



UBC e-News

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Info

- Since the last meeting of the Commission on Culture Board on 14-16 April in Visby, in this Commission there has been a new Chairman, Mrs Tarja Hautamaki, the Head of Culture Department from the city of Vaasa. Mr Olov Gibson from Visby was elected the Vice-Chairman.

- Mr Viktor Rydell, city of Kalmar will not be working any longer as the Secretary of the UBC Commission on Tourism. UBC wishes him good luck and success in his new job.

- UBC will be represented in a few coming conferences:

- Joint working meeting of the main Baltic Sea Organisations, Malmo, 25 May (Mr Maciej Lisicki, UBC Executive Board Member)

- 10th General Assembly of CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Naantali, 27-28 May (Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, Adviser to the 1st Vice-President)

- Congress of Local & Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe 12th Plenary Session, Strasbourg, 1-2 June (Mr Innar Maesalu, UBC Board Member)

- VIII General Conference of BPO, Copenhagen, 8-9 June (Mr Christian Ramberg, Chairman of UBC Logistics Task Force)

- 13th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Szczecin, 9-10 June (Mr Arno Poeker, UBC Vice-President)

- Mr Pawel Zaboklicki, UBC Secretary General, represented our organisation at two conferences:

- Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group meeting, that was held in Sopot on 9-10 May.

- V Baltic Sea NGO Forum, which is held in Gdynia on 12-13 May.

- UBC Secretariat will publish a new BCBulletin and send it out next week to all UBC member cities as well as numerous Baltic and European organisations and institutions. If you need more copies, do not hesitate to contact us.

From UBC Commissions

- *Commission on Business Cooperation*

On 15-17 May there will be a meeting of this Commission in Tallinn. The topics, which will be covered during the two-days meeting, include among others general overview about

- the business environment in Tallinn and in Estonia

- the role of the city to promote and enhance entrepreneurship and business development in the region

- local cooperation networks in the field of technology and knowledge transfer.

Second day of the meeting will be targeted mostly to the exchange of experiences and know-how on the project level, e.g. how to use EU Structural and Cohesion funds for the business development within the Baltic Sea Region and what could be the common interests for the further cooperation on the

project level. Hereby presentations about best practices in other cities are highly welcomed.

For more information please contact:
Mr Jaanus Vahesalu
Commission on Business Cooperation
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- *Commission on Environment*

Invitation to the meeting of the Commission to be held in Sopot, on 20-21 June 2005.

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the UBC Commission on Environment meeting in the lovely beach city of Sopot on 20-21 June 2005. During the meeting we will address the following issues:

- In what direction are Baltic Sea Region cities heading? Presentation of the results of the UBC Sustainability survey 2004. The survey is unique in its scope and presents the state of art in sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region cities.

- What is going on in the region? Presentation from outstanding cities singled out by the UBC sustainability survey. Best Practice examples in the fields of sustainable economy, transport, energy, good living environment and nature protection. A City study tour will take us to interesting project sites in the Sopot region, for example the pedagogic nature path "Stream walk of Sopot".

- What will the future look like? In the workshop the future work of EnvCom will be addressed. How should the BSR cities act to become more visible stakeholders and how could the EnvCom serve as a platform to reach the goal.

The meeting will also give an up-dated view of recent UBC projects. During next week we will serve you with a draft programme and a registration form for the meeting. The last date of registration will be 22 of May. If you already now know that you would like to participate please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned. The UBC Commission on Environment meets twice a year, bringing

together actors and decision makers in the fields of environment and sustainability from the whole Baltic Sea Region. These gatherings are an occasion not only to learn from others' experiences but also to address common challenges and opportunities. We are looking forward to your fruitful participation and innovative contribution!

Anna Granberg
Commission on Environment
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- *Commission on Sport*

UBC Commission on Sport organised its 10th Jubilee Annual Meeting in Klaipeda on 14th-16th April 2005. Participants from 13 UBC member cities from 6 countries discussed how to motivate people to be more active. They also discussed the issue of physical activity and health promotion presented by professor H. Löllgen (Germany) and Mr. D. Kepenis from Palanga School of Health (Lithuania). Moreover, two practical examples were shown by Ms H. Parkkunen (Finland) – Healthy City Programme carried out in collaboration with WHO and by Ms B. Grüner (Germany) – Interreg III C SportUrban Project. During the meeting of the Commission on Sport Ms Beata Łęgowska (Gdynia) was re-elected Chairperson for the next term in office and Ms Lena Ryge (Karlskrona) was elected the Vice-chairperson. Ms Ewa Depka, the Commission's Coordinator made a presentation of the 10 years of Commission's activity as well as of 2005 grant awarding procedure entitled "Healthy Lifestyle through Sport". By awarding grants for sports projects, the Commission on Sport would like to raise awareness of the importance of sport as an integral element of healthy lifestyle and to promote healthy lifestyle practices.

