



Baltic Cities

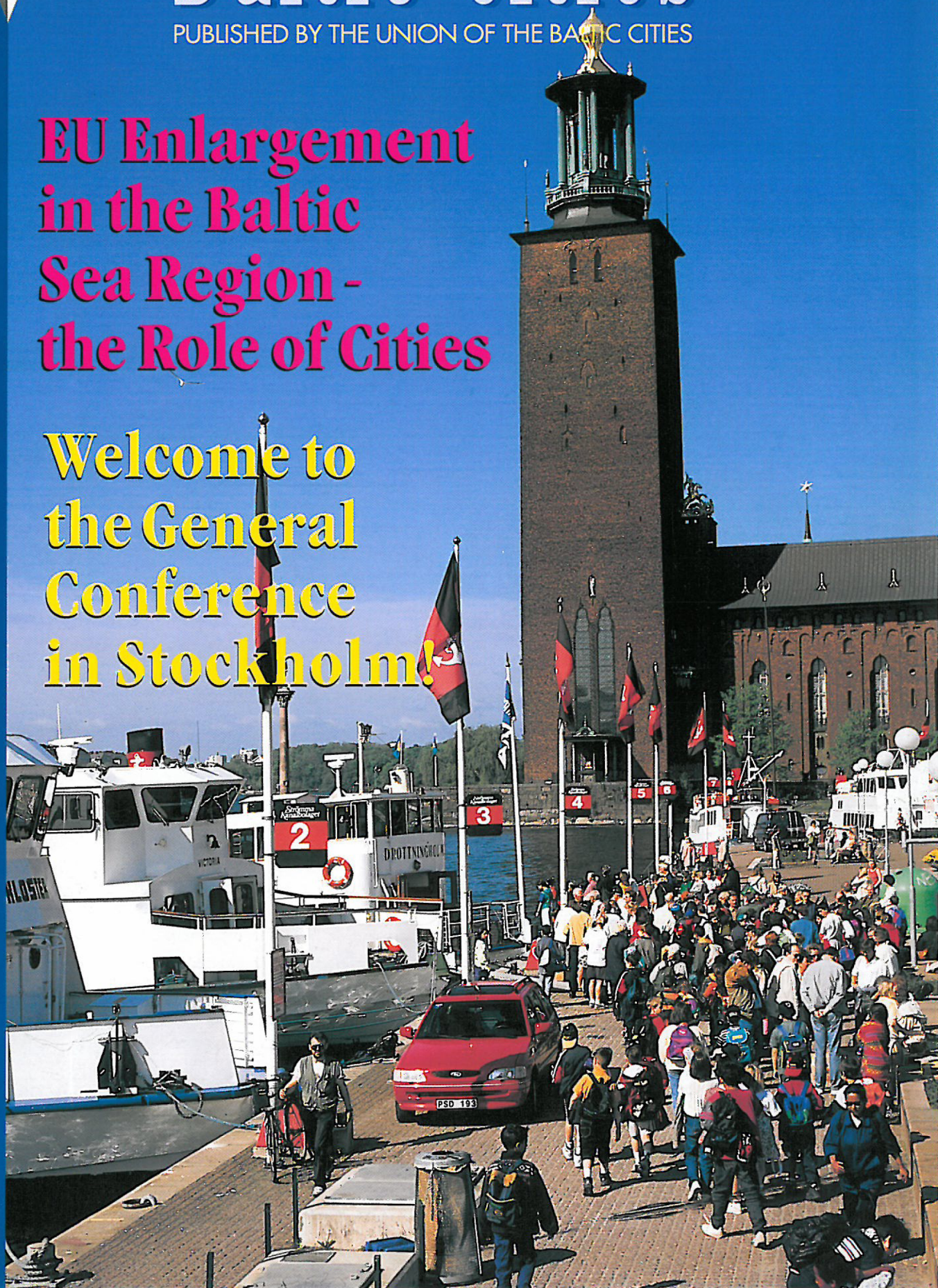
Bulletin

2 / 1999

PUBLISHED BY THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

EU Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region - the Role of Cities

Welcome to the General Conference in Stockholm!



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ISSN 1506-6266

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NEXT ISSUE
Material for the next
issue must be sent by
5 November 1999

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COVER PICTURE
City Hall in Stockholm
photo H. Nelsäter

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Baltic Cities Bulletin



Dear UBC Friends,

I am very happy to welcome you all to the fifth General Conference. Our theme this time is indeed very important for the future development of our member cities.

Our vision of the Baltic Sea as an inland sea in the European Union is rapidly becoming more concrete but the number of question marks is also increasing.

There are some basic qualities in the European Union which when implemented really will mean a drastic change of the situation less than ten years ago. I am thinking of the free movements of people, goods and money – something so unthinkable that nobody in his wildest imagination could imagine it, even when was UBC created.

My opinion is that the later star of the negotiation process of two of the four applicant countries might lead to unnecessary division of our region. However, in our own Union we will treat all cities equally, regardless of affiliation to the European Union.

The local referendums in the accession countries are dark horses, and it is very difficult to predict the outcome, even if the public opinion is in favour of the membership at the moment. The city authorities have a responsibility to inform their citizens about the consequences of the European Union, as pointed out in some articles in this issue.

UBC has accelerated its work with preparing the region for the EU accession process very much during the recent year. The co-operation between the various levels has developed considerably, especially with CBSS but also BSSSC. We must act together in issues that are important for our region, for example a new EU program on co-operation in our region, with simple and co-ordinated rules and with a managing office and decision making located here in our Region. The recent development that many EU programs have been opened also for the Central and Eastern European Countries is encouraging, but it must continue.

We have initiated the UBCEU Coordinators Network, which I believe will be a very important tool to facilitate the accession process. I hope that the financing problems are solved when you read this bulletin. We are also planning an extensive co-operation with TAIEX, which is an office set up by the EU commission in order to facilitate the accession process.

Finally I would like to wish the new UBC board and the Presidium to be elected success in their work. You will inherit several good tools, for example the new UBC strategy and Project Policy. You will also inherit many tasks initiated during the previous period. The most important are, in my opinion, to continue the work with sustainable development and with the EU accession process.

With Baltic Sea Greetings


Anders Engström

Kalmar, August 1999

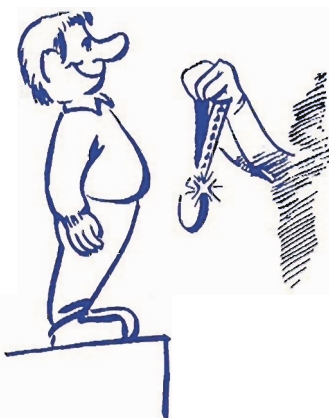
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24th meeting of the Executive Board took place in Tartu, Estonia



Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award



Baltic Sea Conference in Kaunas

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I. EU Enlargement - the Role of Cities

THE EUROPEAN UNION: A WHITE ELEPHANT

To describe the true nature of the European Union resembles the old Hindu tale about the wise man who was asked to describe the true nature of God. He replied: "It is like describing a white elephant to a blind man. Touching the elephant in the front with the hand gives a different impression that touching it at the back – and how do you describe white?" There is not one simple answer, it is dependent on your perspective and prejudices.

If you analyse the EU by looking at the EU budget, the impression is that of an agricultural organisation with some side activities. If the main experience of EU is the paper work, the complicated rules and the slow decision making in projects, the impression is EU being a giant inaccessible mammoth. The giant palaces and the endless corridors in the EU institutions in Brussels give similar impressions.

Understanding EU as an administrative organisation may lead to the wrong track. EU can be better understood if you regard it as an ever-changing process, affecting all

nations, authorities, organisations and citizens.

The economic factors have often been very important when assessing the advantages of EU. What can I earn in terms of money by EU membership? Perhaps you have to go beyond the immediate money aspects to really assess the advantage of EU. Security, peace and co-operation are important factors. EU, like democracy, is something more than just a set of rules. The Union is constantly promoting the idea of a European identity.

There has been a strong tendency regarding the power and influence of EU in recent years, especially since the Maastricht Treaty. The national, governmental level in EU is losing power in two directions: Up, to Brussels and the EU Institutions and the EU bureaucracy, and down, to local and regional governments and the new co-operation bodies between these authorities, for example EU regions.

EU influences local and regional authorities very much both regarding the daily

work as well as strategic development. Most cities in EU countries have changed their organisation and/or working methods as a consequence of the membership. It has also encouraged direct foreign contacts without interference from national authorities.

There are great expectations on the new geopolitical situation when the Baltic Sea Region will become an inland sea of the European Union. However, there is a need for cities to be active in order to be able to utilise the benefits of membership. One way to do that is to support a strong UBC to be a spokesman for the local authority level in our region.

This issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin shows some of the activities and efforts of the cities to prepare for the enlargement. The work will intensify, and UBC wants to become an important supporter of the member cities in this work.

By Juhan Janusson
UBC Project Manager
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IMPACT OF EU-MEMBERSHIP ON MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS

EU-accession and the adoption of the "acquis communautaire" has a considerable impact at all levels of the society, including regional and local levels where political decisions and regulations directly affect the individual citizen.

Local and regional level preparations for EU-membership have to be carried out in two dimensions: on the national level by representatives of municipalities during the negotiations on *acquis communautaire*, and within the municipalities in preparing for adjusting to new rules, building up competencies and taking advantage of new possibilities.

The implementation of EU law is predominantly carried out within the framework of the national legislative process. It is nevertheless important to

realise that the process of both formal and informal negotiations and lobbying relating to the contents of new EU-law now involves more actors than before. Also local and regional actors must be involved in this.

I would like to mention eight areas on which municipalities and regions should focus their interests in preparing for a future in an EU-memberstate.

Public procurement

Local and regional authorities are significant public procurers. The large internal market therefore offers ample possibilities for substantial cost savings through EU-wide call for tenders. You can read more about this in a separate article in this issue

The structural funds

European programmes are strictly objective-oriented. They are based on a programme planning period of far more than a year, with measures designed for an implementing period of several years. EU programmes will be changed regarding emphasis, funding etc. as stated in the Agenda 2000, but compliance with certain principles should be required during the negotiation process:

Partnership: Close co-ordination between the EU Commission and relevant authorities at national, regional and local level through all phases of the programme planning must be guaranteed. To some extent social partners and NGO's should be included as well.



Co-financing: Funding of co-financing by the relevant national or public authority or by private funds must be guaranteed. EU only finances a part of the costs of a programme or a project.

Subsidiarity: EU only undertakes measures aimed at achieving goals which can not be achieved at the national level, and which are therefore, due to their scope or impact, more likely to be sufficiently realised at community level. This principle must be guiding during the negotiation process.

The structural funds and the principle of partnership at work are important tools to be utilised by the local and regional authorities. The national government should not act alone but co-operate with local and regional authority representatives. Local authorities should co-ordinate their activities in their own national associations.

Subsidies

EU law prohibits state subsidies, including costs carried by municipal enterprises that distort or may hinder free competition. Each subsidy must be reported to the European Commission, which examines it and decides whether or not it is allowed. There are exemptions to this rule, and it is not easy to draw a clear line. Concrete example of what is not accepted are internal subsidies within a municipality using surplus of its electricity company to cover deficits in for example its public transport company.

Elections

All EU citizens have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections. This is regarded as a visible element of the development of the EU into a "political" union and should be seen as a decisive step towards a "Citizens Europe".

Municipal and regional finances

Local and regional authorities in most countries regard the implications of both the existing directives (VAT directive and the consumer tax system directive) as well as the tax harmonisation policy currently being prepared by EU as largely underestimated. Another general problem derives from the European-wide pressure to reduce wage-dependent taxes, resulting in substantial financial losses for local authorities. This is an issue that calls for a dialogue with the national government but also at European level.

Environmental policy

Some 2000 EU directives apply or affect the political or technical aspect of environmental protection. This may have considerable impact as local and regional authorities are forced to take environmental aspects into consideration. The national environmental protection policies in most countries have been increasingly focused on individual quality standards as a result of



EU-membership, for example in the fields of water, waste water, air and noise, as well as on technical standards such as specific emissions, noise level or chemical composition.

Employment policy

Although measures aiming at reducing unemployment, job creation and boosting economic activity are usually the responsibility of central governments due to their general competence with regards to economic policy, these issues are of high importance for local authorities and regional as well.

Drawing up national employment programmes must be assessed in Brussels. Initiatives aimed at facilitating the setting up of enterprises, retraining and employment programmes for handicapped, long-term unemployment and youth employment, as well as measures to improve the quality of premises clearly touch upon the interests of local authorities. Being involved in co-ordination and in the decision making process is of importance for local and regional authorities. There are strong links between financial efforts by local and regional authorities and measures taken at EU level.

Urban development

These policy fields are becoming increasingly more important, as they aim at recording and developing local and regional authorities' own potentials. Urban policy tackles, inter alia, the issue of making best use of the synergy between urban centres

and local communities in their hinterland as well as between different markets and cultures in order to strengthen the role of the cities as centres of "logistic systems" for the entire region. This is also important in view of the fact that cities must face social and environmental problems due to their high population density.

The objective of setting up appropriate future oriented systems calls for national support but also from the EU, which is now developing a European urban policy.

Conclusion

The local and regional aspects should be taken into consideration in the negotiation process now. This is a task for national associations of municipalities and regions with the purpose of getting as favourable outcome of the negotiations as possible, for instance environmental transitory rules and guarantees of financial support from the structural funds.

Another task is to establish a dialogue with the national government ensuring that municipal and regional aspects will also be taken into consideration when EU-membership is a fact. Local and regional authorities must also be given an active and important role in deciding on structural funds in their region.

On municipal and regional level, actions should be taken as soon as possible to build up competence amongst both politicians and experts. It is a matter of gathering information, carrying out seminars and other activities, development of twinning relations with counterparts in EU-countries and so on. It is also important to add an EU-strategy to the local and regional strategic plans and development programmes. It does not have to be very complex - a few really important guiding principles for the EU-oriented work the municipality/region wishes to carry out.

By Mr Lars Ohman
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Local and Regional Authorities' Role in the EU Enlargement

OPINIONS FROM THREE INFLUENTIAL EU-POLITICIANS

The European Union Politicians are themselves preparing for the EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region. It will not only be a great change for the new member countries and their cities. Also the European Union will develop and change.

We sent some questions to three politicians who are active in the European Union. We wanted to find out their opinions and insights about central EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and the Committee of Regions) expectations towards the role of local and regional authorities in the accession process.

What are the present activities, strategies or policies of your Institution for the benefit of the accession process with special emphasis on local and regional authorities?

Roger Kaliff:

The main effort at the moment is to create a comprehensive policy on the issue. COR is preparing a document on the matter to be adopted in November 1999 at a conference in Brussels. COR and the local and regional authorities from the six present countries will use the possibility to exchange experiences. The outcome will be a guideline for the COR policy and a recommendation to the other European institutions.

Riitta Myller:

The European parliament has emphasised the importance of the cross-border and trans-regional cooperation in supporting the accession process of the candidate

members. Proposals have been made in order to improve better coordination between Interreg and Phare/Tacis -programmes. The parliament has also succeeded to get earmarked part of the Tacis-budget to cross-border cooperation. It has been annually 30 m euros since 1996. In the current budget there is also 10 m euros for developing the trans-regional cooperation in the Baltic region.

Malou Lindholm

Unfortunately too little. We thought that Agenda 2000 should deal with the accession process more than it turned out to do, and most EU-parliamentarians were disappointed. Considerable sums were allocated, but mainly for adjusting the legal system to the EU legislation. But the important reforms were pushed ahead. Formally the Agenda 2000 is valid until year 2006, and if any country will join the EU before that, many transitory rules will be necessary. One very concrete example is the agricultural sector, which will be very difficult to solve. I have submitted several proposals on more participation by local and regional authorities in regional policy matters but also on accession issues. Mostly they have been accepted in the committees and in pleno.

What is, or should be, the role of local and regional authorities in present and future EU and what is, or should be, their role in the accession process?

Roger Kaliff:

The EU project may not only be a process for the national governments. The accession process must be a process also for

the citizens. This means that large groups of politicians in the accession countries must be involved in the preparations for EU membership. The experience from the new EU countries, like Sweden, shows how necessary this is in the accession countries. This task is even more important in the accession countries, where the EU accession process goes hand in hand with building a sustainable local and regional democracy.

Riitta Myller:

Any regional development is - of course - up to the local actors. The role of the union is to decide upon strategies and finances, but the cooperation and the work itself should be based on regions themselves in cooperation with their own national governments.

Malou Lindholm:

Until now there has been mostly talks and mainly at the national governmental level. The local and regional authorities have been absent in the discussion. It is important for the local and regional authorities to search for information and mentally prepare for the accession. Perhaps the authorities should start local EU offices, so that the citizens do not only have to turn to the capital for information. Also the opposite information flow is important. The EU institutions need information from the local and regional level. Discuss with your national government and with the negotiators - in that way Brussels will also get information on the needs. You have to link the local level with the national level. New



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Member of the European Parliament and:
- Group of the Party of European Socialists (Vice-Chairman),
- Committee on the

Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection,
- Committee on Regional Policy,
- Delegation to the EU-Lithuania Joint Parliamentary Committee



Malou LINDHOLM
Former Member of the European Parliament and:
- The Green Group in the European Parliament,
- Committee on Regional Policy,

- Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights,
- Delegation to the EU-Lithuania Joint Parliamentary Committee (vice-chairman)
- Delegation to the EU-Latvia Joint Parliamentary Committee,



Roger KALIFF
Social Democrat
- Vice Chairman of the Committee of Regions
- Chairman of the Swedish delegation to the COR
- Member of the Institu-

tional Committee and Commission 5 of COR
- Responsible for COR contacts with local and regional politicians in the accession countries,
- Chairman of the Kalmar City Council



EU countries shall adapt to 90 000 pages of aquis communautaire. When Sweden entered, it was "only" 30 000 pages. These demands are enormous, and EU has to show flexibility.

In what way will local and regional authorities in the accession countries benefit from or notice your institutions when their country becomes member of the EU?

