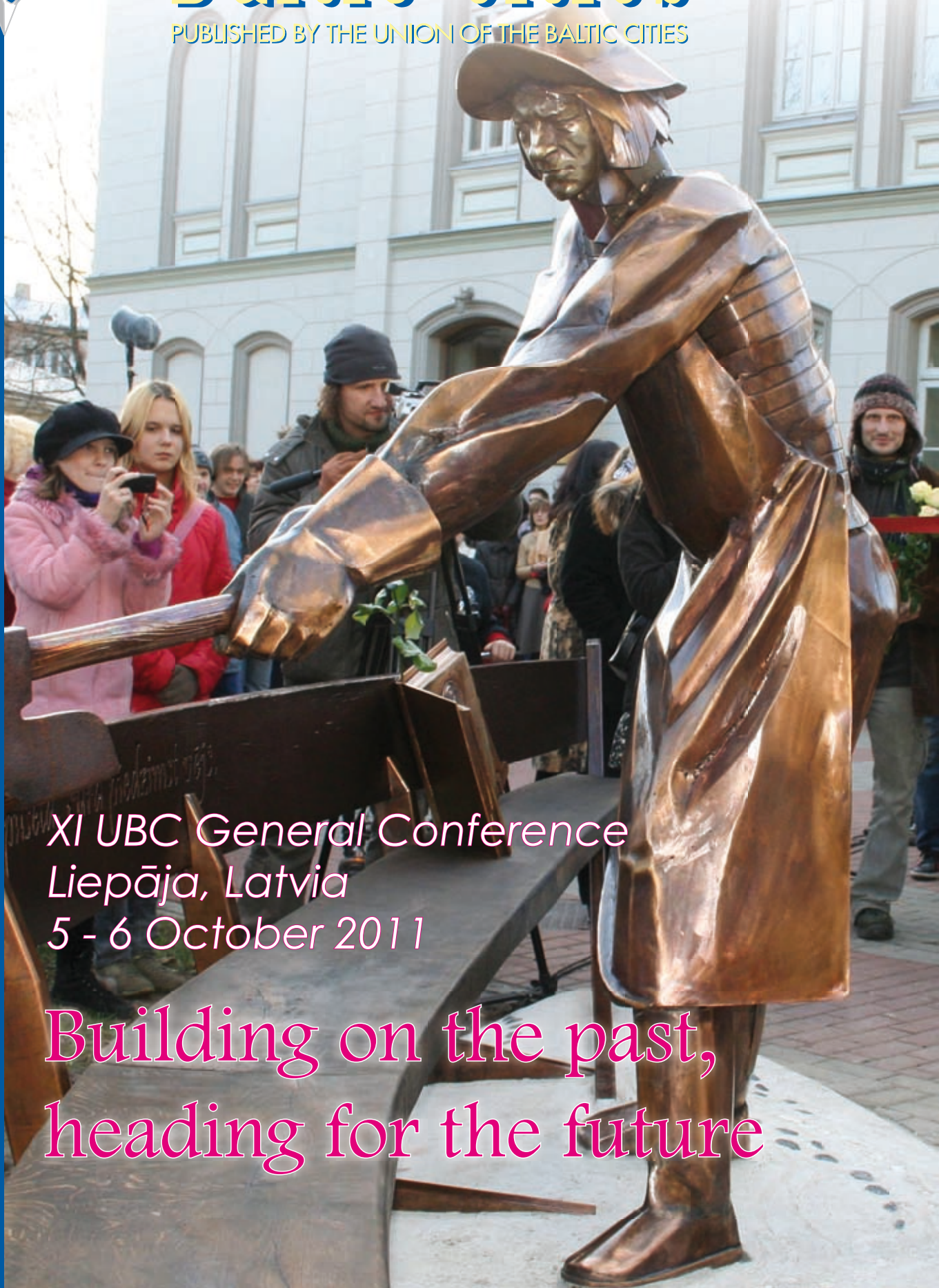




Baltic Cities Bulletin

1 / 2011

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*XI UBC General Conference
Liepāja, Latvia
5 - 6 October 2011*

*Building on the past,
heading for the future*

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COVER PICTURE
City of Liepāja
Photo: Aigars Štāls

Baltic Cities Bulletin

Dear UBC friends,

XI UBC General Conference is approaching. In Liepāja we will be celebrating the 20th Anniversary of UBC's foundation in Gdańsk on 20 September 1991.

Much has happened since the UBC's establishment in 1991. The Baltic Sea Region has been an arena of spectacular changes. From the region divided for 45 years by the Iron Curtain, it transformed into the area of vast cooperation. The theme of the conference will be 'Building on the past, heading for the future'. The reference to the past should be, however, a stepping-stone to the discussion about the future.

The first plenary session will bring an outlook on what happened during the last 20 years from the Cold War to the present cooperation and what can happen during the next 10-20 years.

We have invited distinguished speakers to our conference inter alia from the European Commission and Baltic Development Forum.

The second plenary session will focus on the cities' role, their expectations, interests, etc. Among the speakers there will be Ilmar Reepalu, Mayor of Malmö and Urve Tiidus, UBC Vice-President, member of the Parliament of Estonia, former Mayor of Kuressaare.

We will start the second conference day with the workshops, covering three crucial issues our communities are facing:

- How to strengthen economic attractiveness of cities;
- How to master climate change; success factors in the local integrated climate management;
- How to meet the demographic challenge; the ageing society.

I hope the cities will actively contribute to the conference workshops. The second day will be devoted to the internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finances, etc.

I truly hope Anders Engström, UBC Honorary President, former UBC President and former Mayor of Kalmar, as well as Michael Bouteiller, former UBC Vice-President and former Mayor of Lübeck will join us in Liepāja and share with us fascinating stories from the origins of the UBC.

To have an overview of what the General Conference will bring, I would encourage you all to read this issue of our Bulletin. It highlights the tremendous changes in our cities, once cut off from the East-West contacts, and now active on the international arena. Their dynamic development and increasing sustainability show the huge step we have made since 1991.

Looking forward to meeting you all in Liepāja!

With Baltic Sea greetings,

Per Bødker Andersen
President of UBC



Kolding, June 2011



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New Bridges project resulted in Kärldla in a new function of the harbour area



Welcome to Liepāja! XI UBC General Conference will be held on 5-6 October 2011

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BUILDING ON THE PAST, HEADING FOR THE FUTURE

Let's Get Involved!

Ewa Kurjata interviews Per Bødker Andersen, UBC President

What should be the role of the UBC in the "Baltic Europe" in the upcoming decade?

The UBC is first of all a network of cities in which the citizens expect basically the same public services. Good governance showing respect for democracy and transparency in decisions. Despite historical and cultural differences we help each other by exchanging experiences on different topics – and we do it for free. The challenges for the coming decade are many. A change in demography, unemployment, climate change, social balance and more, are all items to be dealt with by local authorities – both in the biggest as well as the smallest cities of the Baltic area. In this respect we can benefit from the diversity around the Baltic Sea, meaning that precisely the different historical and cultural backgrounds will be to the benefit of development in our region. We do have all the needed skills and we know how to cooperate.

How do you see your role as the UBC President in activating the Baltic cities to implement the UBC Strategy?

I see my role as sort of a moderator – but of course also as a chair responsible for urging the member cities to implement and further develop the UBC strategy. This surely cannot be done in a single way, but it must adapt to the different conditions within the national state and local authorities.

How the UBC President sees the role of the organisation he is the leader of, in integrating the local governments and strengthening the sense of 'Homo Balticus'? (Baltic identity)

Local authorities are part of the government structure in each country around the Baltic Sea. We are not lobbying organisation – but "full members" of the official government within the frames set for the LG by national Parliaments. As such we can contribute by working closely together and by putting up common goals for different areas of interest. But I think it should be underlined once more, that Homo Balticus is not just "one headshape". Homo Balticus is the identity of the diversity and mutual respect around the Baltic Sea.

How could the UBC contribute to deepening the economic cooperation and improving business environment in the BSR?

Through the work of the Business Commission, the UBC contributes actively to the development of business relations amongst the member cities as well as all parts of business society in the countries. And we also look beyond the borders of the Baltic Sea area, as we are convinced, that wider coop-

eration with other organisations in different parts of the world is one of the answers to growth in our region.

Which other organisations could be the UBC's potential cooperation partners on the European level and internationally?

We are already cooperating with other networking organisations in Europe and in USA/Canada. In Europe I can mention the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities & Towns, the Conference of the Atlantic Arc Cities and CECICN. We are represented in the Committee of the Regions with observer status, and I have the pleasure of being member of the CoR – and the possibility of promoting our points of view. USA/Canada is the Great Lakes network. I find it extremely important to connect to e.g. a Chinese counterpart within the next few years, as I see possibilities for trade, research and other business relations as very prosperous.

Any other comments related to the UBC Strategy?

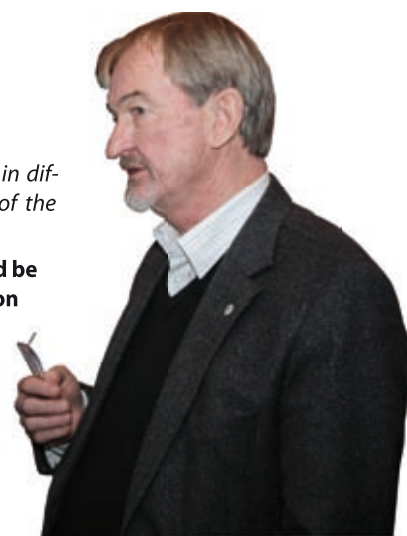
I guess that I have answered also about the UBC Strategy in my answers. But I would like to add that the EU Baltic Sea Strategy is of the utmost importance for all of us and emphasize the UBC will be an active and constructive player in the coming years in this cooperation as well.

Promotion of the Baltic Sea Region's image is thought to be an integral part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. How can, in your opinion, the UBC member cities contribute to creating the BSR brand?

Each and every member city of course acts within the regulations of the national Parliament. But 8 out of 10 states in the UBC family are members of the EU. Therefore there is a need for the UBC and the member cities to be aware of the possibilities for influencing every corner of the common EU policy within different political frameworks in order to put the Baltic fingerprints on today's and tomorrow's political development. In fact, it can be said very simply: Involve yourselves even if the EU system may seem stiff.

What is the future of the UBC in your opinion?

Our common future in the Baltic Sea Region is the future of the UBC as well. We must follow up on new trends. Closer cooperation with other Baltic organisations will emphasise the interests of the region as a whole even more. This cannot be done without the participation of the cities. Therefore you shall still see a vivid and policymaking UBC. In our region and in the EU.





The UBC Formula

Ewa Kurjata interviews Anders Engström,
first UBC President about the organization's
beginnings and more...



The Union of the Baltic Cities is celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year. How quickly did it pass? Organization-making is a complex art; it's not a formula. There's no simplistic, ten-point plan that can be mechanically applied to guarantee success in any eventuality. What was your formula for the UBC?

My formula for the UBC was to find out as soon as possible what member cities expected from the UBC. In the years 1991-92, I spent a lot of time visiting member cities and talking to mayors and employers working with international relations about their expectations.

When we come to think of the UBC's origins, the young Baltic organization must have encountered some difficulties at the outset in the early 1990s? How did the UBC fit into the political situation in the Region after the collapse of the former bi-polar system?

The collapse of the Iron Curtain was no surprise as it was expected by most of us. But fortunately, it was carried out in an almost peaceful way. Of course, it was a new situation for many people in the Eastern part of the Baltic. Many problems arose but also new opportunities appeared. The UBC had a very important role to play, namely to help the Eastern cities to adapt to the new political situation.

We all know that the older fabric with which European cities can work is a true gift. Yet, for some the Baltic Sea Region is quite a fossilized place. Hanseatic past gives a great scope to mould cultural resources. You can work with layers of history and the patina of ages, blending old and new. Yet finding novel, vibrant roles and purposes for the older Baltic towns as well as finding their Homo Balticus souls turned out to be extremely difficult. Has UBC found the Homo Balticus in the Baltic cities?

Homo Balticus has been the joint spirit of the Baltic Sea Region. It has been always present here and in the cities. It is our common Baltic identity. A true gift that still needs to be revealed.

Cities must speak to a world well beyond national government. They need to attract investment bankers, inward-investing companies, property developers, the talented the world over. They need to court the media through which the city's resonance is either confirmed or generated. How did you manage to create coherence out of wants and needs that don't align under the UBC umbrella?

As I mentioned earlier, I had to listen to the member cities about their expectations of the UBC. Of course they had many different expectations and interests. But I have never noticed that they competed. There was an enormous will to cooperate. I very often noticed that if a city wanted some help in solving a problem, other cities would always be ready to offer their expertise and experiences to learn from.

The city is more than 'roads, rates and rubbish', as the Australians say (or 'pipes, potholes and police', as the Americans say). Using this formula, what is UBC in your opinion?

It is a relatively easy formula. As stressed in the major UBC documents, it has always been an organization built upon cooperation, exchange of experience and partnership. These three count most.

The overall goal of UBC is expressed in the conviction "that strengthening the cooperation between the Baltic coastal cities may contribute in a major way to the development of the region and foster peaceful and harmonious relations between the European nations". How did the UBC contribute to the development of the BSR?

Through using experience from others, the member cities successfully realized projects. The UBC has also contributed to the development of the BSR when we took part in different projects initiated by the national governments. The cities have had a great influence on, for instance, protection of the Baltic Sea. Many of our waste water treatment plans have been ameliorated considerably.

After 20 years we can conclude that UBC turned out to be a successful player on the international arena. Yet, if you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

I don't really know. Perhaps other people have other opinions.

You served as UBC President from the day one. If you were to name two most difficult decisions while managing the organization, what were they?

The Board varied in their opinions whether cities from Belarus could be members of the UBC. They were not from a democratic country, but on the other hand, it was a chance to influence the local level. Another difficult question was if the UBC should have an opinion about the EU membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It was, of course, first of all a question for the parliaments, but our member cities in these states wanted the UBC to be active and to maintain its opinion that all three countries ought to join the EU at the same time. And so did the UBC.

Having named the most difficult decisions, could you identify your (as UBC President) successes on the Baltic and European arenas?

It is not up to me to answer that question. It is up to other people, should they have an opinion on that.

What is the future of the UBC in your opinion?

It must be up to persons presently active in the UBC to decide. But in my opinion the UBC must continue to act as a spokesman of the local level.

Ready for THE FUTURE

“The Baltic region has now the possibility to take its place in a new developing Europe, with its long tradition of city co-operation, its plentifold of universities, with the will and the strength to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The only way to meet the global competition of tomorrow will be to form this region of ours”.

Anders Engström at the founding conference in Gdańsk in 1991.

Building on the past

The end of the Cold War was a major breakthrough not only in relations between the countries in the BSR, but also between the cities. For over 45 years the Baltic Sea Region was divided into the democratic West and Soviet East. After the Iron Curtain collapsed, those contrasting worlds had to face the clash of cultures, economies and mentalities. It turned out that the cooperation and exchange of experiences were the best ways to diminish the existing gaps. The Union of the Baltic Cities was a response to the needs of cities eager to share and get the knowledge. The diversity was not an obstacle any more, but an asset.

Referring to the traditional links binding the Baltic cities in terms of trade, culture and tourism, 32 cities from 9 Baltic countries decided to create the UBC. Since the beginning the number of member cities has tripled.

The goals and cooperation areas have been evolving and extending to be adapted to the political and economic situation in the region and in Europe. The primary goal was to deal with the barriers between Western and Eastern Baltic cities and to contribute to the sustainable development of the whole region. Promotion of democracy and good governance were the first main tasks of UBC. Communication was a challenge, as well.

Initiated in 1995, UBC-EU Information Project was aimed at preparing the Baltic cities for the EU expansion in the BSR. The EU enlargement in 2004 caused significant changes in the new member states creating at the same time a new geopolitical situation in the BSR. New financing possibilities for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have created a great opportunity to even up the differences in economies and to improve the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. Also, Russian UBC member cities have been affected by the EU enlargement. Close co-operation with them has been especially significant to avoid arising new gaps and dividing lines.

One of the main strategic aims of the UBC has been from that moment to transform the political, economic and financial potential that is connected with EU enlargement into reality.

European dimension of the UBC activities has been even strengthened when the European Commission started its work on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the first EU macro-regional policy. According to the new UBC Strategy 2010-2015 adopted by the X General Conference in Kristiansand, *UBC and its member cities want to be active participants in the governance structure of the Strategy, as well as in implementation of its Action Plan and relevant flagship projects. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is our key framework for the coming years.*

How has the Union used its potential? How has it contributed to the regional development? What has been accomplished during 20 years?

UBC on the European arena

The Union has been aiming to be present in the European debate since the beginning, however, a clear EU dimension has been dominating since 2004 when Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined the EU.

At the General Conference in Klaipėda, 18 October 2003, UBC adopted the resolution appealing to the European Commission for regular consultations with local authorities associations, on EC policies which affect local authorities. The joint UBC- Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) statement signifying the need of a dialogue instead of a one-way communication proved that acting together make the UBC's voice stronger in Brussels. The first dialogue meeting was organized by President Romano Prodi in May 2004 in Brussels.

The Union expressed opinions and statements on the EU policies concerning the region. Following the development of EU funding programmes for the period 2007-2013 within the new Cohesion Policy, UBC with other Baltic organizations were successfully lobbying for introduction of an financial instrument enabling cross-border cooperation across the maritime borders of the Baltic Sea wider than 150 km.

