



# UBC e-News

Number 30

29.03.2006

Editor: Anna Sośnicka [anna.sosnicka@ubc.net](mailto:anna.sosnicka@ubc.net)

*The UBC e-News is published by UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk and distributed to the UBC Contact Persons e-mail list. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.*

## Info

- During the 45<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting in Kaunas, there has been adopted the Statement against trafficking of women and children. The Statement can be found at: [http://www.ubc.net/today/pictures/statement\\_t rafficking\\_rev.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/pictures/statement_t rafficking_rev.pdf)
- A Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and UBC has been adopted. Find the document at: <http://www.ubc.net/today/pictures/UNITAR-UBC.pdf>

## From UBC Commissions

- *Commission on Urban Planning*

As earlier pre-announced the UBC Commission on Urban Planning invites you to a seminar in Riga on the 27-29 April 2006. Invitation and registration form can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/27-29-04-2006/index.htm> The steering group of the Commission warmly welcomes you to the seminar. We would especially like to stress the importance of participation also for the need to discuss and outline our future activities within the UBC Commission on Urban Planning.

Most welcome to Riga and the seminar!  
On behalf of the commission steering group

Lars-Göran Boström  
e-mail: [lars-goran.bostrom@umea.se](mailto:lars-goran.bostrom@umea.se)

- *Commission on Sport*

The City of Gdynia and the UBC Commission on Sport are honoured to invite you to the Annual Meeting of UBC Commission on Sport which will be held in Gdynia on 5 May 2006. The idea of "Active Living" is going to be the main subject of this year's meeting. However, the meeting will consist of two thematic blocks: the first one will be devoted to multifunctional sports arenas, while the other one will deal with best practices connected with active living programmes – "Cities on the Move". The second part of the meeting will be prepared in cooperation with the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The meeting will be held in English and translated simultaneously into Polish. This year the Commission's Annual Meeting will be combined with the 14th Twin Cities Sporting Competition which is a sporting event organised in Gdynia since 1993 and attended by youth from European Twin Cities of Gdynia. The competition starts on May 4, 2006. So, it is at your discretion to decide if you would like to take part in the events scheduled for May 4 or just join the Annual Meeting on May 5.

The deadline for sending registration forms is 3rd April 2006, and they should be sent to UBC CoS Secretariat by e-mail: [ubcsport@gdynia.pl](mailto:ubcsport@gdynia.pl) or by fax: +48 58 6218620. We are looking forward to meeting you in Gdynia.

Beata Łęgowska  
<http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/5-05-2006/index.htm>

- *Commission on Environment*

The UBC Commission on Environment and the Hanseatic City of Lübeck are welcoming you for the Baltic Cities' key environmental event of Spring 2006, UBC Commission on Environment meeting and Environmental Executive's Roundtable in Lübeck, 4-6 May 2006. The invitation letter, programme / agenda, practical information sheet and registration form can be found here: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/4-6-05-2006/index.htm> Please, note that the deadline for registrations is 7 April. Please, register asap., as registrations will be accepted in chronological order and the venues may set some limits to the amount of participants.

Looking forward to meeting you in Lübeck!

Risto Veivo

e-mail: [risto.veivo@netti.fi](mailto:risto.veivo@netti.fi)

P.S. The event also offers a very nice social programme - including the evening reception at the Old City Hall of Lübeck and a candle-light dinner on the famous sail-ship "Passat".

- *Commission on Business Cooperation*

Please find here:

<http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/15-16-06-2006/index.htm> an invitation from the Mayor of the City of Turku to the Annual Meeting of the UBC Commission on Business Cooperation to be held in Turku, Finland, on 14-16 June 2006. UBC BizCom is ready to cover accommodation costs for about 15 participants from UBC member cities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. An offer applies to one delegate per city in general.