Roger Kaliff:

The local and regional authorities will get a role in the union and can mirror experiences from the whole of Europe into their own authority. This demands also more information and know-how.

Riitta Myller:

I personally consider the close cooperation between the European parliament and the regions as a system of exchanging information. For us it is important to be acquainted with the situation in the accession countries also from the point of regional interests. For example in the area of environmental issues the local viewpoints should never be excluded.

Malou Lindholm:

Now that the Amsterdam treaty has led to more influence for the Parliament, it will attract more attention. One important way is direct contact between the local and regional authorities and individual EU parliamentarians. But to that, you have to leave the strict party policy thinking and go beyond the party boundaries. Local politicians should make contact with politicians who are members of some committee or delegation and discuss concrete issues from their community. This is valid also for local politicians in the accession countries - look up the politicians at the EU Parliament homepage. If you have a special question, look for a politician, regardless of party affiliation who belongs to a committee that handles that type of questions, for example transport, regional policy or environment. I am for example vice-chairman of the Lithuanian delegation of the European Parliament.

In what way should the local and regional authorities act during the accession process? Is the present local and regional authority activity sufficient in order to get a good start of the EU membership? What are the crucial issues?

Roger Kaliff:

It is important to activate, make contacts and search for information. It is also important to have an intensified contact with the national government. This is an important field of work for COR - we try to bring local and regional authorities and the national governments together. All fields

of local and regional authority activity are equally important in the preparation phase, you cannot emphasise only some fields.

Riitta Myller:

Please see the answer on the previous question.

Malou Lindholm:

The best way is to co-operate inside and outside EU. You have to have networks in two dimensions - horizontally with other regions and cities across Europe, and vertically to various national and European institutions. It is also important to become stable. A great problem is lack of continuation and unstable democracies in the accession countries. Therefore it is very difficult to create sustainable networks. Another important task is to initiate discussions among the citizens on the pros and cons of EU membership. The citizens must know what it is about. Otherwise there is a great risk of a back-lash, which is bad for EU as well as for the own country.

Do you have any special comment regarding local and regional authorities and the accession process?

Roger Kaliff:

All kinds of contact creating activity is important. The UBC co-operation is extremely important for a successful accession process. Equally important are city twinning, engagements in Euroregions and similar engagements. The COR has an overall responsibility for good co-operation and more contacts between the European Union and local and regional authorities.

Riitta Myller:

I just want to repeat that development can never be transferred from top to bottom. Only support and resources could and should be given. The best way to maximise the outcome is to strengthen direct cooperation between the Baltic cities and regions. This is one very important element also in building the EU-policy on Nordic dimension

Malou Lindholm:

The local and regional issues have been absent in the discussion. Only some years ago there was a lot of talking about the Regions of Europe but now it has disappeared from the agenda. I also would like to emphasise that citizens and local politicians in the accession countries should not be afraid to make contact with the EU Parliamentarians. We need contact as much as you do.

Interviews by Juhan Janusson
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EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
EUROPAISCHES PARLAMENT
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLAMENTO EUROPEO
PARLEMENT EUROPEEN
PARLAMENTO EUROPEO
EUROPEES PARLEMENT
PARLAMENTO EUROPEU
EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI
EUROPAPARLAMENTET

The European Parliament - the only democratically elected international institution - has 626 Members who exercise democratic control at European level. Parliament helps to draft, amend and adopt European laws and the EU budget, and makes policy proposals. MEPs take a keen interest in the defence of human rights and Parliament has relations with all the world's democratically elected parliaments. The Parliament has more power after the Amsterdam Treaty. Now about 70% of all EU legislation must pass through the Parliament, compared with 30% before.

EUROPEAN UNION

Committee
of the
Regions

The Committee of the Regions is an advisory committee consisting of 222 representatives, appointed by the Member States, of local and regional authorities. It brings a regional and local dimension to the Union. COR created as a consequence of the Maastricht Treaty, which introduced the concept of subsidiarity, meaning that decisions should not be made at the European Level when they can be taken at lower levels.



BALTIC CITIES TOWARDS THE EU

The last decade of the twentieth century witnesses Europe making its career in the Baltic Sea Region. With the collapse of the Berlin wall and the unification of both German states, Mecklenburg VorPommern became part of the EU. Later, Denmark, twice, in a dramatic referendum approved the Maastricht Treaty. Sweden and Finland joined the EU in 1995. Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia signed the European Association Agreements with Brussels. Presently, Poland and Estonia have just started the negotiations for the EU membership and prepare towards adopting the *acquis communautaire*. Lithuania and Latvia are about to start such negotiations soon.

One can say that the Baltic is becoming the inland sea of the European Union, including the significant Norwegian and Russian presence in the region. However, one should draw his/her attention to the fact that no one in Europe (except the Norwegians themselves) questions the Norwegian right to membership in the common market. Russia with its Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions sits on the Baltic sea. Those two cities have probably the richest historic ties with Europe in this enormous country.

In comparison with the Mediterranean Sea Region, the Baltic Sea area is not distinguished by deep disparities, while common European traditions and history to a great extent contribute to closer integration and collaboration in the region.

Disbandment of artificial political divisions into post-war influence zones in the BSR generated in the nineties an unheard-of richness of multi-faceted forms of co-operation and multi-level associations among governmental organisations, regional and local governments, entrepreneurial entities, and NGOs. Union of the Baltic Cities was the first multinational organisation grouping representatives from the Baltic states. Established in 1991 in Gdansk by 32 founding member cities, today the organisation has 86 members.

To a certain extent then the Baltic cities derive from their historical heritage of caring and foreseeing self-governments, sensitive to protecting their own interests, and striving after them like in the times of the Hanseatic League, Kalmar Union, or Pomeranian local assemblies, etc.

At the close of the 20th century those common interests of the Baltic cities first of all unfold to: sustainable development and competitiveness of the whole region, removal of barriers hampering economic, cultural and scientific co-operation, development of regional communication networks and transportation corridors, protection of common environment. Those interests are basically the same as the EU's objectives and aims. Therefore, it is not an incidental saying that the cities in our region are pillars of European integration. Suffice it to say that it is the cities and their citizens who perceive the integration as the chance for growth and well-being.

Unquestionably, it is the national governments who create the legal and public framework of common Europe, as only they can sign treaties. Likewise, it is obvious that international agreements provide only conditions and framework for actions (principles) which are then put into meaningful practice by citizens and local communities in their everyday lives.

In the Baltic Sea Region 44% of the population lives in cities having over 100.000 inhabitants. Also, here groups the major industrial and intellectual potential. Baltic cities are not only ports, but they also accommodate universities, scientific, cultural and technical centres. Regional and local public administrations are seated there. Deputies elected to national and European institutions live mainly in the cities.

On the other hand, the Baltic cities, who compose a unique forum supporting the idea of the common Europe, at the same time experience dilemmas related to unemployment, costly municipal infrastructure, environmental problems, maintenance and revitalization of historical housing stock, social disintegration, crime and the feeling of insecurity.

Engagement of the Baltic cities in supporting European integration evokes then natural expectations towards Europe's reciprocity, especially as we are talking about the region producing 15% of the world's GDP.

Although being conscious that cultivating evangelic feelings is not of main concern to the Brussels' bureaucrats, UBC with its Strategy resolved to lobby the urban dimension in European politics.



We wish that the cities should have the possibly of autonomous contribution into planning and development of the projected Structural Funds and other pre-accession funds according to the subsidiarity principle. The cities also wish to prepare their local administrations and organisations to the EU standards. Many Baltic city adopted its integration policy. Major and richer cities such as Copenhagen, Helsinki and Stockholm opened up their own representation offices in Brussels. Similarly, regional organisations such as Sydsam and Schleswig-Holstein Region together with their cities did the same. Further, Baltic cities develop joint projects which aim at practical preparation towards operations in the internal common market and mutual co-operation. These projects are: UBC Member cities and the EU; EU Coordinators, UBC and Agenda 21, SAIL, Environmental Training Programme, Municipal Environmental Auditing, Public Transportation Proforum, Baltic Sea Alliance, UBC Women's Network, Baltic Art and Culture Festival, Adult education, to name just a few. Union of the Baltic Cities' aim and ambition is to provide the cities with professional consulting in this respect.

I believe that the new Strategy for the UBC, which is to be adopted by the General Assembly in Stockholm in September this year, will contribute to this, too.

Likewise in the past, also today the Baltic cities are to play a creative and positive role in the peaceful co-operation in the Baltic region, the EU enlargement, and to acknowledge the powerful position of the Baltic region in our common Europe. All this is being done for the benefit of the inhabitants - *homo balticus*.

Mr Bartłomiej Sochański
UBC Vice President
City of Szczecin



UBC 5TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 24-25 IN STOCKHOLM

We stand at the threshold of an exciting future with a new millennium and an enlargement of the European Union. What implications will this have for co-operation in the Baltic Sea region?

European Union enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region – the role of cities, regions and states is the theme of our conference in Stockholm. The integration of the Eastern European countries has been raised into high relief in the aftermath of recent events. Shadows from a bygone age still linger on. These events show how important it is that law and justice is upheld, and that respect for life and property become the norm throughout all of Europe, concepts that are central to the European Union's enlargement process. Union of the Baltic Cities will continue its efforts to build new bridges across the Baltic Sea. The best way of doing this is by creating channels of communication between the cities and regions of Western and Eastern Europe to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Secure economic development

The ambition with the enlargement is to secure economic development in our region and to maintain a good social standard. The countries around the Baltic Sea are engaged in a number of projects aiming to bring cities, regions and countries together. Large resources have been allocated for this purpose. But there are still opportunities for the realisation of more good projects.

Strengthen local democracy

The conference in September is aiming to discuss the new possibilities of the enlargement. The issue of democracy is very important in this discussion. Democracy is to a great extent local, it has its roots on a local level. In light of this it is obvious that enlargement is a vital issue for the cities around the Baltic Sea and for Union of the Baltic Cities to continue its work in developing fruitful co-operation around the Baltic Sea.

Conference Programme

The General Conference will be officially opened in the morning on September 24. Apart from speeches on the conference

theme, a special workshop will be also organised. This workshop will be organised parallel to the UBC Commissions' meetings that will take place in the afternoon. The second day will be devoted to the internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, budget, etc.

In the afternoon on September 24 the conference will move to Stockholm International Fairs where the Scandinavian Travel Market is organised. Scandinavian Travel Market will provide a valuable market place, where members of the tourism and travel trade - from more than 20 countries – can meet each other and exchange information and experience and also do business. Stimulating panel debates and useful seminars will all enhance the trade fair programme and make it even more attractive to trade visitors travelling from the entire Baltic Sea Region. A special interest from these target groups as well as representatives of the press will most certainly be aimed at the exhibiting members of Union of the Baltic Cities and the activities planned for Friday the 24th.

Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award Ceremony

The intention of the award, initiated by the Commission on Environment, is to en-

courage all member cities to develop their environmental administration, management and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens. The intention is not to look for the absolutely very best overall environmental management, but to look for innovative practices which function well in the local circumstances of the applying cities. The award will be presented in the City Hall on September 25.

The conference also contains a social programme, such as sightseeing, lunch in the City Hall and a visit and dinner at Vasa museum.

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photo R. Ryan

Sunrise over the Old Town in Stockholm



KOSZALIN AND EU MATTERS



Security of citizens, protection of their rights and interests, as well as economic and social development remain among the most important European Union objectives. Naturally, in the European integration context, Koszalin authorities expect access to the structural funds, influx of capital investment and new technologies to the city.

Integration with the EU, apart from free movement of citizens and improvement in the quality of living, will also result in moving closer to European standards in spheres such as internal security, employment, health and education.

In December 1998 Koszalin applied for the Council of Europe's Award for municipalities. On 20 April 1998 the Council's Committee on Environment, Spatial Planning and Communal Issues granted the European Diploma to Koszalin. The award was granted in recognition of Koszalin's

efforts aiming at increasing the citizens' knowledge about the EU, as well as of numerous activities undertaken by cultural and educational organisations or schools. Also, humanitarian help provided to Kaliningrad and Baltijsk, and to people of Polish origin living in Kazakhstan were appreciated.

Further, in recognition of its efforts, Koszalin was granted the Flag of Europe in May 1999. This flag of honour is a reward for promoting European thought in the construction of an integrated Europe. With such encouragement and inspiration behind us, further European-oriented activities will continue and will certainly greatly contribute to promote Koszalin not only on the European arena.

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WE ARE RUSSIANS BUT ALSO EUROPEANS

Kaliningrad is a very special city of the Russian Federation, with unique history and fate. After the second World War Königsberg city, the capital of Eastern Prussia, became Russian and changed its name to Kaliningrad. Today, our city is the administrative centre of the westernmost enclave region of RF.

Historically, the city located at the crossroads of major trade routes, had become an active member of the Hanseatic League in the Middle Ages and contributed significantly to culture and trade development in this part of Europe. Today, the city tries to take advantage of this unique geopolitical location for the benefit of our region and the whole country by promoting a wide range of international activities, which is gaining importance especially as the process of democratization of society and converting to the market economy is actively going on in Russia. Through the international contacts, we can study the Western experience, can attract foreign investment, and expand cultural and scientific linkages.

International cooperation is one of the top priorities of Kaliningrad City Hall. As a result of dynamic activities the city is

twinned with 16 cities all over the world. Today, Kaliningrad is the only Russian city which has participated in 18 EU co-funded projects, as well as in 9 bilateral projects with Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands. These projects help us greatly to solve our environmental, economic and social problems by providing technical assistance. Further, this cooperation contributes to making our city the centre of trans-regional cooperation, creates wide opportunities for reviving the role of Kaliningrad as European centre of trade, business, culture and science.

The coming enlargement of the EU will have enormous impact on our city. After our neighbouring countries, Poland and Lithuania, join the Union, Kaliningrad becomes the only Russian region, which will be totally surrounded by the EU, not just having common borders like Saint-Petersburg. We are deeply concerned about the future framework of our relationship with the EU. We think one way out is to start a wide-range cooperation activities with the municipalities from the EU countries, and to establish as close as possible links in economic, cultural, social and humanitarian areas.

Future enlargement of the EU makes us think about developing a new model of our relationship with the EU. On one hand, being a part of Russia we have right to take part only in the TACIS, while geographically we are located in the PHARE area. We do need a special status in order to be able to work together with our partners in Poland and Lithuania on overcoming our mutual environmental and social problems. From our point of view, another big obstacle for future cooperation could be some restrictions like more strict visa regulations. So far, Kaliningraders enjoy visa-free regime with Poland and Lithuania, and this contributes greatly to our international cooperation. Visa restrictions would be an enormous obstacle when these two countries join the Union. We do hope that we will manage to overcome these difficulties and our UBC friends and partners from the Baltic Sea states will help us in that.

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GERMAN UNIFICATION PROCESS

Despite all announcements, unification came all of sudden and very unexpected. There was no master plan on how to deal with this great gift of history to the German people.

The FRG has participated in Western cooperation and organisations. The country has been democratically ruled and based on a employee-oriented social market economy. The FRG is a founding member of the EU, while the GDR was a member of Eastern cooperation and organisations run by a single party. It was a member of the eastern economic organisation COMECON, centrally guided by the Soviet Union, and had a centrally planned economy with five-year plans on allocation, distribution and investment.

The organisation of the states and societies were developing differently since at least 1949. In 1990 nearly everything changed for the people in GDR and only for them. The citizens of the FRG did not take over any achievements of the former GDR. For East Germans the November 1989 up to October 1990 was a real revolution. The former system of habits, rules, regulations, conventions, education and training - in short, the experiences of all their lives have been questioned ever since the day of unification.

Besides psychological difficulties some avoidable mistakes happened only due to

political reasons. For example, the currency was changed, two Marks of GDR into one Mark of FRG against any economic reasoning. This decision meant that the value of the GDR Mark and the costs of production in East Germany went up by more than 100% and did not meet economic reality - the differences in productivity. Because of the low productivity in East German industries competitiveness immediately went down and it nearly resulted in a catastrophe which could only be avoided by intensive public western-paid aid.

East German industry had to face competition without any shelter by tariffs and it partially lost its markets in the East. In 1989 we had 1.7 million workers in manufacturing industries in East Germany. Now it went down to one third. Around 35 out of a hundred persons in Western Germany work in the manufacturing sector and only less than 20 in Eastern Germany. The average productivity is only two third of the average Western productivity. Accordingly, the wages are 20% lower. Less than expected necessary investments are made. The actual unemployment rate is 23.2% and a lot of persons are working short hours and in job procurement measures.

An important fact was that in Germany the laws were enacted by the Bundestag in Bonn and till 1990 the East Germans were not even represented there. This makes a

big difference to the accession states where members of parliaments will make the decisions, legitimated by voters of their constituency.

While being unified, we became automatically a European Community member which meant: to participate in an enlarged market with European competition; to take over rules and standards developed and implemented by Western Europeans over 40 years; to deal with a not very powerful European Parliament in Strasbourg, the Commission in Brussels and the European Council; to contribute to the development of the Union by improving the technical infrastructure and the human resources, giving the same chances to everybody to live in a society of fair competition.

So in my opinion, the time of transition into the European Union is a very precious time and it should be intensely and carefully used for preparing the country and its citizens for joining.

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ADAPTING TO MEET THE EU STANDARDS

The majority of people in Lithuania have a vision of their country in the oncoming century, as a member state of European Union. Undoubtedly a great number of fields have to be developed to meet the EU standards.

Economy is one of the fields where Lithuania still has to progress. It is obvious that regional development positively can influence the economy of the whole state. The problems of regional development were discussed at the international conference "Šiauliai: Your Business Partner", which was held in Šiauliai, 12-13 May and was organised by the Šiauliai City Municipality.

The businessmen of the Šiauliai region

had the possibility to establish contacts with representatives from other regions of Lithuania and guests from the EU countries: Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The participants of the conference discussed various questions and shared experiences in three workshops. The importance of regional development for the whole state in the process of the preparation to join the EU was emphasised.

Social issues are taken seriously in the EU. It is very important to a young Lithuanian independent state to align to the EU social standards.

