cellin Gluck with Japanese movie stars Toshiaki Karasawa and Koyuki (recognized from "The Last Samurai" movie) premiered in cinemas all over Japan and was so popular that in respect to numbers of spectators was in the second place after James Bond premiere presented the same month. Needless to say, it gave a huge impact to Kaunas recognition in wide audience in Japan and Lithuania's National Tourism department included Japan among priority inbound tourism markets.

## In love with Japan

The words people to people are very important in building ties between our two distant countries. In 2017 Sugihara Group for Kaunas and Japan Relations Development was established in Kaunas. It was composed from people representing different fields including representatives of Municipality, as well as cultural, business, science, education, sport and other organizations. This group of active, Japan loving residents of Kaunas created wonderful event "Sugihara week", which was organized in 2017 and 2018, and attracted more than 300 participants and guests from Japan. Events included such symbolic initiatives as voluntary painting of Sugihara House façade by 70 professional painters from Japan, Sakura Park planting in city centre, which was donated by Japanese and Kaunas organizations.

During Sugihara Week 2018 large group of businessmen from Japan representing biggest companies in Gifu Prefecture visited Kaunas and on this occasion honey export agreement was signed between Kaunas company UAB "Lietuviškas medus" and Akitayahonten CO., LTD. Interesting fact to note - Akitayahonten CO., LTD is more than 200 years old company. Therefore in addition to close cultural cooperation, economic ties are also being built on the local level.

In the beginning of 2018 Lithuania – Japan Friendship association was established in Gifu Prefecture with similar format as Sugihara Group for Kaunas and Japan Relations development in Kaunas. Gifu Prefecture is annually organizing festival "Lithuania NOW" dedicated to presentation of Lithuanian culture to locals in Japan. Of course Kaunas participates each year.

It is also very important to note another friendly city in Japan – Hiratsuka. We are not only cooperating in the field of education, but this city will welcome the team of Lithuanian athletes, when they will be preparing for Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

When talking about our further international goals the key ongoing project is Kaunas European Capital of Culture 2022. Even though we will be European Capital of Culture, Japan will contribute as well through "EU-Japan Fest" organization, which will certainly enrich the programme and scope of the events.

## Forum – a tool to enhance international collaboration: the "Kaunas 2022" case

In 2017, Kaunas was awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture for the year 2022. Established in 1985, it is one of the main cultural programs of the EU contributing significantly to the cultural relations in the EU by enhancing the cultural dialogue, partnerships and representation of cultural diversity in Europe.

Kaunas presents its ECoC program under the title of "Contemporary Capital" which plays with the historical context of the city. Having inherited a significant layer of cultural heritage from the period of being the provisional or temporary capital of Lithuania (1919–1940), the city uses the temporary "Capital of Culture" title to once again improve and create a long-lasting legacy.

By obtaining this ECoC title, the city joined a family of over 30 other European cities: former, present or future holders of the title, who all share a common strategy to put culture at the forefront of city development.

The participating cities are part of an informal network which provides the participants with opportunities to share their lessons and success stories in the fields such as enhancing civic participation and democratic dialogue, stimulating regeneration of the city through culture, building place identity and positive image in the eyes of the citizens, raising touristic, cultural and investment profile of the town and increasing the overall wellbeing of local societies.

## Get inspired!

To enhance international collaboration of the ECoC family and distribute knowledge from the past to the former and future capitals of culture, "Kaunas 2022" has initiated the European Capital of Culture Forum to which the leaders representing various creative fields come together to gain and share knowledge, get inspiration, network and discuss the opportunities for cooperation.

The forum also aims to contribute to more intense collaboration between culture and arts with other sectors such as business, science, education or politics. An important part of the currently forming discourse of the international event is to rethink the role of culture in the overall wellbeing of the city and the society.

On 23–24 May 2019, the Forum will be organized in Kaunas under the title of "Human Factor" highlighting the impor-





**Agreement signed between Kaunas company UAB “Lietuviškas medus” and Akitayahonten CO., LTD. On the photo from left: Honorary Consul of Lithuania in Gifu Prefecture (Japan), Chairman of Gifu Prefecture Chamber of Commerce Mr. Yukio Murase, President of Akitayahonten CO., LTD. Mr. Tadashi Nakamura, Director of UAB “Lietuviškas medus” Mr. Tautvydas Bloznelis and Kaunas City Mayor Mr. Visvaldas Matijošaitis.**

tance of understanding the individual, emotional factors, differences and the motives of the audience, society, or a client scope. It raises questions – what seems to be causing the deepening division between the society and institutions? What are the social and political uncertainties and disputes currently arising in Europe? Speeches and sessions at the Forum will cover the topics of collaboration between art and business, audience engagement, social entrepreneurship and culture’s role in international diplomacy and European relations.

The debut Forum that took place in Kaunas in 2018 attracted 500 participants from over 20 countries, including the managers of other (past, present and future) European capitals, and representatives of other European bodies. They shared experiences on different issues, such as how the cultural programmes contribute to the integration of various society groups, public initiatives, volunteering, creative industries and tourism, cooperation between public institutions as well as building relations among the local and foreign organizations.

**Kaunas  
and UBC  
welcome you to  
XV UBC General  
Conference  
15–18 October  
2019!**





# INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION AS A TOOL

by Bo Hjalmeffjord | bo.hjalmeffjord@vaxjo.se

**Växjö has the international co-operation high on the agenda. In the city's international strategy, the international co-operation is a major tool for the sustainable development of our city.**

The international strategy has defined three dimensions of importance:

1. An external environment monitoring;
2. A capacity building;
3. And an access to finance.

Through the international strategy, Växjö acknowledges for instance that participation in networks such as UBC, ICLEI and Energy Cities has a great value to bring and share ideas on sustainable development. Other ways are to participate in development projects on relevant themes.

## Project work

Over the years Växjö Municipality has participated in many projects which have brought cities together for exchange of knowledge. Some examples are 'Europe for Citizen' projects on mobility and circular economy which brought new ideas and widened the knowledge in these areas by gathering some six European cities in each project.

Växjö also participates in global exchanges, where it was matched with the Shimokawa, Japan to share experiences on environment. Another example is the now ongoing International Urban Cooperation (IUC) project, where Växjö is matched with the Canadian city of Burlington to work

together on sustainable urban development and nature based solutions. By participating in these exchanges, Växjö's technical experts learn new things, build capacity and broaden their horizons.

## Municipal partnerships

Another type of international project that Växjö is engaged in is the municipal partnership project managed by the 'Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy' (ICLD) with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The purpose of this programme is to contribute to the development of well, and efficiently functioning, democratic local authorities in both the partner countries and Sweden.

In this programme Växjö has a long standing relationships and some project co-operation with three cities on three continents: The Municipality of Vushtrri, Kosovo; the Giang province, Vietnam and JB Marks Local Municipality in South Africa.

The municipal partnership projects are very important for Växjö. Usually these partnerships last for many years and cover projects with different themes, sometimes with several projects on-going in the same partnership at the same time. The international co-operation is an essential part of the capacity development of Växjö Municipality and contributes well to strengthening the city's sustainable development work.



# EU DIGITAL CITIES

## CHALLENGE

by Jouko Hautamäki | jouko.hautamaki@pori.fi



**The global economy affects us strongly, as our industry depends on markets abroad. To maintain the sharp competitive edge, the industry needs to intensively keep their processes effective and search for new business opportunities. This job is permanent.**

The city administration in Pori needs to be efficient, as well. Better and quicker services are expected - especially from the industry sector. In addition, citizen's needs are growing. Behind there are demographic changes, particularly aging and the way how digital applications and services are used. The competition between cities belongs to our times.

### **Digitalization as a solution**

Pori has found the digitalization as the key to tackle those challenges. From the city point of view, the digitalization is the only way to make services efficient and present almost 24/7. Naturally, it is important also to simplify processes first - it doesn't pay to find digital solutions to complex and splurging operations.

The industry can find enormous savings when utilizing digitalization. The data collected from their operations might open new business opportunities - especially if combined with other data sets, public or private. Also, it is good to remember that a company is always a part of a value and supply chain. Therefore, it is reasonable to hook up vendors and customers to digitalization projects.

### **▲ Dr. Uwe Haass presenting at the Pori Digital Cities Challenge Workshop in February 2019**

#### **3x win alliance!**

Public and industry sectors seldom can digitalize processes themselves. They need ICT persons, startups, companies to find the best solutions to process development needs. This combination gives ICT players a real-world test and development environment - and the most important - the reference for further projects and growth. A true 3x win alliance!

It has been clear that the digital transformation in the Pori area cannot happen without a tight facilitation. Pori found the EU Digital Cities Challenge, "DCC", initiative as a solution. DCC is a commission lead project for 15 European cities to find the road-map towards the digital era of each city. DCC provides coaching, workshops and peer reviews - all targeting to the same goal: to add the quality of life and make the everyday living for residents and businesses easier and more productive.

So far, the DCC experiences have been very good; the local players are committed to the program and the strategy is under finalizing. Pori is looking forward to seeing soon lot of digital pilots, vivid start-ups and exited organizations and - a better future.



# INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY IN KLAIPĖDA

by Reda Švelniūtė | reda.svelniute@klaipeda.lt  
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**Port Cities can be seen as multidimensional laboratories where challenges connected with urban mobility are more complex due to the dual system of gravity centre: the city, the port, not to mention their shared hinterland.**

These peculiarities are at once a challenge and an opportunity, as they provide scope for planning, researching and implementing integrated mobility solutions in distinctively complex urban contexts.

The project “PORT-Cities: Integrating Sustainability” (CIVITAS) unites 5 major port cities located on the North Sea (Aberdeen and Antwerp), the Mediterranean Sea (Trieste), the Black Sea (Constanta), and Baltic Sea (Klaipėda). The project also involves a major international follower port city on the East China Sea (Ningbo).

## **Integrating Sustainability**

The five living labs implement mobility measures, supporting their multi-functional role of cities, ports and gateways to inland areas. The project aims to show that sustainable mobility can increase functional and social cohesion between city centres and ports, while pushing the economy forward and boosting the allure of modern urban environments.

Klaipėda joined CIVITAS, because of the challenges it faces: decrease of public transport use, growing number of private cars and high road accident rates. 6 innovative measures are being implemented in the project: enhancing SUMP, establishing a city and port cooperation platform, implement-

ing a bike storage and bike counting system, modernizing the traffic management system, prioritizing public transport traffic, establishing an integrated design for traffic informational signage.

## **CIVITAS for cleaner transport**

This year, Klaipėda plans to install 10 public bicycle storages in different urban areas to improve cycling infrastructure in the city so that cyclists can use bicycles not only for tourist or leisure purposes, but also for everyday trips to make the bicycle a convenient, free alternative way to get to work-place or school.

In the summer of 2019, two bicycle counters should appear in Klaipėda, which will record the passing cycling flows. The collected data will be updated live on the website, properly classified and archived, so the data will be immediately available for all types of reports.

Another measure to reduce traffic flows is the implementation of traffic management system. It is planned to modernize the traffic management system on the main transport corridor nearest to the port. A total of 21 traffic lights and pedestrian crossings will be modernized. Modern smart traffic lights will be installed on this transport corridor, which will increase the traffic throughput at the crossroads. Installing a “green wave” will not only accelerate the movement of heavy vehicles, reduce congestion, but also increase traffic safety. It is expected that this measure will help to balance the growing urban and port transport flows and increase the number of people using public transport.