Moreover, the Union significantly contributed to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. It is now involved in the implementation of several projects listed in the EUSBSR Action Plan as flagships.

The UBC voiced its opinions also on other EU policies, e.g. EU Maritime Policy, emphasizing the local perspective in the European policies.

Recently, the UBC with BSSSC and B7 Baltic Sea Islands Network, presented a joint position paper on the European Union budget for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 emphasizing the fact that the EU Strategy for the BSR needs to be backed up financially.



Towards a model sustainable region

Undoubtedly, the Union has been a frontrunner in promoting the sustainable development understood as balanced democratic, economic, environmental and social one that enables the current generation to live meaningful and healthy lives without compromising the possibility of future generations to do the same.

The commitment to face and solve the problems inherited from the past decades expressed in 1991 at the Founding Conference laid a solid foundation for continuous works for the sustainable future of the cities, and the region and outlined the cooperation between different stakeholders.

The UBC Commission on Environment with the complementary work of other UBC Commissions has been aiming to put the idea of sustainable development into practice.

UBC Agenda 21 and Sustainability Action Programmes list the best practices and actions needed to find good practical and efficient solutions to the challenges and problems the member cities have been facing. Numerous projects have been implemented to reach the goals of the Action Programmes, e.g. SAIL, EMAS Peer Review Project, LVRAC, New Hansa of Sustainable Ports and Cities, PURE - Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication, NEW BRIDGES – Strengthening of Quality of Life through Improved Management of Urban-Rural Interaction, Solutions local, together, Alliance of Baltic Cities (ABC), Managing Urban Europe – 25. The overwhelming majority of these projects gained the EU financial support from the European Regional Development Fund or specific EU programmes (e.g. LIFE).

Progress have been monitored through Sustainability Surveys that have been carried out since 1998. The surveys show how the integration of sustainable development issues is progressing in the cities in the BSR. Practical examples of sustainable practices complemented with suitable tools have been put together into one database available for all UBC member cities at www.ubcwheel.eu.

The UBC has also referred to the climate change threats calling its members for actions to minimize its harmful effects. The UBC Resolution on Climate Change was accepted at the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu 2007. Additionally, when the European Commission started the Europe-wide consultations on preventing climate change consequences and adapting to the new conditions, the Union responded that the climate protection needed first of all the commitment of municipalities and their inhabitants.

UBC Commissions: transfer of know-how, cultural exchange, social security, problem solving

The UBC Commissions have been working to achieve the sustainability goals and to provide constant cultural exchange, transfer of best practices and experiences. Through their work various cities' needs and expectations are met, either concerning culture, business or tourism.

Initially, the Commissions' meetings and seminars, festivals (e.g. initiatives of the Commission on Culture - Festival of the Baltic Cities, art festivals), competitions and publications were invaluable in making the cities better known and more familiar with their rich history, culture and heritage. As time went by, the Commissions, still promoting the cities in terms of culture or tourism, became very useful, multi-dimensional expertise platforms for the cities.

The outcome of the Commissions' work have also been an expression of discourses held in the region, e.g. regarding the social security or gender mainstreaming.

The UBC Social Charter, adopted at VI UBC General Conference in Rostock in 2001, reflects the social practices in the Baltic cities. The Charter offered a conceptual framework providing the basis for the development of the sustainable societies. It was prepared by the UBC Commission on Health & Social Affairs to stimulate the cities to incorporate the social dimension into their policies and strategies.

Social campaigns (e.g. 'Without limits', 'Always Active') promoting integration through sports activities among youth, the disabled, elderly people have been the domain of the Commission on Sport.

The Commission on Gender Equality has been aiming at better recognition of the gender equality problems, and lobbying for inclusion of the gender perspective into the EU Strategy for the BSR.

The Union has also been supporting the involvement of the youth into the local democracy. Transforming the Network on Youth Issues into the Commission gave a new impetus for the young leaders who have been coming up with many ideas and projects, e.g. EU co-funded "Different History, Common Future".

Sustainable urban areas have been the main interest of the Commission on Urban Planning which seminars always meet with a great interest of the city planners and architects. Its successful ABC Alliance of Baltic Cities project with 27 cities participating resulted in steady contacts between partners, proposals on how to deal with the city planning problems of today and tomorrow.

Sustainability in tourism has been in focus of the Commission on Tourism's activities. Its successful Baltic Welcome Center and Ancientimes projects promoted Baltic cities and their heritage as attractive and accessible tourist destinations.

Another area of interests covered by the Union is education. The Commission on Education supports and organizes the exchange between pupils and students among UBC members. Its flagship project is Erken Laboratory Research School addressed to the students aged 16-20.

International cooperation

The Union has been establishing and developing contacts with other Baltic and European organizations and institutions i.e. European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and others.

The cooperation with other Baltic organizations is very important to avoid overlapping and to strengthen one Baltic voice on the EU arena.

Also, in 2010 UBC has become a member of the Conference of European Cross-Border and Interregional Cities Network (CECICN) created by six organisations: Iberian Network of Cross-border Entities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, MedCities, Mission Operationelle Transfrontaliere, Union of the Baltic Cities, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities.

Heading for the future

There are many people working for the UBC who remember how the cooperation looked like at the beginning. Formal obstacles or limited means of communication did not dampen their enthusiasm. Quite the opposite, difficulties motivated to even harder work. The UBC made a long way from being the open door for cities cut off from the international West-East contacts for over 45 years to the strong powerful organization, representing over 100 members on the regional and European levels.

Creating a network of cities keen on working together despite differences and competition has been an unquestionable success.

The future will bring new challenges and opportunities. Being responsive to the changing political, social and economic conditions, the UBC wants to be a meeting place for people, a forum for exchange of ideas, contacts and experiences between the member cities and other partners, a source of inspiration and the dialogue. Its aim for the coming years would also be to empower its position as a respected and recognized partner in the Baltic Sea Region cooperation, promoting the interests of the cities and the region.



Looking out from a former backyard

by Jan Martinsson

Prior to the 1990s, in the days before the fall of the Wall, Kalmar alongside the rest of southeast Sweden suffered heavily from being positioned at the end of the road in the backyard of Sweden. The fact that the city was sitting next to the Baltic coast, right in the middle of the Baltic Sea region did not connote much in those days. Quite frankly, it meant nothing!

The concept of a common Baltic Sea Region, stretching from Scandinavia to Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Northeast Germany, as we know it today, was non-existing. During the long cold war period, not one single ferry line crossed the Baltic, in the area between the Stockholm-Helsinki and Ystad-Swinoujscie.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the reborn of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian republics, the revival of the Polish democracy and the reintegration of Germany altogether restructured and expanded a completely new Europe. New connections and relations in trade and communication and political cooperation suddenly became plausible and easy to reach.

The political leadership in Kalmar soon treasured these new values and prospects for the city. In fact, the Mayor of Kalmar at that time, Mr Roger Kaliff, as early as the mid 1980s became a highly respected leading spokesman for the entire Southeast of Sweden, in the inspiring new developments of Baltic Region multinational cooperation. In 1989, Mr Anders Engström succeeded Mr Kaliff as Mayor of Kalmar. Mayor Engström was also intensely committed to the international Baltic region relations. Consequently, Mr Engström became one of the founders of Union of Baltic Cities elected the Union's first President. During Mr Engström's period as Mayor



Anders Engström, the first UBC President

(and successively Head of International Relations) in Kalmar, a great number of new twin city relations with other Baltic cities was established. These include the Lithuanian city of Panevėžys in 1992, Russian Kaliningrad in 2000 and Wismar in Germany in 2002. Also, due to Mr Engström's efforts the prevailing twin city relations with Gdańsk in Poland was revitalised in 1991.

These early developments in international relations between Kalmar and its neighbours across the Baltic Sea remains a great inspiration to the city's administration.

In the past 15 years Kalmar has participated in or managed more than 65 nationally or EU financed projects in cooperation with its twin cities Panevėžys, Kaliningrad, Gdańsk and Wismar. This has had a great impact on daily life in the city. New friendships have been established across the Baltic, reaching far beyond regular professional relations. Previously closed doors in trade and academic relations have been opened wide, in some cases even completely refurbished, thus increasing capacity in both Kalmar and its partners.

Kalmar has also headed the Commission on Tourism, Telecommunication and Youth Issues. Indeed, for Kalmar the UBC has been an unmatched source of inspiration and the city's main basis for cooperation and partnership in EU projects.

MORE

Jan Martinsson

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Cooperation around the South Baltic Sea

by Ann-Katrin Olsson

In connection to the fall of the Berlin Wall, new possibilities for cooperation with the countries around the Baltic Sea opened up. With the opportunity to travel between Poland and Lithuania, exchange opportunities increased. Since sport is universal it became an area that developed between the countries.

Since the beginning, Karlskrona, the chairman of the Sports and Leisure Committee or equivalent, has been the Vice-Chair of the UBC

Commission on Sport.

Karlskrona promote contacts and relations between the member cities in the area. Youth targeted events have been organized. While only a sport was in focus at first, there are now also public health-oriented activities in the Commission's program.



Cooperation around the South Baltic Sea

In 2010, Karlskrona arranged a large event for both the Nordic and Baltic countries in the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. 100 young people came to Karlskrona and showed off their skills, participated in the festivities and joint development work.

Over the years, regular meetings have been held by associations in different sports. The meetings have been supported by the municipality of Karlskrona and also by the clubs and the youth that have helped to make them possible.

Examples of activities being currently carried out are: the Twin Cities Sporting Competition in Gdynia, Lyckå Cup in Karlskrona and Robertas Poska Cup in Klaipėda. Many other associations participate in the exchange between the cities. The exchange is partly supported by coordinating and initiating operations of the Sports and Leisure Department, but also by the associations. The Sports and Leisure Department is a link between countries, communities and associations.

MORE

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Kiel benefits from the network

by Horst Nimtz

Kiel is a member of the Union of the Baltic Cities since January 1996. At that time, a lot of UBC member cities were Kiel's sister cities. This was one of the reasons, why the city established contacts with the network. Today, 15 years later, Kiel still has good relations with the UBC members.

This network helps in sharing knowledge with other cities and in finding future orientated solutions. One of the core fields of Kiel's international work is business development, especially the question, how to find a place in a more and more globalized world, leads out thoughts. Being a part of the Baltic Sea Region and being a member of its strongest city network, helps in the city's efforts to take this challenge. UBC is an excellent platform to discuss questions of common interest.

In this aspect, reactivation of the UBC Commission on Business Cooperation by the city was a very satisfying experience. Together with numerous partners, it is now very positive to take the challenges of globalisation. The main focus of the Commission's work will be on the topics "Marketing BSR" and "Science Parks".

Back to back with the meeting of the Business Commission, a fruitful conference was held in Kiel in 2010 devoted to the topic "crea-

tive region". More than 50 international experts in economy, science and politics discussed the future of their business location, their industry and commerce during the Kiel Business Strategy Meeting. This shows clearly the attractiveness of the UBC in the Baltic Sea Region.

The aim of Kiel's UBC-membership and the Commission's work is to learn from the international partners. A dialogue is awaited which will help to exchange knowledge and to develop new ideas.

MORE

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Photo: City of Kiel/Peter Lühr



SUPER CITIES IN SUPER REGION

by Ina Šidlauskienė

Every weekend during three recent months, ten Lithuanian cities and regions competed on a very popular TV show to win the name of the country's 'Super City' for the first time. Each team had to introduce the city, its values, people, talents, and to sing, dance and rival in wits and sports. The whole country selected the best city voting by phone. Klaipėda won with an overwhelming majority. Though it was just a game, it united the communities all over the country, inspired pride, self-esteem, dignity, patriotism, and the determination to make own contribution to prosperity. It has also corroborated the high ranks of Klaipėda among inhabitants and confirmed the fact, earlier disclosed by a survey, that Klaipėda is the city, where people would like to live.

In the overall picture of European political, economic, social and cultural life, the Baltic Sea Region could definitely be among the winners. A strong regional partnership on all levels, wisely combined with competition, over the recent 20 years resulted in enormous change. From a closed, dull, industrial port, Klaipėda has become an internationally recognized city, the winner of Europe Prize 2003 of the Council of Europe, the venue of many international cultural and the host of prestigious world sailing events. A city with a steady growing cargo and cruise shipping port, one state and one international universities, the centre of innovation culture and entrepreneurship - Science Tech-



The winning team of Klaipėda with fans at TV show 'Super City'

nology Park, excellent transport infrastructure, a successfully operating Free Economic Zone, new residential areas, a new Concert Hall, theatres and clean beaches for recreation, new service centres, big shopping malls, Klaipėda has got the fortune of everything to continue unveiling its extensive opportunities. A real breakthrough of developments was possible to active employment of the EU financial instruments. In 2011 alone, the overall value of EU support to a variety of projects under the City's implementation comprises 75,6 mln EUR.

Over two decades, the UBC served as a good school for local politicians and administration employees.

As 50% of regulation affecting local government originates from the EU legislation and other international agreements, and democratization gathers speed, cities are taking more and more responsibility. For improving their performance, as well as managing the interface between the state and citizens despite of sometimes very limited resources, the experience exchanges within the UBC Commissions are of a great value. Thanks to the UBC, local politicians are now better placed to express and defend local interests on the national level, too. Being among founder cities of the UBC, Klaipėda is becoming increasingly aware of the organization's potential to lead cities in the 21st century and make the BSR a sustainable Super Region of Europe.

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20 years of cooperation

by Silje Solvang

If we all had the same thoughts, ideas and experience, there would be no need for cooperation. The quotation of former US General Patton (1885-1945) describes the foundation for cooperation across national borders and city limits. The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is no exception. Its aim is to promote and strengthen cooperation and exchange of experience among the cities in the Baltic Sea Region, to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region, and to act on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and other international bodies. The member cities participate because they all want development in the world that is constantly changing.

Since its establishment in 1991 with only 32 member cities, UBC has shown a significant growth. Today, UBC is a proactive network mobilizing the shared potential of over a 100 member cities from all 10 nations surrounding the Baltic Sea. Kristiansand has been a



member city since its beginning in 1991, and is proud to be a part of the Union's 20th anniversary. Kristiansand has been active in several commissions, i.e. Commission on Sport, Health and Social Affairs and Youth Issues. It has been challenging,

*"If everyone is thinking alike
then somebody isn't thinking"*
George S. Patton

interesting and instructive, including the amazing opportunity to visit and explore different cities in the Baltic Sea Region. The membership in the Union has resulted in several projects and cooperation activities

with other member cities, i.e. Gdynia, Umeå and Narva. Kristiansand has worked several years with Narva mainly on two projects. First, a few years ago a delegation from Narva visited Kristiansand and introduced an idea of a common project in the framework of the EEA and Norwegian mechanisms. The purpose of the project was to strengthen the administrative capacity of local governments and assist in improving the quality of public services. This was facilitated through exchange of experience and benchmarking between the local governments of Narva and Kristiansand. Kristiansand hosted 10 small delegations from Narva local government to study tourism, youth issues, environmental issues, planning, etc. The second project included the training of social workers. Four social workers came to Kristiansand to observe, learn and acquire new knowledge about new technology and practice.

In a political and economic context, things have changed considerably since 1991. The UBC has played an important role all those years. Kristiansand believes that the UBC can continue to facilitate cooperation, exchange of good practices and stimulate further changes. To do that the UBC itself must change to adapt to the rapid changes in the world around us. It has been 20 interesting and inspiring years. Congratulations to all of us, members of the UBC!

MORE

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NÆSTVED CELEBRATES WITH THE UBC

by Søren Revsbæk

Næstved municipality has been a member of the UBC since the beginning. In Denmark there was a strong will to resume political contacts and trade with the countries across the Baltic Sea, cut off for more than 45 years.

Næstved has always been interested in international relations. Since WW2 Næstved has had twin cities in the Nordic countries, and after the fall of the Iron Curtain, also in Poland. As a harbour city, Næstved like for other Danish member cities, a contact across the seas is natural. Thus, it was natural for Næstved to support the UBC from the very start. Næstved Mayor Henning Jensen was also a warm spokesman for international relations. For several years he has been one of the Danish representatives in the EU Commission. During 20 years Næstved's activities in the UBC have varied. Since 2001 Næstved has had the honor of representing the Danish cities in the UBC Executive Board and recently it has also been involved in the UBC Commission's on Culture activities.

The city's experience with the UBC has, however, a wider view. UBC has been used as a contact base, when there is a need to get in touch with other cities across the Baltic Sea.

The handiart-exposition in Næstved last year could serve as an example. Participants from Rostock came to Næstved because of the UBC network.

The UBC is much more than the organization itself. It is also an important network that makes the cities much easier to reach. Politics, trade and economics are much different in 2011 than in 1991 in a now much more globalized world. Nevertheless, the UBC as a network and as a spokesman for the Baltic Sea Region is as important now as it was in the 90s.

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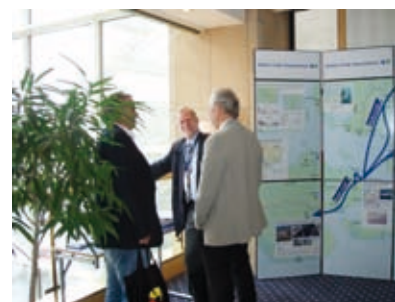


by Anders Franzén

What did Växjö know about life in Lithuania in the late 1980s? And what did Lithuania know about Växjö and Sweden? Nothing or very little. No exchange of knowledge was considered. Situation in Europe and in the region changed bringing new opportunities. People in Växjö reacted for a possibility to go East and see what the system had done to the Lithuanians, to bring help and support. At an early stage a contact was initiated between Växjö and Kaunas, two cities different in many ways, not only in size but also in structure and development. The first Twinning Agreement was signed in Växjö in 1990 to confirm a mutual will of co-operation. Groups of top officials and some representatives from business organisations paid several exchange visits. At first they were rather formal and there was much to learn from both sides. Slowly, closer contacts were established also on other levels of society and more concrete results could be reported. Over the years the co-operation has been focusing on some specific spheres. Once it was a democracy development with exchange of political parties experience and participation in election campaigns. Växjö based company ID, Institution for Democracy, made several seminars in Kaunas and in other cities in Lithuania to explain how a democratic political system with multiple parties works in Sweden. New levels of co-operation in education have developed over the years. Agreements between technical schools and universities (the adult education) have been signed.

