



UBC e-News

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UBC General Conference

The UBC General Conference "Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda", to be held in Turku on 29.09 – 2.10. 2005 is approaching. General Conference is the highest UBC authority, therefore all member cities are expected to take part in it. The cities, which have not yet registered, are requested to register urgently to this event via the webside at: www.turku.fi/ubc.

The last day for registration for the general meeting is 9th September 2005.

From UBC Commissions

- *Commission on Business Cooperation*

As you all probably know, this year the UBC General Conference is going to take place in Turku on September 29 - October 2, 2005. As a secretary of the Commission on Business Cooperation, I think that it would be reasonable to publish some brochure or a booklet that would represent trends and activities of the Commission and that could be distributed during the Conference in Turku. Reacting to the EU's policy of creating a 'Knowledge Based Society' and considering the last Business Commission Meeting in Tallinn, I think the most suitable topic for all UBC BizCom members (Western and Eastern) is creation and development of the Science and Technology Parks (STP) around the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, I ask you to send me one page descriptions/summaries of one (preferably the biggest or the most successful) STP project going on from each of

your cities (no matter in what stage they are), answering to the following questions:

- * What is the name of the STP project? When and where the STP was established? In what stage of development it's now?
 - * Some basic facts about the Project (area covered, staff, etc.)
 - * What is the mission of the Project? Vision? Objectives?
 - * What institutions/organizations are participating in the Project? What international organizations are participating in it (if there are any)?
 - * What services the STP provides (will provide)?
 - * What are the target consumers/clients of the STP?
 - * What are the future plans for the Project?
- So, as you can see the questions are not something that you wouldn't know. I only ask you to put it in one page (MS Word) and send it to me until the 5th of September, 2005.
- * the FONT SIZE of the text must be 10 pts;
 - * please send me 1-2 pictures of your STP (resolution must be around 300 dpi);
 - * the text must be in WORD format.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to help you.

Tomas Darandovas
e-mail: tomasd@kaunas.sav.lt

- *Commission on Education*

Reminder:

We are planning a meeting on September 9 2005 to discuss further business in the Commission. The invitation can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/9-09-2005/index.htm>

Please inform Annely.Veevo@kertel.ee or Cecilia Karlberg Cecilia.Karlberg@norrtalje.se about your participation on this week.

Annely Veevo

- *Commission on Urban Planning*

The Commission on Urban Planning, the participants in work-package 3, and especially the city of Malmö, warmly invite you to the sixth seminar of the ABC-project which is to be held in Malmö, Sweden, from 5 to 9 October 2005. The topic of the seminar will be as follows: Renewal of city districts – Aspects of integration and Public Private Partnership in developing city districts. At: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/06-09-10-2005/index.htm> there is a preliminary program and might be subject to some minor changes. You will receive a final conference programme before the seminar. This is the closing seminar within the ABC-project. However, it's also a starting point for possible future forms of cooperation. The type of seminar that we have developed together within the ABC-project has further potential for development. In the Malmö seminar, we will add new elements as a way of linking up with future projects. We offer two thematic half days on questions that are of great importance for future city planning. In this way we hope to lay a foundation for new interesting ways of co-operation.

We would be grateful if we could receive the registration form before September 1, 2005.

We look forward to meeting you at the seminar in Malmö.

Gunilla Kronvall,
Head of Work Package 3
Christer Larsson
Director of City Planning Office

- *Women's Network*

Report from the meeting of the Network on: "Women and Man sharing decision-making in Municipalities" which was held in Narva, on 26 August.