# GDAŃSK CO-OPERATES WITH UKRAINE

by Anna Kieturakis | [anna.kieturakis@gdansk.gda.pl](mailto:anna.kieturakis@gdansk.gda.pl)

Photo: Grzegorz Mehring/ [www.gdansk.pl](http://www.gdansk.pl)

**Mayor Paweł Adamowicz, brutally murdered in January this year during a charity campaign, believed that Gdańsk as a city of Freedom and Solidarity has a special role to fulfill when it comes to the good relations with the Polish neighbors in the East.**

For Mayor Adamowicz personally, with his eastern roots, as well as for Gdańsk, the cooperation with Ukrainian cities is a priority among other forms of international cooperation.

Ukrainian cities have gained great independence in recent years thanks to a successful local government reform. There is a possibility of extending our European community of cities in the Ukraine, especially because they have clearly declared their pro-Europe orientation.

## **We learn together**

Even still during Viktor Yanukovich's regime, but particularly after the revolution of 2014, delegations of the Ukrainian cities have been visiting Gdańsk as observers and participants of study visits. We were presenting to them what we thought we knew best: a peaceful political transformation and the administrative reform. Representatives of local authorities from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Donetsk, Odessa, Sloviansk, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Kryvyi Rih, Rivne, Mykolayiv, Mariupol, Luhansk, Sevastopol, Khmelnytskyi, Makiyivka, Vinnytsia and other cities spent time in Gdańsk attending workshops and participating in various programs. It seems, that, with some modifications, our model of local government reform found recognition there.

Gdańsk is very actively involved in various other forms of co-operation with the Ukrainian cities. We are enabled by

## **▲ Meeting of the Mayor of Mariupol, Vadym Boichenko and Paweł Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdańsk.**

the function Mayor Adamowicz held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, where he was responsible for the local government of the Eastern Partnership countries. We have created a specific model of supporting local democracy in Mariupol, a city in the Donetsk region, based on a structure of gradual transfer of knowledge in the field of creating a civil society in partnership with the European Union institutions and other countries. Gdańsk took it upon itself to finance the LDA office (Agencja Demokracji Lokalnej) there. We found partners there - city authorities open to European values.

With more than 40 thousand Ukrainian immigrants working and studying in Gdańsk, we are constantly looking for ways to help them adjust to a life in a foreign place. The city has adapted a policy of "equal treatment" and "help for immigrants".

## **New inhabitants of Gdańsk are welcome!**

Kiev Maidan was the biggest shock in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Europe itself has appreciated this spurt and this sacrifice, granting Ukrainians the right to visa-free travel to Europe. Poland had naturally fulfilled the role of Kiev's advocate from the beginning. Gdańsk authorities built an innovative model of integration of immigrants (mainly from Ukraine), based on mutual benefits and respect for the culture, language and tradition of our guests from the East, our new inhabitants of Gdańsk.





# WORKING AGAINST

# RADICALIZATION

by Jørgen Kristiansen | jorgen.kristiansen@kristiansand-bystyre.no

**Kristiansand, in close cooperation with schools, health care providers, police and NGOs, has worked systematically with prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in several decades, primarily related to far-right groups.**

Many years of experience with prevention work against far-right groups have given us great tools and knowledge on how to prevent other type of extremism both religious and ideological. Different methods, forms of cooperation and interventions have been adapted to today's challenge and actively used in prevention.

The municipality has anchored this work both in the administrative and political leadership. We have also prepared the action plans on this subject and have decided through the City Council that Kristiansand shall be a "beacon in the fight to combat radicalization and violent extremism".

### The Strong Cities Network

Based on this systematic and comprehensive work on the prevention of extremism, Kristiansand was invited to participate in the first global network against radicalization and violent extremism. This network is called The Strong Cities Network. Now a global network cooperation is extended to over a hundred cities.

Radicalization and violent extremism is a challenge that needs to be attacked from several angles and across national borders. We are also seeing that municipalities are getting an increasingly central role in terror prevention. Earlier it was mostly the police who handled extremism and

terror prevention. It has been a challenge that the municipalities and the local community are asked to solve this, and the municipalities are given a bigger responsibility through the national action plan (21 of 30 measures are targeted towards the local community).

The Strong Cities Network conducts annual meetings and bilateral networks for member cities. Through this network, Kristiansand met Mombasa, Kenya. Mombasa has taken the initiative to a city-to-city cooperation under the framework of the Network. This cooperation has resulted in transfer of knowledge and experiences, as well as the exchange of plans and methods. We are also planning a youth exchange between our cities.

This co-operation is bilateral. It is expected to get knowledge about terror prevention, terrorist groups and radicalization in Kenya and to know about prevention of recruitment to groups like Al-Shabab.

**The collaboration with Mombasa is formalized in a 3-year letter of intent signed in November 2018.**





# CO-OPERATION

## ACROSS THE BORDER

by Jan Unga | [jan.unga@lulea.se](mailto:jan.unga@lulea.se)

**In February 2019, Luleå and Oulu have entered into a new co-operation agreement focusing on, among other things, jobs and transport. The agreement means that the towns are merged to create better conditions in the common region.**

Luleå municipality and the municipality of Oulu have had a close co-operation for many years, which now is being formalized with an agreement. The agreement shows the direction of the will for each municipality and points out issues and areas to co-operate around. The agreement is signed in connection with a delegation from Oulu visiting Luleå.

Niklas Nordström, Chairman of the Municipal Executive Committee in Luleå and Päivi Laajala, City Director in Oulu, signed the co-operation agreement.

“Oulu is our most strategic partner in Arctic and Nordic co-operation. Together we can create the conditions for more jobs, investments and sustainable growth in our part of Europe”, says **Niklas Nordström**.

Päivi Laajala explains why the co-operation agreement is important to her.

“For Oulu, there are two things among all that are particularly important in the agreement. One is the Ten-T corridor, which involves the development of both port and rail traffic and a holistic grip on the infrastructure. And then our application to become a Capital of Culture in 2026. We hope that we will also get culture across borders”, says **Päivi Laajala**.

Lenita Ericson, Vice Chairman of the Municipal Executive Committee, also raises the infrastructure issue.

“We see that our countries can be linked even better with a modernized infrastructure. That is why we are driving our governments and the EU to make it easier for people and goods to travel along the Bothnian Bay and not least between Luleå and Oulu”, says **Lenita Ericson**.

The agreement will be updated in 2020 when Luleå is visiting Oulu.

**The co-operation agreement between Luleå and Oulu includes the areas of growth, competitiveness and attractiveness, infrastructure and logistics, Smart Arctic, as well as communication, marketing, networking and interest monitoring.**





# TOGETHER AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGES

by Cathrin Truckenbrodt | [cathrin.truckenbrodt@kiel.de](mailto:cathrin.truckenbrodt@kiel.de)

## **International relations play an important role in the history and the upcoming future of the City of Kiel.**

We have developed the general strategic objectives why we are acting beyond our regional and national borders:

- International understanding;
- Strengthening Kiel as innovative business location and science city;
- Commitment to Europe, its European values and the EU;
- Global sustainability and implementation of SDGs;

Since the beginning of the international co-operation, a city twinning has been the basis of Kiel's international activities and in fact it has contributed enormously to fostering international friendly relations by bringing together citizens from Kiel and its sister cities. Besides that, the exchange of best practices in international city networks like UBC and EUROCITIES with their topic-related commissions and forums has become relevant for a growing number of departments in the city administration in the last years.

## **Climate partnerships**

The City of Kiel is aware of the increasing local responsibility arising from globalization and a global trend towards urbanization. The potentials and challenges arising from issues like climate change, digitalization or migration can only be sustainably approached by European or even international co-operation. In addition, we've adopted the UN Agenda 2030 and try to actively implement the SDGs in all of our actions.

International relations seem to empower the fields of sustainability and climate protection: our partnerships with the City of San Francisco (since 2017) and the district of Moshi Rural in Tanzania (since 2013) show that the exchange of experiences on these topics has become a relevant part of bilateral co-operation. The official city partnership with Moshi Rural even has just evolved from a "climate partnership" between both partners. The commitment of both partners raises awareness for the importance of international cooperation for solving global challenges like climate change. As project example we support the local government with practical knowledge i.e. in waste management.

## **Mutual benefits**

Due to its location in the Bay Area, our Sister City San Francisco is already threatened by raising sea levels resulting from climate change. Therefore, institutions have established contacts in the field of renewable energies, as well as on coastal protection. At the same time we have agreed on working together on the topic of waste management as both cities have joined the international zero waste cities network. Both cities will profit from the existing knowledge and varying approaches within the network.

To sum up, every point of international co-operation has managed to broaden the city's perspective on many topics and therefore has contributed to evolving the capacity for innovation in general. International co-operation in the BSR and beyond has become an essential element for the future development of the City of Kiel.

# 'YES' TO PROJECTS

## BEYOND THE BSR

by Frede Danborg | [fd@guldborgsund.dk](mailto:fd@guldborgsund.dk)



**Nearly all our international projects are located around the Baltic Sea Region, and the majority of them are funded by the INTERREG programmes Baltic Sea Region, South Baltic Programme and Deutschland-Denmark (which includes the westernmost part of the Baltic Sea).**

In this area we find a large number of partners that face similar challenges, and share similar visions, but at the same time have other experiences and supplementary ideas for solutions.

An interesting flavour to this main setting is added by a few South and Central European partners in some of our Erasmus+ projects. Delegations from Asia and Africa visit Guldborgsund 3-5 times annually, bringing some overseas inspiration and input.

### **BIOCAS project**

Therefore, it was with great curiosity and eagerness that we answered 'yes' to an invitation to join a project preparation consortium with a lead-partner from the Netherlands and 18 partners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Denmark. The partner group was looking for ways to improve the utilization of biomass, which has strategic interest for us as a coastal and rural municipality. The preparations resulted in the project BIOCAS supported by the North Sea Programme.

The project aims to realizing Biomass Cascading Alliances (BCA's), i.e. extracting valuable components out of biomass before it is processed and used for e.g. biogas and structural material. Biomass from land and sea can provide food,

chemicals, pharmaceuticals, materials, cleaning agents and green energy. The project has also focused on supporting the value chain of biomass, including basic research, applied research, product development and market oriented development.

The municipality has consequently developed strong connections to project partners and a number of universities. The task of the municipality is to create a research focus on local biomass and bio residues and inspire SMEs to implement into new business based on sustainable utilization of marine and land based biomass, thus supporting green transition at the same time.

The BIOCAS project and the focus by Guldborgsund Municipality on better utilization of biomass has resulted in new contacts and cooperation networks, both within the Baltic Sea Region and beyond.

**Marine and agricultural biomass:  
apple pulp,  
rapeseed cakes,  
germinated malt, cake residues,  
wheat husk,  
eelgrass and beet.**







## GDYNIA BUSINESS WEEK

# SEATTLE SUPPORT

by Joanna Leman | [j.leman@gdynia.pl](mailto:j.leman@gdynia.pl)

Photo: Gdynia City Hall

**Gdynia has been co-operating with 15 sister cities and 2 friendship cities in Europe and in the world, including the American sister city of Seattle. Thanks to the co-operation with Seattle the implementation of the international educational Gdynia Business Week programme in cooperation with the Foundation for Private Enterprise Education has been possible.**

Gdynia programme, carried out annually since 2009, is based on the American edition of the course known as the Washington Business Week.