The conference of the Femina Baltica project that took place in Šiauliai, April 22-23, focused on social affairs. It was a result

of the successful co-operation between the municipalities of Šiauliai and Turku. This event attracted a large number of participants from Northern Lithuania and foreign countries and was extremely useful for the representatives of Lithuanian women's organisations and social workers, who had the possibility of gaining new experiences and progressive ideas.

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GDYNIA: A PROJECT-ORIENTED CITY

EU enlargement is the European Commission's priority, especially as joining of new member states is likely to happen soon. The accession process, being the key target for Poland, should involve not only the governmental level, but first of all the local one.

Attempting to meet this challenge, Gdynia Municipal Government adopted the Strategic Plan to give the city a European dimension. Accordingly, Gdynia participates in numerous EU supported projects, varying from small to big multi-partner network projects.



Opening of the Council of Europe Park in Gdynia

The first ones developed by Gdynia City resulted in raising young people's awareness and knowledge about Europe, especially through trainings by highly qualified teachers. (e.g. *Working out a model for European Education and its implementation in Gdynia's Schools* – a project co-financed by PHARE Fund for Small Grant Facility Fiesta II). Further, they brought knowledge about activities strengthening European integration at the local level in Gdynia's twin-cities presented during the seminar "European Integration at the Local Level". The seminar was supported by the Community Aid for Twinning Programme.

Another good example of a CBC project, currently developed, is the mid-scale project *CLEAN - Coal, Logistics, Environment and Neighbourhood* prepared by the Gdynia City Hall, Port of Gdynia in co-operation with Helsinki. It aims mainly at improving coal handling and transportation system.

Besides direct benefits from EU financial assistance, development of such projects brought other important advan-

tages. Projects stimulated changes in the job structure, generated new team working skills, and provided the local administration with knowledge of the European Union legislation. Although uniting cross-border efforts towards undertakings around the Baltic Rim is a highly valuable initiative, some problems have arisen from unsynchronised decisions by the European Commission. Gdynia City is involved as the national lead applicant in several projects prepared in collaboration with the EU's municipalities to tackle common issues, mainly in the field of sustainable spa-

tial development and environmental protection. Applications of three network projects TEM/TER Development Zone, Waterfront Urban Development, and Sustainable Spatial Development with a Network of Ports for Boat Tourism in the BSR were submitted to the PHARE CBC Baltic Sea Region Joint Project with INTERREG. More than

six months have passed since the submission deadline. We are still waiting for the Commission's approval, while the EU partners in the two above mentioned projects have already obtained financial assistance. Delays in making decisions related to the Phare projects cause difficulties in the co-operation between partners, especially to keep deadlines.

To develop Gdynia's activities in project development and to support the city departments the European Integration department has been established within Gdynia city hall structures. The department's scope of activities also includes collecting and spreading information on EU issues among the citizens.

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STRENGTHS OF TURKU

Much has changed in Turku since Finland's membership in the EU. With growing competition between cities and urban regions, government funding of local authorities has decreased radically, while the municipal development is gradually becoming dependent on the local authorities.

The city's vision is that "Turku is an international centre of culture and growth in the Baltic Region". The paths are defined as long-term tasks. The Turku administration, elected city government and its officials, have worked themselves through the strategy process, and came out of it more united and goal-oriented. Our present strategy for 1997-2000 will be changed soon.

If Turku had become a EU Structural Fund Objective area when Finland had joined the EU, we would have had a more or less guaranteed income per capita per year from the ERDF. Turku had opted to become an Objective 2 area. The city would have gained the status of a declining industrial area. Turku fulfilled the unemployment criteria all but too well, but did not gain Objective 2 status.

One lesson from this, and from subsequent competition for the EU Urban Pilot Projects and Urban Community Initiatives has been that cities with similar interests must learn not only to compete, but also to collaborate. There are lessons to be learned from corporate life. Companies in the same field join forces to lobby for the whole branch, and compete with each other within the given frames they have been able to achieve through co-operation. The stronger each city is committed to its own development strategy, the easier it is for the city to open up to others.

Although named a "White City", i.e. without Objective status, Turku has been able to construct many successful EU projects, including several major Social Fund projects, like the Turku Local Employment Initiative. The city has been involved in four EU Research Programme projects. A special unit of the city central administration, ABONET, is acting as an internal consultant to the whole city on translating good ideas into projects.

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FORUM BALTICUM

Being a coastal town in the Stockholm region, Norrtälje has the benefits of being geographically very close to the Baltic countries and northwestern Russia. This favourable location for interaction with its eastern neighbours caused a decision to establish the municipal company, Forum Balticum, with focus on trade and interaction between Sweden and the Baltic Sea neighbours.

Trade and interaction were the founding thoughts of Forum Balticum. These can be realised in many ways; for example by establishing Swedish companies in the Baltic countries and Russia and vice versa, or through carrying out EU- and nationally funded cross-border projects together with sister organisations and municipalities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia.

One of the main tasks of Forum Balticum is to offer corporate service. Companies can get in contact with companies in other countries, receive information on how to enter a new market, receive information on how to proceed in juridical issues etc.

In recent years Forum Balticum's activities have increasingly been focused on carrying out collaboration projects together with organisations in the Baltic Sea Region. However, many projects demand that there are partners from many different countries involved. Forum Balticum has a broad personal contact network of organisations within many different industries and countries that come of use - particularly when seeking collaboration partners for engagement in various projects.

Knowing each other is a prerequisite for good collaboration. Getting to know each other is on the other hand a long-term process. Nevertheless, when engaging in Baltic Sea collaboration Forum Balticum strives for continuously involving new partners in its collaboration projects and add these to the "old" and continuous relations. By adhering to this philosophy the Baltic Sea region and its inhabitants can create a better and more collaborative environment for the future EU-enlargement towards the new democracies.

At present Forum Balticum is running two EU-funded projects in the Baltic Sea region. BABS - Business Around the Baltic Sea, a project aimed at connecting the SME-support institutions that exist in the

Baltic Sea countries, in order to benefit cross-border trade. Another project, also with bearing on SMEs and collaboration between the Baltic Sea countries is DECNET - Distance Education Collaboration Network in the Baltic Sea Region. This project has as objective to make distance education and training for people in the Baltic Sea Region feasible by connecting the networks that already exist in the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. This will benefit the SMEs and thus the Baltic Sea Region as a whole.

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BALTIC PARTNERSHIP

The EU-enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region brings many consequences for all of Europe, including regional representatives in Brussels. For some years now we have worked together in the network known as "The Informal Baltic Group". By now all the regions around the Baltic represented in Brussels are participating in this work, including Kaliningrad Region.

In the Aalborg EU-office, the enlargement has created interesting and unexpected changes. Due to our co-operation with Kaliningrad Region on the ECAT-centre, the city of Aalborg at an early stage decided to widen this co-operation. Hence it was decided that the representative of Kaliningrad in Brussels should have office

facilities together with Aalborg. This opportunity has proven quite exciting for both parties, although it has obviously not been without problems due to Russia's being the third country. We could not have persevered without the forthcoming attitude of Wulf-Mathies' cabinet.

By now we have seen good potential and numerous perspectives for the future. Last spring the Slovenian Government requested to place with us a Slovenian trainee for one month. This visit proved very fruitful and it gave the opportunity to Neša, our trainee, to make relevant contacts in Brussels and prepare for a possible Slovenian representation in Brussels. It further gave to us a first hand impression of and insight in very many activities undertaken by the applicant countries to succeed in the accession negotiations.

On February 1 this year a new Baltic partner - South Finland Alliance (incl. Aalborg's Finnish twin town Riihimäki) also moved in to Rue de Treves in Brussels. As Finland is a fresh EU member with a lot of interests and expertise in the Baltic region, we have now created a truly Baltic environment -not quite as broad as "the Baltic Sea House" in Brussels, but still a very focused environment. This has been substantiated the fact that several of our trainees from the Aalborg University have concentrated in their work on the accession negotiations, and East - West co-operation in general. Aalborg is twinned with Riga and Vilnius. This determines our natural focus on the Baltic and evokes perspectives for future commercial co-operation in many areas. We are all set for enlargement!

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CBC IN THE ÖRESUND REGION



Denmark became a member of the European Union in 1973. A significant result of the EU membership, which has affected Copenhagen, is the result of the programme INTERREG II Öresund. In 1995, an application (including the socio-economic analysis) was submitted within the framework of The Öresund Committee, with participation of its member organisations on both the Danish and the Swedish side of the Sound, including Copenhagen.

The Fixed Link, the preparation of the 16 km long coast-coast link between Copenhagen and Malmö is well under way. The new bridge will be opened on 1 July 2000. The INTERREG II Programme, as an important instrument for fulfilling the goals of integration and business development between the Greater Copenhagen Region in Denmark and the Scania Region in Sweden into a coherent Öresund Region, stimulates co-operation within many fields. These are: regional competence and integration; business development and tourism; research, development and university education; environment, planning and infrastructure; media, culture and education.

Together with the regional authorities and interested parties about 30 million Euro will be invested in cross-border co-operation through the year 2001. The Öresund

Committee administers the Öresund Region Program in the period 1996-99. During the last two years the Committee has been in contact with more than 700 organisations that are interested in applying for the INTERREG II support. The number of contacts is a good sign because it means that different organisations in the region have a strong interest in cooperation across the Sound. This in turn has resulted in more than 100 approved cross-border projects.



The financially largest project is the co-operation between Copenhagen and Swedish TV channels. Every day it is possible to see news items from the other side of the Sound and once a week a thematic half an hour programme is presented. This project is believed to be important for the cultural understanding and identity process in the region.

Other examples of projects are: Europe's Maritime Development Centre, Statistics Öresund, Viking tourism, Medicon Valley Academy, Öresund business integration, Digital Geographic Management System, The Environmental Programme, Benchmarking of the Region, The Birth of a Region, International Marketing, Library co-operation, INFOTEK, Radio co-operation, Mermaid region, Regional food heritage, Social cohesion, Territorial Employment Pact, Education, Public Transport, Hotline.

Although the final call for applications is October 1999, the programme is expected to continue in a new structure under The Community Initiatives 2000-2006. A working group has been established in order to prepare the new programme.

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City of Malmö Joins Copenhagen EU Office in Brussels

From 1 August 1999 the City of Malmö will open an office in Brussels which will be located in the same premises as Copenhagen EU Office.

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EUMaTa PROJECT

The EUMaTa Project co-financed by Swebaltcop - Baltic Sea Co-operation Programme is an innovative action under Article 10 of the ERDF regulation.

The accession process in Sweden was mainly prepared on the national level, and the local level started to organise its work after Sweden had joined the EU in 1995. Estonia will be a member of the EU at the beginning of the 21st century, but the local level has already started to prepare itself for membership. The EUMaTa project is an example of how to organise the work with EU affairs on the local level in Malmö and Tallinn cities.

Malmö and Tallinn have expressed in their respective strategies and plans of action that collaboration between the twin cities is to be concretised through EU projects. The project has been proposed to rest on two pillars. The first one is the EU network's organisation and structure in Malmö and Tallinn. The idea is to exchange experience relating to how to organise work with the EU issues on the local level, as well as how the EU networks function. Concrete collaboration structures and information paths, to compare and understand decision-making processes are to be created. Finding forms of knowledge-transfer and methods of intercultural communication is a central element here. The second pillar shall consist of collaboration revolving around different areas of work which the members of the EU network represent and take responsibility for.

The project will form the basis for future collaboration in various fields and serve as a contact base. The EU network has been designed by way of its cross-departmental structure to be the principal player in the project. Experience will be exchanged via workshops, meetings, job swapping and the Partnership Fair (minidirectoria).

Expected project outcome should be expertise in development and planning of future collaboration within a number of activity fields. EU projects will contribute to those responsible, for example for environmental issues. Both Malmö and Tallinn are encouraging democratic progress through emphasising the importance of EU projects for the development of municipal economy. The construction of democratic organisa-

tions that work with EU issues on the local level, e.g. EU networks, is important when it comes to firmly establishing EU-work in the municipality as a whole. The EUMaTa Project is expected to generate at least 3-5 future collaboration projects between Malmö and Tallinn in different areas of municipal activity.

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EUROREGION BALTIC

One of Elbląg's priorities is integration with the European Union, in which the city authorities see chances of city development.

In February 1997 on the Elbląg authorities' initiative an international conference to discuss establishing the Euroregion Baltic (EB) was organised. Last year the actual agreement on the EB establishment was signed. The euroregion, one of the biggest, groups towns and communes of littoral regions from six countries: Kalmar, Kronoberg and Blekinge Provinces (Sweden), Bornholm County (Denmark), Pomeranian and Warmia-Mazury Provinces (Poland), Kaliningrad District (Russia), Klaipėda Ujezd (Lithuania) and Liepāja Region (Latvia). There are many expectations towards the euroregion, which is to facilitate improvement of trans-border cooperation, communication in the south-

east Baltic, cooperation in the sphere of environmental protection, help reduce prejudices, and prepare joint project applications for EU support. Differences between individual partners, Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian ambitions to enter the EU and special status of Kaliningrad District will favour exchange of experiences and ideas. In 1998 the international secretariat of EB was located in Elbląg. It will then be moved to Klaipėda and a year later to Russia.

This year EB is developing many joint international projects: an ecological camp for youth will be organised in July at the Centre of Ecological Education at Piaski (Poland). In October 1999 Gdynia will host the First EB Fair. Euroregional towns and enterprises will present their own achievements and offers in the fields of tourism, environment and business.

With Poland's joining the NATO and the EU family Elbląg shall become one of the biggest centres situated only 50 kms from the EU's border with Russia. This situation will create new chances for Elbląg development. It is believed that the border should unite people, facilitate exchanges of commodities and ideas. Last year's motto: "Help if you can" led Elbląg's action of humanitarian help for Kaliningrad, Baltijsk and other cities of Kaliningrad District.

Elbląg is also an active member of the UBC and the New Hansa. Many Elbląg schools are set to develop their international projects. The city has 10 partner cities, including the Baltic cities of Ronneby, Kaliningrad, Baltijsk and Liepāja.

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DISTANCE EDUCATION

Lithuania is determined to become an EU member. Thus, it is necessary for every official to get acquainted with the legislation and agreements of the EU. Issues of European integration are discussed and analysed in the Parliament and Government, however this kind of information is inaccessible to average officials.

Thus, to improve this situation and to make the information about EU accessible, the Distance Education Center was established at Kaunas University of Technology three years ago. It is one of the best in Europe according to the opinion of PHARE authorities. Distance education courses for the officials of public institutions, named "Euroli", which are dedicated to the EU, its history, institutions and policy, have been recently organised in this center. It was an excellent opportunity for Kaunas City officials to extend knowledge on the EU.

"We have established modules of distance education "European legislation and institutions" with the support of the European education fund by way of a PHARE project", says the Director of this Center who ascertains that this education is especially important to jurists, lawyers and attorneys working in Municipalities and Ministries. Educational material of the modules will be presented not only to the officials of public institutions, but also to the directors and managers of private companies, beginning in September. New modules "Computer Science - 2", "European Legislation in the Sphere of Trade and Business" and "Environment Pollution", will be presented next year.

Citizens may receive more information about the EU by way of videoconferences organised in the Computer Center of Kaunas University of Technology. Videoconferences are the most expensive, but they help to achieve the best visual interactivity. The distance education Center in Kaunas is included in the World Bank database and is the only one in Lithuania.

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SAINT PETERSBURG'S TIES WITH THE EU

Russia appears to be the largest neighbour of the EU. Traditionally, one of the main directions of EU countries' co-operation in the BSR with St. Petersburg and Russian NW regions consists in promoting market infrastructure being adjusted to European standards. This co-operation mostly developed as direct technical help for infrastructure development and ecological programs under the framework of the EU's TACIS programme.



Having gained relevant experience from TACIS project development since 1991, and also with the purpose of increasing projects efficiency due to the new rules, St. Petersburg offered the following. For the INTERREG and TACIS co-ordination, the city proposed to create a joint Committee consisting of Finnish and Swedish regional representatives participating in the INTERREG program on one hand, and regions of Russian Federation participating in the TACIS CBC. It was also proposed to give the regions sitting on the Committee the right of direct TACIS CBC projects selection.

It is expedient for St. Petersburg Administration to participate in the EU relations and development programs in the BSR, i.e.: "Northern Dimension of the EU", advanced by the Finnish Government, and "Russia - part of Europe", advanced by the Swedish Government.

The offered programs could become the priority ones in the co-operation development between Russia and the EU under the such conditions. 1. The programs shall be

approved by all the EU states. 2. The EU and Russia shall confirm that these programs are mainly focused on co-operation with the NW and N regions of Russia. 3. Obstacles shall be removed and free trade principle in the Northern regions of Europe will be supported, irrespective of their participation in economic unions. 4. The programs shall not regard Russia as a raw appendage of Europe or as one of its regions. 5. The programs shall in the first place take

into consideration interests of the developing processing and high-tech branches of the NW Russia in accordance with the economics of the whole northern region of Europe. 6. Most important projects for the whole region remain in the environmental protection sphere. 7. Environmental protection technologies prepared by all project parties shall be used. It shall be taken into account that the Russian organisations and institutes do not always possess experience of advanced technologies market. 8. Financing schemes for concrete projects and programmes should avoid a significant increasing of credit debts of Russia.

It is expedient to associate the political and address making programs of "Northern Dimension of EU" and "Russia - part of Europe".

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AGREEMENT WITH THE EU

Under the terms of the agreement on the European Economic Area, Norway has become part of the EU internal market. The EEA Agreement applies to the 15 EU countries and three of the EFTA countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Accordingly, the EU legislation covering the internal market also applies to Norway. The agreement has thus created equal competitive conditions for enterprises in the EU countries and Norway, and provides for the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons. The dynamic nature of the agreement means that new EU legislation can be rapidly incorporated into Norwegian law.

Industrial goods are not subject to customs duties. For fish products, agricultural products and other types of food, customs duties have in many cases been abolished or substantially reduced. A certificate of origin and customs routines are still necessary, but the rules are becoming increasingly simplified.