Energy projects have been developed, focusing on usage of biomass in Kaunas region. The experience was shared in a district heating system. Also, the project to modernise Kaunas street enlightening network was initiated. Another issue has been environmental protection with nature friendly transportation, solid waste management and other Agenda 21 issues, like environmental education for children and women teachers.

The cities exchange exhibitions and concerts of local musicians, designers, choir singers and musical instruments, museum workers. Boys and girls have taken part in international youth games. Direct links have been established between tourism agencies in Kaunas and Växjö. The co-operation between Växjö and Kaunas has now continued for over twenty years. It brought in wider understanding and the exchange of knowledge between these two cities.



MORE

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From problem solving to prevention and Green Lahti

by Ulla Kananen, Sanna Vääriskoski-Kaukanen and Timo Permanto

Environmental work is nowadays high on Lahti's agenda. The city's strategy vision sees Lahti as an attractive, vibrant environmental city. Lahti also seeks the role of a forerunner in sustainable development i.e. by halving its greenhouse gasses from 1990 level by 2025. The work for a better environment began already in the 1970's when local Lake Vesijärvi was badly polluted mainly by untreated wastewater. The obvious and smelly problem activated the residents and a solution was sought after together with the city. It can safely be said that this very concrete environmental problem set the basis for Lahti city's environmental work and outlined the co-operation between different stakeholders for years to come.

The problems with the environment also rouse the need to make scientific studies about the state of the environment and here University of Helsinki was the one to answer the call. Nowadays in Lahti there is a department devoted to environmental sciences that trains future specialists to the field. The increase of environmental know-how has accumulated new environmental business to the area and also led to building of an environmental cluster that concentrates on Cleantech technology.

By 1990's and after the Rio conference the problem solving turned into problem prevention and Lahti was first in line to start raising awareness about environmental issues and how everyone could become more sustainable. By networking and awareness campaigns important environmental questions were brought to public discussion. This work still continues.

To share experiences, to learn more and to collaborate, the city has become a member of several international networks such as UBC, ICLEI and BLA21F. This cooperation has been very fruitful for learning new ways to raise responsibility on environmental issues.

Signing the Aalborg Commitments in 2007 brought sustainable development more comprehensively into public discussion. Without economic and social basis and without deeper collaboration of different organizations and stakeholders it is not possible to implement environmental and ecological improvements. The city still needs to tackle huge development issues such as renewing the city centre with sustainability in focus, putting emphasis on improving public transportation system and also giving floor to active participation of residents whether it be in decision-making or by empowering them to act as climate smart as possible.



The future goal will be to fulfil the local politicians' vision of Lahti as an attractive and vibrant green city.

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Kemi – snow, ice and diamonds

by Jorma Virtanen

Once the chairman of the tourism committee suggested that a sign should be installed in both sides of the city: "Kemi - nothing to see. Have a nice journey ahead." Ironical? Yes, but it tells that the city was blind to its neighbourhood.

The first impulse to become a tourist city appeared 25 years ago when a goldsmith master Mr Teuvo Ypyä founded a gemstone gallery, with his own largest collection of stones in Europe, in the old customs storage building. A quarter century ago Finland was about to crash the icebreaker Sampo, which had become too small and old-fashioned. Mr Juhani Leino, Mayor of the city, had come up with an idea to buy the vessel for Kemi and put it for tourists' use. Today the Arctic Icebreaker Sampo is the most international tourist attraction in Kemi. Inspired by Sampo Kemi started seriously to look around what this northern city, 100 km South from the Arctic Circle, could offer for tourists. The inspiration came from the pure nature, silence, snow and ice.

In the North every child builds snow castles in winter time. Couldn't the city build the world's biggest snow castle? In the post depression time of 1990s it was challenging indeed to sell the idea to the political decision makers. But there was creative madness and courage of the inhabitants of Kemi. After two months of hard work the huge castle opened its gates. The castle was accepted by the Guinness Book of Records. There was ecumenical chapel in the castle where services were held and also weddings and baptisms arranged. There were souvenir stalls, a restaurant, a snowhotel, art exhibition, slides and a big stage, where many famous artists, singers, dancers and actors per-

On the icebreaker cruise tourists experience in practice how ice is broken. There is time to eat traditional Lapish food, reindeer and salmon. And finally it is possible to go swimming in the icy sea.



formed. Success and publicity exceeded all expectations. The 16th castle has just recently closed its gates. Snowcastle melts in the spring and therefore every castle is unique. Snow construction technique, skills and tools have developed enormously. Nowadays castle is built within half of the time needed in the first year. The attraction of this year's castle was a comic exhibition: icy, colourful Asterix, Spider Man, Tin Tin and characters of the Ice Age, as well as dozens of others.

The Snowcastle has launched a snow construction boom especially in Lapland: smaller castles, restaurants, snow sculpture exhibitions and other constructions are built in the region. Standards for snow construction have been drawn. Many studies on using snow for building, tourism and business have been made in the Northern universities.

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Kaliningrad: The development picks up

by Vladimir Abramov & Olesia Karpinskaya

Kaliningrad was forced to adapt in an emergency order to two major changes two decades ago. One was due to a change in social system, another – the transformation of the region in the Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea. These changes have demanded all-out efforts from the local community which stood three waves of crisis in the beginning of 1990s in connection with disintegration of the USSR, a default of 1998 and the global financial and economic crisis of 2008.



In these circumstances Kaliningrad had to increase efforts on developing the city environment, improving ecological conditions, supporting cultural traditions, creating effective social assistance system.

In the last two decades scale works on restoration and preservation of architectural and history monuments have been carried out. The

former look is returned to one of the pearls of the Baltic gothic style - to the Cathedral laid in 1333. The Royal Gates were reconstructed within the framework of the 750 anniversary of the city. A central city square – the Pobedy Square is modernized. The historical and ethnographic area «Fish village», in which modern offices

and hotels had been placed, was erected in the style of the North European architecture of the last centuries. A musical theater along with drama and puppet theatres were added to the list of the culture establishments operating in Kaliningrad.

Recently in the city more than 80 coal and black oil boiler-houses have been closed that contributed to the purification of the air. The works on revitalization of the city hydrological system, including over 120 km of rivers, streams and lakes, are actively conducted.

Great attention is paid to modernization of the engineering infrastructure. Erection of a new collector and a complex of treatment facilities is close to completion. Constructing the second bridge across the river Pregel will allow to connect the northern and southern part of the city and to reduce number of traffic jams. A scale reconstruction of the road network is served to the same purpose. Commissioning of the Thermal Power Station-2, which use natural gas as fuel, creates conditions for reliable supply with heat and electricity. It also accelerates the closure of ineffective and environmentally harmful small boiler-houses.

Inhabitants and local authorities believe that their joint efforts will allow to transform Kaliningrad into a modern city in which the nature and a historical heritage are kept carefully.

MORE

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JYVÄSKYLÄ - HUMAN TECHNOLOGY CITY

by Marketta Mäkinen

In 1991 Finland was plunged into a deep economic recession, the effects of which were also felt intensely in Jyväskylä. The way of how municipal policies were discussed and shaped was completely reformed. The mid-1990s saw the beginning of numerous projects for turning the city into a more vibrant and attractive provincial centre, a significant university town and a centre of expertise.

After recovering from the first shock of the depression, one of the first acts was to improve the employment situation in the city. In 1992, the committee was established to identify the strengths of the region. Before the recession, Jyväskylä had gained a reputation of a pioneer of cooperative business and trade policies. Now it was time to get different parties to cooperate for a common goal.

The city drew up an economic development programme, with the focus on a centre of expertise programme, technology initiatives, traditional industry, culture and tourism. Moreover, during the mid-1990s, Jyväskylä started making strategic municipal plans. The municipal plan of 1995 called Jyväskylä – Human Technology City envisioned Jyväskylä as a vibrant growth centre and focal point of Finnish culture and international education.

International relations have long been an important channel for Jyväskylä. The city is a member of the Union of the Baltic Cities, the Eurocities, the Mid Nordic network and the European Cities Marketing network. Jyväskylä has also 12 twin-municipalities. International strategic partnerships emphasise cooperation between educational insti-

tutions and companies important to Jyväskylä. Cooperation between the city, educational institutions and the business sector has not only focused on Europe, but also on the St. Petersburg and Moscow regions, and on Shanghai and Kunming in China.

In 2000, the city also began the international training of its employees by making possible to work abroad for one to three months.

In the early 1990s, a centre of excellence programme was also drawn up in Finland. Eight centres were established, Jyväskylä being one of them. According to the programme, the strengths of Jyväskylä include paper manufacturing, energy and environmental technologies, as well as information and nano-technologies. Education in these industries was increased. The focus areas chosen turned out to be correct, and they have been continually strengthened.

Jyväskylä is strongly focused on service industries. New jobs have been created mainly in the financing and service industries. When the city is examined from the point of view of the employer sector, it can still be considered as a city of education, administration and institutions taking care of public services. A distinctive feature of the development in the 1990s and early 2000s was a noticeable increase in the number of private entrepreneurs. In the early 2000s, workplace self-sufficiency in Jyväskylä was one of the highest in Finland.

MORE

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Photo: City of Jyväskylä/ Pekka Sell



Cinderella Story in JELGAVA

by Ilze Rukmane

At the beginning of the 20th century Jelgava was a pearl of Latvian Baroque, Classicism and Renaissance masterpieces. Unfortunately, the July 1944 bombing ruined 93 percent of the town. While comparing Jelgava formed in the after war period and now, one may see its ageing. The town may boast with extensive green infrastructure in the centre. Priority of Jelgava is the public outdoor space and infrastructure. The town is active in attracting European funds. Jelgava is one of the few towns in Latvia, having its own urban landscape architect.

Today's Jelgava inhabitants do not accept deterioration of town's yards, and express an increased interest in outdoor space closer to their homes. The town which has grown on the banks of the Lielupe River has been living for years unaware of one of its major benefits, double closeness of water, i.e. four waterlines, the banks of the Lielupe and Driksa rivers which, if publicly accessible, would essentially improve the life quality.

Soon Jelgava will be able to call itself the metropolis of waterside promenades and pedestrian streets. After the reconstruction of the protection dam of the Lielupe River's right bank, the promenade was opened in 2010. Soon commercial interests in river business



Recently renovated
St. Trinity Church tower

arose – there was a possibility to establish a small ship traffic around Pasta Island and build a landing stage.

This summer the last stage of Lielā Street reconstruction will be carried out. It will fully change the communication network. It could be the first step in humanisation of the street infrastructure by introducing 'shared space' principles suitable for Jelgava.

Jelgava is also thinking about large-scale architectural projects, such as a concert hall, cinema, library, multifunctional cultural centre. The aim of Jelgava is not to become a metropolis with modern, exclusive haute couture public outdoor space and architecture. It would be nice, however, to create a

simple, functional, aesthetic and unpretentious environment. The task of professionals is to lay aside their personal ambition and work for the people aspiring for the best result possible.

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Ideas of Solidarity for the future generations



by ESC Team

European Solidarity Centre has been established to preserve the heritage and retain a fond memory of Solidarność in order to hand it down to the future generations, while stressing its relevance and universal value.

The first task, retrospective in its nature, was to realise a modern, interactive museum demonstrating how the events in the Gdańsk Shipyard initiated the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe. The Centre also accommodates a multimedia archive and the library, with a collection of dispersed and neglected souvenirs of Solidarność. Together with exhibitions – permanent, and mobile – ESC acts to strengthen the awareness of modern history, which is pivotal in building a European identity.



The future building of the European Solidarity Centre; opening is planned for 2013. Project by PPW FORT Ltd.

The second goal of ESC activity, the prospective one, is to hand down the heritage, ideas and notion of solidarity to the future generations. Solidarity, understood as the concern about the well being and com-

mon interest, and unity with respect for diversity, is still very relevant in modern society and worthy of all efforts of enhancement. Therefore, one of the most important areas of activity in this respect is education. ESC organises workshops, seminars, lectures and debates for young people, their teachers and local leaders, from Europe. ESC is also a cultural institution creating its own events and projects, and organising concerts and festivals with a view to inspiring fresh and new artistic movements.

Finally, it is active in historical research and social science to understand and explain the notion of freedom, justice and solidarity in order to become a centre of co-operation and integration, sharing the heritage of solidarity and its advocacy for justice, democracy and human rights with those who are deprived of it.



The European Solidarity Centre is a multifunctional institution combining scientific, cultural and educational activity with a modern museum and archive, documenting freedom movements in the modern history of Poland and Europe. The Letter of Intent to create ESC was signed by the heads of state and government, who gathered in Gdańsk in 2005, on the 25th anniversary of Solidarność. The Centre was established in Gdańsk on 8 November 2007, by the Minister of Culture, the Marshall of the Pomeranian Voivodship, the President of Gdańsk, the President of the European Solidarity Centre Foundation and the Chairman of the NSZZ Solidarność Trade Union.

MORE

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The embankment of the port canal open to the public

by Aigars Štāls

The Commercial Canal intersects the centre of Liepāja connecting the Baltic Sea and Lake Liepāja. For many decades during the times of the Soviet Union the embankments of the canal could not be entered by Liepāja citizens – it was a fenced-in territory of the port governed by the Soviet navy.

After Latvia regained its independence in August 1991 the Port of Liepāja was gradually converted for the needs of cargo transport, logistics, warehousing, off-shore fishing and other port businesses. Also, the interests of citizens were considered. The down-town side of the Canal, now called the Promenade, has drastically changed over the last 20 years. Today, it hosts a yacht marina and the fish market. It is becoming a popular venue for cultural and entertainment events in spring and summer. Throughout the year local people and city guests are welcome at the bars, restaurants and clubs located along the Promenade. It is open and accessible for a stroll to anyone and at any time of the day or night. This is a place in Liepāja which confirms

that good ideas always come true.

The changes were done in close cooperation of the local government, the Liepāja Special Economic Zone Authority and private companies who decided to invest in the area.

In 2011 a new Master Plan of Liepāja will be adopted. Already during its elaboration, the city, port authorities and citizens have agreed that the Promenade area of the Commercial Canal embankment will not be the territory of the port. It will enhance implementation of new functions

of this public space. The City Council has taken over from the national government three buildings in this area which need to be renewed. Two of those buildings will be used by Liepāja Museum, that planned to open a Fishery and Maritime Museum, to make displays of amber collection, expositions of textiles and art. There will also be an open-air exposition of ancient tools and items characterizing local fishery and maritime traditions. The revival of the Promenade – the waterfront of the Commercial Canal in Liepāja continues.



Annual Līvas Fair in the Promenade. The former closed port territory has become an attractive and accessible public space.

MORE

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Heading for the future cherishing the past

by Olga Tcheryomushkina

So it happened that the modern buildings in Narva have almost entirely blocked the magnificent views of Old Narva, both in the architectural and the historical sense. This was due to the active development of the city as an industrial centre during the Soviet times. Nowadays, however, more and more attention is paid to the tourist potential of the city. The rich history, historical and architectural monuments on the one hand, and the unique location on the border of the European Union and the beautiful natural scenery on the other, make Narva an attractive place for tourist and active holiday-makers. Development of the tourism potential on the basis of the wealthy historical and cultural heritage is one of the tasks that the present-day Narva faces. The city has submitted a number of applications to various European funds and has already received financial support for several projects which aim at turning Narva and the whole cross-border region Narva - Narva-Jõesuu - Ivangorod (Russia) into a place where tourism will flourish.

In March a new Visitors Center opened its doors in the city, offering wide range of information about Narva, Ida-Viru county and the whole of Estonia both via printed and electronic media. It is noteworthy that some ideas for the Center were borrowed and implemented as a result of fruitful cooperation with the city of Kristiansand in Norway.

In the nearest future the city will acquire a beautiful promenade stretching along the Narva River from Narva port to the public



The Promenade now



...and after reconstruction

beach. The latter will in turn become a nicely landscaped recreational area with renovated beach, sports grounds, cafés and a modern infrastructure for organizing public and cultural events. Tourists will be able to take a tour inside the restored bastions' passages, go on fascinating thematic excursions around the city, take long walks along the paths of Dark Garden perched on top of bastions Victoria and Pax, and make use of the audio-guides that transcend times, taking you back to the days when Narva Castle and Ivangorod Fortress were founded and fierce battles raged inside and outside their walls. The city has also plans to restore Old Narva, which used to be a pearl of Europe with its stunning Baroque architecture, not in its original size, however, but in a miniature form.

MORE

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ÖREBRO – FOR THE NATURE AND PEOPLE

by Bo Ek

The urban environments, the green areas alongside the River Svartån, the areas of nature surrounding the city, and the shoreline of Lake Hjälmaren have all undergone major changes in terms of the ecological and social aspects of sustainable development over twenty years. The city and its surroundings should be accessible to everyone. They make Örebro an attractive place to either settle down in or just to visit. During twenty years, the population of Örebro has increased by 25,000 to 135,000 today, placing tough demands on infrastructure and sustainability planning. The participation in various EU-projects within the UBC framework has given important support in fulfilling these demands.