During a six-week course in Gdynia the youth from local high schools and technical high schools have a chance to broaden their economic skills under professional guidance of advisors from the United States. Students gain knowledge in the field of, among others, enterprise management, making strategical decisions and implementation of marketing strategies by means of creative tasks and games, with the assistance of foreign and Polish tutors. The course helps students to improve their teamwork and self-presentation skills. For many students this programme means a first contact with the business world, thus, it forms good working habits.

### How does it look like in practice?

Programme participants are divided into working groups. The basic task of each group is to create an innovative product and to prepare a simulation of the activity of the start-up that is trying to mark its presence on the market. All week long students take part in specialist meetings where they get acquainted with the rules of the business world. Along with the advisors from the American international corpo-

rations they elaborate a detailed activity plan of their own companies. All the programme is carried out in English, enriched with the specialist economic vocabulary. The highlight of Gdynia Business Week is the co-called Fair organized at the end of the programme. During the Fair the youth companies present results of their work in the professional and attractive way. The jury consists of the local business representatives who cast their expert eyes over the start-ups and their, often quite crazy, products. The best groups receive gifts and honourable mentions.

Graduates of the former programme editions can broaden their knowledge within the advanced course – Advanced Business Week. In all the programme editions, apart from Polish students, several dozen of the students from the United States and from the European sister cities of Gdynia have taken part so far.



Photo: Gdynia City Hall





# EDUCATION

## WITHOUT BORDERS

by Helena Mikkola | [helena.mikkola@turku.fi](mailto:helena.mikkola@turku.fi)

**Turku, the oldest city in Finland, is also a traditional school and student city. It has a centuries-old experience of cooperation with education organizations of different countries. This history is also continued in the Education Division of Turku nowadays.**

The Education Division of Turku comprises the following services offered by the city: day care services, basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and non-formal adult education (workers' institutes) in both Finnish and Swedish. Around five per cent of the residents are native speakers of Swedish, so Turku is officially a bilingual city.

The international activities of the Education Division of Turku are concentrated on day care centres and schools – active actors are especially pupils/students, as well as teachers. The representatives of the administration of the Division also operate in many international networks, such as the work groups of Cedefop and the UBC.

### International projects

The international activities of day care centres and schools are carried out, among others, with the twin cities of Turku by means of EU funding (Erasmus+), with the Nordic Council of Ministers (NordPlus funding) and separate funding given by the Finnish National Agency for Education and meant for international activities. The neighbouring areas and the EU countries are emphasized as co-operation countries but co-operation is also done, for example, with Japan, Canada and the developing countries of Africa.

▲ **Helena Heikkinen acts in the steering group of the Japan network in the vocational education of the Finnish National Agency for Education. In the picture you see Helena visiting our cooperation day care centre in Osaka, where Finnish practical nurse students do their practical training period abroad.**

### Increasing the global knowledge

The purpose of the international activities is to develop the language and cultural skills of the participants, to strengthen the professional skills, and to increase the global knowledge and cooperation skills of the organization in various development projects and networks. By means of the international activities, it is possible for both the actors and the organization to keep aware of and up to date with the education trends of the rest of the world.





# PROMOTING SPORTS EXPERTISE

# TO CHINA

by Tiina Järvelin | tiina.jarvelin@jyvaskyla.fi



**The City of Jyväskylä is an official partner of the Finnish Winter Sports Cluster (FWSC), which promotes Finnish winter sports expertise to China.**

By being a partner in the FWSC, the City of Jyväskylä is aiming to come up with winter sport business opportunities for start-up companies, as well as cooperation possibilities in coaching and sports education.

Jyväskylä has top-level expertise in training, research and education in sports and well-being, and in turn e.g. the upcoming China's 2022 Winter Olympics - there is a real demand for winter sports knowledge and technologies in China.

"Through the Finnish Winter Sports Cluster the City of Jyväskylä brings companies, sport clubs and research institutions together to create added value for all parties involved", says **Tiina Järvelin**, Business Advisor at Business Jyväskylä.

## **Hippos2020 - a new urban space for sports**

For instance, the City of Jyväskylä has created an ecosystem for sport and health promotion that brings together businesses, research and education. This ecosystem project will take place in Hippos2020. When completed, Hippos2020, Jyväskylä's new urban centre for sports, exercise and well-being will be the largest indoor sports centre in the Nordic countries.

## **Jyväskylä is a sport capital**

Jyväskylä, located in Central Finland, is a dynamic city of 142,000 inhabitants and known as the Capital of Sport and Physical Activity. Finland's only Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences is in the University of Jyväskylä. The city is home to KIHU, the Research Institute for Olympic Sports, and to LIKES, Research Centre for Sport and Health Sciences. You can also find Sport Business School of University of Applied Sciences as well as many sports and well-being related companies in Jyväskylä.





**Together with the partners from Ghent in Belgium, Helsinki and Karlstad, both members of the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission, have started a transnational co-operation to develop new methods of working for inclusion.**

It all started in Warsaw in March 2018 when these three cities participated in a partner meeting event organized by the European Social Fund, in relation to a rare transnational coordinated call, searching for partners working with inclusion of immigrants and refugees.

#### **Mutual interests and benefits**

[ew32], an NGO in Ghent, wanted to apply their work on S\_U+G Serious Urban Game® transnationally, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki wanted to develop new dimensions to city race related pedagogy and the Municipality of Karlstad wanted to develop new and innovative methods and tools for working with newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Helsinki and Karlstad were interested in [ew32]’s S\_U+G® methodology and [ew32] was interested in Helsinki’s pedagogical experience and Karlstad’s experience in working with integration and large ESF projects. These mutual interests resulted in three national project applications under the name CONNEXT for inclusion, together with a transnational cooperation agreement. [ew32] also brought on Artevelde University College Gent to the partnership.

#### **Co-creating games**

The S\_U+G® methodology strongly engages the participants in an inclusive co-creative process making use of a

digital platform designed for city races. During the game scenarios different storylines and missions give the participants insights into various topics. The games are made for and by participants and the process of co-creating games consists of three consecutive workshops called “labs”. The general objectives of the S\_U+G® methodology are:

- To empower participants, increase self-reliance and citizen competences;
- To connect participants to local stakeholders;
- To stimulate reflection and open dialogue;
- To experience the concept of group-dynamic;
- To have FUN!

The transnational co-operation has been running in November 2018–January 2021. The trainings for professionals who will become core trainers and game masters of S\_U+G® will be organized in all three countries. There will also be on-line support and a learning network platform will be developed for exchanging ideas and experience. Also networking days with study visits, workshops, trainings in horizontal perspectives, etc. will take place.







# JONAVA PROMOTES SUMPS

by Aksana Zacharova | [aksana.zacharova@jonava.lt](mailto:aksana.zacharova@jonava.lt)

**Jonava co-operates with many cities through the project PROSPERITY (Prosperity through innovation and promotion of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans). The town wants to improve the mobility system.**

Installation of by-passes will help to reduce environment pollution, decrease the noise in the city and improve the traffic safety. Co-operation within PROSPERITY and SUMPS-Up project enables to get a basis for the analysis and improvement, development and further implementation of SUMP.

How does such co-operation boost the city's development? PROSPERITY work with cities and countries on all levels. The cities form a living lab, implementing SUMP in their countries and act as a laboratory from which other cities in the same country can learn. They disseminate their experience via blogs, social media channels, as well as by other more conventional forms of communication.

### Learning from others

What can the cities gain from the access to expertise in other areas? During the project in depth research is made on the SUMP situation in each country. All partner cities participate in regular international webinars, workshops, specific training sessions as complementary activities at the international SUMP conferences. So the cities have the possibility to get useful information, knowledge that is based not only on theory, but also on good practices and methodologies applied by cities. It is all about improving own work by learning from other's experience in promoting smart, green and inclusive growth.

Project brings new solutions, develops new channels. Each city is supported by services and products that provide substantial information about local urban mobility planning and solutions. News and case studies are uploaded into the Mobility Plans Platform website, so all can find out some useful solutions.

### Support on the national level

PROSPERITY has the national level partners, that are either ministries or agencies directly working for ministries. National level conferences and trainings are foreseen for the ministries, as well. Jonava approved its SUMP in 2016 concentrating their efforts on promoting the SUMP internally and externally to obtain help and support for its implementation. One of the problems by implementing our SUMP was that we needed help in promoting it. Eventually, we were supported by involving, training and working with the ministries.

**Jonava,  
Lithuania,  
a modern industrial  
city with 30,000  
inhabitants, is a new  
UBC member.  
Welcome  
on board!**

# FRIENDS.

# PARTNERS. CITIES.

by Katarzyna Osiecka-Brzeska | kat.osiecka@wp.pl



**The City of Reda is a young and modern city in the North of Poland. From the very beginning, Reda has been focused on cooperation and development – as a part of that, it established a partnership with four cities: Łowicz (Poland), Lubliniec (Poland), Waldbronn (Germany), Vilnius District Municipality (Lithuania).**

When asked about the need of partnership between the cities, the local politicians are of the same opinion: It's not cities and institutions that matter - the real partnership of cities starts with the cooperation of people; with their need of communication, exchange of thoughts and common actions regardless the national borders.

### **It's all about people**

Reda established the official international partnership at the end of the 1990s (Waldbronn: 1997, Vilnius District Municipality: 1998). It's important to remember, that the citizens and social institutions were engaged in a number of projects before those dates: the teenagers took part in international exchanges, local folk bands gave concerts abroad, and adults could take part in international sports events. Those social-based events became milestones for further cooperation between the cities.

### **The official agreement**

When officially established, the cooperation needed the basis – as bilaterally agreed, the cities started cooperation in the fields of environmental protection, health prevention, social assistance, culture, sport, tourism, and science. The Partner Cities also decided to support establishing contacts between communities.

How did the cities put the theory into practice? By allowing different groups of citizens and officials to build and participate in the partnership. Primary school students, retirees, representatives of culture have been able to visit the partner cities, take part in events, and promote their work and culture. The more often bilateral visits, the stronger partnership becomes.

### **Gain not pain**

One could wonder what benefits cities may gain by such cooperation. The answer is multidimensional. The first dimension refers to social aspects – as the main value of international cooperation is the accentuating cultural and historical similarities between the cities. The citizens that engage in the partnership may broaden their knowledge about other countries, train language skills and gain some intercultural competences.

The other dimension refers to the flow of information and knowledge. As the officials have a possibility to visit partner cities, they are also familiarized with the method of municipal management. They are able to visit modern installations and industrial solutions implemented in the partner city. By that, they receive information about the pros and cons of the technologies and are able to reconsider their own investment plans.

Last, not least, there is a managerial dimension – the partnership creates the possibility to exchange of thoughts, experiences and good practices. The partner city may become an advisor in doubtful investments or arduous challenges.