If you are interested in this sponsoring, please contact Lina Duobaite: [LinaD@kaunas.sav.lt](mailto:LinaD@kaunas.sav.lt), or Maarit Tonntti: [maarit.tonntti@turku.fi](mailto:maarit.tonntti@turku.fi)

- *Commission on Culture*

The UBC Commission on Culture (CoC) would like to invite you to discuss cultural festivals as strengtheners of local identity in the 9th CoC working session to be held in Vaasa on 24-26 November 2006. The main subjects to be discussed are:

- image
- identity
- specific features of cultural festivals
- economics
- global and local

The following key speakers have already been invited to give a speech in the session:

Senior curator Gun Westholm (County museum of Gotland) has since the very beginning 1984 been involved in the organization of The Medieval Week. She is also one of the organizers of Gotland –the Viking Island, which is a new festival that started 2005. PhD Timo Cantell works as a professor in the department of the arts management in Sibelius Academy, Helsinki. He is a sociologist and his researches have been focused on the meeting points of culture and urban planning and economical and social impacts of festivals. PhD Yrjö Heinonen is a researcher who has studied the Tango-festival in Seinäjoki, Finland. The main topics in his research are the image of the cultural festival and the community, identity and local in relation with global.

We are calling for papers from researchers and festival workers in the UBC cities by 22nd June. Each speaker will be given 30 min in total: 20 min for oral presentation and 10 min for discussion. The working language is English. For more information and to send the papers contact:

Tarja Hautamäki

e-mail: [tarja.hautamaki@vaasa.fi](mailto:tarja.hautamaki@vaasa.fi)

## From UBC cities

- *Klaipeda*

### *International Open Sports Aerobics Competition*

The city of Klaipeda would like to invite your city to join the International Sports Aerobics Competition to be held in Klaipeda on 17-20 November this year. Here: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/Aerobic.doc](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Aerobic.doc) please find a detailed information about the competition. Please forward this invitation to aerobic clubs in your city. For more information please contact Ms Ina Sidlauskienė, email: [ina.contacts@klaipeda.lt](mailto:ina.contacts@klaipeda.lt)

- *Stockholm*

### *Invitation to Urban Futures 2.0*

Please find here: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/UrbanFutures.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/UrbanFutures.pdf) an invitation to 'Urban Futures 2.0' - the conference on urban governance to be held in Stockholm on 3-5 May 2006.

- *Kardla*

### *Photo competition "My Friend in my City"*

It is our pleasure to invite you to join the youth photo competition "My Friend in my City". This competition will take place per internet <http://www.photo.kardla.ee> from 1st May until 31.July 2006. All participants must register before 30 April, at web-site <http://www.photo.kardla.ee> All youngsters from Union of Baltic Cities can participate in the photo competition, who are born from 1990 to 1993. Every participant can compete with a maximum of 5 photos, which are taken in year 2006. Photos must be in digital form (Only at least 4 – megapixel photos (longer side at least 2200 pixels) will qualify). An exhibition will be formed of the winning

photos and they can also be seen at the address <http://www.photo.kardla.ee> The objectives of competition are to develop youth activities after school time, increase youth knowledge and know-how of photography; learn for youth team-work and take a initiative to make self youth projects and acquaint for youth photo art in another countries. Contact person is Annely Veevo, Project Manager of Kärđla Town Government and Secretary of UBC Commission on Education ([Annely.Veevo@kardla.ee](mailto:Annely.Veevo@kardla.ee)).

Most welcome to photo competition!

Ene Kaups  
Mayor, Kärđla Town Government

[http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/Photocomp.doc](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Photocomp.doc)

- *Vaasa*

Vaasa City Orchestra (Vaasa, Finland) is a professional symphony orchestra, having its own regular concert programme. The orchestra also performs at various music festivals and operatic productions. Information on Vaasa City Orchestra can be found at the following link:

[www.vaasa.fi/kaupunginorkesteri](http://www.vaasa.fi/kaupunginorkesteri)

Vaasa City Orchestra is looking for partners for a project; the main idea being to bring together musicians and contemporary music from different European countries. An orchestral work will be commissioned from a contemporary composer of each country. A new orchestra will be assembled from the musicians from the orchestras of each partner country. This new orchestra would then perform the commissioned compositions for the first time in each country taking part in the project. The aim of the project is to expand the interaction between the musicians of the different countries, different composers, as well as between musicians and composers. The project provides composers with the opportunity to compose and make their music

known even beyond the borders of their home countries. The project also provides musicians with an opportunity to become acquainted with the contemporary music of the different participating countries, as well as provide them with the opportunity to perform the various works. Funding: EU- program Culture 2007. If your organisation is interested in this idea, please do not hesitate to contact with Mrs Merja Tyynelä, e-mail: [erja.tyynela@vaasa.fi](mailto:erja.tyynela@vaasa.fi)