In June 2010 Örebro designed its Climate Plan with intermediate objectives and measures looking as far ahead as the year 2020. The vision is that the burden on the climate produced by each person in Örebro should be at a level that, if applied globally, would not endanger the overall climate of the Earth.

In the early 1990s, there were areas next to the waterways that were derelict and badly polluted. An area by Lake Hjälmaren was the worst of all, with an old rubbish dump, polluted industrial sites, a dis-



From being the eyesore of the city, today the area is a natural pearl



used oil terminal, and completely overgrown woodlands.

A huge change began. Where the ground was the most polluted there are now rolling hills, meadows where livestock can graze, a water park, a nature school, and a restaurant that is open all year round. The new foot-paths and cycle paths also act as dykes through which lake water can flow during the spring and autumn. The subsequent bird life is very rich.

Fourteen new nature and cultural reserves were founded in

2010, forming a ring around the city. The areas on both sides of the mouth of the river are now nature reserves, linked by an ingenious bascule bridge for pedestrians and cyclists, under which boats can sail. It is possible to walk or cycle alongside the river, past the marina, the lock, the beautiful city park, and Örebro Castle.

During the past year, streets and squares in the city have been given a facelift and made more accessible to anyone walking or cycling into the city.

MORE

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Pruszcz Gdański

City of Changes and Development



by Bartosz Gondek

A visible division of the city into Eastern and Western part. No roads – not only estate roads but also roads of importance for the whole city. Residual sewerage. No defined city centre and a sugar factory functioning in the very centre creating a negative image of the city. Industrial areas, increasing unemployment, no recreational areas and no cultural offer.

It is hard to believe that 20 years ago it was what Pruszcz Gdański looked like. Today it is a modern developing city near the Tricity agglomeration. It is inhabited by educated and dynamic young people. It is an important road and rail hub and a place where A1 freeway begins. Today's Pruszcz Gdański is one of the most attractive cities in northern Poland which is confirmed both by investors and the results of national economic rankings. The city is friendly for its citizens and for investors. It became possible thanks to ceaseless work. The new city centre, recreation and green areas, the culture park and the reconstructed city park came into being. Most of the main roads were renovated, and new ones have been built all the time.

Next to the Gdańsk Bypass and the freeway the industrial district is situated. Many well-known companies such as Investa, Crown Cork,

Poczta Polska, LPP have their seats in the Baltic Investment Zone. Investors say that they were encouraged to choose this localization by a friendly policy – the assistance from the early stage and easy formalities. The fact that the city is very well-communicated is the next asset.



An undeniable attraction that will change the image of the city by the end of July is the reconstructed trade factory from the Roman times. It will be a place full of life, where history meets modernity and where visitors can feel the spirit of old times. This area will be used to organize open air events, happenings and artistic undertakings. Just next to the factory, in the amphitheatre of the International Baltic Cultural Park there are many cultural events taking place: the summer stage of Wybrzeże Theatre, concerts, cabarets and many others.

After 20 years Pruszcz Gdański can be described as a city of sustainable development thanks to continuous efforts, not only to develop infrastructure but also to invest in culture.

MORE

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Towards sustainability with improved transportation system

by Agrita Jeruma

Since the second half of 1990 when the development of Latvia economy restarted, Riga has increased its role in the national economic and social processes at a considerably faster speed than other regions of Latvia. Undoubtedly, this period marks the beginning of the continuous movement towards qualitative and sustainable urban development of the city.

Today about half of Latvia's GDP has been generated in the capital of Riga. 80 % of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Latvia is concentrated there and has reached 4.314 billion EUR. The city together with the region agglomeration is the largest among the Baltic countries with more than 1.2 million inhabitants. Businesses located in Riga produce almost 60% of the total industrial production of Latvia.

Over the last 20 years Riga has experienced very rapid and intense economic growth. The national infrastructure networks like transport, energy (electricity, gas, oil) and ICT (information and communications technologies) are concentrated in the capital.

Transport system of Riga city provides an appropriate infrastructure base to facilitate the growing trade flows between the EU and Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as to serve the needs of local export/import operators.

Recently the Mobility Plan of Riga has been elaborated providing solutions for the traffic and transport problems on inter-municipal and inter-stakeholder scale, which the Ministry of Transport of Latvia is facing, contributing to spatial, ecological, economic, social and institutional optimization.

Development of large public infrastructure projects has been set forward as the key priority of the city. One of the most important infrastructure projects since Latvia regained its independence is the Southern Bridge that considerably contributes to improving the city transport system and reducing traffic jams. Realization of the Southern Bridge and its runways is divided into three stages: first two stages have already been carried out and the last one is planned to be completed by the end of 2012. Another important infrastructure project is the Riga Northern Transport Corridor that will create new transit highway through the city in West-East direction by passing the historical centre of the city and will include Riga Port into the Trans-European Transport Network and will improve the competitiveness of Latvian East-West transport corridor.

The city attractiveness, territorial competitiveness, governance of large-scale urban development projects with particular attention to the different modes of financing, and attractive cultural background are the key factors that determine the city development today and in the future.

MORE

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TRANSFORMING TAMPERE

From an Industrial Town into a Congress City

by Ella Kuula

Tampere was an industrial city producing textiles, pulp and paper as well as machinery, among other things. However, in the 1980's it became clear that new forms of business are needed to replace the smoke-stack factories, which were closing down. This is when the congress business started to develop.

Congresses were seen important for increased international cooperation and new economic growth. On the other hand, musicians in Tampere had hoped for a real concert hall for fifty years. In 1981 Tampere finally decided to make plans for a concert and congress building.

The ambitious aim was to build the biggest concert and congress hall in the Nordic countries. Despite hesitation due to the hard economic times at the end of the 1980's, the city luckily kept its decision to build the hall. It was opened 20 years ago and named the Tampere Hall.

Tampere has two universities, a polytechnic, a university hospital and several research institutions. Many professors and researchers are members of international scientific communities and active congress organizers. Therefore, the main focus for the congress sector is on scientific meetings and congresses. The public sector, non-profit organizations as well as companies host

international meetings, too.

Tampere Convention Bureau was established in 1995 as a joint effort of the city, the educational institutions and the business sector. All major congress venues, hotels and other companies that benefit from the congress business are involved. Tampere Convention Bureau gives free and impartial consultation to anyone wishing to host an international meeting in Tampere.

The role of the Universities in Tampere has been essential in transforming the city from an industrial town into a centre of education, research and high technology.

The number of international congresses has risen to a substantial level thanks to the active international cooperation among professors and researchers, as well as the active work of congress professionals.

Today, Tampere is the second largest congress city in Finland with around 50 international congresses every year. Most of them are Nordic congresses attracting participants from the Scandinavian countries, as well as other countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Some congresses bring in delegates from all over the world.



MORE

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TRELLEBORG for the prosperous future

by Ingrid Wall

A new motorway, sports arena, extended port facilities, residential area in the harbour and expanding railroad – Trelleborg is a place bustling with construction machines, blueprints and visions. 9 November 1989 is one of the most important days in the history of Trelleborg. During thousands of years, the inhabitants in Southern Sweden have shared the Baltic Sea with its neighbours. The first settlers came to Trelleborg over the Sea about 13,000 years ago. Since then, water has united people on both sides. Therefore, it was a day of great joy when the Iron Curtain came down and the folks once again could travel freely across the borders. The port of Trelleborg, with ferry traffic to Travemünde, Rostock, Sassnitz and Świnoujście provide that the floating bridge to the continent is available 24 / 7.

A great future lies in front of Trelleborg, being a part of two very expansive regions, the Baltic and the Öresund. The unique position on the threshold of the continental Europe, 15 minutes away from the Öresund Bridge, makes Trelleborg an ideal place to live and work. In half an hour you reach the international airport of Copenhagen. By boat it takes less than four hours to get to Germany. In a couple of years, Trelleborg will be a part of the national and international network of railroads for the passenger traffic.

With 32 kilometres of sandy beaches, the surrounding farmland with small picturesque villages and the friendly city centre, Trelleborg attracts many new residents every year. Here families can

Trelleborg is the second largest port in Sweden and the biggest ferry port in the Baltic. About one fifth of the Swedish foreign trade passes through Trelleborg. In a couple of months, the new motorway to Trelleborg will be ready. The bustling port expands to meet the demands for larger ships, the railway line builds for more capacity and the road network extends.



find the house of their dreams, close to the Baltic and the nature, although very close to the hot spots in Copenhagen, Berlin and Stockholm. Life is busy in Trelleborg these days. The plans for a whole new sports arena progress and new residential areas will be built on the shore of the Baltic. Further, part of the harbour area will be transformed into housing areas, literally on the water.

Living so close to the Baltic Sea means a great responsibility for the environment. Trelleborg have been participating in several projects like Clean Ships, Baltic Master, Submariner and WAB.

MORE

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Sustainable Urban Development



by Anne Juel Andersen & Erik Møller

In recent years Aalborg has undergone a considerable change. It has been based on the guiding principles on sustainable urban development as laid out by the Aalborg Commitments. Industry along the harbour front and in central urban areas has moved away and resulted in large urban areas becoming prime spots for regeneration. The development from industrial city to a city characterized by knowledge and culture has gone hand in hand with Aalborg University's expansion to around 14,000 students.

The new waterfront plays a central role in the transformation of Aalborg from industrial city to experience and knowledge city. One of the aims of this transformation is to link recreation, education and culture in the harbour area that runs adjacent to the centre of Aalborg. This includes institutions such as Nordkraft, the city's former power station, which has been converted into a centre for culture and leisure, where art, sport, music, theatre, film and restaurants are all combined under one roof, the Utzon Center, an international exhibition and knowledge centre, and in 2013 the House of Music.

In the central harbour front project, cultural heritage has been taken as a starting point – historical traces are used in a new context with new functions and new connections in the city. The actual harbour front area as a transition area between the city and the water was, as opposed to the urban regeneration between the bridges, seen as an important asset which had to be maintained, albeit with new content. Creating a raw, maritime environment with historical traces was emphasized. As an example, the railway tracks were reused

in the paving as guiding elements for the disabled and to organize furniture such as benches and garbage containers. The harbour quay and bollards are also intact – though steps have been cut into the quay in order to provide a place for people to sit. Furthermore, there has recently been established a harbour bath along with several other areas for leisure and sports activities. An important aspect of the design has been not to blur,

but to emphasize, the maritime and industrial atmosphere. Owing to the regeneration of the harbour front and a range of urban spaces and building projects in the city centre, the city centre is currently expanding to the North-East, and new patterns of movement and green connections are being created. This marks a comprehensive reconstruction of the city centre and central harbour areas.



Photo: Bibi Weismann

Regenerated harbour front area Jomfru Ane Parken, Central Harbour front of Aalborg

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PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

by Eglė Juozapavičiūtė

When a number of European countries turned stable and powerful, Lithuania in 1991 had to take its first steps toward independence. Main purpose of that time was to transform and adopt existing basis for successful development of a new state and to ensure a better tomorrow for future generations.

Klaipėda District is making great efforts to retain the old Lithuanian heritage. Having a strong moral basis from the past, one is able to move forward into the future. Klaipėda District understands it and pays special attention to restoration and preservation of ethnographic homestead.

Agluonenai village is one of the few still remaining examples of Lithuania's Minor wooden architecture. It is a typical small farm in the Klaipėda Region. In 1983, Agluonenai barn theatre was settled in the homestead. Since then the festival of Lithuanian barn theatres has been organized in Agluonenai homestead every summer. More than 20 plays were shown in the barn and more than 100 villagers took part in these plays for over 27 years.



Jonas Gizas homestead

The homestead was renovated by funding from European Economic Area and Norwegian Financial Mechanism. This spring Agluonenai ethnographical homestead will open up for all lovers of cultural heritage and tourists.

Another renovated homestead is located in one of the most beautiful areas in Klaipėda District - Dreverna village. It was also renovated from the funds of Norwegian Financial Mechanism. In the end of XIX century Dreverna village was famous for its boat builder and fisherman Jonas Gizas. He was the best manufacturer of Curonian boats Kurenas. Kurenas is the old Curonian fishermen boat, produced in the 12th century. It was up to 10 m long and 3 m wide. The main purpose of these boats was fishing, but they were also used in the

lagoon for the logistical purposes.

The museum and the tourist information centre was established in the homestead in 2010.

MORE

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Curiosity and Passion – in the land of eight seasons

by Maria Wärbo Wetterlöv



Along with Riga in Latvia, Umeå in Sweden has been designated European Capital of Culture 2014. The program is surely developing with creative borderless networks and open-source methods as driving force. Europe's Capital of Culture 2014 in Sweden will use new technology as a tool to ensure open-source, to create the program and to establish long-term co-operation. There is a strong belief that the venture will be leverage for a long-term, culture-driven development plan for Umeå and the region that will not end in 2014 but continue for many years to come. The overarching objective is empowerment of the citizens, the city, the culture, the Northern Region, and the European interaction.

Umeå 2014 is building upon existing cultural infrastructure and gradually strengthening the institutions, festivals and independent players. The aim with this process is to create resilient local, regional, national and international networks that have the possibility of continuous growth. In creating the program, Umeå 2014 is using a dramaturgy that is inspired by the eight seasons of the Sámi people – the Arctic indigenous people. The Sámi seasons have their own rhythm, shaped by the Sámi people's cultural history and closeness to the nature. The seasons influence people – subtle variations in the weather, variations in our mood, and variations in what we do with our time. Each season has its own

special distinctive character – just like the activities in the program during the European Capital of Culture year. Every season will have its own opening ceremony that will draw attention to the city eight times during the year.

We have found that the dramaturgy of the eight seasons and the way we plan the events according to these seasons appeals to the people, the artists, our co-creators and partners. And it is also attractive to commercial and industrial life as well as sponsors, says Fredrik Lindegren, artistic director of Umeå 2014.

The bearing ideas in the application were shaped in a spirit and process of openness, dialogue and co-creation. Many open meetings and seminars and reference groups' representation has formed the foundation for the program.

Umeå 2014 is now establishing new networks and forums locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This has taken co-creation to the next level: operative planning. In 2012 the first draft of the program will be presented.

We already have strong networks, not least in the Baltic Region, but we have to make strong efforts to find innovative, creative and brave projects together with co-creators in the Baltic cities, says Marie-Louise Rönmark, Mayor of Umeå.

Culture is the driving force for innovation and culture makes people and cities grow.



Photo: Andreas Nilsson

MORE

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JĒKABPILS – CITY OF THE RIGHT CHANGES

by Zane Lapinska

People are the most important asset of Jēkabpils. The City Council in various ways is seeking for possibilities how to raise the quality of people's lives.

The cornerstone of Jēkabpils success is using and changing its natural resources. In this way inhabitants have been provided with active recreational facilities to spend time with family and friends.

One of the mostly liked and visited places of recreation is Radzu Reservoir and Mezaparks (Wood Park) in Jēkabpils. Developing of the park infrastructure started in 1966 when 26.2 hectares were planted with 20 different tree and shrub species in order to protect the city from noise and dust.

During the World War II and up to the establishment Jēkabpils at the dolomite quarry, the aerodrome was located at Radzi reservoir. From 1986 Mezaparks (Wood Park) started to develop.

The health trail with original runway and gymnastic equipment, accommodation and recreational playgrounds for children were arranged. Since 1998, seven-kilometre running race around the reservoir that gathers outstanding Latvian athletes, has been organized every autumn.

In the summer time eight verdant islands appear. The reservoir



beach has Blue Flag which proves that it meets 29 criteria covering water quality, coastal quality, safety, service, environmental education activities and information.

The Islands of Radzu reservoir are important for several species of birds as a nesting place. Here there is a large number of nesting gulls, terns and ducks, and a variety of shorebirds - the river snipes,

plovers and sea magpies, and lots of great crested grebe. Up to 2000 pairs of a specially protected species, a black-headed gull - white gull with a dark brown head - are breeding here.

This place serves as a link between the past and the future. According to the results of the survey in 2010, it is also a place where people would like to see new, progressive projects, e.g., a bicycle path around the reservoir, bmx-track, a skate park, a motorway for summer activities and a skiing hill for winter sport activities.

MORE

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From tradition to modernity



by Łukasz Ptasznik

In the Middle Ages, Elbląg was Poland's gateway to the world. The town had had a thriving seaport, and the Old Town was full of loud merchants and seamen. The modern city continues the best traditions of the Hanseatic League. Elbląg has still excellent transport links and innovative projects focused on business development. During the last 20 years, Elbląg has changed visually and economically. The Old Town was rebuilt offering presently numerous galleries, museums, restaurants, hotels, pubs and cafes.

Elbląg is a combination of a modern city management and professionalism in relationship with investors, in conjunction with the multi-cultural traditions. This is a place where modernity meets the best traditions of the place, says Grzegorz Nowaczyk, the Mayor of Elbląg.

While the industrial Elbląg gradually becomes more modern, she does not forget about her traditions. In 2006 the city launched Business Incubator where entrepreneurs can develop innovative projects and ideas.

On 28 April 2011 OPEGIEK company opened its GIS Center which is specialized in the development of digital maps and software for geodesy. The Elbląg Technology Park was established for investors interested in developing modern technologies. Higher education schools also

contribute to developing the city. The most important is the State School of Higher Professional Education in Elbląg which provides well-educated engineers and computer specialists to support the industry based on new technologies.