Ewa Depka
Commission on Sport
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- *Commission on Tourism*

I have the honour to invite you all to the annual meeting of the Commission on Tourism on 9-11 September 2005. This year our meeting is hosted by Jurmala, Latvia, situated on the fantastic southeast shore of the Baltic Sea! Please visit www.jurmala.lv to read more about the host of the meeting!

Since the board was elected for a two-year-period last time (October 2003 and September 2005), there will be elections for a new board of the Commission at this meeting. Kalmar, leading the Commission since 1999, has announced its retirement from the Chairmanship from October 2005. Please feel free to contact the elections' nominating committee, chaired by Ms Liisa Lemmetyinen Turku, liisa.lemmetyinen@turku.fi to name possible candidates for the new board of the Commission. The board itself appoints its new chairman. Besides traditional meeting procedures there will be plenty of opportunities to visit tourist attractions in the area, both scheduled in the programme and during free time. Visits to spa hotels, a concert hall and Kemer national park are included. New information about EU and possibilities with EU financing.

Invitations will come soon through the UBC e-mail network!

Viktor Rydell
Commission on Tourism

- *Commission on Urban Planning*

On 20-24 April the city planners from 27 cities in 8 countries met in Gdynia, for the 5th seminar in the ABC-project (Alliance of Baltic Cities). That's a three-year Interreg IIIB supported project, run by the UBC Commission on Urban planning. The seminar theme was "Cities as regional engines - Improving the city core". The first day of the seminar focused on presenting as much information as possible about Gdynia and the Tri-city region Gdansk-Sopot-Gdynia. Then

the participants of the seminar were taken to a very interesting excursion through the city and its surroundings. The second day focused on three different workshops. One group studied how to re-develop a harbour area close to the city centre, the Dalmor company fishery pier, and a waterfront area between the pier and the city centre. The proposals aimed for multi purpose use, increasing contact with the city area and some small scale investments to increase the attractivity and access to the area. Another group worked with how to improve and revitalise a number of inner city housing quarters. The inner parts of the quarters needs to be more efficient and attractive outlined. The third group worked with how to make best use of a green corridor near the City Hall and how to combine needs of more office space and parking with qualities of the green area. The results from the workshops were presented at the third day, in plenum, and to representatives from Gdynia city. The results will also be described in a printed seminar report, to be delivered at the 6th ABC-seminar in Malmö on 6-9 October. The seminar also held an excursion to Hel, a spectacular long and narrow peninsula outside of Gdynia, as well as short visits to Sopot and Gdansk.

Jussi Kautto
Chairman of the Commission
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From UBC member cities

- Waterfront Expo, Riga

The city of Riga is to host the third annual Waterfront Expo (27-29 September 2005, Riga Congress Centre). Here please find: http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/WaterfrontExpo.doc more information about this event (conference & exhibition). If your city is interested to participate in this event please contact Mr Mark Beaumont at: Mark.Beaumont@mediageneration.co.uk

Mixed feelings one year after enlargement

Ten member states on 1 May marked one year of belonging to the European Union; a milestone that is being greeted with something less than enthusiasm in some older members of the club. European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said the anniversary "is a happy event for all Europeans" and called it a reunification of not only nations and peoples but also of cultures". He added that the distinction between old and new member states "no longer makes sense." However, last year's biggest EU enlargement ever to include eight poor countries from eastern Europe as well as the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Cyprus has still to see all of the politically and economically ruffles smoothed out. Mr Barroso said that Europeans are still getting to know each other and that it will take time and patience. In economic terms, becoming members of the EU, appears to have contributed strongly to growth and foreign investment in the new member states as well as trade among all 25. In Poland, the largest of the new member states, food exports to its neighbour Germany are three times their level before enlargement. The Baltic member states, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, have the strong predicted growth rates for this year. The European Commission predicts their economies will grow 7.2%, 6.4% and 6% respectively. The new member states have also strongly benefited from EU direct aid. However, although they are doing economically well out of membership, the generally small size of their economies means that they have not been able to boost the Union as whole. Politically, the new member states have also made themselves felt - particularly in the EU's policies towards Russia. They tend to take a far stronger position on Europe's vast neighbour to the east and have been responsible for the EU toughening up its stance towards Moscow. They also assume a natural political responsibility for events on their doorstep. It was noticeable that during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, it was the Polish and