# FRIENDSHIPS

## WORLD-WIDE

by Gundega Rugāja | [gundega.rugaja@tukums.lv](mailto:gundega.rugaja@tukums.lv)

**The town of Tukums has eight twin towns in nine countries: Plungė (Lithuania), Scheeßel (Germany), Andrychów (Poland), Tidaholm (Sweden), Chennevières-sur-Marne (France), Izium (Ukraine), Karelích (Belarus) and Krasnogorsk (Russia), with protocols of intent signed with Khoni (Georgia) and Balta (Ukraine).**

Collaboration with each of the twin towns has formed historically. For example, the citizens the Lithuanian town of Plungė and Tukums have been collaborating in sports. Representatives of both towns, including the youth, visit each other several times a year to participate in various sports competitions, such as hockey and football.

### **Diversity unites!**

Our long-term collaboration with Andrychów focuses on projects and culture. Over the last few years, there have been many projects with the participation of a large number of citizens from both towns. One of them is “Still United? Europe in the shadow of new borders. Life at the crossroads...” within the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014–2020 which aims to understand the issue of proverbial borders and “walls” that Europeans are building in their mind during this economic crisis. Is living in the shadow of these expanding mental borders compatible with the ideas of a united Europe? Other projects have included “Diversity Unites Us”, which aimed to develop a sense of belonging in Europe. The project promoted cultural exchange between EU countries, experience exchange among specialists, organizations and citizens, and much more.

Tukums has a strong Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, which has implemented an international proj-

ect “NGOs as a Powerful Tool for Strengthening Europe’s Future”. The aim of this project was to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among member states, thus enhancing the solidarity of citizens and finding new and innovative ideas for strengthening the EU future.

The countries participating in the projects – Poland, Germany, Ukraine, Georgia and Latvia – gain valuable experiences through the culture and traditions of other countries.

### **Youth exchange**

Tukums has built excellent collaboration with several twin towns in the realm of youth experience exchanges, for example, the Scheeßel Secondary School has formed close ties with J. Rainis’ Gymnasium of Tukums. Excellent collaboration has been developed between the Music Schools in Tidaholm and Tukums. Each year, we sign an agreement with the town of Krasnogorsk in Russia regarding youth exchange trips to creative competitions. Krasnogorsk organizes the creative expression competition New World (Новый мир) with the participation of representatives of various countries, including the youth from Tukums. Our recently formalized friendship with Chennevières-sur-Marne is already close-knit.

### **Business ties**

Our co-operation with Izium (Ukraine) is based on business. Entrepreneurs of both towns are showing interest and gaining experience during exchange trips. When our new friends from the municipalities of Khoni and Balta arrive in Tukums for experience exchange, we are glad to assist with our experience and good example.



# GLOBAL

## GÄVLE

by Annika Lundqvist | annika.lundqvist@gavle.se



**According to the international strategy of the municipality, Gävle through the international work is contributing to a peaceful, democratic and sustainable development in the world and our children/youth should from an early age be prepared for a more globalized world.**

We do this by using different kinds of cooperation:

### City twinning

Our Nordic Twin Cities Co-operation with Gjøvik (Norway), Naestved (Denmark) and Rauma (Finland) started in 1949 and has developed into a platform of exchange and learning with four main joint activities: bi-annual Twin City Meetings (political), yearly CEO thematic meetings, bi-annual Sports competitions for Youth and bi-annual Culture director meetings. Gävle is also twin city with Jūrmala (Latvia) and Galva (USA).

### Municipal partnerships

These are partnerships with cities that are limited in time (3-5-year agreements that can be prolonged) and focused on themes of common interest, possibly financed via the Swedish Municipal Partnership Programme. Ex Gävle-Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, South Africa 2002-2018, Gävle-City of Zhuhai, China 2010-2020.

### Network of cities

To meet and share learnings and experiences with many cities, with a strong incentive to develop joint projects, Gävle is engaged in two cities networks: UBC - Union of the Baltic Cities, which is co-operation with cities in our geographical neighborhood and Eurotowns, which is co-operation with medium-sized cities in Europe (50,000-250,000 inhabitants).

### Projects

Gävle is as a city engaging in all types of EU/international projects; from eTwinning, school exchanges, teachers' continues learning, policy and operational development, to pilots and investments. Ambitious and forward looking, we are always open to suggestions of cooperation that can support our continuous journey towards a healthy, innovative, prosperous, resilient and sustainable city!

The municipality is also offering minimum 3 weeks of summer work in another European country to +100 students after their second year in upper secondary education. Thousands of youth in Gävle have participated in the "International Summer Work Experience" since the start in 2002! For many it is the first time they travel abroad on their own and they benefit from all kinds of experiences and learnings through the exchanges with others during both work and leisure.







# TWINNING CO-OPERATION OF CHOJNICE

by Michał Karpiak | [karpiakm@miastochojnice.pl](mailto:karpiakm@miastochojnice.pl)

Photo: Anna Zajkowska

**Chojnice co-operates closely with its twin town Emsdetten in Germany. Several citizens' meetings organized by both towns in the recent years resulted in new projects of NGOs and municipal institutions.**

Since 2016 the Foundation for the Development of Chojnice and Czulchów Land together with local culture centre and partners (association Rockinitiative from Emsdetten and foundation Cerberus from Dutch town Hengelo, what is a twin town of Emsdetten) have been organizing the rock festival InterTony. This open air event promotes international co-operation. Bands from twinned towns and other invited artists perform on stage for the audience of around 1000 people. 100 volunteers from 3 twin towns work together on preparations and the event itself. Their joint work is possible thanks to the support of The Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation (SDPZ).

## Students exchange

In 2017 Chojnice's Primary School number 7 successfully applied to German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW) to start an exchange of students with Käthe-Kollwitz-Schule in Emsdetten. The partners organized already 4 meetings till the end of 2018. Each meeting resulted in improvement of language skills, better understanding of the culture of the neighboring country and new friendships.

Town Halls of Chojnice and Emsdetten started an exchange of workers of communal institutions in 2018. Its aim is to exchange good practices in various fields of activity. In 2018

three workers of Town Hall of Chojnice visited Emsdetten. In May 2019 three persons from Emsdetten come to Chojnice to get to know how local library works, what the town's strategy in communication is and how Chojnice copes with environmental problems.

## Co-operation of artists

In 2019 two more projects have emerged. Culture Centre of Chojnice invited all photographers from twin towns to prepare photos showing public spaces and buildings that were created 100 years ago and which have survived to this day unchanged. This project is a part of preparations for 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of rejoining the town of Chojnice to Poland.

Town Twinning Association of Emsdetten together with Foundation Zarzewie from Chojnice is organizing a project "pARTner" which is a meeting of young artists and their caretakers that gives an opportunity to create together and to get to know each other.



# BROADENING

## PERSPECTIVES



by Johan Eggers | [johan.eggars@skola.karlskrona.se](mailto:johan.eggars@skola.karlskrona.se)  
Christina Engman | [christina.engman@skola.karlskrona.se](mailto:christina.engman@skola.karlskrona.se)

**Rödeby primary school is always looking for ways to collaborate and learn from international school partners. In the global tomorrow, it is vital that schools, teachers and students broaden their perspectives in the world.**

Swedish curricula points out global solidarity and international collaboration as an important goal and tool for Swedish schools.

We have much to gain from our different partnerships and it is also a way to make teaching attractive. The international activities may not be our everyday subject but we try to incorporate it as much as possible into our planning.

Now and then our school is active in international partnerships receiving external funds from EU. During those projects, there are obviously a lot of activities connected to that.

### Partnership with Pretoria

One of our longest partnerships is with two different public schools in Pretoria, South Africa. We have been in partnership with these schools since 2013. Thanks to the Swedish state funds we have been sending teachers both from South Africa to Sweden and from Sweden to South Africa.

The relationship is strong and we have been doing activities together with our students in a jointly made activity plan.

There have been activities, but mainly in the area where we are sharing our cultural heritage, nature, Swedish, language, food, ev-

eryday school life, etc. In this partnership, our three schools have very different conditions. We are talking about these different conditions and how history and economy affects people. We also held a big event on UN global goals in the autumn 2018.

### Iceland

Another partnership, made possible by funding and organization by Nordplus Junior, is with a school on Iceland. The Iceland school shows good results in school atmosphere and student health. This partnership is led by Rödeby primary schools grade 7-9 teachers.

The project is about student health and ways to make school enjoyable and productive. Models and influences have been shared between the schools. We visited Iceland on a Nordplus budget.

Through this and together with own findings we have constructed a pedagogical method. How to make students and teachers active together, in building strong and good relations at school.

Together we want to build a school code of ethics saying "We can do it". We strive for a positive attitude towards school, peers, teachers and future.



# MIELNO BENEFITS FROM TWINNING

by Krzysztof Szpakiewicz | k.szpakiewicz@gmina.mielno.pl



**Mielno has been co-operating with many different cities in Poland and abroad since many years. Now it has 7 partners: Schorfheide (Germany), Altenpleen (Germany), Båstad (Sweden), Tolscva (Hungary), Mlynica (Slovakia), Gródek nad Dunajcem (Poland) and Wieliszew (Poland).**

This co-operation has a number of different fields, mainly it focuses on education, culture, sport and tourism, in particular by establishing and sustaining contacts between children and young people. Also, environment protection, developing common European projects, economic and business co-operation and exchange of experience in the development of local governments and democracy are among the co-operation areas.

The German municipalities of Schorfheide and Altenpleen were Mielno's first foreign partners. This co-operation continues today in a form of official visits or students exchange.

Thanks to our Polish partners we had the opportunity to co-operate with partners from Slovakia (Mlynica) and Hungary (Tolscva), with whom we have partnered recently, but intensively. Mielno delegation was already two times in Slovakia. Delegations from Hungary and Slovakia were hosted in Mielno in 2017 during a large meeting with our foreign partners, where the co-operation agreement with the municipality of Tolscva was signed. Currently, Mielno is looking for a partner from the Czech Republic to be able to interact with the measures and programmes dedicated to the members of the Vysehrad Group.

The Swedish Municipality of Båstad is also an example of successful co-operation, including the EU projects. The delegation of Mielno participated in the I Festival of Winter Bathing in Båstad, organized in the framework of the joint project "South Baltic Winter Bathing Events", funded by the South Baltic Programme.

Thanks to co-operation with Wieliszew and upon their recommendation, Mielno could take part in the project within the Europe for Citizens Programme. Together with local governments from Italy (Cautano and Teverina), Malta, Hungary (Arnot Municipality) and with Polish Wieliszew, a statement of project support was signed. Europe for Citizens is a programme supporting NGOs and local governments, as well as other organizations and institutions active in the field of civil society, culture and education, in the implementation of projects related to the topic of European citizenship, local initiatives, social and democratic engagement and European memory.

At the debate held in Mielno, the partners discussed on how to mobilize and encourage local communities to participate in democratic processes on the EU level. The participants advocated the need to support initiatives, debates, networks to better understand the EU issues, history and diversity.

Mielno is constantly striving to co-operate with its partners in most innovative way. There are new challenges and projects ahead.



# IT IS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

by Roland Engkvist | [roland.engkvist@gotland.se](mailto:roland.engkvist@gotland.se)

**Region Gotland is currently involved in two municipal partnership projects. One is in Kibaha, Tanzania and the other is in Zmejivka, Ukraine.**

The partnership with Kibaha has been going on since 2003 and the main area for cooperation have been water and waste. In Ukraine we are currently working in the areas of agriculture and sustainable tourism.