We are trying to be an attractive partner for those who want to invest in our city. We have conditions for developing investment projects. We want to be a reliable partner and participate in serious investment projects that will bring benefits to both sides, says Mayor Nowaczyk.

In January 2007, the Elbląg Incubator of Modern Information Technologies was opened. It provides opportunity for doing business on very convenient terms. It offers 35 office rooms which are fully equipped with hardware and software. There are also well-organised logistics services and preferential financial terms.

The city leads a number of environmental projects aimed at improving the life of citizens. In the past, the city was awarded with the first prize of the European Union - Honorary Diploma for outstanding achievements in ecology (2001) and Certificates "Environmentally Friendly City" in competitions under the auspices of the President of Poland (2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003).



MORE

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THE STONE CITY

by Emmelie Sundqvist & Lina Andersson

Sundsvall has a vision of meeting the growing expectations and challenges of business growth. Not an easy task considering that Sundsvall has the greatest diversity of businesses and industries in the northern Sweden.

The greatest asset is in the city center. As a well developed urban environment, Sundsvall is unique to Norrland. Its homogenous 1890's character makes it unique to the whole of Sweden. The natural forest surroundings also play a key role in making the city an attractive place, but it is the strong sense of urban character that makes it stand apart and lends liveliness and style to the northern atmosphere. Certain areas have been deemed of particular importance as far as improvements and development are concerned.

The Stone City and its cultural heritage hold great meaning to the region as a whole. The city's streets and town square should be developed into exciting meeting places offering areas for culture, leisure activities, the arts and socializing. The Stone City also harbors a number of smaller parks to be developed. The main thoroughfare in Sundsvall is Storgatan. Renovations are planned in order to make it more attractive and more accessible. Storgatan presents a wide cross section of Sundsvall's business life.

The lower half of Selångers river is an untapped resource for city life. It is necessary to cross the river in order to reach Sundsvall so it is important to create an attractive area where Selångers river connects with Sundsvall's Bay. The interplay between the Stone City



and the water surrounding is a vital link in creating Sundsvall's 'living' room.

Norrlands best seaside apartments are planned to be built. The buildings will be positioned towards the south and every apartment will have a view over the waters. Indeed, the northern wharf holds enormous possibilities as a residential area while the southern wharf serves as a natural extension of the

city centre. Here exists the possibility of an arena where sporting events, concerts and other activities can take place. There are many opportunities available to entrepreneurs who wish to take part in the creation and development of the area.

MORE

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Revival of the Kärđla Yacht Harbour

by Reet Kokovkin

What if I tell you a story about a town on a seashore without a harbour? No way – you say! But this is true, it used to be Kärđla on the Hiiumaa Island. The harbour, once a gateway to Europe, emerged for a huge clothing factory and was lost in the World War II.

The Cloth Factory (built in 1830, destroyed in 1941) gave a start for the development of the community from a village to a town. Kärđla owes the factory a network of streets and infrastructure; a school, a hospital and care for the elderly were established; a new church, houses for workers. Many other vital infrastructure elements were built up, including a harbour to satisfy needs of the factory.

In the revolutionary 1990s, Kärđla made an effort to restore the harbour within the PHARE Program. Years went by, Mayor after Mayor found more important fields of town requiring fast developments, but the harbor area stayed abandoned.

In 2009, Hiiumaa joined the Interreg IV project New Bridges, led by the UBC Commission on Environment. The aim of the project is to study the rural-urban interaction and find practical solutions to the problems of partner-towns. The method of the project, elaborated by NORDREGIO (project partner) foresaw active involvement of citizens: representatives of business, public and voluntary sector selected the area of project activities. These discussions were

backed by the sociological study on the Hiiumaa people's dispositions on the development trends and current status of the island. The problem to solve for Kärđla turned out to be the new function for the area surrounding the harbour. In cooperation with the County Government, the detail plan is elaborated allocating living, leisure, business and social zones of the future business centre of the town. At the same time, EU funds for building the yacht harbour were obtained. The harbour will be able to host more than a hundred yachts and boats while the immediate surrounding of the harbour will become a service and culture centre for the whole town. First vessels in the brand new destination – Kärđla Yacht Harbour are to be welcomed in the season of 2013.



Kärđla Old Harbour

MORE

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A unique cross-border partnership

by Ewa Kurjata

Szczecin's one of the most successful international projects is Euroregion Pomerania. Established in 1995 by Polish and German partners, three years later it expanded, incorporating the Swedish municipalities. Szczecin plays a leading role in this political configuration. Today Euroregion Pomerania develops interesting projects along the Polish-German-Swedish borders and significantly contributes to the south Baltic area growth. Its borders coincide to a large extent with the Szczecin Metropolitan Area (SMA), and its cross-border character imparts uniqueness to the area, whose one of major challenges is presently to develop a cross-border tourism product, which would help recreate the West Pomeranian brand. This grouping organizes numerous training sessions, meetings, conferences, festivals and exchanges, yet its major asset is youth cooperation.

Among recent projects worth mentioning, there is Services-Advising Centre for small and medium enterprises, institutions, municipalities and poviats in Euroregion Pomerania. Launched in December 2009, it is the sixth centre servicing the Polish-German border. Other centres are located in Karlino/Koszalin, Dębno/Myślibórz (Poland), and Schwedt/O., Greifswald and Neubrandenburg (Germany). Co-financed by INTERREG IV A, the 'Cross-border Net-

work of Services-Advising Centre (CUD) of Euroregion Pomerania in 2009 – 2012' project, has already brought about noticeable results. Euroregion Pomerania in Löcknitz (Germany) and Szczecin Municipality jointly started operations to support cross-border cooperation in the fields of economy, tourism, environmental protection, education, culture and social matters.

The Centre offers assistance in establishing business contacts, finding German partners for projects and joint undertakings; organizes information meetings, exchange of experiences between Polish and

German entrepreneurs; provides legal information on running business and German market; fairs, exhibitions, festivals and other interesting euroregional events. All services are offered free of charge. The Centre also works closely with Polish and German institutions supporting economic and social growth of the region such as the Northern Chamber of Commerce, Polish-German House of Economy, Szczecin International Fairs Ltd., Szczecin Entrepreneurial Centre, West Pomeranian Agency for Regional Development, etc. Euroregion Pomerania Project has been fulfilling our aspirations of creating a uniform and cohesive region in the south Baltic, capable of developing its own unique cross-border brand, drawing on experiences of previous generations and their heritage, bringing together EU citizens living along the two borders and offering them new opportunities.



MORE

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COMMUNICATION has changed radically



by Lilian Lukka

When citizens of Tartu had to do any transactions with the City Government 20 years ago, they had to take a couple of hours off from work to visit one of the offices in the city centre. Now it is possible to do most of the transactions on the Internet or by phone. The way the City Government communicates with the citizens has changed radically during the last 20 years.

In 1994 Tartu launched its webpage, which has developed over the years. It contains a lot of useful information, from phone numbers and records management procedures to current affairs. There has been a shift from paper to the Internet in the performance of lots

of transactions. By means of e-application one can ask for land tax incentives, submit applications for different allowances, ask for a place in the kindergarten and more.

Tartu has been in the forefront of innovations that help to make the governance of the city more open and communicative. 12 years ago, the city webpage introduced the service 'Ask from a city government official', where people can

ask questions. The questions and answers are published on the webpage. Tartu homepage is also a medium for different surveys and competitions.

To carry out transactions in municipal authorities or other administrative agencies, the citizens can find information and get support from the City Information Centre that has been existing for 15 years. Tartu also uses social media to communicate with citizens, being one of the first cities in Estonia to open its account in the popular social media portals Twitter and Facebook. At present, the Tartu's Facebook page has over 10,000 followers, being one of the most popular city government Facebook pages in Estonia.

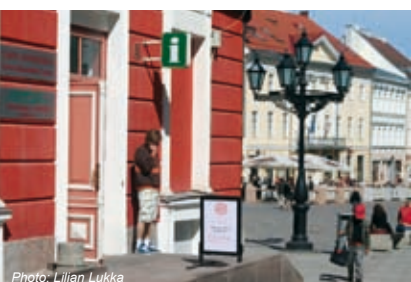
Tartu shares its experience with many other countries. The City is one of the partners in the international project *eCitizen II – "Towards citizen-centered eGovernment in European cities and regions"*. The project is financed by the INTERREG IVC and its aim is to share with best practices in the field of e-engagement.

Tartu finds it very important to consider the interests and opinions of as many people as possible in the process of administering the affairs of the city. One way to achieve this is to make the best use of electronic channels.

MORE

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Information Centre of Tartu
on the ground floor of the Town
Hall in the downtown



Investments in Gdynia

by Joanna Grajter

Gdynia is located at the intersection of important sea, land and railway routes. The most significant regular connection is the route to Karlskrona, which for Poland is a gateway to Scandinavia.

Apart from traditional branches of industry, which gave rise to the city – today information technology, biotechnology, etc. are at the top. Pomeranian Science and Technology Park (PSTP) was created upon the initiative of Gdynia's local government with huge financial support from the European Union. About 100 innovative companies are located here. At present the PSTP is under extension process, and in two years' time it will increase its potential.

Recent years have been full of investments in road infrastructure, which has resulted in the increase in transshipment in port, growing activity in the banking sector, a low unemployment rate and high quality of life and wealth of the inhabitants.

The biggest and most significant one is Kwiatkowskiego Route opened in 2008. It connects the container and ferry terminals with the network of national and international roads.

Port of Gdynia Authority joined in the modernization of Gdynia's road system. The Port co-financed rebuilding

of port bypass – Janka Wisniewskiego Street, which was finished almost simultaneously with Kwiatkowskiego Route. The European Union helped financially in realizing those projects.

Also, a logistics centre will be of use for further development of the port and companies. Port of Gdynia Authority cooperates with the Pomeranian Special Economic Zone in order to incorporate the area of prospective logistic centre into the Zone and provide investors with attractive conditions. It is being built next to Kwiatkowskiego Route – in the neighborhood of container terminals and close vicinity of side tracks of Polish railways connecting the area with the main railway line E65 (Tricity-Warsaw, Tricity-Silesia).

Another impulse for the development of the city and whole region will be the realization of an ambitious project of adaptation of military airport in Gdynia-Kosakowo (Babie Doły) into civil purposes. The airport is perfectly located, both when it comes to meteorological conditions and location in relation to the city and coastline. The area covers 700 ha and has a huge reserve of land for necessary commercial infrastructure.



Photo: Maciej Bejma

MORE

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KOSZALIN, A DYNAMIC CITY

by Joanna Wilczek

Koszalin has been the UBC's member since 1998. During those 13 years the city was a subject to vigorous development, both in terms of its economic and social status. Not only the quality of life improved, but so did the city's investment attractiveness. Extension of its borders in 2010 caused that Koszalin gained access to the Baltic Sea becoming a particularly attractive tourist city. In the nearest future more than 1 billion PLN will be invested in the city to construct roads, housing estates, etc.

The most important investments are: construction of the sports hall for 3000 spectators, further development of the Special Economic Zone, providing good conditions for investments in the city, and commencement of construction works on the long-awaited Aquapark. Construction and modernisation of roads including the inner ring supposed to improve road traffic in Koszalin and continuation of works on the water supply management and sewage disposal to facilitate work of local entrepreneurs, are the other noteworthy undertakings.

Mr Piotr Jedliński, Mayor of Koszalin, thinks that the city must develop evenly, in all directions. Therefore, a new building for the Koszalin Philharmonic Orchestra, a new complex of the so-called "Orlik" sports grounds, animal shelter and bicycle lanes are all under construction.

Refurbishment of the Baltic Theatre of Drama with parallel renovation of the adjacent area, thermal modernisation of educational facilities, free access to the Internet in the city and revitalisation of the Pomeranian Dukes' Park are all worth mentioning.

Great attention is paid to developing tourism, which has been considered in the past few years as one of the most important sectors of economy. The comprehensive investment in developing the Chełmska Hill area makes it a regional tourist attraction. The reactivation of the seasonal railway connection with the nearby seaside town of Mielno and the opening of a ferry line across Lake Jamno connected with the Baltic Sea are other actions aimed at increasing the region's tourist attractiveness.



MORE

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Culture as a long-term investment in the future of Vilnius

by Anton Nikitin & Neringa Misevičiūtė

While Lithuania was preparing to mark its Millennium Anniversary in 2009, Vilnius, was also bidding for the European Capital of Culture 2009. The title heralded the important events and the considerable challenge Vilnius as the capital of Lithuania had not met over the past 20 years.

The idea of Vilnius as the European Capital of Culture began to form up in 1999. Conscious efforts were put into making Vilnius the gates into the country celebrating its Millennium Anniversary.

The key feature of the entire programme was the ambitious project bringing together different social groups for a common reason. The emphasis should be put not only on the events and the overcrowded audience halls, but also on the new spaces opened for the use of residents and guests of Vilnius. Artists revealed the role of the banks of the river Neris in the life of the city and showed that railway or bus stations can also serve as spaces for displaying the art. They are being exploited for cultural festivals even now.

The new projects and events have become a long-term investment, the benefits of which will be reaped in the years to come. A great number of projects developed for this European undertaking have already claimed their permanent place in the cultural life of the city. Some of them such as the Street Music Day and the 'Culture Night Let it be night' had started before the undertaking and became

very popular. Probably one of the most significant achievements is the continuity of smaller-scale projects which have become deeply entrenched in local and international culture and art.

The mission of the entire programme was to develop a new concept of European culture which should be identified with modern life where every European citizen is perceived as a creator of culture. In principal, the objective has been achieved since a great number of individual artists contributed to the project by producing art in the most unusual spaces of Vilnius.

Another very important aspect of the project was the intense involvement of young artists. Not only did the young artists put to use their artistic talents, but they also developed their competencies at specialised lectures and workshops held by

well-known professionals from abroad. This made Vilnius a young city open for different people, cultures, and innovations.

The European Capital of Culture was an unprecedented challenge for both the city and the country. The benefits of it will be appreciated in the years ahead.



Photo: Milda Juknevičiūtė

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St Nicolas in Visby goes Kultudral



by Ulrika Mebus

Can the cooperation between society, culture and commerce be a successful way to animate the cultural heritage, making it a resource in regional development without destroying the cultural values?

Together with another 11 medieval church-ruins and the medieval townwall, St. Nicolas ruin forms a very special townscape, unique for Visby. In the Medieval Age, St. Nicolas was the church of the Dominican order. North of the church, the monastery buildings were adjoined to the church. Now the former church is to be transformed into an innovative cultural arena – with the ruins in focus. The project St. Nicolas Kultudral is managed by the Gotland Museum in its first phases. When construction starts in 2011 Kultudralen AB will take over the leadership.

The project aims at creating an innovative and magical cultural arena within the authentic walls of the medieval ruins. The St. Nicolas Kultudral is an entirely innovative mode of convergence between various branches of art and activities, culture and commerce, between Gotland and the rest of the world. Close cooperation lies at the core of the concept: in partnership they give each other support, creating new development opportunities. The funding for the project consists of regional, state and EG funds in combination with private funding from companies and individuals.

The monumental limestone walls of the ruin, the magic light, the excellent acoustics and the bewitching atmosphere of the place

live on. The contribution of our era will be an excellent stage – artistically and aesthetically. A new vault, complete with glass star-shaped prisms is envisaged. The service area will be housed in an adjoining building, an innovative design inspired by the Gotlandic building tradition. The architectonic formation is in the hands of one of Scandinavia's most highly merited architect's offices in the field of enhancement of cultural heritage and ruins – Exners Tegnestue A/S in Århus, Denmark.

The ruins create a peerless setting, open up for dimensions beyond the ego, time and space both for artists and guests. The Kultudral will enrich every event whatever the season. The opening of St Nicolas Kultudral is planned to happen in May 2013.



St. Nicolas medieval Churchruin in Visby with the new vault.

Photomontage by Exners Tegnestue A/S



MORE

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MALBORK One day is not enough!

by Aleksandra Kapejewska

Though significant social and political changes started 20 years ago in local communities in Poland, including Malbork, the town had never gone through such infrastructural changes as it experienced for the past 5 years. The Malbork Castle – former capital of Teutonic Order's state – is one of the best known tourist attractions in Poland and Europe. For many years though, the castle was the biggest and the only true tourist attraction of Malbork. Today, the town should be remembered also for its extraordinary atmosphere, unique monuments and rich tourist offer.

The whole town underwent a huge change in the last 5 years. At central Kościuszki street a Town Square with a fountain appeared, which amazes visitors with its spectacular night shows. The square serves as a venue for numerous exhibitions, processions, fairs and street theatre shows. The main attraction here is undoubtedly the town fountain, where water from almost 50 nozzles "dances" in time to music. Daily shows, particularly those in the evening, made more spectacular by light effects, draw hundreds of interested spectators in the summer season.

Close to the Town Square there is a miniature of

the Malbork Castle. This model is made of more than a million specially baked bricks. With a base measuring 11 x 5 metres, and built to a scale of 1:30, the model attracts both tourists and residents of the town.

Malbork can boast multiple attractions for the sport lovers. "Jumpy Park" provides entertainment for both adults and youngsters. A rock-climbing wall, tennis courts and sports pitches ensure that everyone will find something to do here. Another leisure facility for the town's residents and tourists is a mini-golf course. Dino Park, situated in the area of town park, starting from this summer season will offer a number of attractions including a 5D cinema, a museum of fossils, a playing ground for children and an educational alley with 40 animatronic dinosaurs at a scale of 1 : 1. In 2010 Malbork local government finished realization of a project co-financed from the EU, thanks to which an outdoor auditorium for 3.000 people, stage and screens were build in the immediate vicinity of the town centre, on the background of the Malbork Castle. This allows to organize more attractive cultural events in professional conditions, such as The Siege of Malbork or Magic Malbork Show.