Lithuanian leaders who were on the spot and it was those countries that helped shape the EU's response. But there are two countries where feelings about enlargement have been, at the very least, ambivalent - France and Germany. These large economies, suffering from low economic growth and in Germany's case record-high unemployment, have spurred feelings of blame in their citizens towards the new members of the European Union. Although there has been no 'influx' of migrants from the new member states to the countries that have no labour restrictions (Ireland, Sweden and the UK) as several tabloid news papers had predicted, there has still been feelings of resentment in some quarters. Germany and France particularly resent the low corporate tax rates in east European countries - the rates were lowered just before joining. This prompted recriminations by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder but then a slashing of Germany's own corporate tax from 25 to 19 per cent, in order to compete with the new member states. On top of this, when large companies such as Siemens threatened to move eastwards, employees agreed to freeze wages. In both Germany and France, tough restructuring is going on in order to make themselves more competitive - but it has led to resentment among their citizens. They blame their uncertain futures and job situations on new member states leading to eurobarometer polls showing a drop in support for further enlargement. In France, the feeling is also nuanced by a general perception of Paris losing its stature and belonging to a club over which it no longer has any control. The nature of the debate is captured by the furore surrounding an EU proposal to open the market in services. In March, 1000s of people took to the streets in Brussels to demonstrate in favour of a Europe's Social Model. They feel it will be undermined by cheap service labour from the east - made possible by such a services directive.

French President Jacques Chirac took up the rallying stance for Europe's social model at a meeting of EU leaders on the same day. Elements of the discussion can also be found over the issue of whether to take protective measures against the large increase in Chinese textiles on Europe's markets. This has divided people into the pro and anti-protectionist camp as Europe's 25 member states struggle as a whole to compete in a globalised world.

Source: EUobserver

EU and Russia move closer amid Baltic tension

Russia and the EU have agreed to strengthen economic and political ties after adopting a 'roadmap' for closer cooperation in several key policy areas. The deal, agreed on Tuesday during an EU – Russia summit in Moscow focuses on the creation of four common spaces for closer cooperation. The four 'road maps' covering economic integration, freedom and justice, external security and research, education are non-binding but are being seen as a clear boost to Moscow - Brussels ties. "The process of creating a greater Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall continues," said Russian president Vladimir Putin. Relations between the two blocs have been tense since EU enlargement last year brought Russia's borders alongside the EU. In the EU's Baltic States, friction over border and transit agreements and the legacy of soviet occupation threatened to overshadow the summit. Both Estonia and Lithuania refused to attend Moscow's celebrations marking the end of the Second World War, and have asked Russia to publicly apologise for the post-war occupation of the Baltic States. But the Russian president said he would make no further apologies for Stalin's secret pact with Hitler that led to the annexing of the Baltic States and argued that it was time to leave historic grievances in the past. Putin allegedly lost his temper with an Estonian journalist suggesting sarcastically if Russia should apologise annually for signing

the pre-war Ribbentrop-Molotov pact with Nazi Germany. But there was cautious optimism over the new agreement, especially on rules to relax restrictions on visa regulations allowing easier travel between the two blocs. Although further intensive discussions on visa-free travel for Russian citizens and the return to Russia of migrants who enter the EU illegally from Russian territory will be needed, the opening of talks in this area is seen as a major breakthrough. Responding to the current transit agreement impasse with the Baltic States, Putin said Moscow would sign border treaties with Estonia and Latvia when they "grow up" and stop making "stupid" demands. Both Moscow and Brussels were keen to be seen as moving on from past differences. "Our goal is to create a common European space for the benefit of our citizens. Common values and interests are at the heart of our relations," said European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso. And current head of the rotating EU presidency, Luxembourg prime minister Jean-Claude Juncker called Putin a "friend of Europe". "It is not necessary to agree on everything but to know that we work on a basis of common conviction.

"Source: EUPolitix

UK, Latvia and Poland top working hours poll

People in the ten new member states spend an average 112 hours longer per year in the workplace than those in the EU-15 states, says a comparative report released by the European Foundation's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO). The working hours poll continues to be topped by the UK in the EU-15, where employees spend 43.1 full-time hours at work. In the EU-25, the highest levels of usual hours worked by full-time employees are in Latvia and Poland. People in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia take less than half the annual leave registered in Sweden, the EIRO report found. "Collective bargaining plays a key role in

determining the duration of working time in most of the countries in Europe, with coverage levels of around three-quarters of the workforce in the EU-15 and less than half in the new member states," commented Willy Buschak, acting director of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Source: EurActiv