Technical barriers in trade have been abolished through common rules for state aid to industry and common product standards and inspection arrangements.

Public procurement above certain threshold values must be subject to an open invitation to tender, including both Norway and the EU countries. All enterprises in the

EEA participate on equal terms.

EEA agreement also covers services. Free right of establishment for enterprises has been introduced for the whole EEA. Investors from EU countries may invest in

pate in the social dialogue in the EU.

The EEA agreement does have an effect on the Norwegian trade and thereby also an effect on the central purchasing system of the municipal of Bergen. One of



enterprises or real estate in Norway, and vice versa refers to the EU countries. Norwegians and the EU countries may travel freely throughout the EEA and seek work wherever they wish.

The social dimension of EU cooperation includes Norway. Common provisions in the field of labour law and the working environment are being prepared. Norwegian labour and management also partici-

the most important effects is that all enterprises in the EEA compete on equal terms.

"Europakontoret" is an office located in the city of Bergen which informs regional enterprises and the publicity about the investments and the development in the EU and EEC countries.

The Norwegian Government's WWW server is called ODIN and has the following address: <http://odin.dep.no>



ÅRHUS: THE SMALLEST BIG CITY

The Århus Region is one of the fastest growing regions in Scandinavia. The University of Århus, the dynamic and expanding business environment, the rich cultural life, safety and quality of life are some of the key words that makes Århus Region a place where people and companies want to live and locate. The population in Århus Region has grown more than 7,5% over the last 11 years.

The Århus Region attracts dynamic and highly qualified people. As a result, a large number of companies chose it as one of their European locations. International companies make it more interesting to work in the region and more qualified people are attracted. Employment in the Region has increased by more than 6% over the last

10 years. This makes Århus Region one of the fastest growing industrial regions in Scandinavia.

In 1990 the Department of Business and Industry in Århus city established a Brussels office, which was the first Danish city to set up a regional office in the heart of Europe. Later on, 11 Danish municipalities and regions have followed. In 1994 a co-operation agreement covering the whole region was signed with the county.

The overall perspective of the office is to assist in creating growth within the municipality and the region. In close co-operation with various public institutions, organisations and private companies located in the Århus area, the consultants inform, supervise and assist in regards to funding

opportunities within the EU system.

From the outside, the EU appears to be a gigantic bureaucracy to companies not used to dealing with international institutions. By having a permanent representation in Brussels we hope to make entities interested in participating in projects with a transeuropean perspective.

Co-operation with other Baltic regions and regions from the applicant states has a high priority in our agenda.

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CARREFOUR SOUTH SWEDEN

The city of Ystad is the proud host of a Carrefour office. Within the geographic boundaries of the EU, there are approx. 120 Carrefour offices: from Greece in the east to Ireland in the west and Finland in the north, to Spain in the south. The offices, which work closely with the EU Commission's DG X, are primarily concerned with regional and rural development. The work includes the collation and dissemination of information and the encouragement, promotion and development management of related projects.

The office principal is the Southeast Skåne Committee of Cooperation (SÖSK). SÖSK, which is an alliance of five municipalities working for achieving common goals, runs the office in close collaboration with Region Skåne and the south Sweden organisation, SydSam.

There are several Carrefour offices in the Baltic Sea Region. Namely, five in Finland, eleven in Sweden, two in Denmark and two on the Baltic coast of northern Germany in Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg - Vorpommern. There are no Carrefour offices in the applicant countries yet. In 1996, Carrefour Nyland (Helsinki region) and Carrefour South Sweden made a proposal to the EU Commission in which it was suggested that Carrefour offices should be established in the Baltic States and Poland. It was determined that this would be an effective and efficient method of anchoring and developing the "EU-structure" in the candidate countries. The offices would not only expedite the dissemination of EU related material but also promote cross-border projects. Although a final decision has yet to be made by the EU Commission, Carrefour South Sweden has taken the initiative to establish a satellite office in Lithuania. This action will simplify the first steps in the development of a fully-fledged Carrefour office.

For the last two years, Carrefour South Sweden / SÖSK has collaborated and advised on various projects in Lithuania. A project of significant importance has been the creation of the LaDruVa Alliance. This is an inter-municipality collaboration comprising the municipalities of Lazdijai, Varena and Druskininkai. Three weeks ago, LaDruVa accepted the responsibility being appointed principal for the Carrefour satel-



THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION'S NETWORK FOR
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

lite office in South Lithuania. The offices, which are in Druskininkai, were officially opened on Europe Day. Important delegates at the inauguration included representatives of the EU Commission, Lithuanian Foreign Office, local politicians and politicians from South Sweden. The cost of setting up the office has been borne by Region Skåne, Jönköping County Council, the County Administrative Board of Jönköping, SÖSK and the EU Swebaltcop program. The office is manned by two Lithuanian citizens. A Carrefour South Sweden advisor has been assigned to the office for the whole of 1999.

A number of projects have already been started up. These include Regional Culinary Heritage, for which Carrefour South Sweden is European co-ordinator; Building Conservation and Distance Learning. It is the hope and ambition of the organisers that the European Office for Southern Lithuania will act as a Carrefour office for all of Lithuania.

Carrefour South Sweden is also planning to open a satellite office in Świnoujście, northwest Poland in 1999. The municipality of Świnoujście will be principal for the neighbouring municipalities and the county. Region Skåne and SÖSK will cover the initial costs of the office. The purpose of the office is to foster collaboration between South Sweden and Northwest Poland. It is hoped that this co-operation will be exploited by the Four Corners and Euroregion Pomerania. The work of the office will concentrate on the county of West Pomerania.

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Finland's EU Co-ordinators' network is a cooperative network of EU specialists, with the purpose of maintaining close co-operation between people who deal with EU affairs in different areas of the country.

The EU Co-ordinators' network can also operate as a partner in projects with other EU countries and corresponding networks there and in cooperation with others (including the Baltic states).

The network has over 40 members from 35 different areas in Finland. Some members also work at the European Union Commission in Brussels.

The network promotes the use of the best EU practices in Finland as well as promoting local, regional, national and international use of the opportunities offered by the EU and European cooperation at both local and regional level. The key to the activities of the network is the close cooperation of EU professionals in practice, their

exchange of experiences and information regarding specialist questions. The network

meets at least twice a year. The meetings are comprised of educational, informative and international elements. The network is led by a development team, whose chairman is the chairman of the network. The EU Co-ordinators' network has its own website (www.eucan.net) and an internal e-mail system as a means of circulating information. The network is prepared to operate in international team projects and to provide partners for different projects.

The Chairman of the network is the City of Pori EU Co-ordinator, Mr Kristian Vainio and the secretary is the City of Kuopio EU Co-ordinator, Mrs Raija Kovanen.

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EUROPEAN INTEGRATION HOUSE IN SZCZECIN

Szczecin has had its own European Integration House for almost two years now. The house accommodates ESTA, EuroInfo, Alliance Francais, Antenna Office of the Association of the European Border Regions, Baltics Office and Secretariat of Euroregion Pomerania, which is an association of Polish, German and Swedish local authorities.

Its main task is to coordinate the city's international activities within the framework set by the City Executive Board. Further, it has a special mission to carry out for the city, namely to increase the citizens' knowledge about the European Union, its institutions and their operations.

Not only does the European House provide the information on EU and Polish integration into the European structures, but it also trains local politicians, city representatives and students on the EU policies and Baltic Sea Region initiatives. Again,

the House strives at developing intensive interregional and cross border contacts for the city whose main political priorities evolve mainly around the Baltic Sea Re-



gion. Finally, the European House is to facilitate the cooperation with the numerous organisations in the BSR and the EU itself. For example, it works closely with organisations such as BTC, UBC and Eurocities, and the Council of Europe.

With the 1997 UBC-EU Information Project, Szczecin City Government started an early process of preparing its administration towards the integration process. Today, interdepartmental cooperation with the ConAct project partners is being developed. Also, the city competes for EU funds to co-finance the most acute problems from which it has been suffering.

After over one year of intensive activities, the European Integration House has very well fit into the local needs and greatly contributed to increasing the overall knowledge of the Szczecinians about the European Union.

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EU PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM IN KALMAR

As of January 1, 1994, when Sweden entered the EU, all Swedish public procurement switched over to the extensive EU legislation on public procurement. Overnight a rather flexible system, steered by about 20 paragraphs, was replaced by a much more formalised system covering about 200 paragraphs of legal text.

Three fundamental conditions have to be met in public procurement under EU legislation. Namely, competition must be utilised as much as possible. All procurement shall be on business lines. All tenderers must be treated equally. Further, procurement of all services or goods over 200 000 Euro must be announced within the European Union's OJ. A tender can not be opened before at least 52 days after tender announcement. Normally you are not allowed to negotiate with the tenderer. The selection criteria must be defined in the tender documents and no other tender criteria may be used. Tenderers can appeal against and get damages after an incorrect tender-

ing process. The tendering results must be announced in the EU's OJ.

An intense training and education program was carried out 1993. Study visits were made to countries that had earlier implemented the EU rules. Smaller local authorities co-operated in larger procurement units to get more competence. As an example, Kalmar agreed on co-operation with four neighbouring local authorities.

At this stage one may ask what the main results are. It was difficult, or even impossible, to favour local companies that gave inferior tenders than other Swedish or foreign companies. There have been only a few foreign tenders. But the new publicity rules have contributed to spreading out the ongoing tendering processes over the whole country and tempted more companies to give competitive tenders. It increased the national competition rather than international, which has given better prices and conditions. The binding legislation has created better order in the local authority

procurement operations. Purchases earlier carried out in a routine way without tendering now are done in formal tender process with a far better result. The national companies have got better possibilities to compete internationally. Standardisation gives better flexibility in the long run.

There are also negative consequences. Namely, the term of time of 52 days is often hindering. It is difficult to describe the demand precisely in the tendering documents so that suppliers can be assigned without further contacts, as foreseen in the legislation. From the buyers' point of view, it is a disadvantage that you normally cannot negotiate with tenderers on submitted tenders. The extensive sets of rules are a major hindrance if you want to have special environmental considerations or support a local company.

After five years experience of EU public procurement rules you can generally say that it has contributed to creating a better business climate, and in many cases to getting better prices and conditions for local authorities as buyers.

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PÄRNU AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Pärnu Town Government has been actively participating in the regional co-operation programmes of the European Union since 1997, when the Baltic Small Project Facility and Central European Border Regions financing were announced under the cross border co-operation framework.

Three projects submitted by Pärnu have been approved and are currently co-financed under the BSPF. If compared to other Estonian towns and municipalities, most of projects submitted by Pärnu have been successful.

Since the second half of 1998, the project entitled GeoInfoSystem for Effective Development Research, Town Planning and Care of Technical Infrastructure has been jointly developed together with the town of Vaasa. The project aims at developing and improving the geodetic information system of Pärnu using the experience of Vaasa. In the project course, the IT and geodesy specialists of Pärnu have had an opportunity to study the results gained at Vaasa and generate new ideas for better implementation of a similar system in Pärnu. Joint meetings and seminars have been arranged not only for the city administration.

At the beginning of 1999, two new projects were launched. The first one is

developed together with Elsinore, a Danish town, and is striving at preparing Pärnu beaches to meet the Blue Flag of Europe's requirements. As such, the project offers an opportunity to investigate a set of environmental conditions and requirements in the whole region and implement Agenda 21 in practice, as well as arrange events relevant to environmental protection. The finances provided for acquisition of tangible assets will be used for developing the system of notices for pedestrians, as well as for information boards and maps distributed in public places. The Jury of the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe decided to award the Blue Flag Certificate to the beach of Pärnu in 1999 and expressed their hope to be in a position to award the Blue Flag to it next year.

In co-operation with the town of Norrköping, Sweden, Pärnu runs a second project of catastrophe liquidation, aiming at creating a system joining various emergency services for liquidation of potential accidents on the Via Baltica Highway. Specialists from the Pärnu Hospital, the emergency service and ambulance have been involved in the project. They can study how the similar system is operated in Sweden. Norrköping is one of the biggest centres on the E4 route heading from Stockholm

to the southern part of the country, the new hospital currently under construction in Pärnu is planned to serve the region round the Via Baltica Highway. The main event within the framework of the project includes simulation of a major accident on the Via Baltica Highway with the aim of providing training for co-operation between various emergency services.

Apart from EU projects, Pärnu runs a number of projects jointly with its twin cities. Principal fields for these projects concern education and training (student exchange programmes), environmental protection, infrastructure, optimisation of the structure of local authorities, etc.

Evaluating the execution of EU projects, the city has definitely benefited from them. It managed to reach a new level in co-operation with its twin cities. Involvement in EU projects and collection of the respective information has provided us with the opportunity to follow closely the processes in the European Union, as well as facilitated acquisition of funding in the future. For Pärnu, it would be of utmost importance to receive financial means from ISPA in the nearest future as DGXVI has declared it to be the No. 1 corridor of Pan-European transport network - this means its maintenance costs are to be covered by the European Union.

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CHANGES IN LAHTI

The structural changes in the Finnish society of the present decade, as well as joining the EU have significantly changed the otherwise routine administrative culture. Unemployment became an insurmountable problem, and all public and administrative spending in Finland had to be cut down. As Finland joined the EU after only a very short preparation period, at least in the municipalities it was not possible to prepare in advance for the coming changes, neither for the challenges.

The city of Lahti has traditionally been internationally-oriented. Previously Lahti did not have any international activities worth mentioning, with the exception of the town twinning activities. The EU brought

international activity into a completely new light. The city administration is learning the EU manners. Various EU funding systems, project development and management, establishing international connections, building networks, etc. - were all new questions that came about with very short warning.

City international activities are then a completely new sphere. LIFE, PHARE and TACIS programmes have become important funding sources of international co-operation. Lahti city has coordinated the EU projects, the most important of which are aimed towards developing Local Agenda 21 activity in St. Petersburg and the Baltics.

Lahti is also a partner in various projects involving the EU sustainable development

objectives. Through those projects we have learned to manage projects and have got good ideas and inspiration for the development of other activities. Also, important investment projects have been carried out, such as the passenger harbour development, Pikku-Vesijärvi pond improvement and the development of parks and nature tourism, all under European regional development funds. In addition, large-scale projects to increase employment have been developed with the help of the EU Social Fund. The City of Lahti qualifies under Objective 2.

Based on this short experience it can be said that the EU has been a great learning process, providing numerous opportunities and means of achieving many objectives important to our city.

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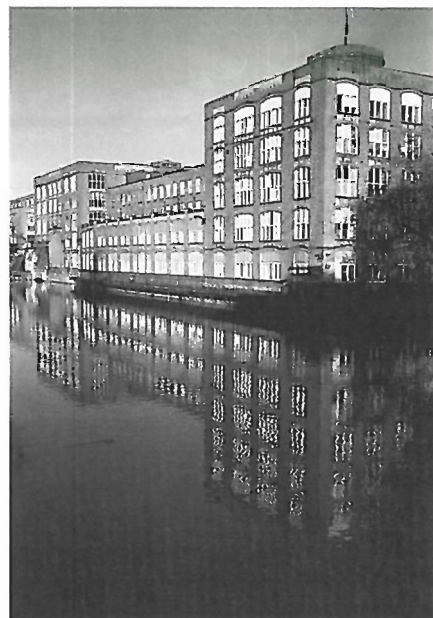
EU IMPACT ON TAMPERE

Tampere started very early to study what kind of influence possible membership in the EC could have on Tampere and its surroundings. In 1991, the Mayor nominated a working group to study and report on this matter. The group consisted of representatives of universities, chamber of commerce and regional council.

The working group followed the national discussion about membership, its advantages and disadvantages. The biggest problem was that most of the written material and studies concentrated on influences at the national level. The working group had in any case a very clear estimation that membership in EC would give more advantages than disadvantages to the Tampere region. In May 1992 the report was compiled and had 48 recommendations in different fields of city activities. In 1994, there was a referendum in which Tampere parties clearly favoured membership, which influenced to the voting. The expectations were very high for membership and its impact.

As an industrial city which had under-

gone big structural changes it was believed that the city should have been eligible to be an objective 2 area because of a high unemployment rate. In spite of eligibility Tampere was not named an objective 2 area, because it was easier for the government to divide the same amount of population into different areas and smaller cities. This decision caused big disappointment in Tampere. The first years in the EU have been years of learning. We were involved in some EU-projects where we were able to improve our understanding of the process itself and gain experience. Networks like twin cities, UBC, Eurocities, ICLEI, etc. were very useful to find partners and create ideas for projects. We are open to EU cooperation and its future. Maybe we are more and more critical regarding which kind of EU projects we undertake, but we intend to be an active partner in the European and especially the regional level. We believe that EU enlargement in the BSR will give us useful opportunities. We also have experience which could be useful for applicant countries and their cities.



Vapriikki Museum Center

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BALTIC SEA CITY VORDINGBORG

Vordingborg was founded on the Baltic Sea by the Danish King Valdemar the Great, who built his main castle in 1175 in the centre of his kingdom. In the same year his half-brother bishop built another castle in a remote location which later grew to be known as Copenhagen. Since then the development has gone round our part of the country, and today Vordingborg is a small town with 20.000 inhabitants.



Lt. Commander Arunas Mockous (left) and Mayor Bent Pedersen after signing the adoption papers on 8 May 1999 in Vordingborg

When the EU enlarged its area to half the Baltic Sea and its sphere of interest to the other half, Vordingborg found herself in the centre of this process. The town council approved the commercial master plan for Vordingborg declaring it a Baltic City. The existing plans were accelerated for Østersøcenter Vordingborg ØCV, a Baltic Sea Center Vordingborg for investigation, improvement and exhibition of the Environment of the Baltic Sea. In 1997 the Russian marine research ship Proff. Stokman visited Vordingborg as a part of the co-operation with the University of Roskilde on the coming Environment Centre. Following the first visit in 1998, this year the Lithuanian frigate Zemaitis visited Vordingborg. The Zemaitis was adopted by the Vordingborg Town Council. The papers were signed on 8 May 1999 by Lt. Commander Arunas Mockous of the frigate Zemaitis of Lithuania and Mayor Bent Pedersen, Vordingborg, saying "we will maintain a permanent bond and unite our

efforts to act for peace and progress". In fact, it was the first time a Danish City had adopted a foreign ship.