MORE

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Międzyzdroje increases its attractiveness



by Joanna Ścigata

Międzyzdroje, together with surrounding Wolin National Park, are a unique location with numerous natural, historic and cultural attractions. Summer offer is filled with numerous cultural events. The International Festival of the Choir Song, established in 1965, is the oldest one. Summer Festival of Artists attracts artists of the Polish film, TV and theatre to Międzyzdroje. It is also the place where many sports events are organised, such as Breakfast Run or Władysław Komar and Tadeusz Ślusarski Athletics Meeting, and both national and foreign sportsmen participate in these events.

Międzyzdroje is associated not only with a significant number of tourist attractions and cultural events, but also numerous noteworthy investments. Since 2009 sports infrastructure in Międzyzdroje has been constantly developed. Multifunctional Andrzej Grubba Sports Hall was opened at the primary school, and a football club 'Orlik' will be opened in June 2011. Cultural investments also play a crucial role in the dynamic development of the town. The Tourist Information Point by the promenade was modernised. The new amphitheatre with assisting facilities was constructed. What is more, an ecological and professional playground was opened in the central point of the promenade. The project entitled "Międzyzdroje in flowers" considerably contributed to interesting spatial development of the city and its embellishment. The idea was very positively accepted both by the inhabitants and tourists, and will be continued this year. Environmental protection is extremely important for the town. It executed reclamation of the closed communal waste dump.

One of the most important investments – modernization of the promenade – is still being realized. It will gain an entirely new and



Photo: Międzyzdroje City Hall Archive

modernised arrangement.

During VIII Self-Governmental Forum of Capital and Finances in Warsaw, the authorities of Międzyzdroje received laurels for their work for the benefit of the commune. As far as general classification is concerned, Międzyzdroje gained 9th place and the commune was honoured with "Self-Governmental Diamond". Międzyzdroje was the second in Poland within the category of the richest small towns. All prizes and awards stand as motivation for further work and investments. Gaining investors and selling attractive properties within the premises of the whole commune constitutes an important aspect for further sustainable development. Subsequent investments – overhaul works in the wastewater treatment plant, construction of the yacht port, indicating new bicycle routes, as well as many other ventures shall significantly increase the attractiveness and prestige of the town.

MORE

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PALANGA TOURISM INFORMATION CENTRE EXPANDS

by Egidija Smilingienė

Palanga Tourism Information Centre has expanded its activities in 2010 - 2011. In 2010 two branches of TIC were opened. Groups of tourists from cruise ships were visiting TIC branch founded in Palanga Botanical Park.

In 2010 the branch in Šventoji was opened as well, which was visited by a large number of tourists, especially from Lithuania.

In summer 2010, Palanga Tourism Information Centre provided services to tourists in a new office. The current area has more than doubled. Now it is possible to provide information in attractive and accessible way.

Currently Palanga Tourism Information Center has six representative offices abroad: in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, Minsk, Tallinn, Kaliningrad. The aim is to attract more tourists from the neighboring countries and the Baltic Sea Region. Such systems provide an opportunity to promote Palanga resort not only at exhibitions, but all year-round to deliver off-season offerings. Celebrating 20th anniversary of Palanga's cooperation with



the city of Simrishamn (Sweden), a bilateral representative office of Palanga Tourism Information Centre and Simrishamn Tourist Information Centre (Sweden) is planned to be opened. Palanga TIC actively participates in international tourism exhibitions, e.g. in Oslo, Riga, Moscow, Minsk and Kaliningrad. Palanga's original stand in Vilnius attracted the eye of visitors and met with great attention. The town participated in two business missions in Russia and Belarus.

Palanga Tourism Information Centre is actively developing cooperation with the Kaliningrad Region: in tourism and cultural projects, sharing of experiences, including participation in exhibitions and sightseeing tours for Kaliningrad tourism and media representatives.

Every year Palanga TIC issues new publications: accommodation catalogue "Be our guests in Palanga", a health services guide "Palanga - source of health", a conference

organizing guide "Let's meet in Palanga", Palanga and Šventoji maps, a West Lithuania's cycling routes map. Publications are issued in several languages and distributed free of charge.

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UBC today

UBC Board met in Lahti

Organization of the XI jubilee General Conference in Liepāja and the UBC Strategy implementation were the main themes discussed by the UBC Board at its 60th meeting held in Lahti, Finland, on 11 March 2011.

The participants were acquainted with the proposal of the GC Task Force to devote the conference to the 20th Anniversary of the UBC. It could be, however, a stepping-stone to the discussion about the future. This should be also combined with increasing the UBC's attractiveness to other partners. The first plenary session would bring the outlook on what had happened during these 20 years from the Cold War to the present cooperation and what will happen during the next 10-20 years. The second plenary session could highlight the cities' role and their expectations, interests, etc. The Board authorized the Presidium to work out the final programme and invite the keynote speakers.

Mikko Lohikoski, UBC Strategy Coordinator, informed that two working groups were convened to work on two tasks of the Strategy: Communication and Marketing Strategy and Expert Exchange. He presented the outcome from the meeting of two Strategy task forces that took place in Lahti on 10 March. The TF proposed to start a process of formulating the Communications and Marketing Strategy with an analytical phase. The member cities will be consulted on the issues connected with this strategy. Also, the interviews will be made with the stakeholders outside the organization, e.g. Baltic Sea Region organizations, national governments, Brussels, etc. This survey would help to get a picture of the UBC responding to basic questions: who are we? what do we want? where are we going to? The second stage would be a process itself, and during the third operational phase the main messages would be formulated, the chan-

During the meeting in Lahti, the UBC welcomed its new member, Swedish city of Falun.



nels of communication chosen and the target groups defined.

The task force on expert exchange decided to make a search for the funding opportunities which would allow to carry out programme on expert exchange on the basis of the UBC cities experience.

Three UBC Commissions on Culture, Gender Equality and Urban Planning presented their activity report and informed the Board members about their plans for the nearest future. Also, the Board agreed to merge the Commission on Business Cooperation and on Information Society and create one UBC Commission on Business Cooperation with St. Petersburg and Kolding as co-chairs.

Secretary General, Paweł Żaboklicki, presented the UBC 2010 financial report. Also, the Board approved the UBC budget for 2011.

The next Board meeting will be held in Karlstad, Sweden, on 17 June 2011.

Welcome to Liepāja at XI UBC General Conference

"Building on the past, heading for the future!"



Photo: Aigars Stāls

The UBC celebrates its 20th anniversary! The jubilee General Conference will be held in Liepāja, Latvia, on 5-6 October 2011.

In addition to the outlook on what has happened during these 20 years in the cities and in the Union itself, the Conference will bring the discussion about the future.

For the eleventh time the mayors of Baltic Sea cities, representatives of governments and international organizations, many key actors active in Europe will meet to recall the first steps of the Baltic cooperation, to evaluate achievements, to discuss the prospective Baltic - Europe - world relations, contacts, and projects.

Moreover, three thematic workshops will be organized during the conference:

- W1. How to strengthen economic attractiveness of cities;
- W2. How to master climate change; success factors in the local integrated climate management;
- W3. How to meet the demographic challenge.

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

Follow www.ubc.net for more information.



New solutions for promoting sustainable development

The three-day conference on sustainable development, called 'Solutions local, together', was held in Turku on 31 January to 2 February. It brought together over 580 experts – local authorities and other stakeholders, and representatives of the business world – from 18 countries. Through various workshops and discussions, new solutions were sought for creative urban planning, sustainable consumption, protection of the Baltic Sea, combating the climate change, and renewable energy use.

In her opening speech, Mari Kiviniemi, Prime Minister of Finland, highlighted the pioneering role of the Nordic Region in sustainable development. In the panel discussion led by Minister of Housing Jan Vapaavuori from Finland, the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation pointed out that climate change is not only a threat, but also an underutilised opportunity for the green economy and finding new solutions for sustainable development.

Locally, together with others

The aim of the conference was to share positive experiences from innovations and models of operation while offering municipalities and other local actors genuinely productive and practical ideas. The best practical solutions for combating climate change were also recognised at the event. The awards went to the ECO₂ – Eco-efficient Tampere 2020 project of Tampere and to the snowcooling project of Snowpower AB and the County Council of Västernorrland, Sweden. The conference offered a good platform to exchange existing good practices and widen the use of them around the BSR.

The Conference was the forth in the series of the Nordic Conferences on Sustainable Development. Previous conferences were held in Gothenburg, Sweden (2004), in Oslo, Norway (2006) and in Odense,

All four conference rooms were sustainably staged by using local product to match the topics of the discussions.



Photo: Tero Wester

Denmark (2008). The Finnish organizers of the conference broadened the conference target audience to the entire Baltic Sea Region. This was enabled by providing the entire conference programme simultaneously interpreted into Finnish, Swedish and English.

The conference was created locally with several stakeholders and this was visible in the conference through 13 local solutions, 3 side events and large processes that involved hundreds of citizens and pupils to benefit from the event. The outcomes of the conference will continue after the conference for example through local menus at 8 restaurants, water path for all 5th graders at Turku, co-operations between several actors and new thinking of the use of space and staging.

The next Nordic Conference will be held in Umeå, Sweden.

MORE

www.solutions2011.fi

Facebook: Solutions 2011

YouTube: so11utions

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Working Group on Local Safety and Public Order

Vilnius as a venue for sharing good practices to ensure public order in cities



On 14-15 April 2011 Vilnius hosted the 3rd meeting of the UBC Local Safety & Public Order Working Group. The meeting was attended by 39 representatives from Karlstad, Nacka, Botkyrka, Tallinn, Turku, Riga, Jēgla, Gdańsk, Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai.

The Working Group discussed matters related to alcohol consumption in public places, illegal graffiti, youth-related issues and traffic problems. The ways of solving the problems were debated on.

The presentations made by participants met with great interest. The Head of the Tourism Section of the Municipal Police in Riga, Andrejs Aronovs introduced key issues and challenges associated with tourism in the capital of Latvia. The subject of social riots and their background and consequences was presented by Marcus Qvennerstedt from Botkyrka. The problems with elderly security, potential risks and safety precautions were lectured by Christina Edman and Gunnar Dahl from Karlstad, Sweden.

In addition, the participants visited the Police Headquarters in Vilnius, where they got acquainted with the work of Vilnius police.



Photo: Milda Juknevičaitė

Also, the activities of the secretariat and organizational matters were discussed. New members: Karlstad and Kaunas joined the Working Group. A new logo of Local Public Safety & Order Working Group was chosen.

The presentation of "Safe city" initiative - a safety dedicated leaflet was the next point of the session. The main aim of the project is to give advice to the tourist how to stay secure

during a vacation and to familiarize them with the local law. Also, it is to promote the LS&POWG as an entity responsible for safety and security.

At the end, four topics for future meeting in Sweden were selected. Tallinn will be working on the environment, Gdańsk on illegal trade, Nacka on cooperation with state police and Vilnius on transport (taxi) crime control and preventive projects.

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Innovative and sustainable cities

The Commission on Urban Planning held its 23rd seminar "Innovative Districts" on 11 - 13 April in Växjö.

Växjö is, according to the BBC, "the Greenest City in Europe", because already for 15 years the city has been working for environmentally friendly urban development. The city aims to become fossil fuel free by the year 2030. At the same time Växjö is growing, and the population is presently more than 80 000 people. Located in the middle of a large wood and timber industrial region, the city has built a well functioning district heating system and also uses wood as a construction material. That is why the seminar participants visited the wooden multi-storey housing complex on the waterfront of Trummen Lake. There were also lots of other interesting practical solutions to see for planners working with the questions of sustainable urban development.



Photo: Carsten Nielsen

Seminar participants listening to the workshop presentations

Despite the impressive sustainable development, Växjö still has some questions of how to further develop the city and how to connect certain isolated parts with the city centre. The seminar workshops concentrated on Samarkand, an industrial and commercial area that needs certain updating, and the Trummen area with the Linné University and the wooden multi storey housing project. The community feels these areas are placed apart from the city centre and thus the urban structure needs improvement. That is why the ideas of the CUP network of urban planners were appreciated. There was Mr Martin Möller from the Århus University's Alexandra Institute to tell about how business life and university meet and inspire each other for new development. Ms Sidsel Jensen from the Gehl Architects gave an inspiring presentation about Samarkand, another workshop focus area. The workshops resulted in many new proposals for future urban development, including new housing and business building possibilities and cooperation with the university researchers.

45 participants from 20 cities and 8 Baltic countries took part in the seminar. The beautiful early 1900's grey stone Teleborg castle provided excellent premises.

The next Commission's seminar will be held in Tartu, Estonia, in September 2011.

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Commission on Health and Social Affairs

BACK IN ACTION

It has been a new beginning for the Commission since Elbląg has taken the lead over the works in 2010.

After publishing the Letter of Intent this early spring the Commission managed to gain some initial interest mainly from Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish members of the UBC. Simultaneously, the Commission also entered into relations with two strong organizations.

One of them is Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being, the intergovernmental body which focuses on increasing coherence between the countries in the Northern Dimension area (most of them from the Baltic Sea Region), narrowing socio-economic disparities, and improving quality of life of its inhabitants. Partnership with NDPHS, hopefully, will result in cooperation in some projects related to children obesity and life-style related non-communicable diseases prevention.

Another organization the Commission would like to cooperate with is the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association in Turku, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region, whose overarching issues such as health equity and health in all policies are well in line with our concerns.



Wojciech Drozd, Chairman of the Commission on Health and Social Affairs, City of Elbląg

And, in order to balance health and social activities the Commission has already started preparation of workshop related to the ageing society in the context of demographic challenge for the Baltic cities. This event is planned during the next UBC General Conference in Liepāja in October.

As the event preceding this workshop, it is intended to organize an open meeting of Commission on Health and Social Affairs in Elbląg in September. It will be devoted to the senior citizens' issues, similarities and differences in problems they face, and help they require from local authorities. The question how the municipalities deal with it is to be discussed. This may be a good possibility of sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences and distinguishing best practices for all engaged in the matter of health and social care. Conclusions drawn from this meeting may also be a good contribution to further discussions in Liepāja.

The time is running, so concurrently to the continued recruitment of the Commission members, the consecutive consultations bearing in mind topics mentioned above will start in the nearest future.

Health and social problems are common and affect all inhabitants of the Baltic Sea Region so Elbląg Chairmanship is determined to be successful.

MORE

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Gdańsk - a City of Gender Equality

The seminar entitled 'Gdańsk – City of Gender Equality' prepared by the UBC Gender Commission took place in Gdańsk on 7 - 8 April 2011.

The seminar was run by experts of the Gender Commission and was addressed to local politicians, municipal staff and non-governmental organizations. It began with a mapping of the situation of women in Gdańsk prepared by gender experts from the University of Gdańsk. The major goal of the seminar was to lay the ground for improvement of the situation of women in Gdańsk. Several aspects of equality were discussed i.e. a need for city planning which would take into consideration needs of both women and men, opposing domestic violence and improving situation of its victims and designing a labour market that would be equally attractive to women and men.

A special guest of the meeting was Mauella Portier – Project Officer from Citizenship Council of European Municipalities and Regions who spoke on the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. Experts from Scandinavian countries presented examples of activities on the local level aiming at improvement of women's lives.

The participants visited two local NGOs: Network of East-West Woman and Regional Information and Resource Center.

The Commission on Gender Equality is currently preparing a cam-



paign to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, its meaning and to create an interest in the issue. There will be posters for member cities in their mother tongues to be spread among the cities. The posters can be used to start a discussion at schools or workplaces regarding gender issues and why it is important to work for a gender equal town.

MORE

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Gender Equality BEST PRACTICES

My Business – my Future

"My Business – my Future" project is the fifth, modified and improved edition of the original program of The Economic Foundation from Gdynia. The project aims at supporting these individuals who are planning to start their own economic activity. It is realized in the form of a competition and its crucial stage is the proper selection of the candidates – motivated and full of ideas for a practicable business. When it comes to the selection of the target group we have taken into account the difficult situation of women over 45 years of age on the labour market and we wanted to increase their chances of returning to professional activity. During the recruitment process the gender criterion was taken into consideration. Accordingly, among 30 qualified participants there were 20 women. During training child and dependent care cost reimbursement was provided – this kind of support was intended especially for women.

The selected group of the participants have the opportunity to benefit from the experience of the professionals and they are granted financial help in the form of:

- Training course,
- Individual career counseling,
- Individual business counseling,
- A one-off grant to the amount of 40 000 zlotys intended for investments related to running a new business,
- Monthly finance support (1000 PLN), for the maximum time of one year.

So far these kind of projects executed by the Foundation have proved to be extremely effective, and their effects permanent. Most businesses established by the participation in the project are successfully functioning on the market and constantly developing.

The project was awarded the main prize in 2010 *European Social Fund in the Pomeranian Voivodeship – interesting ideas, good practices* competition.

MORE

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Youth in Turku



Turku, European Capital of Culture 2011, hosted a meeting of UBC Commission on Youth Issues on 25 - 27 April. This time 11 cities participated. First topic was about interesting cultural youth projects cities have had recently. Secondly, the Commission made final decisions on larger youth project application.

The Commission will be developing, empowering and promoting youth councils in the Baltic cities, but also communicating the views and understandings of youth through different media campaigns. The tradition of holding youth conferences will be continued this fall in Liepāja on 4 - 7 October.