### Challenges of today

You often say that “no man is an island” it means that we cannot live on our own without contact with other humans and thrive. This applies even of communities like rural farms, local villages, communities or cities, islands or other. Therefore, co-operation or partnerships with other areas or cities between different countries is an important part of dealing with the challenges of our world today.

Poverty for example is not only about not having material resources, economy or safety. It is also about not having a single chance to change your way of living. Our world has many big challenges like climate crisis, environmental problems, safety and war, social injustice, health and gender issues. Things that mostly negatively affects the poor and less fortunate people on the globe.

When starting partnerships and project with other regions we have the opportunity to co-operate on local democracy in democratic institutions. Together we can make efforts to increase transparency, accountability, equity and participation in the societies.

## ▲ Project visit in Kibaha, Tanzania

### How does such co-operation boost the cities growth?

When co-operating worldwide today you can say that “learning by meeting” is the new boost. Both people from poor countries and wealthy countries benefit from co-operation so that their own societies can find new ways of developing. It is important to mix different areas, culture goes very well with technology and children. Gender is also a very good area to mix with the more traditional issues. The challenge of today is to see new ways of co-operation and try to be open for humans in a general perspective.

What can the cities gain from the access to expertise in other areas? A co-operation between the cities will be beneficial, as there are possibilities to get access to experts in different fields depending on what is needed. When the parties get to know each other, there are possibilities to discuss different matters of importance for the development of the cities.

### Smart, green and inclusive growth

The possibility to share ideas and knowledge will help to find methods and economical ways to promote smart, green and inclusive growth. By the means of low carbon city planning and regulations for housing, etc. the way forward to sustainable cities will be promoted. As each city has different approaches and expertise, the mix will result in a mutual understanding that will make a creative base for promoting sustainability.





# PRUSZCZ GD. SHARES ITS POTENTIAL

by Bartosz Gondek | bartgond@wp.pl

**The tradition of international co-operation is very long in the area of Pruszcz Gdański and dates back to the ancient amber route times. The town has been co-operating with different partners not only in Europe, but also world-wide.**

Since 2012, one of its closest partners has been Hofheim am Taunus, a town located near Frankfurt am Main. Inhabited by 40,000 inhabitants, the resort is a central part of the SPA axis, which is also comprised of cities Wiesbaden and Bad Homburg.

Both towns have been aiming to know each other. This exchange, based on the creation of a constant private relationships, has built friendships sustained for a long time beyond the official mainstream of meetings.

However, the individual relations are not enough. The official delegations of both towns take part in the most important events. Also, the cultural exchange has been developing – artistic and sport potentials are presented, the cultural heritage is shared.

The existing partnership experiences, and the undoubted attractiveness in terms of potential and position, have resulted in cooperation offered to the City of Pruszcz Gdański in the Chinese district of Yanggu in 2016. Mayor Janusz Wróbel signed the agreement that aimed at fostering mutual trade relations.

Last year our roads also crossed with the Belgian town of Beerse, whose inhabitants have a particularly warm attitude towards the Poles. In 1944, the city was liberated by the troops of General Stanisław Maczek.

# PANAJACHEL – THE PEARL AT LAGO ATITLÁN

by Karin Wohlgemuth | karin.wohlgemuth@rostock.de

**The year 2018 was a very special for a group of activists. After many years of co-operation with the region around Panajachel in Guatemala, the delegation came to Rostock on the occasion of its 800<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

They arrived prepared for a very special ceremony: the signing of the friendship contract between both cities as the culmination of already five years of intensive co-operation.

Lots of activities could be reported: the fair-trade distribution of biological pure high-land coffee as a stable base for earnings for the coffee farmers, the support of the reconstruction of a primary school which was severely damaged after an earth quake, common school projects on natural water circulation models, as well as assessment in the local waste management and city cleaning.

In summer 2018 a waste collecting vehicle was donated from Rostock in order to introduce the separation of different types of garbage. Meanwhile, in Rostock as well as in Panajachel, friendship association were founded to put all efforts on a solid and wider base.

Future projects focus on the promotion of Maya gardening, and of Maya folklore, Maya mathematics and Maya astronomy in the schools of Rostock. It is planned to organize a pupils' exchange soon between the first pair or partner schools.





# KALMAR AND ENTEBBE WORK

# TOGETHER

by Anders Almqvist | anders.almqvist@kalmar.se

**Kalmar has nine twin cities. The most remote, but one of the most active, is Entebbe Municipality, a major town in Central Uganda situated on a Lake Victoria peninsula, approximately 37 kilometres southwest of the Ugandan capital, Kampala.**

In fact these two cities met in the late 1990's due to a co-operation between UBC and the newly started initiative "Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities' Co-operation" (LAVRLAC), initiated by a former Entebbe Mayor, with support of the former President of UBC, Anders Engstöm. The aim was to mobilise all local government authorities around the Lake Victoria basin to preserve the lake and its aquatic life.

## **Tangible results**

Since the co-operation started, Kalmar has been involved in a wide scope of mutually beneficial projects together with Entebbe. With support from the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy, staff and politicians from the municipalities have worked side by side and achieved many important results, such as: improved performance and legitimacy of local elections; a more gender equal service and decision-making structures at the municipal level; the establishment of a new and more detailed city plan for Entebbe; improved management and recycling of household waste which gave Entebbe the "Cleanest City of Uganda Reward" 2013; and most recently, the development of cultural pedagogic methods in pre- and primary schools, and improved opportunities for youth participation in local decision-making.

## **All is involved**

There are indeed many differences between municipalities in Sweden and Uganda when it comes to, for example, resources, cultural and organizational issues, and the amount of self-governance at the local level. But, there are also many similarities, such as the need for transparency in decision making, strive for more efficient service deliverance, and high ambitions among both politicians and staff to make their municipalities a better place to live and work in.

The co-operation has given many opportunities for knowledge exchange among municipal staff and has brought new solutions to challenges within both Kalmar and Entebbe. What is more, it has improved Kalmar's position on the labour market, as opportunities for the international exchange tend to attract talented staff, and give a reason for experience ones to stay.

This type of projects does also tend to strengthen important relations with NGOs and public authorities on regional and national levels.

Examples of partner organizations involved in the two latest projects are: Kalmar County Museum, Kenya National Museum, Linnaeus University in Kalmar, Makerere University in Kampala; ABF; Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda; Cultural NGOs in Entebbe; Kalmar County Theatre, etc.



# UMEÅ TRANSFERS

## ITS KNOWLEDGE

by Cathrin Alenskar | cathrin.alenskar@umea.se



### **Umeå municipality and Seychelles signed a collaboration agreement in 2004 in school, environment, tourism, business, sports and cultural co-operation.**

Several projects have been implemented over the years; teacher and student exchanges, cultural co-operation, citizen exchange, etc. The School of Business and Economics, Umeå University, also has had a collaboration agreement with the Seychelles since 2006. In 2019 Umeå University signed a broad agreement with Seychelles University.

### **To face the demographic challenge**

The latest project between the city of Umeå and Seychelles is within elder care. The demographic trend in Seychelles, with its 90,000 inhabitants, is similar as to many other countries in the world. Within the next 15 years, the elderly population will increase by 30%. Today, Seychelles has no functioning dementia care, so people with dementia including those with Alzheimer's disease, mentally ill and generally weak people live in the same accommodation.

The majority of the elderly are cared for in the homes of relatives or of "carers"/home carers without knowledge in dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Seychelles has adopted a new national strategy for elderly care on how to work with dementia care. The elder committee of the city of Umeå has set up a project together with the Government of Seychelles regarding capacity building on an institutional level within elderly care.

There are basically two activities planned in the joint project:

1. The basic training course in elder care developed by the city of Umeå will be translated into English and transferred to the trainers of elder care in Seychelles and thereafter the trainers in Seychelles will train the caregivers - "train the trainers".
2. Nurses from Seychelles will job shadow nurses in elder care in the city of Umeå.





# FOR UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

by Jūratė Mitkevičiūtė | [jurate.mitkeviciute@palanga.lt](mailto:jurate.mitkeviciute@palanga.lt)

**Palanga has been committed to active development of new international relations, fostering and promoting the idea of the unity of Europe. The administration of Palanga also encourages the community of the city, the youth especially, to be devoted to the strengthening of the current relations with foreign partners and to making new contacts with prospective partners.**

The city has fostered cooperation with partner cities of 10 European countries in such important areas as culture, tourism, ecology, education, etc., i.e. Simrishamn in Sweden, Frederiksberg in Denmark, Pärnu in Estonia, Jūrmala and Liepāja in Latvia, Bergen auf Rügen in Germany, Ustka in Poland, Svetlogorsk and Cherniachovsk in Russia, Kobuleti in Georgia, Bucha in Ukraine and Eilat in Israel.

Palanga contributes to the development of international relations and promotion of European values by being a member of the Euroregion Baltic (ERB), the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), European SPAs Association and the international organisation “Mayors for Peace”.

## Multilevel co-operation

Palanga is visited by high level guests from foreign countries every year. Ambassadors of Moldova, Romania, France and Israel visited Palanga and had meetings with the administration of the city in 2018. International relations with partner cities and other municipalities are supported not only by politicians or specialists of municipal administration. Close relationships have been established between various institutions and teams, employees of educational, art, sports schools, social security and health care system.

Palanga educational institutions are especially active in maintaining international relations with partner cities. For example, in co-operation with the school Am Grünen Berg from a partner city Bergen auf Rügen (Germany), Palanga Vlado Jurgutis Basic School organized several joint projects in 2018. The projects included integrated lessons and continuous pupil self-expression programme *Christmas Readings*, attended by a delegation of pupils from a regional school Am Grünen Berg from Bergen auf Rügen. Pupils read poetry written by foreign poets in the second foreign language: Russian, German and French.

## The youth involved

Thanks to the friendly and business relations with the European Brass Band Association, a world-famous European Brass Band Championship will be held in the reconstructed Concert Hall in Palanga in 2020. An agreement concerning the event was signed by Šarūnas Vaitkus, Mayor of Palanga, Ulf Rosenberg, President of the European Brass Band Association, and Kor Niehof, General Secretary.

The municipality gives much attention to the local youth organizations, their activeness and implementation of promotion and joining of various activities. The representatives of Palanga youth participated in various training courses and skill development activities held under Erasmus+ programme in 2018. Some of the said trainings were held in Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Sicily. The young residents of Palanga participated in DARE Erasmus+ student exchange programme and international partners' meeting in Portugal in May.



# UBC NEWS & FACES

## Join us at the XV UBC General Conference “Building an inclusive and resident-focused city. The Baltic way”

**The XV UBC General Conference will be held on 15–18 October 2019 in Kaunas, Lithuania. Themes of the conference include among others “Inclusive Cities” and “Culture as catalyst for cities development”.**

The General Conference is the highest authority of the Union and has power to take decisions concerning any activities of the Union, e.g. electing the Presidium consisting of the President and three Vice-Presidents of the Union for a two year period, as well as electing the Executive Board for a two year period.

In addition, a number of plenary sessions and back-to-back meetings are organized during the conference. As in previous years, a Youth Conference will also be included, and the Baltic Sea youth will actively participate in all conference programme.

Save the date – more information will follow in our channels.