We also see the EU enlargement in the yacht harbour, at which usually 7000 visiting boats call every year. But the number decreases as many yachtsmen now go for holiday adventures in the Baltics and Poland. We do hope to see visitors from these countries in our harbour in the years to come.

A small but growing attention is concentrating on the development around the Baltic Sea.

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II. UBC Today

24TH MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD

The 24th meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 28 June 1999 in the City of Tartu, Estonia, upon the invitation of Mr Andrus Ansip, Mayor of Tartu.

General Conference in Stockholm

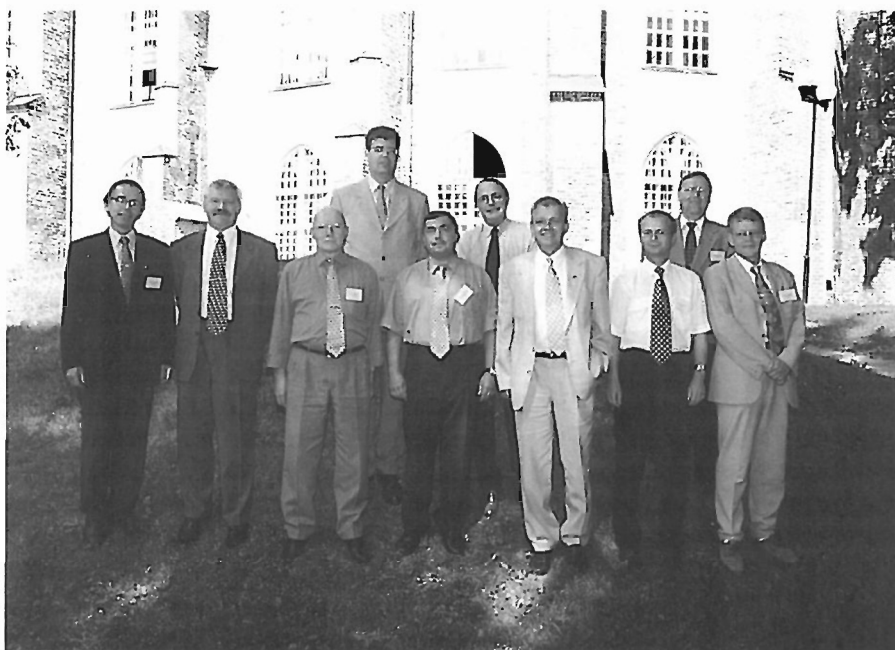
Mr Dag Larsson, Stockholm City Councillor, once again warmly invited all member cities to participate in the Fifth General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities to be held in Stockholm, on 24-25 September 1999. Mr Anders Kylberg, Project Manager, presented the final programme of the conference. The first day of the conference will be devoted to the conference head theme: "European Union Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region – the role of Cities, Regions and States". The second day - the General Assembly - will deal with internal UBC issues such as elections, reports, budget etc. The Board encouraged all member cities to send delegations to the General Conference in Stockholm.

The Secretary General Mr Pawel Zaboklicki presented the proposals of the UBC budget and membership fees for the period 2000-2001. The Board decided to forward the proposals to the General Conference.

The Board proposed the candidates to the UBC Presidium in the next two-year period i.e. Mr Anders Engström, Kalmar, for the President; Mr Eugenijus Gentvilas, Klaipėda, and a representative of Turku, for Vice-Presidents. The President reminded the Board members to contact member cities in their countries and select the candidate cities to the Executive Board for the next two-year period. The Board recommended the General Conference to hold its sixth meeting in 2001 in Rostock.

UBC major documents

The Board completed its extensive work on the major UBC documents i.e. the Statute, the Strategy and the Internal Regulations. The Statute and the Strategy will be forwarded to the General Conference for the adoption.



UBC Executive Board 1997-1999, from the left: Audun Øiestad (Bergen), Vello Järvesalu (Pärnu), Kaj Kjær (Aalborg), Arno Pöcker (Rostock), Bartłomiej Sochański (Vice-President), Michael Bouteiller (Vice-President), Anders Engström (President), Maciej Lisicki (Gdańsk), Armas Lahoniitty (Turku), Dag Larsson (Stockholm), missing representatives of Kaliningrad, Klaipėda and Rēzekne

New Member Cities

The Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki informed about new applications for UBC membership sent by the cities of: **Chojnice** and **Reda** (Poland), **Landskrona** (Sweden), **Sestrotetsk** (Russia). The Board decided to accept mentioned cities as members of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

UBC and Environment

Mr Risto Veivo, UBC Environmental Coordinator, Turku, introduced the concept of Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award. The award will be granted during the General Conference in Stockholm, in the City Hall where the Nobel Prize dinners are held. The Board endorsed the proposal and encouraged all cities active in the field of environment to apply for the award.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, co-Chairman of the UBC Commission on Environment, Turku, introduced the UBC Local Agenda 21 Action Programme for the coming three years 2000-2002, developed by the LA21

Working Group. Our basic commitment, as expressed in the programme, is that the Union of the Baltic Cities, as a major network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region, recognises its responsibility to make our future a sustainable one. The Board will propose the Action Programme to the General Conference in Stockholm.

Situation in Belarus

Representatives of Sapieha Foundation (pro-democratic movement) from Belarus Mr Mechaslau Hryb and Mr Hristofor Zhelapov introduced the Board with the situation of cities and regions in Belarus. Guests from Belarus described the present situation as undemocratic and informed that the local and regional authorities are virtually appointed by the government. The Board took note of the report and appealed for democratic reforms in Belarus.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be held in Stockholm, on the eve of the V General Conference, 23 September 1999.



23RD MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD

The 23rd meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 6 March 1999 in the City of Pori, Finland, upon the invitation of Mr Martti Sinisalmi, Mayor of Pori. The first day of the meeting was attended only by the Executive Board members, the second day was open to representatives from all member cities.

The meeting was opened by Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union. With great sorrow, Mr Engström informed the Board that Mr Jaak Tamm, former UBC Vice-President, Mayor of Tallinn and Sillamae, passed away on the 4th of January 1999. Mr Jaak Tamm was deeply involved in creation and development of the UBC. The Board paid tribute to the memory of Mr Tamm with a minute of silence. His unexpected death was a great loss to the Union of the Baltic Cities.

V General Conference

Mr Torbjörn Bengtsson from Stockholm introduced the preliminary programme of the V General Conference, 24-25 September 1999. The first day of the conference will consist of the keynote speeches meetings of the UBC Commissions, 1-2 workshops, a visit to international travel fair. The second day will be devoted to internal UBC matters such as elections, reports, strategy etc. Mr Bengtsson said that the invitations to the Conference will be soon sent out to all member cities.

Strategy for UBC

Mr Bartłomiej Sochański, UBC Vice-President, reminded that after the last Executive Board meeting in Szczecin, the latest draft of the Strategy was sent out for comments to all member cities.

Mr Sochański presented comments sent by the member cities. The Board authorised the Strategy Working Group to discuss submitted comments and include the appropriate ones into the Strategy document.

Financial Report 1998

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, submitted the UBC financial report for 1998. Mr Żaboklicki underlined that all member cities (except one) paid membership fees and the financial position of the Union is stable. The report displays UBC incomes, expenditure, table with membership fees, expenditure of the Commissions, costs of the secretariats and UBC projects with external funding. The

Secretary informed that, as usual, the auditors report will be presented at the General Conference. The Board adopted the report.

Meeting of major Baltic organisations

President Engström reported from the meeting of major Baltic organisations held on 27 January, at the invitation of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in the newly established CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm. The following organisations took part in the meeting: CBSS, UBC, BSSSC, Nordic Council, NC of Ministers, Baltic Assembly,



Barents Council, HELCOM, VASAB, Baltic 21. The aim of the meeting was to exchange information on activities carried out by mentioned organisations, in order to facilitate cooperation and avoid duplication of work. All present organisations shared an opinion that such working meetings are necessary and should be held regularly.

New Member Cities

Secretary General informed about new applications for Union membership submitted by the cities of: **Jõhvi** (Estonia) and **Pruszcz Gdański** (Poland). The Board decided to accept these cities as members of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished them successful cooperation with other UBC members.

CBSS and HELCOM

Mr Serguei Sokolov, Senior Adviser, introduced the Board with the structure, aims and activities of the CBSS. Mr Sokolov stressed the importance of cooperation between UBC and CBSS as regards the representation of the interests of the Baltic Sea Region. As an example Mr Sokolov men-

tioned the document on improving compatibility between Phare, Tacis and Interreg IIC, to be delivered by CBSS to the EC. UBC took active part in the document preparation. Mr Kjell Grip, Environment Secretary, made a presentation on the goals, activities and structure of Helsinki Commission. Mr Grip pointed out existing and potential areas of cooperation between HELCOM and the UBC Commission on Environment such as: municipal environmental auditing, local agenda 21, environmental awareness etc. The Board thanked

Mr Sokolov and Mr Grip for their presentations and expressed hope for further fruitful cooperation between our institutions.

The Chairmen of UBC working Commissions submitted reports on Commissions' activities since the last Executive Board meeting held in Szczecin on 16-17 October 1998. The Board adopted the reports and encouraged all Commissions to proceed their important work.

Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia, reported on the results of the art competition "The Children of the Baltic", carried out by the UBC Task Force for PR. Ms Depka, Project Coordinator, emphasised that the project was very popular among the member cities – 236 works from 25 cities were sent to the competition. The final of the competition took place in Gdańsk on 28 January 1999. The jury including the representatives of diplomatic corps awarded 10 prizes. The Board expressed its satisfaction to the TF for the successful implementation of the project.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki introduced the latest issue of the UBC Baltic Cities Bulletin 1/99 devoted to Local Agenda 21. The bulletin provides information on LA21 work carried out by UBC and its member cities. Mr Żaboklicki emphasised that LA theme was very popular among the member cities and over 30 cities provided stories describing their activities in this field. The Secretary underlined the role of the Commission on Environment which significantly contributed to this issue of the bulletin.



EU CO-ORDINATORS MET IN KALMAR

A two day seminar in Kalmar (31 May - 1 June) gathered 20 representatives from the Baltic cities to discuss the role of the EU co-ordinator in their municipalities and to work out concrete action implementation mechanisms for the UBC. Presentation of the UBC Strategy, the EU demands and prospects for local authorities, the role of local authorities in the Baltic Sea co-operation; CBSS, as well as project development in co-operation with the European Commission were the main highlights of the seminar.



Group discussion during the meeting - it's all about co-operation and exchange of experiences

The group discussed how to collaborate together to fulfil the strategic aims of the UBC. It also debated on the ideas for concrete projects that could be developed in the cities and how to integrate the EU issues into this work.

The second day focused on how to develop the UBC and BSA homepages to create an efficient tool between the UBC member cities and other Baltic Sea organisations.

Preparing towards the EU enlargement, local authorities need not only to collect information on the present changes, but they ought to keep a dialogue with the national governments. In this way, the work will be carried out on two levels and the level of competence will be even higher. Only then can the cities forward demands towards their governments. In fact, the EU demands that the national government consult the local and regional authorities before introducing legislation on issues related to their activities. Hence, the local authorities have received an important tool in fulfilling the subsidiarity principle.

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COMMISSION ON EDUCATION TO MEET IN KÄRDLA, ESTONIA



This meeting, which will take place 17-18 September 1999, constitutes a forum for the development of the educational network of UBC Cities in the Baltic Sea Region. It is now important to establish who should be the contact persons for real educational collaboration.

The first meeting of the UBC Commission on Education took place in Norrtälje, 27-28 November 1998. At this constitutional meeting the Commission elected Mr Kurt Pettersson, Norrtälje, as chairman of the UBC Commission on Education and Mr Ivo Eesmaa, Kärkla, as vice chairman. The secretariat of the UBC Commission on Education will be located in Kärkla.

The Commission on Education will work on collaboration and exchange on educational issues between the Baltic Sea countries. This will be achieved through the work of the secretariat, which at present is being established, and through the co-ordinators in the UBC member cities who represent schools and educational organisations in their respective cities. The UBC Commission on Education will facilitate, for example, the cross-border exchange of students and teachers, the flow of "best practice" approaches within various areas of education and on different levels.

The initial steps within the Commission are focused on the exchange of pupils, students and teachers, adult education and information on education targets. The information within these areas will be offered on a web page in order to realise easy access for those organisations interested in joining and/or proposing projects with a bearing on cross-border collaboration.

Many of the proposals from the last meeting depend on the existence of the secretariat that can realise these proposals. Therefore, the meeting in Kärkla will aim at establishing the next steps and the division of labour within the Commission. The questions that have ensued from this year's efforts are as follows: how the "city co-ordinators" will be chosen, what their responsibilities should be, what information is important in order to facilitate collaboration and exchange within the areas of adult training/vocational training/upper secondary school education, etc., what kind of information the website should contain.

The Commission on Education welcomes all city representatives that are interested in increasing collaboration on educational matters between the Baltic cities.

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NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION ON BUSINESS CO-OPERATION

Cities of Gdynia and Gdańsk being co-chairmen of the Commission on Business Cooperation have just prepared a special questionnaire on various economic subjects like: decisive factors for economic successes and solving economic problems, important business events, municipal business prizes, current business information and promotion systems used in each city.

The questionnaire has been sent to all members of the Commission on Business Cooperation.

At the same time the work on issuing of a Economic Statistical Information Leaflet has been started.

The aim of this leaflet is to present to all of the members of Commission on Business Cooperation - the most important and useful economic data - for example: city budget, income and expenditure, number of enterprises in private and public sectors, number of working places, rate of unemployment, fairs and banks, financial and insurance sectors as well as competent contact persons in the UBC Commission on Business Cooperation.

Above data are aimed at assuring of fruitful business cooperation among the members of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Perhaps an autumn conference will be held in Gdynia to discuss in details and summarize all questions and proposals arising from the above mentioned materials. The decision will be taken in the nearest future.

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N.E.W.S. - INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Szczecin, together with Riga and Gotlands' s Community, is organising the exhibition presenting new phenomena in the visual arts of the Baltic Region.

The idea of new international art exhibition in Szczecin was borne in 1995 as a result of Szczecin's activities in the UBC. The first show named *Horizone Line* was the main event on the agenda of the 3rd UBC Festival of the cities in Szczecin in summer 1995. Later, a new edition followed in 1997 and was named *Baltic Ikonopress* accompanied by launching of the promotional issue of the *Mare Articum*. The success of the show and rapidly developing artistic contacts resulted in establishing the biennial Baltic art exhibition in Szczecin.

The new formula was proposed to have a travelling show in three cities: Szczecin, Riga and Visby.

The artists recommended by the associated editors of the *MARE ARTICUM* magazine were finally selected by the curatorial board consisting of city representatives. The 20 artists are invited to participate in the *N.E.W.S.* project starting in Szczecin, and develop their works during the exhibitions in Riga and Visby. The artists are invited to each location so that they can response to the different context in each city. The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of seminars and video presentations. Two comprehensive catalogues are planned to be published in the course of the project; the first one for the opening in Szczecin presenting the artists participating in the show, and the second one for the final presentation in Visby collecting the texts from the seminars. Project development was possible thanks to the financial and organisational support by the cities of Szczecin, Riga and Gotland's Community.

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COMMISSION ON CULTURE HOLD ITS THIRD SESSION

The 3rd Session of the Commission on Culture took place on 27-29 May in Kalmar, Sweden, and was attended by 15 member cities of the UBC.

The Session began with presentation of CoC achievements for the years 1994 - 98, which included the cultural network within the Baltic Region, and several projects such as: Baltic Music Network, UBC Catalogue of Cultural Institutions, *Mare Articum* art magazine, Baltic Choir Festival, UBC Library Network, and others.

The important matters discussed during the first day of the session included the possibilities for development of the ongoing projects, involvement of the new ComC members in organization of recent and future projects, improvement of the collaboration network between the cities. Several interesting proposals, related to art education, cultural and historical heritage of the Region, web pages on art and culture were presented during the Session.

The second day of the Session was devoted to the future of the ComC. The members worked in two groups. While one group discussed future cultural events, the other one sorted out possibilities of improving the structure and routine tasks of the ComC.

During the session, the Committee of ComC was elected with the representatives from 5 cities: Bergen, Helsinki, Klaipėda, Szczecin, Visby. The role of the Committee is to develop the future structure, status, and the ways of functioning of the Commission. The next meeting of the Committee of CoC is scheduled for 2-3 October in Klaipėda, Lithuania.

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Members of the Commission on Culture during the meeting in Kalmar

CBC CONFERENCES

Bartłomiej Sochański, UBC Vice President participated in two major conferences on cross-border-cooperation in Russia and Finland in March 1999. First, he presented the management structures for CBC in Euroregion Pomerania (EP), whose main goal is "to undertake joint actions aiming at reaching equal and sustainable development of the region, and bringing people from all sides of the border together". Different legal systems, administrative structures, economic disparities, Shengen border, language gap and mentality, including memories from WWII are hindering cooperation. He also tackled the issues of coordination of joint projects (Interreg IIC /

Phare CBC), both being subject to different procedures in Brussels, and Polish-Swedish-German Concept of EP Development 2000-2006.

The second conference tackled issues related to transfrontier cooperation for the protection of the environment in the Baltic Sea Region. In his presentation he focused on concrete projects developed on the local level – the cross border cooperation proper, carried out within the Euroregion Pomerania, which is a tri-partner CBC cooperation. He referred to the EP's experiences in developing joint environmental projects.



BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTISE IN BALTIC CITIES AWARD 1999

On the 25th of September in Stockholm, in the Noble Prize Dinner Hall, on the occasion of the V General Conference, one of the UBC member cities will receive the very first Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award. Before that glorious



moment, this city will have done something very good and exemplary in its daily work for the good of its citizens, something that all the other cities can learn from.