Kristīne Priedīte interviewed a few participants and gathered valuable feedback from the meeting. This might inspire cities not involved in the Commission's work yet.

HASAN HABIB (TURKU):

I am wondering why we didn't become a member of the Commission earlier. After the meeting in Turku we definitely would like to be the member. It is a good opportunity to meet future project partners. It was a great pleasure to host the meeting and show you our culture and diversity.

ALESSIINA JUUSO (KEMI):

It was very interesting to meet other youngsters and exchange opinions. It is interesting to see how other cities organize their youth work. I am interested in going to youth conference in Liepāja, too. I hope that other cities from Finland will also come.

UFFE HARRIS (KOLDING):

There are several advantages of this meeting. First, there is networking opportunity - we need people with whom to work in future. One more advantage is the inspiration - we can compare our experiences and decide what we could do in our city. Finally, there are exciting projects which we can participate in. We want to participate as much as we can. Here are very serious people involved.

RENATE GROSS (TALLINN):

I met new people with whom I may have projects in future, got ideas for Youth Council in Tallinn and spent a good time. I will definitely join meetings in the future. I think that Commission has a great potential.

BO OTTERSTROEM (GULDBORGSUND):

I already have e-mailed Youth School about the opportunity to join Commission. Also, we are looking forward to hosting the Commission's meeting in spring 2013. We will probably propose new projects as well. It was very nice to network with people and make new contacts.

DEJAN PANOW (ROSTOCK):

This was one of the best meetings - we talked about concrete projects and all participants were goal oriented. We will take part in the new project. We also have many things to say to the politicians about things they should do. Youth is the future and will become decision makers and politicians should listen to their opinions.

CAROLINE TRAM NGUYEN (KRISTIANSAND):

Our biggest benefit from the meeting in Turku is the new project we would like to participate in. It is also good that cities can exchange experiences. Of course, there are topics which can't be discussed because of the totally different situations, but there are also many common things and we would like to hear other opinions.



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR THE BALTIC FUTURE

Cultural Prize 2011

The UBC Commission on Culture invites the UBC member cities to propose a candidate for the Cultural Prize 2011 "Building Bridges for the Baltic Future". While distributing the prize the UBC Commission on Culture will appreciate activities which:

- have influenced the cultural life of the city in a remarkable way,
- have influenced the image of the city in a positive way,
- have strengthened the identity of the city,
- have raised the awareness of cultural values of life.

Only municipalities are entitled to apply. The organizations willing to apply for the prize are obliged to submit their application forms through the municipality, who may decide what the responsible agencies are, but the UBC Commission on Culture wishes that the officials of the agencies are professionals in the field of culture. Each UBC member city is allowed to submit only one application for the nomination. The cities that have a representative in the CoC board may not submit an application.

The candidating activities should have been realized successfully in 2011. The application should contain:

- a detailed description of the cultural activity,
- a photographic portfolio (preferably digital photos),
- press cuttings (if available),
- the applicants (member cities) evaluation and motivations of the cultural and other values of the activity.

The grant for the cultural activity is 1500 EUR. The award ceremony will be held in Liepāja on during the UBC General Conference.

The completed application form should be e-mailed to the UBC Commission on Culture Secretariat to maarit.keto-seppala@turku.fi by **31 August 2011** at the latest.

MORE

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Bridging Ages conference in Tallinn, Estonia, 3 - 5 June 2011

Using Time Travel to Explore Turning Points in History

The past has not always been a smooth, linear process. Changes often come suddenly and the society takes another direction. Sometimes the changes come violently, sometimes more peaceful, sometimes you don't see the turning point until afterwards. There are changes only affecting the local community but there are also major changes affecting us nationally and internationally.

In the 20th century the two world wars have been turning points for many. The Great Depression, the collapse of the Berlin wall and the Soviet empire, the end of the apartheid system, the peace treaty on Ireland, the atomic bomb, liberation from colonial rule in Africa, global warming, the green revolution are other turning points. And there are many more...

How do we deal with those turning points when writing our history? Is the turning point a way to make peace and understand the past, a way to healing and reconciling after a conflict? Or is it only the victor who writes the "new" history? And what local sites and stories are connected to the turning point?

The Bridging Ages conference in Tallinn is going to explore how the society deals with Turning Points in History today. The Time Travel



Photo: Jaan Künnap

method will be used to experience the changes in Estonian history in the 1980s. More examples world-wide how local events and sites are used are expected. The aim is to discuss both theoretical issues and share practical experiences.

The conference will take place in Tallinn, the capital

of Estonia during its reign as European Capital of Culture. Sessions, comprising of lectures, seminars and workshops, will be held on 3 - 5 June and the Time Travel will take place on 4 June. The program is designed to foster developing discussions on the relationship between theoretical frameworks and fieldwork. The conference is due to take place at the same time as the traditional medieval culture festival Old Town Days.

The conference is organized by Bridging Ages, International Organization in Historic Environment Education and Time Travels together with the Tallinn City Museum.

MORE

www.bridgingages.com
www.linnamuuseum.ee/linnamuuseum/



European Road Safety Charter

Road safety in Sweden



Sweden's long-term road safety goal is that there should be no fatalities or serious injuries in road traffic. This goal was approved by the Swedish Parliament in 1997 and is based on the "Vision Zero" program. Sweden is among those countries with the lowest number of traffic fatalities in relation to its population. This is not enough, however. Swedish road safety work is based on a refusal to accept human deaths or lifelong suffering as a result of road traffic.

The Swedish National Road Administration (Trafikverket) manages the country's state-owned road network and has overall national responsibility for safety on all roads in Sweden.

The main participants in road safety work are the National Road Administration, the police and Sweden's 289 municipalities, which cover the entire territory of the country. Other important participants are the county administrative boards (i.e. branches of the central government), the National Society for Road Safety (Nationalföreningen för trafiksäkerhetens främjande, NTF) and the transportation and automotive industries. The automotive industry has major potential to improve road safety by changing the design of vehicles. Over the past decade, vehicles have become safer and safer. Crash tests conducted by the independent European New Car Assessment Program (Euro NCAP), in which Sweden is represented are particular benefit. The Swedish Motor Vehicle Inspection Company (AB Svensk Bilprovning) is responsible for annual inspections of all vehicles registered in Sweden.

In spring 1999 the Swedish government presented eleven points aimed at strengthening and stimulating road safety work, along with examples of what they mean in practice:

1. A focus on the most dangerous roads

Concentrate on the most dangerous stretches of road.

2. Safer traffic in built-up areas

Majority of municipalities analyzed their street networks from a safety standpoint. This led to reconfiguration and thus safer street environments in a number of municipalities. These efforts are continuing.

3. Emphasis on the responsibilities of road users

A greater respect for traffic rules is needed. Speed limits, seatbelt use and elimination of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are particularly important. Efforts to make the enforcement of speed limits more effective have begun.

4. Safe bicycle traffic

A voluntary bicycle safety standard has been introduced. There are regular campaigns to increase the use of bicycle helmets.

5. Quality assurance in transport work

Public agencies with large transportation needs will receive instructions on how to assure the quality of their own transportation services and those procured from outside firms, in terms of traffic safety and environmental impact.

6. Winter tire requirement

A new law mandating the use of winter tires on cars under winter road conditions between 1 December and 31 March.

7. Making better use of Swedish technology

Introducing new technology to improve road safety will be acceler-



ated. Technology that can be introduced relatively soon includes more effective seatbelt reminders and systems that support adjustments of speed limits. Technology under development includes ignition locks that prevent drunk driving and electronic driver's licenses.

8. Responsibilities of road transport system designers

The Inquiry Commission recently presented a proposal that clarifies the responsibilities of the public sector and the business community for safe road traffic. The commission proposed the establishment of an independent road traffic inspectorate.

9. Public responses to traffic violations

The Inquiry Commission is reviewing existing traffic violation rules and will propose changes from the perspective of Vision Zero and of ensuring due process of law.

10. The role of voluntary organizations

The government is evaluating the road safety work of NTF and its use of State funds. NTF is a grassroots organization whose members include 24 county road safety federations and some 70 national organizations. A large proportion of its work is state-financed.

11. Alternative forms of new roads financing

The studies of the potential for supplementing public financing with other forms of financing for major road projects are underway.

IMPORTANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS

One guiding principle of Vision Zero, and thus of Swedish road safety work, is that people should value road safety so highly that they naturally behave as responsible road users and follow traffic ground rules. The Swedish Parliament decided in June 2009 on a new interim target for road safety, whereby the number of fatalities was to be halved and the number of serious injuries was to be reduced by a quarter from 2007 to 2020.

Source: The Swedish National Road Administration
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MORE

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NEWS from member cities

The Time Machine in Paide



Paide Rampart Tower has been changed into history center called „Wittenstein“. It is a historical theme park created at nine floors, each carrying the different exhibition from different eras. Visitors have the possibility to ride the elevator up from the Iron Age to the Euro Era.

For the first time in written sources Paide was mentioned in 1265 when the Livonia order knight Konrad von Mandern had built the massive fortress called Rampart Tower. During different periods it was bombed to ruins and built up again from the ground. It witnessed and survived many wars and battles, kings and tsars, but it has always been a strong emotional symbol for the Estonians. When the tower was re-built in the beginning of 1990, the rise of the tower was seen as a symbol of the Estonians getting back in charge of their country which many generations before had dreamt of, worked hard and even died for. The tower was opened in 1993. With the co-funding of the ERDF and Paide Town Government, a long-planned idea became the reality in 2011. The historical tower with its nine floors is a real time machine that enables visitors to travel in time just like Herbert George Wells had once dreamt of. The role of the time-machine is carried out by an elevator which takes visitors from the ancient times exhibition on the ground floor through eight different ages up to the 21st century on the 9th floor.

The tower is full of different high-technology devices and applications



which help to create a more realistic expression of the time period and allow the visitors to experience unforgettable adventure throughout the thousands of years of history exposed in the history centre Wittenstein. A time traveller will be able to listen to the spell of a wiseman at an authentic sacred grove site of prehistoric Estonians, sit by the same table with a higher government official of feudal times, ride in a real stage-coach along Estonian manor-houses, experience the bumpy ride inside a cattle wagon on

route to a prison camp and enjoy many more interesting attractions. No reason to be discouraged by language barriers at the tower of Wittenstein - the vikings, Gustav II Adolf, Peter the Great and all the other historical celebrities speak Estonian, Finnish, English, Russian and German. Time travellers will be instructed by a guidebook which tells stories about the magic and pain of different eras.

MORE

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Žalgiris Arena the biggest sports complex in the Baltics

Žalgiris entertainment and sport palace is under construction in Kaunas. For 20 years, Lithuanian basketball players and fans of this sport have been waiting for the most modern sport palace to be built. The Žalgiris Arena is the biggest and the most modern not only in Lithuania, but also in all other Baltic countries. The Arena on the Nemunas island is distinguished for sports and cultural events. Up to 15 thousand spectators can watch events there.



players would compete for medals.

The budgets of Kaunas and Lithuania's government, as well as the funding of the European Union and donations of Kaunas citizens supported the construction. The nominal worth of Kaunas arena is 50 mil-

In October 2008, the works on Kaunas arena started. Even then Lithuania knew that it had the right to organize 2011 European Basketball Championship. For this reason, all major cities took huge responsibility to build modern sport stadiums in time, where the best European basketball

lion Euros. FIBA leadership complimented Kaunas for building such impressive arena with so low figure expenses.

Thanks to experienced architect Eugenijus Miliunas, the arena is designed, using modern technologies.

Lithuania's most famous basketball player Arvydas Sabonis confirmed that Kaunas arena matches USA arenas not only by its size, but also by well prepared base hall, warm-up hall and changing-rooms.

Parallely, the construction of bridges to the Nemunas island took place. The first bridge to the Nemunas island was opened in 2009. The second bridge to Žalgiris Arena was opened in 2010 and it was named "Karmelity bridge".

Now, next to the arena, the construction of two river bank (level) parking lots is coming to an end, where 600 vehicles can be parked. This parking lot will connect both bridges of the arena.

The first serious testing of Žalgiris Arena is expected on 14-18 September. The quarterfinals and finals of 2011 European Basketball Championship of Men will be played here. For Kaunas it is a great honour, appreciation and responsibility which the city took. Welcome to Kaunas - the Capital of European Basketball of 2011!

MORE

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ECONOMIC HOT POINT ON TOP OF EUROPE

The most northern areas of Finland, Sweden, Norway and North-West Russia are facing rapid economic growth due to huge mining and energy sector investments in the near future. Iron, chrome, gold, nickel, oil and gas are already being exploited.

Until the end of 2011 Northland company will decide to export 3 million tonnes of iron concentrate. Port of Kemi at the pole position can offer year round sea route to markets, soon via 12 metre sea channel.

Stainless steel company Outokumpu Plc is investing 440 MEUR in Kemi chromium mine. Other substantial investment in the area will be Fennovoima's nuclear power plant of 6000 MEUR and Bio fuel plant of 600 MEUR.

An extension of the Motorways of the Seas, namely Barents Transport Corridor (BTC) runs via Kemi to the Barents area and to the city of Murmansk, Russia. Multinational companies Gazprom, Total and Statoil have decided to exploit huge oil and gas deposits of Barents Sea by 35 billion EUR. This will also expand project cargo and the industrial equipment deliveries via the Port of Kemi.

Already today BTC route could relieve congestions in St. Petersburg:



Murmansk area, with around one million inhabitants, is supplied mainly from the South via E-18 road (1.400 kms). Modal shift from road to sea via the Port of Kemi would save environment, time and financial resources. This fact was studied, tested and documented in co-operation with Russian partners by partly EU funded project (www.barents-transport.fi).

The Port of Kemi supplies transit cargo flows to Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Expanding to Russian areas would also balance the vessel traffic by filling the empty space in vessels that sail up to Kemi for loading paper industry products. Around 500 vessels call at Kemi each year. The Port handles about 2,5 million tons and 60.000 converted TEUs annually (www.portofkemi.fi). Effective logistics infrastructure is vital for the supply of iron and energy from these Europe's High-North areas.

MORE

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News from Jõhvi

The beginning of the new year in Jõhvi was marked with the installation of the sculpture "Jõhvi Deer". The deer is presented on the coat of arms of Jõhvi and now it welcomes guests and residents of the district. Just after a few months the second stage of pedestrian promenade construction has been completed, that allows the residents to walk and bike, admiring the new lighting and interesting small architectural forms. This year also the final stage begins, which together with the construction of a new road junction will help to redirect the traffic outside from the city center and to create a safe and attractive recreational area for residents and tourists. The area will be used for mass celebrations and activities that diversify the cultural life of this rural municipality.

These activities include the festival of Slavic Cultures "Slavic light", which will be held in a city park in July and the annual festival of national cultures "Creative cauldron", where the representatives of different nationalities, living in Jõhvi, can participate.

The interesting and original folklore festivals have become one of the visit cards of Jõhvi and annually attract visitors from other cities, regions and countries.

MORE

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Breathtaking Cultural Events in Malbork

The Siege of Malbork

is an outdoor event organised in the middle of July. It joins the historical climate of the town, which used to be the biggest Mediaeval European fortress, with active entertainment and education activities. It refers to the history happened 600 years ago, when the victorious army of king Władysław Jagiełło set

off from Grunwald towards the Teutonic Order castle in Malbork. There are at least 350 Polish and foreign knight brethren taking part in a historical staging presenting the siege of the castle. Numerous attractions in the castle area makes everyone feel the Mediaeval climate. These attractions include: a knights camp, a fair of Mediaeval handcrafts, horse-riding shows, and much, much more.

The second largest outdoor event in Malbork is **Magic Malbork**, taking place in August. The main point of Magic Malbork is a unique evening performance at the von Plauen Banks, in the immediate vicinity of the castle, joining various forms of art: music, acrobatics, dance, image and light. Combination of several dance and acrobatic groups with laser, light and pyrotechnic effects shows, breathtaking acrobatics at heights, make the show hypnotizing for several thousands of spectators. Magic Malbork Show is organised for the third time. The event ends with the fireworks show.



Photo: M. Pawłowicz

MORE

www.oblezenie.zamek.malbork.pl
www.magicmalbork.pl



MAKING GDAŃSK SAFER

Last survey carried out by Eurotest shows that almost 98% tourist visiting Gdańsk feel safe. Gdańsk is one of the most visited cities in Poland. A thousand year history and geographical location make it charming, unique and crowded in the high season.

Since 2003, the City Council has been monitoring tourist satisfaction. Every year the survey report brings figures on visitors sense of security. In the last seven years that indicator has been increasing from 73,5% in 2004 to 97,9% in 2010. According to the polls, most tourists perceive leisure in Gdańsk as a time free of any threats and dangers.

Two law enforcement agencies – the National Police (NP) and Municipal Guard (MG) have been committed to ensure safety for tourists visiting the city. Municipal Guard's main function is to maintain the local safety and public order. Although MG officers undertake actions against minor offences, they are not allowed to proceed with the crimes.

The police current resources are approximately 1150 people, located in 9 police stations in Gdańsk. The total number of police cars is 160, both marked and unmarked. The 6 Sections of MG which are placed in the main districts of the city consist of 240 officers. They are equipped with 23 response cars, 4 motorcycles, 13 mopeds and 3 watercrafts. They react on about 300 incidents daily. A substantial



part of the security system in Gdańsk is CCTV surveillance. This is an example of cooperation between two forces: MG observes the situation and then alerts the police in case of a law violation. The police reacts to all incidents notified by MG. CCTV is under constant extension, currently made of 164 cameras recording 24 h/day. On the whole, CCTV network protects from danger, but also several hundred occurrences are revealed monthly and successfully accomplished. The peak of the tourist season in summer is the busiest period for MG. Two most neuralgic places are the Main Town and the seafront. During that season the number of patrolling units in those areas is doubled. At the end of July the Main Town is hosting Saint Dominic Fair – one of the

biggest trade and cultural open-air events in Europe. The primary goal is to keep public order, as well as protect the visitors life and their belongings.