Invited by Vice-Governor Galina Moldon, UBC Women's Network met in the historical Estonian city of Narva on 26 August. In the seminar and meeting participated 17 women from Estonia, Russia and Finland. During the seminar a presentation about current developments in gender equality issues in the BSR Region as a whole was given by Senior Adviser Carita Peltonen (Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen), about the Development in Estonia by Ülle-Marika Papp, (Acting Head of the Gender Equality Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia) and about the situation in Narva by the Deputy Chairman Larissa Olenina, Narva City Council. The representatives from Ivangorod and Kingisepp spoke about the situation in their municipalities. The press, local TV and radio was present. After the seminar UBC Women's Network had the Annual meeting. In the meeting the co-ordinator Ulla Lundqvist presented the Activity Report November 2003 – August 2005 and results from the Enquiry from UBC Women's Network to the member cities about women/men participating in City Councils and Boards 2005. The Action Plan for 2006 and 2007 was discussed and approved on. In the meeting the following decisions were taken:

- To build a report system within UBC and its member cities mapping 1) the track record of the cities in gender politics 2) statistics and 3) the state of equal opportunities in institutional life.

- to propose to Women's Network meeting in Turku that the information within UBC should be delivered to the cities translated to the native languages. The lack of knowledge in English should not be an obstacle for participating.

The meeting also discussed the need of changing the name of UBC Women's Network. For this purpose a working group of four was nominated to work out a proposal for the Network meeting in Turku.

Please give me your opinion on all these issues before UBC Women are meeting up in Turku!

You can find information on General Conference, Turku 30.9. – 1.10. at <http://www.turku.fi/> and about the International Conference Women and Democracy 6.10.-9.10.05

<http://www.womenanddemocracy.spb.ru/>

I thank you for your participation in the Network activities! Let's go on!

Ulla Lundqvist

Co-ordinator of UBC Women's Network

e-mail: ulla.lundqvist@feminaaboensis.com

- *Network on Youth Issues*

Dear UBC-members,

Young and Active in the Baltic Sea Region is a conference arranged by UBC Network on Youth Issues and will be held in Vilnius 13th-16th October.

The invitation can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/13-16-10-2005/invitation.pdf>

Please spread the invitation to all possible interested people in the UBC member cities, and don't hesitate to contact me if You need more information.

Tina Jönsson

Project assistant

e-mail: Tina.Jonsson@kalmar.se

Other invitations

- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation's (NEFCO) 15th anniversary seminar

Please find here:

http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/NEFCO.doc an invitation to participate in the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation's (NEFCO) 15th anniversary seminar to be held in Copenhagen on October 6, 2005. At the seminar experts will present the scientific results from their evaluation on the condition of the Baltic Sea, commissioned by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. If You are unable to attend, please feel free to forward this invitation to any colleague of Yours who might be interested in the topic. If you have any questions concerning the seminar, please contact Mr Karl-Johan Lehtinen, Senior Manager Environmental Affairs, karl-johan.lehtinen@nefco.fi

Other info

- UBC will be represented during the following conferences:
 - Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Vilnius which was held on 28 - 30 August, by Vytautas Juodagalvis, UBC Executive Board member
 - 6th Conference of CBSS Ministers for Spatial Planning & Development, VASAB 2010, to be held on 19 September in Gdańsk, by Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General
 - „Open Days 2005 – European Week of Regions and Cities”, to be held in Brussels on 10-13 October 2005, by Maciej Lisicki, UBC Ecexutive Bard member
- Ms Anna Dargiewicz has joined the team of UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk. Ms Iwona Smigerska - Belczak has left the Secretariat.

Solidarity celebrations

Poland and the EU celebrated the 25th anniversary of the anti-communist Solidarity movement on Tuesday (30 August), but Warsaw and Europe face deep political divisions despite the rhetoric of goodwill. The series of strikes by Gdansk shipyard workers in 1980 under the Solidarity trade union banner began a chain of events that led to the collapse of the Soviet empire and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Lech Walesa, the original leader of the Solidarity group, put the Polish revolution on a par with the French revolt of 1789 and Gandhi's liberation of India from UK colonialism in the 20th century. Sixty-two year old Mr Walesa, who plans to retire from politics this year, also heaped praise on the late pope John Paul II and former Russian leaders Gorbachev and Yeltsin for their role in the changes, while speaking at the 'From Solidarity to Freedom' conference in Warsaw. German president Horst Kohler and EU commission president Jose Manuel Barroso attended the event, with Mr Barroso praising Polish progress since EU accession last year in the popular Polish daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. "One year after accession you can say: it was a great success. And now you are on the best road to the euro and to the lifting of border controls under the Schengen agreement", the Brussels head indicated. Polish president Alexander Kwasniewski, who worked for the communist government that Mr Walesa helped to overthrow, stretched out a hand of friendship to the Nobel peace prize winner. "Twenty five years ago I did not stand on the same side as you, but now I have no doubt that your vision of Poland took us in the right direction", Mr Kwasniewski said. Meanwhile, the European Parliament organised an exhibition and concert with other Solidarity heroes such as liberal MEP Bronislaw Geremek in Brussels, with the EU setting aside €500,000 to help commemorate the event. But the celebration also helped to highlight some of the underlying tensions in Polish and European politics today. Mr Barroso spoke of the need for solidarity in settling the EU's 2007-2013 budget, with the