Many working Europeans face poverty

Around 14 million working EU citizens live in poverty, according to a new Eurostat survey. Workers aged 16 years and over are particularly at risk in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Lithuania and Slovakia. The study, published on 28 April, argues that having a job is the best way out of poverty but being employed does not necessarily prevent people from being poor. Figures show that in 2001 around 11 million workers (6 percent of the total population) in the "old" EU member states were living in a household with an income below the national poverty threshold, which affected around 20 million people altogether counting other household members. The youngest workers in question were concentrated in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland, while older employees tended to be the worst off in Greece, Portugal, Italy and Ireland. Single parents and people living alone are particularly vulnerable to risk of poverty, according to the study. On the other hand, even though women get lower pay, they face less risk of falling below the poverty line than men (especially in Italy and Ireland) as women are second- earners in most households. The survey also indicated that while being employed in Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, Germany and United Kingdom reduces the risk of poverty by two thirds or more, workers in the Netherlands and Luxembourg "have only a slightly lower chance of escaping poverty compared to the total adult population." In "new" member states, the risk rate for in-work poverty ranged

from 3 per cent in the Czech Republic to 14 per cent in Slovakia. Low pay, low-skills and part-time, unstable contracts help cause the situation. According to the European Anti Poverty Network, a Brussels-based NGO, the results of the survey prove that the EU must take social measures into account while making economic policy.

Source: EUobserver

The European Commission should consider adopting a Slavic working language, such as Polish, alongside the current Germanic and Romance trio of English, French and German, according to French linguist Claude Hagège.

The eminent Collège de France professor made the remarks at an international communications conference organised by the College of Europe at Warsaw's Radisson Hotel on May 8. The European Commission currently issues all of its internal communications in the three main tongues, while community legislation and other formal documents are published in the 20 official languages of the EU. The rules for the European Parliament, the European Council and the European Court of Justice vary slightly. Dr Hagège added that of the two Germanic working languages, English leans more toward the North American cultural sphere, while German has a more deep-rooted European "vocation". Meanwhile, the Swiss linguist and economist, François Grin, noted that the current system fosters a "completely unfair" situation in which the majority of member states are forced to pay for English, French and German language education in order to compete in the language skills marketplace. He noted that some recent calls from the commission and member states for further linguistic convergence on the grounds of translation and interpretation costs fall foul of economic arguments. "The cost of education is totally overlooked", Dr Grin told the EUobserver. "Languages have to be learned. If English is to be the only working

language, then the UK should subsidise English language learning in Europe. If English, French and German are to be the only working languages, then these three countries should subsidise the rest". He calculated that the commission currently pays €2.30 per citizen per year to meet the costs of its multilingual regime, but that the cost would rise to a modest €5.50 per citizen per year if all 20 official languages were used as working languages. The University of Geneva expert also pointed out that more and more people are keen to learn several European languages, as basic English skills become banal and lose value.

"In the UK, monolingual Brits are losing jobs to other EU citizens with more than one language", he remarked.

Source: EUobserver

EU job seekers prefer Norway

Six out of every 10 job seekers from the new EU countries work in Norway. 25,300 out of a total of 32,900 work permits in 2004 were issued to citizens from the new EU countries, an increase of 40 per cent compared to 2003, while applications for permits for skilled workers decreased. The largest group of applicants in specialist categories are tradesmen such as carpenters, joiners, painters and bricklayers. Other large groups are health care workers and engineers. On 1 May 2004 ten new countries became member of the EU and as such also part of the EEA co-operation. Norway introduced transition schemes with eight of the ten new countries: Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. 25,325 first-time work permits were issued in 2004, four out of five of which were according to the transition regulations. The three largest countries of origin for these were Poland (16,136), Lithuania (6,111) and Latvia (1,185).

Source: Norden – the Top of Europe

Salzburg Culture Forum

ICCM, the International Centre for Culture and Management, is pleased to announce this year's Salzburg Culture Forum. The forum will take place from the 25th of July, 2005 to the 27th of August, 2005 at ICCM's Kolleg St. Josef in Salzburg/Austria. The Salzburg Culture Forum succeeds the 'International Salzburg Summer Academy for Arts Management' and represents an extension of previous programmes. The Salzburg Culture Forum (SCF) will serve as an international meeting place where it is possible to nurture attitudes, knowledge and cultural awareness. It aims at enabling the world's cultural leaders to act appropriately and successfully in promoting their cultures' advancement and cultural identities while facing the challenges of globalisation. The SCF will feature some brilliant representatives of the cultural management world. Lecturers and trainers will be extraordinary professionals from all over the world, with a lot of experience and a passion for cultural projects and will provide visions for facing cultural challenges.

If you want to take part in the Salzburg Culture Forum, it is essential to fill out the application-form on the web page:

<http://www.iccm.at/Apply-now.218.0.htm>

For further information on ICCM's widespread activities, please refer to:

<http://www.iccm.at> - please utilize the button 'Salzburg Culture Forum' for a detailed programme or see attachment.

If you need any further information on the Salzburg Culture Forum, please don't hesitate to contact Sonia at:

salzburgcultureforum@iccm.at

We hope that you will get in touch with us soon.

ICCM

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