At the moment, maybe more than ever before, the Baltic cities are facing many new challenges and developments and every year numerous decisions are being made, which strongly affect our common environment and the well-being of the citizens. Many of the practises arising from these decisions give excellent support to reaching sustainable development at the local level. The Award has been initiated by the Commission on Environment for distributing information about these solutions.

The Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award 1999 will be given as a honorary award (trophy) to one of the UBC member cities. The intention with this award is to encourage member cities to develop their administration and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens.

The Commission on Environment is calling for innovative practises which have been developed and/or implemented by city administrations to meet local needs. The intention is not to look for the absolutely best management schemes, but to look for *innovative practises which support well local sustainable development and environmental management*. This approach should mean that each UBC member city basically has similar chances for winning the award.

The deadline for applications is 1 September. Further information can be obtained from the Commission on Environment Secretariat and from the UBC web-pages.

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2000 PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES

The Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference, the Turku Conference (September 1998), and the three other regional European Sustainable Cities and Towns conferences will be followed by a new Pan-European Conference in February 2000. This Conference will be organised in Hannover, Germany. The UBC Board City Turku has been invited to take part in the Steering Committee and the UBC may become one of the endorsers of this major European Millennium event in the field of sustainable development in cities. Development in the Baltic Sea Region will be one of the topics of the conference.

With a whole range of different events that allow intensive exchange of ideas, learning, networking and creating new partnerships, the Hannover Conference 2000 will build upon and widen the European movement of Sustainable Cities and Towns. Special emphasis will be on gaining new partners from all policy levels, from the social and economic sector as much as from the environment movement and, geographically, especially from CEE countries.

To make the Conference a success, YOUR involvement is needed. The first Announcement, that will be sent out in June to around 7000 addresses, will include a call that allows you to offer your active participation in the conference.

If you would like to be included in the mailing list, if you want to actively participate in the Conference or if you have any suggestions or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the organisers. Let's learn together from the lessons of the past and prepare for the next decade!

Further information:

Tel. +49 511 168 40912
Fax +49 511 168 44025
<http://www.HannoverConference2000.de>

NEW MEAS AGAIN!

The UBC Commission on Environment has received a new positive funding decision for MEAs from the Nordic Ministers Council. The decision allocates DKK 215.000 for continuing the work in Lithuania by starting a couple of new MEAs in a group of smaller cities in co-operation with the ECAT-Lithuania. ECAT-LT is currently carrying out a feasibility study, and the new cities will be decided on the basis of the results of this study.

The MEA model is specifically planned for the cities in the Baltic Sea Region. It comprises a thorough analysis of the environmental effects and performance of the whole municipal administration of the target city, and provides a good tool for further development. However, the intention with this model is not to carry out a formal EMAS, but to help the cities to evaluate and organise their environmental work. The model utilises co-operation between partner cities (UBC members, twin cities, etc.). Municipal Environmental Auditing requires a solid commitment from the implementing municipality.

In the first phase a local project team and an international auditing team will be created. The local team starts the collection of data after a short training. The collecting phase requires a period of about three months. After that, the auditing team analyses the data and compiles reports on different sectors. The sectoral reports are then combined, and the results are validated and communicated back to the municipality as basis for improvements.

At the moment there are on-going MEAs in Panevėžys and Klaipėda in Lithuania, in Pärnu in Estonia, and in Turku and Pori in Finland. The model is available to all cities, not only to UBC members. All interested are most welcome to contact the UBC Commission on Environment for further information.



UBC LOCAL AGENDA 21 ACTION PROGRAM

UBC Visions for Sustainability

The UBC has been very actively preparing its Local Agenda 21 Action Program for the coming three years (2000-2002). The Local Agenda 21 Working Group prepared a proposal, which the Board adopted in its meeting in Tartu, 28 June. The Board also thanked the working group by establishing it formally(!), as the group has so far operated mainly on the initiative of active people from many member cities and been facilitated by the UBC commissions on environment, and health and social affairs.

The Working Group will continue its work submitted directly to the UBC Board and utilising the services of the Commission on Environment Secretariat. The Board will propose the Action Program to the General Conference in Stockholm, 24-25 September, and the General Conference is strongly expected to endorse the program.

The basic commitment of our organisation, as expressed in the program proposal, is that the Union of the Baltic Cities, as a

major network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region, recognises its responsibility for making our future a sustainable one. The UBC has the potential and the will to contribute to sustainable development for the good of the citizens of its member cities and for the common future of our cities, countries, the Baltic Sea Region, Europe and the Planet Earth.

The implementation of the program is estimated to last for three years. For example the following visions are to guide the work:

The cities in the Baltic Sea Region will, using Local Agenda 21 as a central tool, through a process of balanced economic, social and environmental development strive towards sustainability and democracy, and the Baltic Sea Region as a whole will develop towards a more sustainable future. All UBC members will have started their own Local Agenda 21 processes by the latest during 2000-2002, and the commitments of the Turku Statement will be implemented.

UBC and its members will play an important part in the advancement of sustainability in Europe and contribute to a balanced development of the whole continent by facilitating co-operation between cities in the EU and in those countries of the BSR, which are not EU members.

The co-operation between all stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region for sustainable development will be strengthened, and Baltic 21 will be successfully implemented. The UBC will make a strong contribution to the implementation process.

The internal work of the UBC will become more sustainable and all UBC activities will be organised according to the internal sustainability recommendations.

Naturally, the implementation is far from an easy task. The strong efforts of all of us are needed. The Local Agenda 21 Working Group will provide a good tool for the implementation. The group is open to all interested, and the intention is that it should continue being a channel for strong cross-sectoral participation.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 ROUNDTABLES

On the occasions of the Project SAIL workshops, roundtables have been organised where local experts can exchange experiences with the project partners. On the occasion of the workshop in Tartu, 22 April, such a roundtable was organised in the City Hall.

The roundtable recognised Tartu as a leading city in Local Agenda 21 work in Estonia and it was strongly underlined that Tartu's work is to be used as a best practise case. This work has been based on comprehensive involvement of the whole municipal administration, citizens, and other stakeholders and interest groups. According to the roundtable, this should be one of the central things in the Local Agenda 21 work in all municipalities.

The roundtable also discussed the needs of Estonian cities with regards to support for Local Agenda 21 work. According to the Estonian participants, there is a constant need to develop and offer environmental education for all citizen groups. Local involvement is the best precondition for suc-



During the SAIL Project, three roundtables have already been held (Jurmala, Tartu and Gdańsk). This photo is from the roundtable which was held 10 June at the UBC Conference Room in the Green Gate in Gdańsk. Two more roundtables are scheduled for Kaunas and St. Petersburg. All interested are welcome.

cessful Local Agenda 21 work. Plans on paper may be bought from foreign consultants, but real results are reached only when the local community is committed to the work.

Furthermore, the roundtable brought up that accessibility to environmental information should be facilitated both locally and globally. Best practise cases should be translated, and the possibilities to use the

internet should be increased in Estonia. Information materials made for public use should contain concrete information about what people really can do for the environment in their everyday lives.

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EUROPEAN WEEK 1999 IN ROSTOCK

UBC Commission on Health & Social Affairs continued its public work especially for children and their teachers during the European week. Together with the Local Agenda 21 Office and the EU Information Centre in Rostock, an information day was organised in the largest 'Children's Activity Centre' in the city.

During an exhibition, on large boards and stands, information about the UBC, twin cities of Rostock, LA 21 and EU was presented. Our office provided a description about the aims, structure, commissions and activities of the UBC. In children's project of that Centre a map of the Baltic Sea States has been painted where all UBC member cities are named and marked. All distributed material about UBC was in German language. In order to attract attention of children a written quiz with questions related to UBC, twin cities and Local Agenda 21 was organised. The answers could be found in the exhibited materials. With a little guidance and talks about those subjects most of the children aged between 8 and 16 were able to find the right answers. Between all correct answers the prizewinners was chosen on Saturday at the end of the European week.

Another activity was to start collecting money for a children's and orphanage house in Kaliningrad, which will be continued in the following weeks up to the international Children's Day. We have also organised the contact to the head of that house by translating his letter and appeal for help and giving it to the press to be published.

We had informative and interesting talks not only with children but also with many teachers, social workers and visitors during this week.

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View from the center of Rostock, the host city of the UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs. The story below is devoted to a new project of this commission.

DAPHNE PROJECT ON PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING OF YOUNG WOMEN

It has been said the major drawback with the fall of the Iron Curtain is the big problem with trafficking. Many tens of thousands of young women from East Europe, including the UBC member cities, are forced to stay in the big cities of western Europe as prostitutes in conditions that resemble white slave trade.

After discussions with the European Commission, UBC has initiated a project to combat trafficking by producing information material for young women in UBC member cities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. The aim is to warn about the dangers of being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and abuse in Western European countries.

This information material will be printed in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian languages. The material will show what methods traffickers use and how easy it is to become a victim of deceit, blackmail, debt-bondage, deprivation of freedom of movement, abuse and violation of human rights and of course also to get health problems.

The information material will also show ways to find help for suffering young women in Western cities and how to return home and find help in the home countries.

The second aim is to produce information material intended for city leaders, teachers, social workers, youth leaders, police and media in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. It will

contain information about the problem as such and how to use the information material produced for the potential victims.

We will try to encourage local NGOs by lectures and training. Public awareness will be raised by involvement of city representatives and press conferences.

The third purpose is to distribute the information material to local authorities, regional NGOs, international organisations and EU institutions via:

- UBC network in the Baltic Sea Region and the UBC member cities
- NGOs in the countries and connected to Kvinnoforum and UBC
- press releases of UBC and Kvinnoforum
- links to existing databases and homepages

Only NGOs are entitled to support from Daphne, so the main applicant will be Women help Women, Rostok. The UBC/Commission on Health and Social Affairs will administer the project. Other participants are the UBC Women's Network, Kvinnoforum, Stockholm, and NGOs in Member Cities in Poland, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia dealing with prevention and health care.

Further information:

Ms Petra Hamann
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HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMISSION ON SPORT MEETING IN GDYNIA

New Chairman!

It is a real pleasure to introduce a new Chairman of the Commission on Sport. It is Mr Wladyslaw Kozakiewicz a member of the City Council of Gdynia, Poland.

Mr Kozakiewicz is an outstanding Polish sportsman, a gold Olympic medalist in pole vault from Moscow 1980. Actually, it is difficult to mention in this short note all of his achievements and gold medals scored during international and national championships.

Annual Meeting

The UBC Commission on Sport Annual Meeting took place on 18-20 June 1999 in Gdynia. Representatives of the following cities from 3 countries participated in the meeting: Lithuania (Panėvėžys, Šiauliai, Vilnius), Russia (Kaliningrad, St. Petersburg) and Poland (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Szczecin).

During the meeting the cities presented their calendars of international sport events. Some of them were proposed to be supported financially by the Commission and held under the UBC auspices. It was decided that the below mentioned events received the Commission support. Moreover, it is the pleasure to announce that these events

entered the official calendar of the UBC sport events: 1. UBC I Sport Games (23-25.07.99, Klaipėda, Lithuania), 2. Baltic Autumn (19-21.11.99, Kaliningrad, Russia), 3. Baltic Sail (13-15.08.99, Gdańsk, Poland), 4. International Small Football Tournament (14-15.08.99, Vilnius, Lithuania), 5. International Football Triathlon (27.08.99, Panėvėžys, Lithuania)

You are welcome to participate! On further details, please contact the organizers. We do hope that all sport initiatives of the UBC members are a great opportunity to promote both the UBC idea and health or fitness.

The meeting programme included a presentation on the other sources of financing the sport events, such as European programmes. Such knowledge makes it possible to look for and benefit from many funds while organising the international games.

We invite all UBC member cities to cooperate with the Commission on Sport!

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COMMISSION ON TOURISM WILL MEET IN RIGA

The Commission on Tourism was established in 1996 to promote the development of tourism in the Baltic Sea Area. For the time being there is a change in leadership. Mr Kyrre Dahl, new Development Manager in the City of Kalmar, is taking over the chairmanship.



On the 28th of August 1999 the Commission will hold a meeting in Riga where the continuation of the work with a new action plan for the coming years will be discussed.

We welcome you all to take part in the discussions!

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEKEND IN NARVA

EENA, the Estonian Association of Business and Professional Women invited women from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden to meet in Narva on 4-6 March, 1999. The weekend meeting was organized with the support of Nordic Council of Ministers, Narva City Government and other organizations.

Women's situation, role and influence in the society were the highlights of the seminar. The agenda also covered a fair, exhibitions of paintings, photo, seminars and cultural exhibitions. The purpose of the seminar was to create the opportunity to establish new contacts and find partners, as well as to deepen existing co-operation between the BSR and the European networks through the European Women's Lobby (EWL). Two women's Networks – UBC and SweabaltQ tightened up their ties. As a result, Narva BPW Club was invited to participate in a women's exhibition in Sweden. This co-operation is of great im-

portance when we now are working for an EU enlargement in the region.

Also, discussions about the second Baltic Sea Women's Conference in Helsinki on 8 March, 2000 were held. The first conference took place in Lübeck in 1997. The aim behind the conferences is to strengthen women's influence on the development of the Baltic Sea Region. UBC Women's Network wants to play a strong role in this development, being deeply rooted in the local level in all member cities.

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GENDER EQUALITY IN LOCAL AGENDA 21

An application to the EU programme "Equal opportunities for men and women" was sent together by the cities Lahti, Lübeck and Sundsvall. The project entitled "Gender equality in Local Agenda 21" is planned for one year.

The project aims to develop methods of integrating women's experience and needs into the ongoing Agenda 21 work in the cities. The purpose is to create greater awareness and knowledge within this field among the groups involved in the Agenda 21 planning and budget processes.

It was impossible to involve non-EU cities in this programme, but we hope that there will be possibilities to spread out the results from the project among all UBC member cities.

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UBC ROUTEMAP FOR THE FUTURE

The presidium has almost ended the second phase of shaping the Strategy to meet the expectations of the UBC member cities. The final draft will be presented to the Executive Board in Tartu, Estonia on 28 June 99. The next step, i.e. adopting the Strategy is down to the UBC General Assembly which is gathering at the conference in Stockholm.

Indeed, the strategy marks a watershed in addressing the changes in the UBC which is adopting to the changing political situation in the Baltic Sea Region. UBC must now start an interactive process with the cities to set up a framework for coordinating its Commissions' respective actions, exchanges, progress as well as identify areas where actions must be taken first.

It is expected that with the new Strategy, serving as the organisation's routemap to the future, UBC will find the process

easier. Further, it is the presidents' hope that with a clear strategy and the executive plan the UBC member cities will be better equipped to complement on-going regional co-operation within the BSR and the EU.

With the strategy the Union of the Baltic Cities adapts the new quality of its activities to produce a recognisable hallmark. The Strategy, containing the long term vision, would increase the UBC's profile in the Baltic Sea Region and contribute to achieving sustainability of the Region by developing UBC's role as a major actor facilitating the co-operation and relationships between the Baltic cities, as well as representing their interests.

Alongside the strategy drafting additionally two working groups have been established to work out the Internal Regulations and the Project Policy for the organisation.

US - BALTIC SEA REGION RELATIONS

13 members of the US - Baltic Sea Region Relations group visited the US

The members of the US-Baltic Sea Region Relations / Northern European Initiative were participants in the United States Information Agency's International Visitor Program and were visiting the US on February 27-March 17, 1999 as guests of the US Government.

The 13 government officials, politician and academics, representing ten countries, gathered to discuss the US - Baltic Sea Region Relations: trade, investment and regional development. The UBC was represented by Ms Ewa Kurjata, Baltics Manager from Szczecin, Poland and Mr. Esa Kokkonen, Director of the Baltic Institute of Finland from Tampere, and Mr. Vladimir Churov, Deputy Head of International Relations Committee, St. Petersburg, Russia.

The cities of Washington D.C., NYC, El Paso, Seattle and Chicago were on the group's busy itinerary. Among the issues the group learned about was the Great Lakes - Baltic sea twinning project. Other primary areas of interest were economy and its relation to regional development, bilateral relations between the US and Canada. Baltic Sea Task Force on organised crime, energy safety and efficiency, sustainable development, Northern European Initiative,

US-Baltic Sea relations, environmental clean-up efforts in the BSR, EMU and its impact on the American Dollar, NAFTA and cross-border cooperation with Mexico were of major interest to the group. Also, the US Customs discussed how they inspect illegal products and what steps are being taken to thwart smuggling and identify counterfeit goods. Issues of intellectual property and trademark, strategic plans to enhance the identity of Greater Seattle in targeted world markets thru marketing publications, trade missions and other activities were also discussed. Finally, the group had an opportunity to learn the basics of the newly established Baltic-American Partnership Fund, jointly funded by the philanthropist George Soros and the USAID to support the development of civil society in the region through training, direct support and technical assistance.

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UBC CITIES RUSHED TO HELP KOSOVO

UBC has been approached by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) who sought our help for the victims of Kosovo. Also, an invitation was extended to the cities and regions to set up partnerships with the Albanian cities and regions, and possibly with Kosovo.

UBC cities are not turning a blind eye and see the humanitarian necessity to stop an ongoing crime against humanity. Tons of goods were sent to suffering refugees.

Here are some details coming from the cities of action. Gdynia city bore transportation costs of food, clothes, tents and mattresses all packed in seven trucks. Money was donated by concerned citizens. Also, the city administration gave 100.000 Zloty. Bergen City has been approached by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist in planning the infrastructure in Kukes, Albania. The project is developed in close collaboration between the Ministry, Bergen City and Norwegian NGOs, having the relevant experience in such projects. Pori has many associations which channeled help for Kosovo, arranged concerts and other events to collect money and clothes. Inhabitants of Pori have donated nearly 300.000 FIM and Satakunta Region



respectively 772.000 FIM. Szczecinians have also gathered significant amounts of money to help the victims of the Balkans war. Malmö expressed its strong willingness to help Kosovo, too. Additionally, Göteborg has chosen to act through the established channels for international aid such as the Red Cross and the UNHCR for transporting and distributing items collected by the city administration. The Swedish municipalities together with Swedish International Development Agency are also housing refugees who arrive to Sweden.