UK-French scrap over farm subsidies threatening to lead to lower funding for poorer eastern European members. President Kohler assured Warsaw that the German government does not support recent calls for compensation of German families exiled after World War II and that Poland will be involved more closely in German-Russian relations and energy deals.

"I believe that Poland and the Baltic states should be included in this process [talks on building a Baltic Sea gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, bypassing Poland]", he said. Contracts for the controversial project are expected to be signed on 8 September. Mr Walesa used the celebrations to stress Poland's concerns over Russia's threat to European stability, urging Europe not to press too hard for democracy in former Soviet states such as Belarus for fear of a backlash from "the Russian bear". Poland has been a strong supporter of regime change in countries such as Ukraine and Georgia and is currently pushing the EU for more action to support opposition movements in Belarus. And UK academic Lord Ralf Gustav Dahrendorf warned the EU of trimming back civil liberties in line with new anti-terror proposals, saying "Democracy and the rule of law are being stolen from under our noses".

Source: EUobserver

Commission supports independent broadcasting to Belarus

The international radio broadcaster Deutsche Welle will receive 138,000 euros from the Commission to air 'independent' programming to Belarus. The Belarusian public's need for independent information was underlined by the fact that yet another independent newspaper, *Den*, was shut down on 22 August 2005 by the Belarusian authorities, the 20th over the last two years according to the Belarus Journalists Association. The Commission funding will allow Deutsche Welle to broadcast 15 minutes of programming a day during the working week. Citing the "strong stranglehold" on the Belarus media, a Commission spokeswoman

said that that serious concerns about the human rights and democracy situation had made it necessary to "make available an independent source of information to the Belarusian people". However, the chairman of the Belarusian Language Society has complained that Deutsche Welle will broadcast in Russian, not Belarusian. Presidential elections are to be held in 2006, and President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the country with an iron fist for 11 years, will run for office again.

Source: EurActiv

Fear of 'youth drain' from new member states

Some new member states are battling with a 'youth drain' as well-qualified young people leave for jobs in western Europe, according to a new report. Published on 10 August by the NGO, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), the report suggests that "3% to 5% of young new member states nationals who [have] completed a third-level education tend to leave their home countries for better wage prospects". "Sending countries (such as Poland or Hungary) fear not simply a brain drain but rather a youth drain", states the report.

Statistics show that workers tend to be predominantly young (18-34) and male. Poland, as the biggest new member state, has the most nationals abroad. Poles make up the biggest number of eastern workers in the UK (98,235 or 56%), Ireland (40,000) and Sweden, where Poles account for 60 percent - all three member states opened their borders to new member state workers. In Germany, where there is a seven-year transitional period before free movement is allowed, Poles are again the most numerous, with 216,575 seasonal workers and almost 20,000 contractual workers registered in the first half of 2004.

ECAS says that the statistical data on migration within the EU since enlargement last year shows that fears about an influx of workers to old member states proved to be a myth. "The scare-mongering was wrong", said Tony Venables, head of ECAS adding "There is still

an enormous gap between the public perception of enlargement and what is happening on the ground". The authors of the report suggest that particularly in the UK, Ireland and Sweden, migrants from new member states tend to be temporary, so do not bring their family, and take jobs that others cannot or will not do. In Warsaw, for example, a training school has been set up to prepare Polish dentists to work in Britain, where there is a lack of dentists.