In the next few months Gdańsk will be completing big investments: 44-thousands football stadium, Second World War Museum, European Solidarity Centre and Shakespeare's Theatre. All these projects will attract even more people. It seems that the biggest challenge for the law enforcement agencies will be to smoothly maintain the city without any disturbance to inhabitants. And, last but not least, to make sure that both – citizens and visitors – are safe.

MORE

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GreenCity program supports new growth of Lahti

Lahti has a strategy with an ambitious aim to cut the greenhouse gas emissions by half in 2025. Additionally, there are plenty of on-going spatial development plans in Lahti with an objective to develop and raise the quality of urban core and neighborhoods. At the moment, the annual population growth rate of Lahti is 0.7 %, which should maintain the health socio-economic profile of the area.

The environmental goals are not self-evidently met with growing spatial needs of urban settlements and infrastructure, not to forget the urban life style requirements. The city has a strong backbone in environmental work done by the Lahti Region Environmental Services, and the expertise in Cleantech business led by the Lahti Science and Business Park Ltd. The newly established GreenCity program of Lahti (2011-2013, funded by ERDF) aims to implement the environmental-friendly solutions to the very core of the Lahti city development.

Lahti GreenCity program consists of new and innovative practices, better co-operation of city partners and higher visibility of the Lahti Region. The practices of GreenCity program include e.g. pilots that tackle the need to increase the energy-efficiency of buildings.

The renovation planning of municipality-owned buildings and the advisory work of private building projects are heading towards more holistic overview with the work of GreenCity program. Lahti is developing greener working practices with WWF Green office program, which it is committed to implement in the whole city by 2013. The development of urban core of Lahti (2011-2016) will be designed in a new partnership with the citizens, the urban dwellers. As a member city of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 year, Lahti develops inspiring public-private co-operation models, which facilitate the transformation of urban core towards space that brings

Lahti GreenCity program = New practices



Markus Lehmuskoski

BUILDING – Aim to implement sustainability into life-cycle planning of new residential areas



ENERGY EFFICIENCY – Aim to cut 15% of Lahti City's total energy use by 2016



Ippo Vuorinen

TRAFFIC – Lahti City searches technologically advanced public transportation solutions.



Lahden kaupungin

HIGH QUALITY URBAN SPACES – Inspiring combination of environmental awareness & design



Kirsi Vauramo

SENSE OF COMMUNITY – Lahti provides current information of environment, and encourages citizens for active co-operation



Saara Vauramo

URBAN NATURE – The preservation of urban nature "hot spots" planned together with urban compaction



quality of life to everyday experience of the citizens. For instance, the bicycle routing and parking spaces are designed in an intensive co-operation with urban cyclists.

The GreenCity program also aims to develop mutually important new partnerships with other environment-aware cities in Finland and globally. Best practices of other cities may well end up as a part of the urban development of Lahti.

MORE

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A Brand New Arena for EuroBasket 2011

Among the objectives set in Klaipėda City Strategic Development Plan 2007-2013, there was the modernization of sports infrastructure by constructing a new modern, universal, multi-functional sports and entertainment complex. The long awaited day will come on 28 July this summer, when the new complex SVYTURIŲ ARENA ("Lighthouse Arena") in Klaipėda will open its door. Its capacity depending on the type of an event is from 1800 to 7450 seats. The architectural design of the Arena building is sea-related - it resembles a catamaran. The project cost 20 mln. EUR, half of the expenditure covered from the EU Structural Funds.



Opening of the new Arena, Klaipėda becomes the main leisure attraction centre in the Western Lithuania. During the first year, more than 60 events will be held there. Half of them will be shows of foreign performers and groups, more than a third – sports events, and the remaining part will be the concerts of local performers and events organized

by the city. The premier performance is the concert of the legendary British group "Smokies".

The most moving event in the Arena are the play-offs of the European Basketball Championship 2011 - EuroBasket 2011, held on 31 August - 5 September in Lithuania this year. That will be the 37th Continental Championship

held by FIBA Europe, and the second time hosted by Lithuania. That will also be the largest Basketball Championship ever, attracting 24 selected European teams. Group D - Belgium, Bulgaria, Georgia, Russia, Slovenia and the Ukraine will compete in Klaipėda. The city is getting ready to provide high standard services to the sportsmen, international media, and dozens of thousands of basketball fans.

MORE

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The Youth of Europe, whip up!

On 23 September Narva traditionally acquires the status of autumn capital of Estonia. This year however, with Tallinn being a European Cultural Capital 2011, Narva will for 91 days become the autumn cultural capital of Europe. It has been decided that the celebrations will focus on youth and the activities will cater for young people's interest regardless from which country they might come from.



The preliminary programme of the "Youth in European Culture" festivities is packed with events. There is going to be a carnival procession along the main streets of Narva, where all kinds of fancy dresses and costumes are welcome: from historical characters typical for the olden days to bizarre creatures of futuristic designs. For the entire day the stages on the territory of Narva

Castle will be given to music bands and dance groups representing all styles and genres. In a cozy nook of the Castle there is going to be an open-air cinema, showing world-famous blockbusters.

A stunning show where a separate group of dancers creates the flag of every EU-member state using umbrellas as props and performs national dances accompanied by the music of a respective country promises to attract huge audiences - not only will it be colourful and nicely choreographed, it will also look extravagant.

Another extraordinary feature of the celebration is an improvised Art Street which will invite everyone to try their hand at various skills from making a national wooden doll, or a personal pin to painting a picture. The magnet of the Street is undoubtedly going to be a 3D permanent street painting done by a famous professional – something that no other city in the country has ever seen before. Here everyone can pose for a camera shot and send a peculiar picture to surprise their friends and relatives. Closer towards the evening, a guest-star, DJ Slon, will ignite the public on the dance floor under the starry sky inside the walls of the ancient Castle. Finally, with the closing accords of the DJ's last track, the skies will brighten with spectacular fireworks and fill with thousands voices of the young crowd cheering loudly on. The meeting of the local Youth Parliament on the hottest issues of European youngsters and an exciting "city-raid" contest are scheduled for the following day.

MORE

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Mariehamn CELEBRATES

Mariehamn, the only town in the autonomous Åland Region was founded in 1861 by the Russian tsar Alexander II and named after his consort Maria Alexandrovna. The founding papers were signed on 21 February and as part of the town's 150 year celebrations a



commemorative ball was held in the Town Hall on 21 February this year. Among 300 invited guests there were 2 representatives from the Russian Postal Office who presented a commemorative stamp depicting Maria Alexandrovna. The stamp was issued simultaneously in Russia and Åland. Celebratory events will be held all year with a special focus on the Mariehamn Party in mid-August.

On the eve of 150th birthday Mariehamn was, as only the second Scandinavian town to receive the award, certified by AAA Certification to confirm that the town's management of environmental issues within municipal administration, services and development comply with ISO 14001, 2004.



A reform regarding the number of municipal council sub-committees has been accepted by the town council and as a result the number of committees will be cut down from 11 to 6 starting from 1 January 2012. Mr Bjarne Pettersson, a longstanding civil servant and Mayor since 2007, has now retired. His successor who took over on 1 May is Mr Edgar Vickström who previously held a number of prominent posts with Ålandsbanken.

MORE

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Live like a Viking

Make a journey one thousand years back in time! There you can meet the Vikings, take part in their everyday life and experience a real Viking fight. In Trelleborg you can do the time travel this summer. Here, Vikings from Europe will gather for a week in July to trade, make handicraft and test their strength in traditional warfare. Meet the successors of Harald Blue-tooth, Sven Two beard and other Vikings. Situated on the northern side of the Baltic Coast, Trelleborg is the southernmost city in Sweden. Twenty years ago archeologists made a unique find, the remaining of a Viking fortress dated back to 980 AD. This was the first fortress to be found in Scania, formerly East Denmark.

Today, a part of the ring shaped castle is rebuilt on its original site in centre of Trelleborg. Situated in a park, designed in Viking stile, with a Viking museum, it is the perfect place to give a try to the authentic Viking life – taste the food, prepared over open fire, try to make a typical handicraft and see what a Viking bed room looked like. You also find several other buildings, constructed in an ancient way where you can experience other aspects of the traditional Viking life.

In the summer, modern Vikings from all over Europe travel across the continent to live the life their ancestors did one thousand years ago. Every year the Viking Market and the battle attract numerous visitors to Trelleborg and the Trelleborg.

There are plenty other things to discover in Trelleborg, e.g. the southernmost point in Scandinavia, the Smygehuk, 32 kilometers of white, sandy beaches, small farm villages and be acquainted with the Scanian cuisine.



CALENDAR

8 July - Viking Wedding
9 July - Viking Battle of Trelleborg
10 July - Viking Battle of Trelleborg

All day market, handicraft, small fights, displays, music, hands-on activities, Viking games, children's play and lots of other events.
 For the latest news and hours:
www.trelleborg.se/trelleborg

The universal design comes to Liepāja

Liepāja is the first city in Latvia where together with a new bicycle path winding through the entire city also new pedestrian lanes with tactile tiles have been built in line with the principles of the universal design. The local Liepāja entrepreneurs have worked out the design and started production of the special tactile tiles for pavement that allow also the vision impaired people to have a safe walk. This idea was suggested by Andis Dzērve, expert of Liepāja Association of the Blind who got the inspiration during his travel in Italy, where it is a daily reality. The needs of the vision impaired are taken into account in the metro stations, on the sidewalks and in the public buildings.

Andis Dzērve was drawing the design of tactile guidelines for the streets, persuading the builders and officials and approaching the local entrepreneurs with an offer to make those special tiles. Andis was drawing on paper what the visually impaired Māris Ceirulis, President of Liepāja Association of the Blind "saw" through his feelings. The local company SIA Rūķis LM agreed to produce the tiles.

Now the citizens of Liepāja already got used to seeing colored textured tiles in the newly built sidewalks or bike paths. The grey color pedestrian

lane runs side by side with the new 7 km long red color bicycle lane stretching from one city border to the other. The pedestrian lane is equipped with a tactile guideline made of tiles with a different texture and lighter colour, thus helping the vision impaired people feel where the middle line of the sidewalk is. There are detectable warnings also at street crossings – tiles with yellow truncated domes alert the visually impaired pedestrians that the pedestrian lane ends and they are approaching the carriageway.

Liepāja has started implementation of the universal design also in the currently renovated Station Square, at street intersections and pedestrian crossings, as well as at public transport stops. There is another novel project elaborated in cooperation with the Development Department of Liepāja City Council - "My Social Responsibility". The project is submitted to the INTERREG Latvia-Lithuania cross-border cooperation program. It proposes to adjust the city beach for the people with disabilities giving them a possibility to enjoy a swim in the Baltic Sea.



Thanks to Andis Dzērve more and more sidewalks in Liepāja have tactile paving. For this initiative he was awarded the title Liepāja Citizen of the Year 2011



VILJANDI – HOME OF ESTONIAN HERITAGE

The heart of the Viljandi tourist area beats in an ancient rhythm. The rhythm contains the past, the present and the future, creation and preservation. It represents centuries of life in this area, strong cultural history and old traditions. In Viljandi every footprint of land talks of its history, culture and traditions.

In 2008 the town won a tourism competition "Hidden Treasures of Estonia" awarded by the European Commission. Kondas Centre and Estonian Traditional Music Centre are two ventures expressing the culture, and bringing out Viljandi's roots in cultural development.

Green parks, old wooden houses, monuments and small art galleries allow for pleasant walks in the town. Its good location, varied nature and good connecting roads have been convincing merchants since 14th century that this has been an excellent place for trade and stopovers. In 1991 the tradition of Hanseatic Days was revived. During the Hanseatic Days the town is crowded with guests, there are concerts and a handicraft fair, people walk in the streets wearing historical costumes.

Cultural and creative Viljandi is ready to pass its welcoming hand to people from Europe who would like to become a part of real Estonian way of life, its historical background and cultural wealth.

Viljandi invites all Hanseatic Cities and guests from near and far to the 35th Hanseatic Days 2015, which will be held on 4 - 7 June 2015.

MORE

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New Mayor in Næstved



After 23 years as a Mayor of Næstved Henning Jensen has decided to leave the post. Mr Jensen was first elected to the City Council in 1974 and became a Mayor of Næstved with 45.000 inhabitants in 1988. As a result of the municipal reform in Denmark in 2005, Næstved is now twice as large. Mr Jensen was a driving force in the merger of 5 municipalities that became the new Næstved.

Mr Henning Jensen will continue his work in the City Council for the rest of the election period.

The post of the Mayor is now passed on to Mr Carsten Rasmussen, who was first elected in 2001 and has served as Vice Mayor and a Chairman of the Social Committee. The next election in Denmark is in 2013.

A European Maritime Day that Puts People First



Every year on May 20, European Maritime Day is celebrated across the European Union to showcase the importance of the sea and oceans for our everyday life. The previous editions were held in Brussels (2008), Rome (2009) and Gijon (2010) respectively. This year, Gdańsk, Poland hosted the 4th edition of the European Maritime Day Conference on 19-20 May.

The title of this year's European Maritime Day was "Putting People First" – because the conference centred on the many benefits that an integrated approach to Maritime Policy brought to European citizens.

This is the main event where stakeholders from a large range of maritime sectors meet and discuss the opportunities and challenges currently facing maritime regions and sectors across Europe: from tourism and fisheries to maritime transport and climate change. European Commissioners Maria Damanaki and Siim Kallas joined Polish and European ministers and personalities at the event. Numerous maritime stakeholder events, workshops and exhibitions took place.

The Conference took stock of the different initiatives which were underway, especially those related to a more stable and transparent maritime planning system, closer international cooperation on surveillance across the borders as well as search and rescue operations, etc. 'Putting People First' included a specific focus on generating jobs in maritime sectors. The panels discussed how to make maritime careers more appealing to young people, and how to promote mobility between jobs and sectors.

The Baltic Sea Strategy was another focus of the event. By interconnecting the players of a dozen countries and countless sectors, it has imparted unprecedented dynamism to the region and given rise to some 80 projects.

Other topics included: a wide range of policy initiatives that relate to the sea, the benefits of Maritime Spatial Planning for the sustainable use of sea space, the Commission's e-Maritime initiative (DG Transport) to enhance berth-to-berth navigation and services in Europe, means to improve the Baltic's marine environment by reducing the eutrophication due to ship waste, identifying vulnerable habitats and providing examples of good governance in the basin.

Karlskrona - Gdynia Cooperation



Photo: Marz Amström

Ferry traffic between Karlskrona and Gdynia has a long tradition. Already in the 1930s there was a ferry connection between the cities. Following the Second World War and later the Iron Curtain cut off the contacts. During 1980-1981 the "Polkalinjen" traffic between Karlskrona and Gdańsk was maintained. After the fall of the Iron Curtain Karlskrona worked hard to reintroduce the ferry service to Gdynia. In 1995 Stena Line, via its subsidiaries' Lion Ferry, established a ferry connection. Since 1998 the line is operated under the name Stena Line.

In June 1998, a new ferry terminal at Verkö in Karlskrona was inaugurated, as the ferry port in central Karlskrona became too small. Stena Line has continually adapted the tonnage according to the development of the traffic and in November 2010 the 'Stena Vision' was put into service to meet the growing demand for transport. In summer this year, her sister ship 'Stena Spirit' will replace the 'Stena Baltica'. Today Stena Line has two departures every day from each port.

Good communication links have positively contributed to a well-developed cooperation between Karlskrona and Gdynia in many areas. Particularly the cooperation between schools, in the cultural sector and in tourism should be mentioned.

The good cooperation between Karlskrona and Gdynia, their ports, and work of the Swedish 'Baltic-Link Association' and the Polish 'Amber Road Cities Association' have contributed greatly to the EU project "Baltic-Link Motorways of the Sea". The EU supports the development of the infrastructure to and from the ports of Karlskrona and Gdynia, especially the rail infrastructure, to promote more environmentally friendly transportation. Another result of the project is that the ferry service is now included in the prioritised part of the Trans-European Transport Network. The project is scheduled for completion in 2013.

MORE

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AMBER CUP SŁUPSK 2011

On 7-8 January 2011 for the fifth time the country's largest indoor football event Amber Cup was held in Słupsk. The organizer was the Słupsk President, Maciej Kobyliński. The event gathered a number of enthusiasts and fans of football. Gryfia Hall was filled to the last place, there were about two thousand people.

Eight teams played in the main tournament. In qualifying, they were divided into two groups. Lechia Gdańsk took first place in its group with a set of major victories and balance goal 14:2!

Lechia, Lambada, Silesia and Team Forcars Słupsk played in the semifinals. Lambada won a third place in the Amber Cup.

In the final Lechia Gdańsk and Śląsk Wrocław competed. The score remained tied from the beginning to the end of the match. Finally, Lechia Gdańsk became a champion of Amber Cup 2011.

Matches at a high level, great organization of the event, the names that attract the fans - all those made the Amber Cup successful. TV live transmission gave the possibility to reach a wider audience and not just people living in the vicinity of Słupsk.

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60th UBC Board Meeting in Lahti, Finland, 11 March 2011

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20 YEARS

Union of the Baltic Cities