Event page: <http://ubc.kaunas.lt/>

More about Kaunas: <http://ubc.net/cities/kaunas>

### **Connect with us!**

- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/UBC\\_BSR](https://twitter.com/UBC_BSR)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/UnionoftheBalticCities/](http://www.facebook.com/UnionoftheBalticCities/)
- LinkedIn: Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
- YouTube: [bit.ly/ubc-youtube](http://bit.ly/ubc-youtube)
- Instagram: [ubc\\_bsr](https://www.instagram.com/ubc_bsr)





## UBC Executive Board met in St. Petersburg

by Irene Pendolin | [irene.pendolin@ubc.net](mailto:irene.pendolin@ubc.net)

**The 83<sup>rd</sup> Executive Board Meeting of the UBC was held on 23–26 April 2019 in St. Petersburg. On the meeting agenda there were, among others, preparations for the XV UBC General Conference in Kaunas on 15–18 October 2019, 10<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdańsk in June, proposal of cooperation with VASAB, WG on Gender Equality project proposal, Shore Power and the Cruise Industry, The Baltic Sea House initiative, Anti-radicalization BOX project, Empowering participatory budgeting in the Baltic Sea region, and UBC budget 2019.**

In addition, the UBC welcomed a new member city, Municipality of Jonava from Lithuania, and accepted a new UBC partner from Dierre/Smartdoor.

Chairman of the Committee for External Relations **Evgeny D. Grigoriev** welcomed the UBC Executive Board to St. Petersburg, one of the founding members of the Union.

“City of St. Petersburg is happy to host the Board meeting of the UBC. We have many common issues around the Baltic Sea, concerning for example youth and environmental protection – these are important to all Baltic Sea countries. We hope that through this meeting we can open up new ways of cooperation all across the Baltic Sea”.

One of the presentations made by St. Petersburg’s representatives concerned the Vodakanal environment protection plant, which was also one of the destinations for study visits during the Executive Board meeting. The Vodakanal also does important educational work by teaching children about water protection. Other presentations by the hosts included e.g. Friends of the Baltic.

Of the UBC Commissions, the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission and the Youthful Cities Commission presented their current work to the Board and the St. Petersburg hosts. The youth will again have a strong involvement in the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdańsk as well as the XV UBC General Conference in Kaunas.

“In Kaunas, there will not be a separate conference for youth but only one conference where the young are with us also as speakers and panelists. This is very important if we wish to truly involve young people in our organization, work and societies”, stated **Carsten Adamsen**, Chair of the Youthful Cities Commission.

**Matti Mäkelä**, Chair of UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-being, invited all UBC member cities and partners to register by 10 May to the conference “Supporting Youth Employment and the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee – The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices from Baltic Sea Region”. The Conference will be held in the Committee of the Regions on 20 May 2019.

The UBC Executive Board reviewed and accepted the UBC budget proposal for 2019, presented by the Secretary General **Paweł Żaboklicki**.

The next UBC Board meeting will be held during the XV UBC General Conference in Kaunas in October.



# Welcome to the Baltic Youth Camp!

by Carsten Adamsen | caad@kolding.dk



**In June the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will run its course in Gdańsk. The UBC Youthful Cities Commission for the 4<sup>th</sup> time together with Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, Euroregion Baltic and Baltic Sea Cultural Center has opted to create the possibility for youth involvement on this occasion.**

On 8–11 June 2019 we will bring around 100 youth from all over the Baltic Sea Region to a 3-day “festival” of youth discussions, workshop, seminars and cultural understanding. We will provide a forum for debate and discussions for young people on issues important for the future of the region and raise awareness for its sustainable development. A secondary goal of the Youth Camp is to find a way to create a Baltic Sea Youth Declaration to politicians of the region.

We will highlight the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we have a special focus on SDGs related to the work of the Regeneration 2030 movement. We will focus on the topic of the EUSBSR Annual Forum (Circular and Sharing Economy). We consider SDG12 – responsible consumption and production, as especially crucial in this regard.

The Youth Camp will take place on the island of Wyspa Sobieszewska just outside of Gdańsk. Our goal is to create a bigger and even more attractive Youth Camp with the support of other strong and interested actors. Actors from the Gdańsk and Pomorskie Voivodship are committed to contribute with own ideas and resources to anchor the Youth Camp on site. The Youth Camp is also a big chance for the responsible actors of the EUSBSR to communicate their activities, ideas and ambitions - and get impulses from the younger generation.

We heartily invite you, the UBC politicians to join in! In the morning of the last day (11 June) the participants will present their conclusions in the form of the first edition of the Baltic Sea Youth Declaration. After the presentation, we will open the floor for dialogue between the politicians and the participants through organizing workshops and ‘speed dating’. 11 June is also the Participation Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Forum that begins on 12 June.

In Kolding, Denmark, on 29 April – 2 May 2019, the Youthful Cities Commission holds its annual meeting. The overall topic is the youth participation and involvement. As 1 of January this year, Kolding has entered the league of cities with a youth council. Its youth council presents itself and hosts a workshop on the works of youth councils around BSR. The question on how to improve international co-operation between youth councils, is discussed.

Also, there is the Youth Conference / UBC General Conference in October on agenda. Unfortunately, we were not able to be funded in the first round of Erasmus+ projects but we submit a new project for the April deadline, as well. Hopes are still high for Erasmus+ funding, and the goal to gather around 100 youth in Kaunas for the conferences.

Lastly, the Youthful Cities Commission is looking for a new vice-chair to take over the work, as Riga enters into the position of a chair as of 1 January 2020.



Photo: City of Turku, Joonas Salo

by Matti Mäkelä | matti.makela@turku.fi

# UBC's Best Youth Guarantee Practices travel to Brussels

**This year's main activity of the UBC Task Force Supporting Youth Employment and Well-Being has been organizing the UBC Conference Supporting Youth Employment and the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Brussels on 20 May.**

The Conference concentrates on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Baltic Sea Region and successful networking and the best practices of peer development. Task Force's own work is presented thoroughly, of course, but participants will also hear about other networks, such as School to Work in Baltic Sea Region and StartNet in Central and Southern Europe. Best practices and some examples of successful innovation transfers are also part of the program.

The event is brought to a climax by a panel discussion, which tries to find answers to some major questions, such as "What are the main challenges of the future?" and "How we are able to face and solve them?"

The target groups of conference are policy makers, education and welfare specialists, NGOs, municipalities and public institutions. UBC will arrange a conference together with the Committee of the Regions.

### School to Work in Gdańsk

During the first half of the year 2019 Task Force has continued collecting good practices and widening the national and BSR networks. One good example of the latter activity has been a newly started cooperation with the StartNet Net-

work. In June Task Force will arrange a conference in Gdańsk together with the School to Work Flagship. The Conference concentrates on the following themes: early school leaving, NEETs and integration of newly arrived refugees and migrants.

Next fall the Task Force is planning to arrange two study visits. First one will take place in Turku, where program themes are attractiveness of the VET, integration of the migrants and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). Second study visit in Malmö will be organized with the themes of basic skills and integration of the migrants.

More information: <https://www.s2wflagship.eu/>



Photo: City of Turku, Jussi Vierimaa





## Innovative safety to be discussed in Tartu

by Kaspars Vārpiņš | [kaspars.varpins@liepaja.lv](mailto:kaspars.varpins@liepaja.lv)

**The next UBC Safe Cities Commission meeting will be held in Tartu (Estonia), on 5-7 June 2019. "Innovative solutions in safety and emergency management" will be the topic of the meeting.**

The meeting will start on 5 June at 15:00 with welcome words and presentation about Smart Tartu. The introduction will be followed by visit to Tartu Volunteer rescue brigade where they will show and present volunteers' capabilities in rescue services.

6 June will be booked for member city presentations about the innovative solutions in safety and emergency management, fruitful discussions and exchange of experience.

Also, the discussions will concern the XV UBC General Conference in Kaunas and the Commission's activities and involvement. An update about other UBC activities will be provided.

The day will be concluded by with information about CASCADE project and Commission members will take part in one of the project activities.

On the last day of the meeting, the South-Estonian Rescue Centre and Emergency Response Centre will be visited to learn about their everyday work and various challenges.

Hope to see you in Tartu!

## CASCADE – Community Safety Action for Supporting Climate Adaptation and Development

It is becoming more evident each year that climate change is an emerging security threat, and a field in need of involvement from civil protection specialists, as well as climate change experts.

CASCADE project will seek to improve urban resilience in cities and towns, as well as the overall macro-regional resilience. The expected outcome of CASCADE is to adapt existing risk assessment methodology to the climate change context and tailor it to the local level.

This methodology will be used in a training course for city officials, responsible for civil protection. CASCADE will also strive for initiating a region-wide policy dialogue on the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as an effective platform for cross-sectoral co-operation between different levels of governance and for greater policy coherence on climate risk assessments.

UBC Safe Cities and Sustainable Cities Commissions are the partners in this project.

# HA Capacity – work to empower stakeholders and broaden funding

by Mikko Lohikoski | lohikoskimikko@gmail.com



**The European Commission presented in the end of January a bi-annual report on the progress of macro-regional strategies to the other European institutions. Its general conclusion was that four strategies – the EU-SBSR, and others covering Danube, Ionian and Adrian and Alpine regions, are all progressing, albeit with different speed and characteristics.**

The EUSBSR, being the oldest and turning 10 years this year, is clearly the most developed, and acts as inspiration to the others.

One of its four horizontal – all-encompassing – actions is HA Capacity, of which UBC is one of the three coordinators, together with the Swedish Institute and Norden Association representing the Baltic Sea NGO Network. At its meeting last October, the UBC decided to take direct responsibility over the practical work as coordinator from a partner organization. The formalities were finalized in March 2019.

HA Capacity has become an important “engine” of the EU-SBSR. According to its mission, it has organized a number of training sessions and consultations for other strategy stakeholders, usually with the help of generous funding from the Swedish Institute.

For example, HA Capacity has organized a number of one day (lunch-to-lunch) workshops with thematic Priority Areas of the Strategy. These aim at better performance of key stakeholders in implementing action and flagships, and better alignment of funding for activities. These PA workshops will continue, as they have been well received.

Another development of major importance is the work of HA Capacity in broadening the funding of the EUSBSR. At the moment, majority of funding for flagships and projects

comes from the Baltic Sea INTERREG funds. However, these are but a fraction of funds available in the EU “mainstream programmes” such as ERDF and ESF. It is clear, that the ambitious goals of the macro-regional strategies cannot be achieved without ensuring broader funding for them in the coming years.

Therefore HA Capacity organized a number of consultations with the Managing Authorities of ERDF and ESF to discuss ways and means to make their funds better available for the macro-regional activities. A major step in this direction was a meeting in Brussels on 27 March 2019 convened by the European Commission – DG Regio and DG Employment, Social and Inclusion. It brought into dialogue some 150 participants representing both the mainstream programmes and macro-regional strategies.

While there remains still much work to be done, the mood in the meeting was very positive and the necessity of closer co-operation and co-ordination was acknowledged. The European Commission also emphasizes this. If – and hopefully when – in the future funds of the EU mainstream programmes will be available to support key activities of EU-SBSR, this will open new and much bigger possibilities also to cities to implement important development processes. HA Capacity plays in this process a key role.

Taking this development into consideration, it is important that UBC and its member cities would strengthen their involvement in regional co-operation as part of the EUSBSR.