Ireland is the most popular destination. However, the lack of restrictions in the UK, Sweden and Ireland has led to a sharp increase in the numbers of workers coming to these countries, when compared to pre-enlargement data.

In the UK, 175,000 workers have registered - much higher than the 5,000 to 10,000 predicted by the British government. Similarly, in Ireland, 85,000 social security numbers have been allocated to migrants from accession countries, a high percentage for the small four-million strong country. In Sweden, which is the only country that also allows equal access to its social security system, there was a 70 percent increase in the number of applications for residence permits. But arguing that these workers fill a gap that needed to be filled, Mr Venables said that the justification for transitional measures restricting workers - in 12 of the 15 old member states - "appears indefensible". He also indicated that there may be a link between the transitional measures and the 'Polish plumber' syndrome in France, which has become a metaphor for all the fears about cheap eastern labour. He suggests that because it is so difficult for a Polish worker to get employed in France, the worker becomes self-employed, and charges cheaper Polish prices.

Source: EUobserver

OECD: Broadband internet to reshape entire communication sector

As Google's much-awaited Google Talk application hits the market, a new OECD study predicts stiff competition for traditional fixed-line telephony from internet-based solutions.

The OECD's 2005 Communication Outlook comes just as traditional telephony carriers are recovering from a period of non-profitability, but, the authors say, they may soon be plunging back into the red. The main threat comes from Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony, which poses a series of challenges - especially to the profitable market in long-distance foreign calls. Using programmes such as the popular Skype VoIP application, users can cut 80% of their phone costs. More threats for fixed line telephony arise from the growing popularity of mobile services, which is likely to be boosted once third generation mobile telephony with its high bandwidths and abundance of new services becomes widely deployed. But 3G itself is being challenged by the spread of wireless internet hotspots, which, in combination with VoIP may also be used for telephony. The next threat, according to the OECD, arises for free-to-air TV, which may gradually be replaced by video downloading and video-on-demand on the internet. Cross-platform competition between the different technologies involved may create a need for new regulatory approaches, the OECD concludes.

Source: EurActiv

Search engine grant

Nordic researchers are to work together on the development of a multilingual search engine specially designed for websites containing information in multiple Nordic languages. Researchers from Stockholm University, KTH and the universities of Oslo, Bergen, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Iceland are to receive a grant of DKK 2.5 million from the Nordic Council of Ministers for the project. The project - called TvärSökprojektet - will be based on the Swedish search engine SiteSeeker by Euroling AB. The idea behind the project is to make it easier for Nordic citizens to find information in the languages of the countries next door. Many Nordic citizens enjoy a passive understanding of the neighbouring languages. Often they are able to read

information but find it difficult to pinpoint the information they want because they do not know the right words in the appropriate language. Comprehensive glossaries already exist for the various Nordic languages and these are now to be merged into a single and universally accessible dictionary on the Internet called TvärSlå. TvarSlå will in turn be used by TvärSök to locate information in the different languages on Nordic websites. SiteSeeker is already used on more than 80 Swedish public-sector websites and Intranet sites. The SiteSeeker search engine has an inbuilt spell-checker and language support for inflected words in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and English - all developed in Sweden and stemming from basic research in language technology at KTH. The Swedish project partners are the departments of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV) and of Numerical Analysis and Computer Science (NADA) both of which are joint departments at Stockholm University and KTH.

Source: Nordic Council

Norway elections to spark new EU discussion

An election in Norway in two weeks time is likely not only to bring a new prime minister but may also spark a new round of EU discussions in the country. After rejecting EU membership twice in referendums, the current Norwegian government - made up of pro-and anti-EU parties - agreed to freeze all talk on Norwegian EU membership. But prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik's liberal-conservative coalition is set to be replaced by the Social Democrats and their leader Jens Stoltenberg in the election on 12 September, according to the latest opinion polls. A new Social Democrat-lead government is likely to raise the issue again.

Source: EUobserver