The Union of the Baltic Cities donated 2,5 thousand USD to help the war victims.

UBC wishes to recognise all the cities that responded to the appeal to support the victims of the Balkan war.



UBC AT HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS

Union of the Baltic Cities has developed into one of the most important networks in the Baltic Sea Region in recent years. This is reflected in the invitations of the UBC President to a number of high level meetings, where he has been asked to give the opinion of UBC in different matters. Here is a short list of the most important meetings during the first half of 1999.

February 17, the CBSS assembled at a meeting in Kaliningrad. Mr Engström put the emphasis on present and future co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region. Among the items suitable for increased co-operation is preparation for the enlargement of the European Union in our region and the implementation of Agenda 21. The relations between our region and EU should also be the subject of co-operation, especially regarding funding of future programs, co-ordination of programs and initiating local management and decision making on EU projects in our region. Also exchange of information is an important field for co-operation.

March 21, UBC and BSSSC had a joint meeting with the EU Commission in Brussels. Mr Engström stressed the importance of continuing and increased funding from the European Union to the Baltic Sea Region, the need for co-ordinated programs and rules and also the need for local management of programs in our region.

March 25, the Council of Europe had a conference on the theme "Problems of Financing Transfrontier Projects", also in Kaliningrad. Mr Engström in his speech emphasised above all the lack of suitable programs after the Phare and DG 16 financed programs have disappeared. Also the lack of co-ordination of financing on both sides of the Baltic Sea, the uncoordinated programs, deadlines and difficulties regarding program rules. One acute problem is late payment, especially from BSPF.

April 12, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited representatives of all Swedish actors in the Baltic Sea Region to a meeting with the Government. Mr Engström outlined a feasible model for concrete projects in BSR. UBC can initiate and carry out projects to strengthen the region and for sustainable development, and also catch and convey experiences and information from the local level. UBC, BSSSC and CBSS should jointly act to be a spokesman in Brussels with support from the na-

tional governments. Finally joint projects between the different level should be carried out, for example regarding information and exchange of experiences in the field of Agenda 21 and preparations for EU enlargement.

April 22, the Council of Europe carried out a large conference in Kaunas on the theme "Improvements of Co-ordination between Institutions and Bodies for Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region". Mr Engström stressed the importance of further co-operation between the organisations. Recently an EU commissioner had complained about the multitude of organisations in our regions. This shows the need to show a common face towards Brussels.

June 14, Mr Engström had a speech at the CBSS meeting in Palanga, Lithuania. He listed a number of very concrete issues where cities have to be prepared for EU enlargement. He was also invited to a meeting aiming at setting up a concrete action plan to prepare cities for EU enlargement.

BALTIC SEA ALLIANCE



The three Baltic networks UBC, BSSSC (subregions) and the chambers of commerce (BCCA), have joined forces. After the two year talks on further cooperation it was decided to develop a joint information and marketing project at last kicked off in January 1999 in Kalmar.

It is important to stress that this is not a new database but a contact link. The link, called www.balticsea.net, will be used for spreading information among the organisations in the BSR, and connecting the existing home-pages of the UBC, BSSSC and BCCA. In the future other similar organisations will be invited to take part.

The BSA home page will be one important entrance for European and International organisations which would like to get contacts in our region. BSA will be also used for information on the respective organisation members, and will include some

important tools for further search.

The project is divided into three parts at the moment, with the UBC taking care of the home-page development including the fact pages, as well as the server. BSSSC has started a major work around a "Partner Search Forum" together with Kommunedata, Denmark. BCCA is working on the marketing side and is preparing a marketing leaflet. So far the project has not got any coordinator, but the idea is to share the job between the three organisations. This also means that BSA will be heavily dependent on the support of the three organisations. At the moment the BSA pages are under construction. Quick launching is planned and all the members will be involved in its marketing. The server and the job will from now on be transferred to the UBC Secretariat or some other place. In the meantime you can visit the ongoing project at the address: vuv.balticsea.net.

Unfortunately, the ambitious plans had to be reduced due to the lack of financing.

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POLISH – ESTONIAN TWIN CITIES CONFERENCE

Võru, Pärnu, Tõrva, Kunada, Suwalki, Ciechanów, Łukow, Włocławek, Gdynia are well on the way to tightening up their twinning relationship.

On 10-12 May Tallinn city hosted a Polish-Estonian Twin Cities conference. Both national associations of cities gathered together to talk about existing twinings and to establish new partnership co-operation. Enlargement of the European Union and its impact on the Baltic cities was one of the leading themes. Local governance issues, Polish-Estonian cultural and economic exchanges and practical examples of European cooperation of the cities were covered, too. The conference met with significant interest in the area.



TAIEX – UBC Co-operation

TAIEX is an office set up inside the Commission to help the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparation for integration into the single Market. It also collects and exchanges information from these countries and from the Member States about assistance needed or offered, and about the progress which the countries are making toward aligning their legislation with that of the Union.

TAIEX is run by a team of Commission officials, with help from officials detached from the administrations of the Member States, and with a network of contacts in key areas of the Commission and in each of the Member States. This means that the Office can be a 'one stop' for requests for documentation, information and advice of all kinds relating to the Single Market.

The Office helps public administrations in the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus, including local and regional authorities. It offers a range of services, e.g., providing texts of Single

Market legislation, texts from the Member States, advice on transposition, experts from the Commission and the Member States who can visit a country which needs short-term help, workshop sessions in Brussels on key Single Market issues, and short study visits or placements in Brussels and in the Member States.

Request for advice and assistance can come directly from the local authorities, or they can be channelled through co-ordinating Ministries, or the Representation in Brussels of the country concerned. There is no charge for the supply of single copies of texts, nor for advice given in writing, telephoning or by fax. If advice is needed from an expert who has to visit the country for a few days, standard terms and conditions will apply. In many cases, the necessary costs should be covered by existing Phare multiannual budgets for approximation of laws. When this is not the case, the Office will take over all of the costs of sending an expert.

For seminars and workshops organised by the Office and for short study visits the costs will all be met by the Office. For study visits there are favourable conditions.

TAIEX is intended to increase transparency for all who supply and use technical assistance in the area of approximation of legislation. Its activities are focused on the Single Market.

UBC and TAIEX are currently discussing a co-operation project on seminars for city officials in various areas. The first occasion will probably be a seminar on EU regulations concerning Waste Management in Poland and in each of the Baltic states. It may be followed by seminars in other environmental matters, public procurement and other issues.

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"FREEDOM OF TRAVEL WHILST FIGHTING ABUSE"

This issue is of particular concern in areas adjacent to international frontiers. In times of economic and financial turbulence, it is almost a matter of economic survival. That is why it is today one of the most intensely discussed topics on the agenda of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The CBSS Commissioner has reopened his survey on conditions for travel and movement of people in the region; it is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. The CBSS Secretariat has compiled a factual report, which indicates that the problem has been reduced to crossing the Russian border in both directions. There is mounting concern that cross-border contacts may become more difficult if the existing special visa-free arrangements are abolished in the process of EU enlargement.

The CBSS Committee of Senior Officials examined these issues during its meeting in Kaliningrad on 17-18 February. A question was raised about the strengthening of travel restrictions being in line with key CBSS decisions and political commitments made within the CSCE/OSCE and Council of Europe frameworks. The discussion unearthed a difference of opinion between the Member States, but the topic remains on the CBSS agenda, and the search for solutions continues. Some interesting and promising ideas have already been suggested.

The ultimate goal, of course, should be a regime which would allow citizens of CBSS countries to travel without visas, on the condition that they carry valid travel documents and remain subject to normal passport and customs control at the border. Should this objective prove to be unattainable, visas could be made more accessible through proliferation of consular offices. Visas issued by one national authority could be made valid for travel to other Baltic Sea States. Visas could also be made more affordable by way of reducing or eliminating relevant fees. Issuance of multiple-entry could become the rule, rather than exception. Visa procedures could be simplified and less time-consuming: their issuance on the spot could be the norm.

Lengthy, cumbersome, and sometimes inhumane border-crossing procedures are often the source of illegal activities. The problem could be alleviated through construction of new border-crossing points, technical upgrading of the existing ones and adequate training of personnel. "Green corridors" should be introduced for law-abiding travellers.

The positive effect of visa-free arrangements could be undermined through an introduction of other barriers, such as the requirement for travellers to carry certain amounts of cash. Again, "green corridors"

for known, frequent travellers, tourists and children, along with a more thorough passport and customs control for others would be a more effective solution.

Enhanced co-operation and exchange of information between competent national authorities are pre-requisites for effectively fighting illegal activities. The Task Force on combating organised crime in the Baltic Sea region is a perfect instrument for such co-ordination.

The effectiveness of visas as instruments for combating criminal or terrorist activities should be studied thoroughly and objectively by an independent body of renowned experts, an international ad hoc "wise men committee". It could also examine the various legal and institutional aspects, which stem from the Schengen Implementing Convention and other relevant EU documents. The aim of this study should be to identify ways of facilitating travel in the Baltic Sea region, which would be fully compatible with the Amsterdam Treaty framework. Preliminary analysis has given reasons to believe that such solutions could be found. It is a matter of political will.

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III. Member Cities in Action

Aalborg Hosting International Events

Euro Brain '99

The 2nd international conference on brain diseases EURO BRAIN '99 will be held on 29 September - 1 October 1999. This year's conference is focusing on Anxiety Disorders & Depression, Alcohol & Drug Abuse, and Dementia. Combining an interdisciplinary approach with a high scientific level, EURO BRAIN '99 will be interesting for medical doctors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, therapists, researchers, health economists, administrators and for politicians as well.

DanFish International

On 7-10 October 1999 the Aalborg Congress & Culture Centre is staging its biggest international event. DanFish International is Denmark's only and Scandinavia's largest commercial fishing exhibition in 1999. In a total exhibition area of 7,500 square metres exhibitors representing more than a dozen different countries will present all kinds of gear, equipment, technology and services for the fishing industry. Several international meetings will take place in connection with the exhibition, and a special seminar on Co-operation between Baltic and Danish Companies will be organised.

Euro Education 2000

Preparations for the 3rd European conference on Information and Communication Technology in Education, EURO EDUCATION 2000, to be held on 8-10 February 2000, are well underway. Adopting innovative approaches such as electronic posters, networked lectures, interactive presentations, chat back forums, etc. EURO EDUCATION will be an important forum for teachers, teacher educators, administrators, courseware developers, and even students to explore challenges, evaluate solutions and formulate strategies for exploiting ICT to create the networked information society of the future.

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The world's largest sailing ships

In the Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Race the world's largest sailing ships contend for the popular CUTTY SARK TROPHY. This year Aalborg has the pleasure and much coveted honour of hosting the Grande finale of this race from August 18 to 21, 1999, when these ships will take over Aalborg Harbour. The other host cities are St. Malo, France, Greenock, Scotland, and Lerwick on the Shetland Islands. So far, 51 ships with 2900 crew members from 15 countries have entered in the Cutty Sark Tall Ships' Race '99 including ships from Russia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Latvia.

Tall Ships' Race Aalborg Secretariat
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Artus Court, the starting point of the veteran's rally

Rally of Highway Veterans

The Editorial Staff of "Formula 1" and the Union of the Baltic Cities kindly invite you to take part in the II International Rally of Highway Veterans - "Gdańsk '99" which will be held on 22.08.99 in Gdańsk.

The invitation is addressed to the owners of historical vehicles from the cities of BSR

to come to Gdańsk on 21-22. 08. 1999. The aim of the rally is to promote Gdańsk and the neighbouring Kashubian Region.

The programme consists of two stages:

1. Taking photos of the Kashubian Region. There will be a competition for the best photo of the Kashubian Region.

2. Car presentation. Inhabitants of Gdańsk and tourists will choose their favourite car.

The participants will also visit the "Lubiana" Porcelain Factory and the Museum of the National Anthem in Bendomin.

We welcome you to participate in the inauguration of the rally, which will be held on 22 August at 10.00 near the Artus Court in Old Town Gdańsk.

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"Music -YES! Drugs - NO!"

The Youth City Action "Music -YES! Drugs - NO!" was organised in Baltijsk Municipal District within the period from 1 April till 1 June 1999. The main targets of this action were fights against drugs, promotion of healthy life style using different kinds of youth activities and creation of Confidence Centres.

Schools and military units have to fill in a questionnaire to obtain statistical information about drug addiction in the city and in the garrison. Prophylactic program against drug addiction was renewed based on this information.

A lot of events and quizzes devoted to the anti-drug theme are conducted in each youth meeting. Among them were the Poster Competition with the motto "Drugs - are Death" and the Dance Competition "Star-Teenager 99". Activity was finished 1st of June, in the Day of Children Protection, with a big show "Music - YES! Drugs - NO!" at the Baltic Glory Square in Baltijsk. A lot of arts groups and youth teams from the district participated in the Final event.

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Gdynia starts a new partnership!

On 5 May 1999, Wojciech Szczurek, Mayor of Gdynia and Dmytro Shymchuk, Deputy Chairman of State Municipal Administration of Sevastopol, signed the Agreement on Co-operation between the Cities of Gdynia and Sevastopol.

We hope that Gdynia will become a gateway to this City on the Black Sea and will facilitate the contacts between UBC Member Cities and Sevastopol. On its part, Sevastopol is looking forward to closer co-operation with UBC. It is a great chance to bring together two seas, the Baltic and the Black Sea via friendship and exchange between the cities.



W. Szczurek, Mayor of Gdynia, with D. Shymchuk, Deputy Mayor of Sevastopol

Sevastopol is a city of rich history and culture and of many opportunities as well. Today's city was built in 1783 at the site of the antique Greek town of Chersonesus from the 5th century B.C. Later Sevastopol became a real melting pot of cultures and religions. The city was inhabited by native peoples and also by Frenchmen, Englishmen, Italians, Greeks and Turks, just to mention some. Today's Sevastopol has retained this colourful and multicultural character.

Perhaps the first thing coming to one's mind while thinking of Sevastopol is the naval port. Sevastopol harbours two Navies, namely, Ukrainian and Russian. Apart from the naval port, there are the busy commercial and fishing ports as well. It is worth mentioning that the climate is similar to that of the Champagne region in France. This natural phenomenon allows the production of fine wines and sparkling wines. The mild climate attracts tourists who can bathe for 5 months in the waters of the Black Sea. This short description just hints at the city attractions making it a destination place for both business people and holidaymakers.

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New Projects

Gdynia has received grants from the Small Project Fund within the Cross Border Cooperation PHARE programme. Two projects will be realised with the assistance of the above mentioned grants.

The first one is the "International Contact Camp in Gdynia" which was held on 1-12 July 1999. The camp was organised for the children from the school-orphanage in Kaliningrad and for groups of children from Witebsk and Vilnius. Its basic aim was to get the children acquainted with different national cultures and customs, to enable children to have friendly contacts with the youth from neighbouring countries and to make them tolerant towards the different characters of other nations.

The second project to be realised in Gdynia is the "Presentation of the City and Region Liepāja" (11-13 October 1999). The objective of the project is the economic, cultural and scientific presentation of the city and region of Liepāja. Presentation should enable creation of cooperation and exchange of mutual experiences between the cities from the Association of the Polish Municipalities of the Euroregion Baltic, and companies and institutions from the city and region of Liepāja.

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Hope Bridges

Towards the end of the last war the bridges between Elbląg and Kaliningrad were blown up, limiting use of the old right-of-way to local traffic.

The government of Poland has prepared plans for reconstruction of an express way running from Elbląg to Kaliningrad. It is a section of 50 km length. It has used the Swedish consulting firm "Sweroad" which has elaborated a study of road reconstruction, technical conditions of this undertaking and investment profitability and evaluation. At present it appears that reconstruction of the road from Elbląg to Kaliningrad will become a reality. In July 1999 the first bridge of over 250 km length, crossing the Omaza river, will be ready. Conceptual plans for reconstruction of other sections have been accepted covering Elbląg - country border. In the opinion of experts, routes connected with the planned expressway A-1 (North-South) and road

E-7 (Gdańsk-Warsaw) will have a big impact on road communication system improvement in the region of south-east Baltic.

This undertaking has been divided into some stages. The first stage is bridge construction at the Omaza river, near the border with Russia. Afterwards the next sections of old pavement will be renovated and bridges at Młynówka and Pasłęka rivers will be reconstructed. Grzechotki (at the frontier of Poland with the Kaliningrad District) would become a big international border crossing. It is a very expensive investment. The Polish Government would finance planning. The government is going to try to obtain EU assistance for all necessary construction.

In Elbląg, the Brzeska street bridge over the Elbląg river has been built. This bridge will improve communication in the town and in all region. It will make management of the harbour areas situated on the left side of the river a possibility. This bridge will be ready in the year 2001.

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Sun and Studies by the Baltic

Satakunta Polytechnic operates in five towns in western Finland and hosts over 5,000 students in such fields as Business and Management; Fine Art; Social Services and Health Care; Technology and Maritime Management; and Tourism.

Every summer the Polytechnic arranges an International Summer Term in Pori (5 July – 6 August 1999). The lecturers come from European, American and Asian partner universities and other higher education institutions of the Polytechnic. This year the Summer Term consists of studies in Business and Management; and Social Services and Health Care. There are some courses in languages, Fine Art and Maritime Management, as well.

26 courses are offered this year. Each course lasts 1 – 2 weeks and extent is 1,5 – 3 ECTS -credits. The courses are meant for the registered degree programme students of the polytechnic, visiting international students, and for all those interested in the particular subject areas. The language used is English.

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View to the island of Cronstadt in the Gulf of Finland

Cronstadt

This small town on the Kotlin Island in the Gulf of Finland is well known all round the world. Long time ago the Neva River, the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea were a trade waterway called "from Vikings to Greece".

Searching for a place to build a sea outpost for the Russian northern capital, Peter the Great in 1704 started a fortress construction, at first called Cronshot, which means Crown Castle. Military facilities, large harbours, canals, docks and spillways were developed with an astonishing speed. Cronstadt history is tightly connected with Soviet and Russian Navy history.