Next possibility to get involved is the forthcoming EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdańsk (12–13 June 2019), as well as the preceding Participation Day one day earlier. Registration for both events has been opened.





# UBC cities exchange with European cities on sustainable urban mobility plans

by Esther Kreutz | [esther.kreutz@ubc.net](mailto:esther.kreutz@ubc.net)

Photo: Richard Adams

**In autumn 2017 the first SUMP Learning Programme was launched within the CIVITAS SUMP-UP programme and since then over 70 cities from all over Europe have learned, exchanged, discussed and cooperated in four learning programmes. The fifth and last SLP is starting in May this year.**

The learning programmes are 6 months intensive courses including webinars, e-courses and face-to-face workshops, where a small group of cities (max 25) is co-operating.

SUMP-UP brings together cities and municipalities of different sizes, with different prerequisites but similar experiences from all over Europe.

## **13 UBC member cities were part of the learning programmes**

“This kind of programme give great possibilities to build connections with other cities and open doors for cooperation and knowledge sharing in the future, as well”, states **Anna Huttunen**, Sustainable Mobility Manager from the city of Lahti. Lahti was just in the process of developing their SUMP when an application to the SUMP-UP call was a great addition to get support on the way.

Trelleborg municipality applied to the 3<sup>rd</sup> learning programme with the aim to raise awareness of mobility aspects and to get support to increase internal cooperation between departments in the municipality.

“The opportunity to learn across nations and to establish networks for future initiatives and collaboration was an

## **▲ SUMP learning programme workshop in Birmingham, UK in June 2018**

added value”, says **Lina Wedin Hansson**, Sustainability Manager from Trelleborg.

The content input in the project is of course the core part, the cities receive a lot of input and materials to work on with their colleagues to further develop their processes at home, but perhaps even more important is the personal exchange and discussions with colleagues from other cities in the face-to-face workshops. The participants from Trelleborg frequently interacted with the other European cities in their learning group and found especially the discussions very rewarding.

“I think the most valuable take away of the programme is exactly the discussions with fellow colleagues. It is exciting and kind of relieving to share experiences and see that all cities face challenges when it comes to sustainable urban mobility development. Some of the challenges are similar, some are different, but you acknowledge that there are certain discourses and political debates that are common for all the cities”, says **Anna Huttunen**.

Both cities, Lahti and Trelleborg are active UBC members and used to co-operate within our region. Nevertheless, exchanging with other cities from different geographical regions widens the perspective even more and provides you also with new views on your own local challenges and opportunities!

More about the project on [www.sumps-up.eu](http://www.sumps-up.eu)

# Sport 4 Values project launches in Kaunas

by Phil Tulba | phil@tulba.co.uk



## Step up For Rights of Females (SURF)

- Capacity building project
- Fighting for Gender Equality and Women's rights
- Lithuania, India, Senegal and Honduras
- <https://www.facebook.com/genderequalityindia/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/athletesofindia/>

**Partners from 8 European countries have been successful in securing funding for an ambitious multi-year project funded by the European Commission called 'Sport 4 Values' (S4V).**

Applications were submitted for the call: "Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level - EAC/S14/2018", with Kaunas municipality in Lithuania leading the partnership. It includes:

- Campobasso, Italy
- Fazana, Croatia
- Larissa, Greece
- Liepāja, Latvia
- Portimao, Portugal
- Sandanski, Bulgaria
- Thermi, Greece
- Umeå, Sweden

The Union of Baltic Cities is also a partner. Its members who want to attend the partnership meetings, seminars and conferences where research findings and best practice examples will be shared, as well as opportunities for training and networking, are invited!

The aim of the funding is to use the power of sport to promote common European values. The partners have chosen the novel approach of using urban sports (BMX, skateboarding, roller skating, parkour and 'street' basketball) to engage young people to develop and enhance freedom, equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities and the role in urban sports to develop and promote them.

## The project idea

The idea came from the observed benefits of these 'sub cultural' activities on young people. Whilst urban sports are individual in nature, the culture surrounding them include respect, solidarity, working together, freedom of expression and tolerance.

These values not only support common European values, but also create a sense of social inclusion and cohesion within communities (both communities of place and interest) and being part of a team – a cultural identity.

The benefit of sport is widely recognized and through this project partners will identify good practice, develop practical tools and disseminate them through a series of workshops, training and conferences for urban sports development.







# UBC partners up with Ducky!

by Bogdan Glogovac | bogdan@ducky.eco

**In order to engage citizens of Baltic cities to live eco-friendlier, UBC has contacted Ducky, a company from Trondheim (Norway) to discuss how Ducky can help. Ducky is an online platform designed for climate engagement in sectors such as: transport, food, energy and purchase.**

Ducky directly embeds all the best engagement practices in a complete, interactive climate engagement platform built on campaigns and competitions, where participants can log and track their everyday climate-friendly activities. Participants are immediately rewarded with feedback on how many kilos of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents (kg CO<sub>2</sub>e) that are saved by their actions; introducing a real time feedback and gamification element.

The first meeting was hosted the by UBC Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki in Gdańsk, with a representative of the Youthful Cities Commission.

Great potential opportunities (such as Baltic Climate Cup, a climate competition between Baltic cities) were immediately identified. Also, different UBC Commissions such as the Sustainable Cities and the Youthful Cities have seen large potential in communicating and measuring climate impact of Baltic youth, but also focusing on the environmental and urban sustainability work within the UBC.

UBC has decided to test out Ducky during XV UBC General Conference that will be held in Kaunas on 15–18 October.

Testing Ducky will be done via creating a campaign “UBC’s Climate Culture Challenge”, where all participants will be invited to join their teams and compete in a 3-day challenge, by logging climate action in transport, food and energy.

More than 400 youngsters and 100 politicians from all of the 10 Baltic countries will be a part of this unique “Climate Challenge”. If this pilot project goes well, the next step would be to scale it up and proceed towards the “UBC’s Climate Cup” by the end of 2020.





# Joint project against radicalization

by Marko Paunovic | marko@outofthebox-international.org

**According to European Commission reports, there is lack of cross-sectoral co-operation between public authorities, IT companies and CSOs working with youth at risk of radicalization. More often not good practices addressing violent radicalization in one sector/country do not effectively translate to other sectors/countries.**

“Anti-radicalization BOX – building a model for successful cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing violent radicalization on the local level” project aims to create spaces for this exchange and build synergies and long-term cooperation, thus increasing successful countering of violent radicalization of youth. During the project a new and exciting social media tool, the UNIKS application (<https://www.uniks.com>) will be upscaled and piloted. Furthermore, the project will introduce the “anti-radicalization box”, a platform dedicated to continuous capacity building and a good practice source for CSOs, educational institutions and policy makers.

The main aims of this project are to map effective practices in ITC and training & education in order to empower local actors within the field; upscale and test the UNIKS app, best policy and mentoring practices verified by Police departments local CSOs, and educational institutions dealing with violent radicalization; create policy responses, recommendations and structures for effective cooperation between police, schools, CSOs and social services on local level, transferable to other EU countries; and finally, create European community of practice to enable synergies, exchange of information and enhance long term capacity building of local actors.

During the 24-month project, the consortium of partners will work towards the enhancement of local actor capacity to provide preventing/countering radicalization services and will support structures offered to all relevant actors; furthermore, the project activities will aim for increased cooperation between local actors in different EU Member States aiming to develop common prevention projects building on complementary capacities and knowledge.

The activities will consist of a varied approach: coordination activities, research, upscaling and piloting the UNIKS app, training, capacity building and advocacy activities reaching out at least 2,400 practitioners in capacity building and dissemination activities and at least 40,000 stakeholders in the online activities.

The project itself will offer an opportunity for an international co-operation. The partners are all experienced actors in the field and will bring an interesting dynamic to the project overall: **Molise verso il 2000** is a local development agency working to support sustainable rural, economic and social development; **Out of the Box International** is a European Network bringing together different actors working on social innovation and advocating for a solidar Europe; **CESIE**'s mission is to promote community development through capacity building and empowerment of individuals; **Liepāja Municipal Police** will contribute to the project by their work in secondary schools in the city; **WUS MED** is a politically independent association with a vision to be the competent partner in developing education and social inclusion. Also, the **UBC** is the project partner.





# Baltic Sea House — the region's new common "Lighthouse"

by Tommy Bruun | tob@colorclouds.dk

Photo: LANGE ARKITEKTER | COLORCLOUDSTUDIO

**The Baltic Sea House will be a neutral Baltic Sea space, where multilevel regional governance can develop, digital and creative platforms can breed and share interest and focus on the preservation of the regional eco-system can be visible as a contemporary and future agenda.**

The BSH's are placed on selected sites and will collectively symbolize the strong affiliation and dependency between the nations. In the long term, the houses will be the mediator of connections across the region, for the benefit of all. The BSH has the potential of becoming a generator of a new nature based urban development, addressing question of inclusiveness, citizenship and new urban strategies. Becoming an attractor at a remote site, it addresses future development and use of local and regional resources. The different sites must contribute to a whole understanding of the region - an understanding of diversity and inclusiveness.

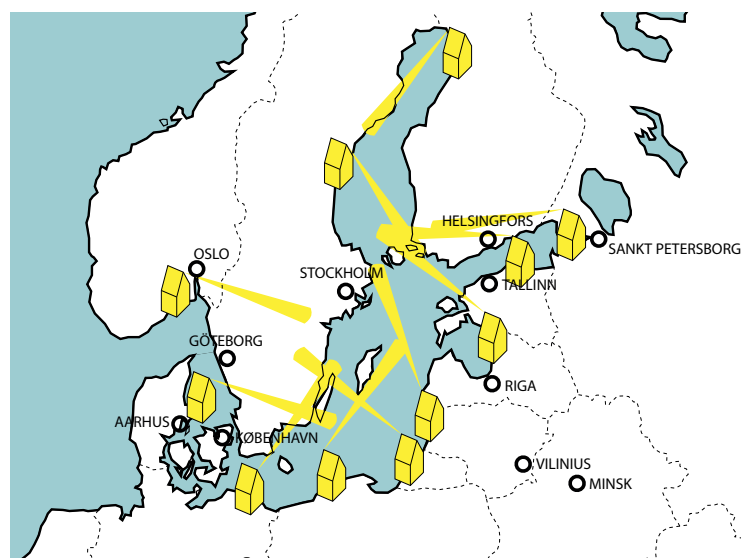
The BSH project will support the Union of the Baltic Cities agenda, expressed in distinctive common lighthouse meeting places, where regional interaction, cultural meetings, music, theatre, discussion, engagement, cooperation and development can take place.

The project will also support UBC democratic values, such as equality, inclusivity and participation, by creating a space for these values – a dynamic democratic meeting place which presents our common conditions and goals. The project will contribute to the development of our region; become a regional and active platform for joint cultural experiences, common ideas and regional initiatives.

10 identical houses are placed on important sites along the Baltic Sea with regional and local development opportunities. The houses have a recognizable iconic expression. They are erected in a wooden structure – a local building material used in the region for centuries. The design provides the framework for an interior multi-use space for: theatre, exhibitions, meetings, concerts, debates, business meetings and joint regional events across borders for all 10 houses.

The houses contain the necessary installations for light, sound, heat, communication and secondary facilities, which can be activated when needed. They can be closed down when not in use and require no daily use or operation.