More than 300 monuments of architecture, history, technology and culture attract tourists attention. They can reach the town by bus, cutters, hydrofoils and yachts. Amusing tours round the forts, organisation of tourists' rest on the islands in the Gulf of Finland, yachting sport development, all these activities welcome you to our town!

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Development of "Vodokanal"

The St. Petersburg State enterprise "Vodokanal" with a support of the EBRD and help of European consultants carries out a project of corporate development. The aim of the project is modernisation that enables "Vodokanal" to become an independent enterprise which could offer an effective and quality service.

In July 1997 "Vodokanal" signed a credit agreement with EBRD, as well as with the partners from Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. These countries also provide consultancy services. The main partners of "Vodokanal" are "Severn Trent" (UK), Stockholm water-communication service, Helsinki water-communication service.

The project consists of several steps and will be underway till 2015. It will cause great changes in finance and technical sphere and organisation. There are preliminary results: the program of leakage finding equipment and installation of water-meters for better water utilisation.

Although EBRD hasn't transferred money yet and there is crisis situation in Russia the project has not been stopped because the foreign partners finance all projects running now. It will be difficult to recover the credit due to the rouble devaluation but not only "Vodokanal" should be interested in its corporate changes but also the city of St. Petersburg and Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Naval City of Karlskrona - Part of the World's Heritage

In December 1998 UNESCO accepted the naval city of Karlskrona as a World Heritage Area. The World Heritage List contains "natural and cultural properties of outstanding universal value in a rapidly developing world". In the naval port of Karlskrona more than 300 years of history lives on in the most unique way.

When Karlskrona was founded Sweden was a major territorial power. To maintain this position and to display the greatness and glory of the kingdom, Karl XI founded the naval port of Karlskrona in 1680. The top architects in the country were commissioned to draw up plans for the city, and by 1682 there were 2000 men working on its construction.

Karlskrona became a seat of the government in 1683. Although the Swedish empire disintegrated during the first twenty years of the 18th century, the naval harbour, shipyard, fortifications and city continued to grow. New plans for conquest and new ideas in shipbuilding gave the city new strength and by the end of the 18th century Karlskrona was the third largest city in Sweden and also her military centre.

The city stopped growing in the early 19th century but began to expand again with the industrial revolution. The naval base and shipyard in Karlskrona have maintained their status since then.

Today Karlskrona is a modern city, a leader in the field of IT development and more than 10% of those employed work in IT companies.

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Teledemocracy is coming

The growth of telecommunication technology has turned most of the world into a global village which is increasingly linked in social issues, economics, and of course, democracy. We have to secure and support the democratic process which is vital for all community politicians, institutions and organisations. In that process regional co-operation can play a vital part.

We have to increase consciousness about decision-making. We have to make co-operation more practical so that citizens can understand the real democratic process, and we have to link politicians and citizens with each other by new tools of the information society.

In schools, workplaces, city halls, and everyday life, communication systems have made it possible to create a truly "world-village". Government officials across Europe can talk to one another via the new media - enhancing cross-regional cooperation. Citizens can more easily access politicians through e-mail and public information kiosks, and this development has to be strengthened.

The BSR is an economically growing area. It's also a great and broad gateway between the present member states of the EU and the countries in transition in CEE. A telematic network should be built around the Baltic Sea. Essential for any trading region is its infrastructure, and teledemocracy is a growing part of that infrastructure. Regional infrastructure is useful only if it spans national borders, easing cross-country commerce and social contacts.

Kotka is constructing the information society through its own teledemocracy application. Kotka has recently created its own interesting and democratic Kotka Teledemocracy - project (NET for nets). The core is Telematic Municipal Counter (MTC). In the project there are about 90 towns and cities from Finland, Germany, Italy and Spain. The city of Kotka is one of those pioneers in Finland who are developing the substance of the information society. One objective to the future might be to develop a unifying network around the Baltic Sea by the same model.

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Hanse-Sunshine-Tour 2000

The bicycle tour through the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be held from August 2nd to August 13th 2000. After a ferry transfer from Rostock, the tour will start in Tallinn and will lead via UBC member cities Pärnu, Riga, Ventspils, Liepāja and Palanga to Klaipėda.



The bicycle tour is a goodwill action especially for children suffering from leukaemia, cancer and other chronic diseases. All 150 participants are persons engaged in sports, economics and politics. The Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Dr. Harald Ringstorff, is the patron of the tour.

The organisers want to intensify political, economic and friendly connections. Moreover such activity supports integration of the Baltic republics within the European Community. In this sense it is continuing Hanseatic traditions. If you would like to support the tour please transfer your donation to the account mentioned below.

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500 00
Kennwort: Hanse-Tour 2000 Baltikum

Baltic Sea Seven Islands

The B7 organisation started in 1989. Since 1997 it has its own secretariat, an office in Brussels, three permanent working groups, a civil servant group and a steering committee.

Environmental issues have priority in their cooperation. Beginning this year, B7 develops two Interreg II C projects. The Estonian islands participate as project ob-

servers. Yet, the PHARE component has not been decided upon.

The SUSWAT project (sustainable groundwater) is to exchange knowledge and information between the seven islands, to develop relevant ideas for water protection and saving. It is expected that pilot projects for sustainable solutions for water supply in the islands will follow. Next, the BEST project (B7 Exchange of Sustainable Tourism). The objectives are to increase knowledge and information between the islands concerning sustainable tourism, create networks linked to tourism organisations, NGOs and research centers, create a Eco tourism-profile for business development.

Other non EU projects include People to People activities; a Folk Youth Festival on Saaremaa, athletic games on Åland and a B7 exhibition on a ship visiting 17 Baltic harbours this summer. Also, B7 has started to investigate common possibilities to develop the food industry. Most of the islands work with the concept Regional Culinary Heritage.

This summer two international conferences will be held on two of the B7 islands. The CPMR Island Commission Conference was held on Gotland, June 23-25 and the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Conference will be on Öland, September 2-3.

The B7 annual conference is held on Åland which holds the chairmanship this year. Next year Bornholm takes over.

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Water - the Cycle of Life

Health Control and Environmental Centre of Lahti has started in April 1999 a one-year EU-project "Water- the cycle of Life" in co-operation with Calvia (Spain), Aalborg (Denmark), Groundwork-Blackburn (GB), Kirklees (GB) and Perpignan (France). It is about raising awareness of the problems of water conservation and resources management.

In the project we organize awareness raising, education and schooling that will be developed according to the principles of environmental concern, conservation and pollution control of our natural waters. Actions are linked to the Environmental

Forum of Lahti. Saving and conserving ground waters campaign is intended for general public and a guidebook for conserving and saving of potable water is prepared. Intensified pollution control efforts are directed to the prevention of oil accidents in different locations.

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BASE 21

Striving at creating a sustainable society, Gotland, an eco-municipality, together with the cities of Pärnu and Tukums (Estonia), has begun a pilot project aimed at setting up an interregional network for environmental organisations in the BSR. Their goal is to facilitate the development of organised environmental tasks in agreement with Agenda 21.

The basic project idea stems from the project group's belief that interregional environmental co-operation around the Baltic, intended to result in a sustainable use of common resources, must be based upon balanced ecological, economic and social development. It is important to encourage local efforts throughout the entire Baltic region in order to achieve good results with an interregional environmental project, both in terms of political decisions, as well as the activities of voluntary organisations involved in the environmental issues. Intensive environmental efforts on the Gotland related to the structure, administration and the establishment of various administration networks and businesses, serves as the fundamental action plan in the field of environmental improvement. Then, the project is to establish and secure environment.

BASE 21 is thought to act as a pilot project, with the task of investigating and setting up the premises for local environmental organisations developing Agenda 21 from a grass roots level. These organisations will build internal networks (IT) and seek ways of establishing international co-operation. Even though the pilot project is limited to local efforts in 2 cities, the project is expected to act as a basis for developing more networks cored by the financing programme, namely the SWEBALTCOP.

<http://www.swebaltcop.org>



From a Closed to a Developed Town

Kuressaare, located on the island of Saaremaa, used to be one of the closed towns in Estonia during the Soviet period. With the re-gaining of independence, the town faced many problems. Yet, it was difficult to decide how to start solving them. We lacked experience, skills and funds but there was strong commitment to improve the living environment. So, we started to look for solutions via co-operation with West European cities. During the past ten years we have established a successful co-operation network with Tammisaari, Mariehamn, Turku and Vammala in Finland, Skövde in Sweden, Ronne in Denmark and Kuurne in Belgium, and we have gained a lot through joint projects in different fields.

One of the most neglected fields was social welfare. Together with Ronne Municipality we initiated the Kuressaare Old People's Home project (1994-1998), co-funded by the Phare CBC Programme. As a result, we have established the Centre of Social Services for the elderly and people in need.

Kuressaare is a seaside town but for decades it has been impossible to go swimming because of the pollution. Together with the Finnish Ministry of Environment another Phare CBC project "Cleaning the Kuressaare Bay and Constructing a Yacht Harbour" was launched in 1995. As a result the Kuressaare Bay has been dredged and cleaned and the yacht harbour has been restored. Further, the town beach has been cleaned and tennis courts were built near the shore. The area is located right behind the 12th-14th century Bishopric Castle-Fortification which is a unique building in the Baltic states. As a follow-up we have started cleaning the fortification moats of polluted sediments in co-operation with the Finnish Ministry of Environment.

The old town of Kuressaare has a valuable architecture of the 17th-19th centuries. In co-operation with Ronne the buildings were assessed in 1996-1997, and a computer database for them was created. This project has spread to several other towns in Estonia. Currently, we are preparing the first Municipality Atlas in Estonia, which gives a survey of the town development and urban construction.

The Phare BSPF Town Planning Project made together with Turku has reached its final stage. During this project our town workers have been trained to computerise planning methods.

We have also introduced a waste management system meeting modern requirements, rehabilitated the Fresh Water and Waste Water Treatment Plants, and reconstructed the heat energy production. We have had culture and sport exchanges, further education for young in our twin towns, and professional training in the course of joint projects. Also, further co-operation between different NGO's and private people has been developed.

Networking and co-operation has provided us with successful opportunities to prepare our town and its people to be ready for EU membership.

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New Faculty in Liepāja Pedagogical Academy

The incomes of the tourism business sometimes exceed oil business profits. Unfortunately, this kind of business (tourism business) in Latvia is not sufficiently developed, but it is starting to grow. There are some fields which have become popular in recent years such as country- and Eco-tourism. The best example of Eco-tourism in Liepāja is the project called "Amber road" - the coastal zone from Liepāja to Jurkalne, which could be formed into a foot- or bike-path.

Liepāja Pedagogical Academy opened a new faculty called "Tourism manager, guide" in 1998. Tourism manager, guide is an occupation of the 21st century. This occupation has a future. The tourism manager is a person who does all that is necessary to maintain functioning of a firm or an agency. He has to know the laws, to react to unexpected situations. He ought to be well connected and should have good contacts with a client.

The plan which the faculty offers to the students is very extensive. There are both general education and specific subjects, like principals of tourism, tourism infrastructure and organisation, the service of tourism, the principles of management, legislation, etc. The faculty is offering a great opportunity to study abroad as well as to study foreign languages like Russian, German, English and French.

A practicum is organised every summer. This summer it should be tourism information, followed by tourism group organisation

and management, and for the third summer - guide practice, and at last - Eco-tourism. Excursions are another integral part of the studying process. Some excursions are made by students themselves in order to practice.

For the present we can offer only the highest professional education, but we hope that there will be a possibility to get a bachelor's degree. Competition is approx. 8 people for each vacancy. At present there are 25 places for students, including 15 that are fully funded.

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Written by 1st year students:
Natalie Vecvagare & Nora Plēpe

Baltic Sea Conference

Kaunas hosted the "III Local and regional authority cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region" on April 21-23, 1999. The Conference was part of the 1999 work programme of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE). It was organised jointly by the City of Kaunas and the Ministry of Local Administration Reform and Municipal Affairs, Lithuania.

The Conference participants examined strengthening of local and regional government in the Baltic Sea region; local and regional authority co-operation in the prevention of environmental pollution; improvement of co-ordination between institutions and bodies for co-operation in the Baltic Sea region and the future prospects for local and regional government co-operation.

According to the Final Declaration of the Conference, Conference participants wish to, e.g:

- record their conviction that, despite different national political traditions and cultures, the acceptance of the principle of subsidiary and the establishment of strong self-governing local authorities, with resources matching responsibilities, are crucial for peace, civic stability and economic development in Europe.

- consider that a stronger political will is needed in order to bring about a better distribution of responsibilities and resources between different levels of public administration.

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Viljandi's Strategic Development Plan

Viljandi, S Estonia, understands the EU integration as the rise in the nation's cultural and state conscience. Economically, it means development to match the democratic market economy. That is why people in Estonia are searching for new solutions in development and planning.

The 'Strategic Development Project 2000-2005' started in November 1998. Total openness during the operation (public discussions & meetings), emphasising the importance of political decision, informing and involving local interest groups and professionals are the project highlights. The plan is to analyse the socio-economic and environmental situation, to identify main guidelines for development and territorial planning, to develop the infrastructure and create favourable investment conditions.

The action plan was developed, a team formed and search for supporters started. 14 theme groups and several subgroups were formed. So far about 140 citizens of Viljandi have participated in the work. The initial situation that involved the background, resources and advantages of development resulted in a conference, and a file of city identities was compiled. Development models and ways to solve the problems have been searched through the SWOT analysis. Discussions evolved around the target group, possibilities to motivate them and two separate development models. The main question was how the future Viljandi will be divided between state institutions and army, administration, agriculture, commercialism, housing, science and culture. The development scenarios for Viljandi were: a sport centre, a gambling hall, pensioners' (children's) paradise with quiet and clean urban environment, a green town with open-air activities, a centre for agriculture, close links with Latvia and Tartu, a summer resort, and the cultural capital of Estonia.

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Written by Mr Olav Remmelkoor
Member of the Leading Group of
the Strategic Development Group



Mariehamn Looking for Regional Maritime Contacts

Mariehamn is one of the UBC's smallest members. Its resources for implementing a comprehensive EU policy are limited, but a number of different projects have been initiated. Mariehamn takes a positive view of the prospects for further co-operation across the Baltic Sea, not least through an enlargement of the EU to comprise the Baltic states.

Mariehamn wants to create new, strong cultural links, especially in the area of sailing ships. The town is home to the four-masted bark Pommern, the "Cathedral of Sailing", which is now a museum but was once one of the major participants in the Grain Race from Australia to England and part of the large fleet of Gustaf Erikson, whose fame extends far beyond the Åland shores. Next year, Åland will be "Port of Call" in the Tall Ships Race, which is returning to the Baltic.

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Project "New Pathways"

New Pathways project is utilising open data centres and Distance Learning for socially excluded people to re-enter them into the labour market. United efforts of private and public organisations have resulted in six recently opened data centres.

All citizens in Næstved can use the centres. This means that if you don't know if the ICT-technology is useful, you can go there and try it - and if you can not manage it by yourself, you can ask for help. The ODC guides will guide you through your work. They are all early retired pensioners and now employed in public sector jobs.

The new system works with the Danish social welfare law. The Danish legislation

on maintenance dictates that persons who are unemployed with no work income, and therefore maintained by the public, social system or the public unemployment insurance are obliged to go for better qualifications in order to get back to work.

Mr Leif Henriksen, Næstved
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Kieler Woche 1999 – a Symbol of Baltic Cooperation

Kieler Woche is the greatest sailing-sport event in the world, and being the largest summer festival in northern Europe. Once again Kiel, the capital of north German state of Schleswig Holstein, expect more than 2,5 million visitors from all over the world for Kieler Woche 1999. The world famous sailing regattas, with more than 5.000 participants in almost 2.000 boats, was complemented by a comprehensive programme, featuring panel discussions on social and political topics, cultural events and activities for the summer festival. Talks on social and political questions were as much a part of this as exhibitions, pop concerts and a great windjammer parade.

"Maritime future – The Baltic Region on its way into the Year 2000" is the motto on which a good many panel discussions focused. A particular highlight were talks on social and political subjects given by Kimmo Sasi, the Finnish Minister of Overseas Trade, and Gunter Verheugen, Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office on "Co-operation in the Baltic: the EU's Nordic dimension." Development in the Baltic region was also the theme of a parliamentary meeting, to which the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein had invited deputies from the Nordic states and from the countries on the Baltic seaboard. The International City Forum concentrated on the topic of urban tourism in the Baltic region. This brought together representatives of Kiel's twin cities and a large number of associated local authorities (especially those of the Baltic region) with experts on tourism and specialists from the worlds of economics and science to discuss the significance of urban tourism for the economic development of the countries surrounding the Baltic.

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Family photo at the 24th Executive Board Meeting in Tartu, 28 June 1999

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ATTENTION Member Cities !!!

The theme of the next bulletin will be "TOURISM IN BALTIC CITIES". Everyone is welcome to send material to be published in it. The deadline for contributions is 5 November 1999 – please respect it. The Editorial Board wishes following contributions to the bulletin:

- Stories related to the theme
- Short news about activities in the cities
- Vivid and creative photographs to the stories

Please do not hesitate to contact the UBC secretariat in any questions relating to the Baltic Cities Bulletin!



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Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of currently 87 member cities from all 10 Baltic countries, with an overriding goal of contributing to the democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Union has based its operational activities on ten working Commissions on Business Cooperation, Communication, Culture, Environment, Education, Health and Social Affairs, Sport, Tourism, Transportation and Urban Planning. The Commissions coordinate and execute specific projects, activities and special events. Each city is capable to have its own creative and fully independent input to the Commissions' work.

The Union has an observer status with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE).

The Union is open for new members. Any coastal city of the Baltic Sea or any other city interested in the development of the Baltic Sea Region may become a member of the Union by making a written declaration of its will to enter UBC.

**Please contact the Union's Secretariat in Gdańsk for more information
about the UBC work and the rules of entering the Union.**