We imagine the houses being build by a joint team of 3 selected craftsmen from each of the 10 countries.



# CITY NEWS



27.–29. jūnijs

Liepāja

## 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LATVIAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT RESIDENCE IN LIEPĀJA

**In 2018 Latvia celebrated its centenary and in honor of this great event, there have been many activities across the country during the last year and the closing event of more than a yearlong celebration will be held in Liepāja this summer.**

To celebrate the dramatic events that took place 100 years ago when the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed, headed by the Prime Minister of the first Provisional Government of Latvia and later Prime minister of Latvia for four terms – Kārlis Ulmanis, the Provisional Government was forced to leave Rīga. For six months Liepāja became a residence for the Latvian Provisional Government. In June 2019, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Latvian Provisional Government to Liepāja on board of the steamship "Saratov" will take place.

"Saratov's" 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Liepāja will celebrate not only to remember and celebrate the centenary event that is important to our city, but this reconstruction will provide an opportunity for every Latvian citizen and guests of our city to get to know the nuances of history important to our country and Liepāja, remembering the time when the city was the headquarter of the Latvian government.

During these three days from 27 to 29 June this year there will be a unique chance to explore events of the 1919.

Event Program will consist of Ecumenical worship service at Liepāja St. Anna's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Reconstruction of the historical event "Welcoming of the Steamship" Saratov" to Liepāja – 100", a symbolic staging of the Provisional Government arrival at the square near the Old Customs House, a walk along the route from the Old Port to Jānis Čakste Square, festive outdoor ball, events for families and children, "Kurzeme region Song Festival" and other activities with a participation of foreign artists as for example Dixieland collective from USA, a bagpipe and a drum group from Scotland and a street theatre troupe from France.

Liepāja welcomes all our UBC friends from far and near. See you this summer!

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## GDAŃSK – MATURE CITY BETWEEN LIGHTHOUSES

**Implementation of projects in broad international partnerships gives cities the opportunity to gain a new look at urban development challenges. Is it a mature city, or a leader – a “lighthouse” of change or perhaps a city aspiring to face these challenges?**

Gdańsk is supposed to be quite mature in the field of international work and has started the implementation of a new international partnership project called Civic eState - Pooling Urban Commons. This is another project co-financed under the URBACT Program, after My Generation, My Generation at Work, Change! and Boostinno. Gdańsk with 6 partners tries to discover and implement better policies for urban sustainable development, this time in the area of city governance and civil-public partnerships.

This new network consists of the leading city of Naples and partners: Barcelona, Amsterdam, Ghent, Yasi, Presov, and Gdańsk. Its goal is to transfer through adaptation the Good Practice “Lost & Found” of the City of Naples. Thus it is named Transfer Network and aims at guaranteeing the collective enjoyment and management of urban essential

facilities conceived as urban commons. This public-community governance approach will secure fair and open access, participatory decision-making, sustainability and preservation to the benefit from these assets for future generations.

The project is run on two levels. The international level is mainly the exchange of knowledge and experience during transnational meetings. Meetings’ goal is to provide training opportunities and peer learning between cities, gain legal and expert support to run the pilot activities (experiments) on the local level.

To implement the Civic eState Good Practice, each city must come up with a solution adaptable to the local conditions and situation.

The entire project in Gdańsk will be focused on conducting three experiments. The first – creation of a “Citizens’ House” in Gdańsk (Civil HUB), is a space for supporting social innovations and urban activism in the empty building at Dolna Brama Street. The second will be related to the community management in the existing neighbourhood houses. The third one will work out a methodology for co-management of tenants in the social housing.

Each of these pilots will consider formal and legal terms in the national and local legislation frame and will work on building a community around the physical space ready for co-management and taking responsibility of the place according to the Italian principle of public-civil partnership.

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Photo: Evelina Vālaitytė

## WATER TOURISM UNITES THE CITIES

**Sailing in the Curonian Lagoon with larger yachts is a real challenge – it can be heard from many foreign sailing enthusiasts who were interested in opportunities of getting to the lagoon. The 4<sup>th</sup> International South Baltic Coast Ports Quality Forum “Development of Water Tourism in Curonian Lagoon, Nemunas Delta and South Baltic Coast” discussed the situation in the Curonian Lagoon.**

South Coast Baltic project is a marketing initiative under the umbrella of which 14 regional tourism associations and marina players from Germany (Vorpommern), Denmark (Bornholm), Poland (Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie), Lithuania (Klaipėda region) and Russia (Kaliningrad region) have joined forces to market the unique water sports area Southern Baltic Sea more effectively. All regions are connected not only by the coast but also by warm hospitality. They are characterized by a long history, lively culture, endless beaches and uniquely untouched Bodden, lagoon and river landscapes. Boaters who want to explore all this can choose from a wide range of family marinas to five-star marinas.

### Water tourism is popular

The event was organized by the project partners, including Klaipėda district Municipality together with Klaipėda City, Šilutė District and Neringa Municipalities.

The Baltic South Coast project aims to increase the number of sailors in the southern Baltic Sea coast. The Forum presented project activities and plans, discussed the opportunities and challenges faced by sailors and ports operators.

The question of how to develop a convenient shipping infrastructure in the Curonian Lagoon was also examined and what specific actions could be taken to attract sailors to the Curonian Lagoon bay. Mayor of Klaipėda City Municipality Vytautas Grubliauskas was delighted that the event was dedicated to the topic of water tourism in the Curonian Lagoon region. Sigitas Karbauskas, Director of Klaipėda District Municipality Administration, emphasized the importance of co-operation in a project that involves not only international partners but also encourages municipalities and port representatives to discuss the shipping conditions in the region, promoting tourism.

The event raised up problems and prospects for the development of water tourism in the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas Delta region.

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## CO-OPERATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION – A GREAT PLATFORM FOR A CITY DEVELOPMENT

**The co-operation between city of Jēkabpils and the Baltic Sea Region has been very productive.**

If we are thinking about key words and key ideas in co-operation between Baltic Sea Region cities we may say that base of all successful projects is communication. Communication is the main ingredient to successful relations between cities and it leads to the new projects and possibilities to develop our city in a way that we could not even imagine, based on our own experience.

The meetings provided by the UBC are a great platform to meet new people and colleagues which can lead to new

projects. For example – if city of Jēkabpils wants to participate in some cross-border project it is sending out invitation letters to different towns in the region, sometimes being not responded at all. But, if we are sending invitations to people, who we already know from some UBC meetings, it is most likely that we will get positive response. So, once again it proves, that communication gives us development possibilities on a new level.

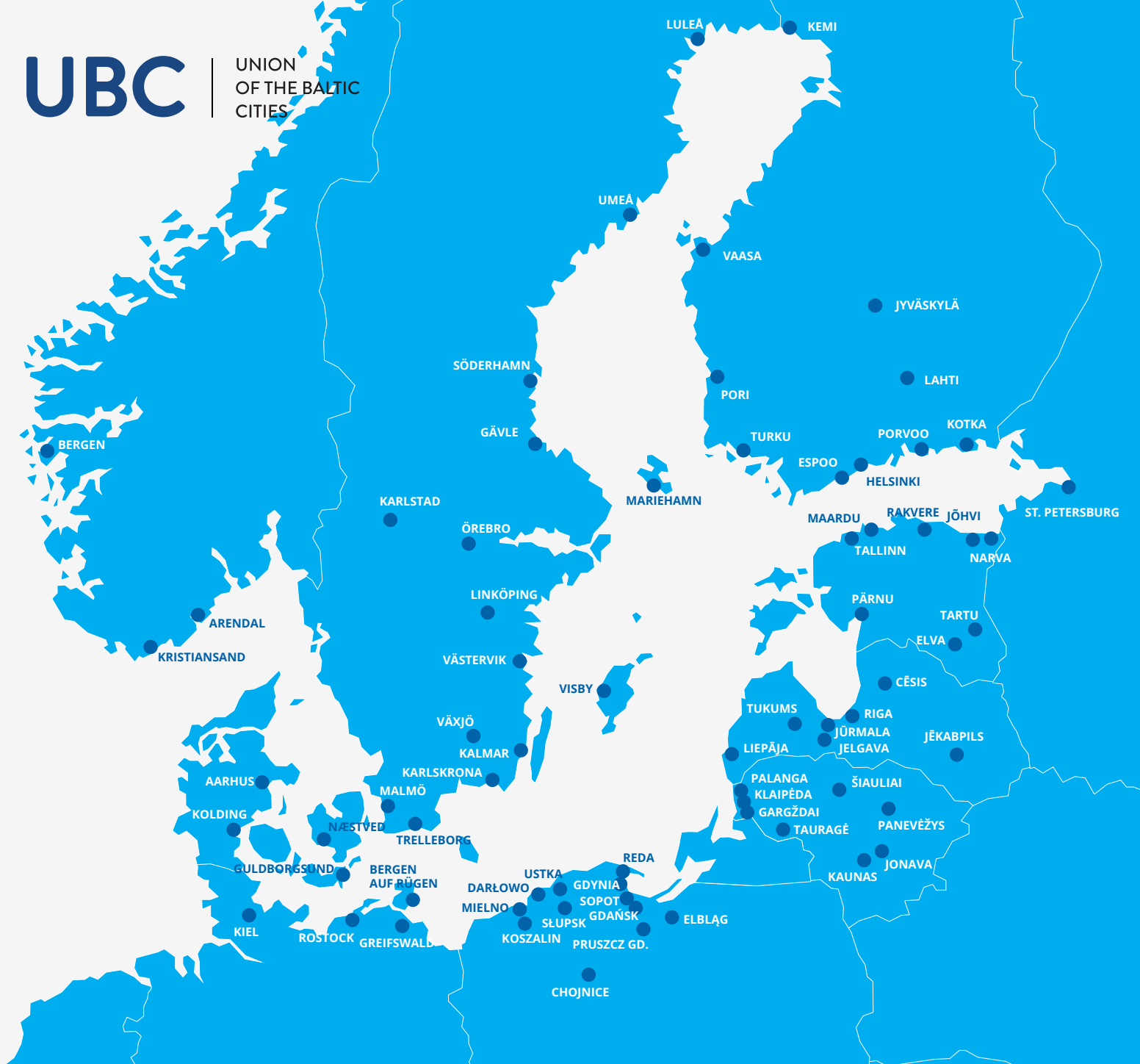
As for the latest co-operation, few years ago, thanks to the UBC, city of Jēkabpils participated in project in which group of colleagues from our city hall went to the Sweden and Norway. The aim of this project was to get acquainted with smart, green living and waste management in these countries. And for now, Jēkabpils has implemented a lot of ideas in everyday work in managing daily waste of the citizens. After a few years of the project implementation, the residents are living by these rules and are grateful for such possibility.

In the near future we will experience a new possibilities to communicate and visit other cities in Baltic Sea Region and provide ideas gained in these meetings to our citizens in Jēkabpils.

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# UBC

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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](http://www.ubc.net)



## Let's meet at the 10<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Forum in Gdańsk!

The events co-organized by UBC:

- The Baltic Youth Camp, 8–11 June 2019
- The Participation Day, 11 June 2019
- Seminar: Recognising potential – easing the way for migrants, 13 June 2019



## See you in Kaunas!

**15–18 October 2019**

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