### **From UBC Secretariat**

- Call for stories to the Baltic Cities Bulletin

Recent events in the world, i.e. increasing prices of crude oil or limiting the gas supply, only prove that we are all interdependent as far as energy is concerned. This crucial and very sensitive issue has become one of the key topics in policies of many states and organisations. Moreover, energy is also a highly prioritized global environmental issue as its production has a harmful impact on environment. Taking the supply security and the environmental aspect into account, the Baltic Sea Region should aim at creating a common balanced energy market. The next issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin will be devoted to the theme: ENERGY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION. Although the policy on energy is set at the European Union and governmental level, the most of energy is produced and consumed at the local level. Here the policy is put into practice. Does it reflect the actual needs of the cities? Does it correspond to the interests of local markets? The Editorial Board intends to publish articles and interviews with politicians and experts from the UBC member cities. Our aim is to show a variety of aspects of energy – political, environmental and economic. We would like you to answer the question how to utilize the governmental and EU regulations on energy for the benefit of cities and consumers. We hope you will be able to share

with our readers your knowledge and experience on the energy supply security problems and environmental impact of production. The opinions on renewable energy and diversified energy sources and best practices are most welcome. We are also looking forward to stories describing interesting events and a daily life of our member cities. Those articles are published in the chapter “News from Member Cities”. UBC Commissions are welcome to inform about their events, meetings and projects in the chapter “UBC Today”. Here: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/bcb\\_call106.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/bcb_call106.pdf) please find the guidelines when submitting your story. The deadline for stories to the Bulletin is 3 April 2006. All material should be sent directly to the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk, at the address: [anna.dargiewicz@ubc.net](mailto:anna.dargiewicz@ubc.net). If you have interesting issues to report, please do not hesitate to send them.

Paweł Żaboklicki  
Secretary General

### **Call for stories Environmental Bulletin**

Theme for the UBC Environmental bulletin 1/2006 is Monitoring Sustainability and State of the Environment. We welcome stories from all Baltic cities and partner organisations. How has your city, municipality or organisation solved problems with regard to evaluating key trends of sustainability? What do you know of your local environmental development, and how do you build up your knowledge? What have been the most challenging tasks and what still needs to be done? What have you learnt and would wish to share with others? See also Call for stories: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/EnvBul12006.rtf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/EnvBul12006.rtf) The deadline for all stories is 31 March 2006.

Risto Veivo and Sari Bowie

**Invitation to Empex**

At the 45th Executive Board meeting in Kaunas, 10-12 February 2006, the UBC decided to give its honorary patronage to the 2nd edition of EMPEX 2006 investment conferences & fair for 16 emerging markets from CEE. The event will be held in London on 26-28th of June 2006. EMPEX Exhibition is designed to present emerging real estate markets in Europe to investors. During the event there will be presented investment offers of particular cities, regions and private corporations. On the conferences the most important information about emerging markets and investing possibilities will be presented. The UBC Executive Board recommends EMPEX as very interesting and profitable in new business relationships event and encourages the member cities to participate in EMPEX 2006. Here [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/Empex.doc](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Empex.doc) please find an invitation to this event.

For more information please contact:  
Ms Katarzyna Trukawka,  
[katarzyna.trukawka@empex.pl](mailto:katarzyna.trukawka@empex.pl)

**Conferences attended by UBC representatives**

- 63<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 15-16 February 2006 (Per Brdker Andersen, President of UBC).

During the session a new President of COR was elected and the Bureau. Among the other topics, delegates discussed: Healthier, safer, more confident citizens: a Health and Consumer protection Strategy, The Hague Programme: Ten priorities for the next five years - The Partnership for European renewal in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice, Establishing for the period 2007-2013 the specific programme "Fight against violence (Daphne) and drugs prevention and information".

- General Meeting of the National Associations of Local and Regional Authorities of Council of Europe Member States and Observers, Strasbourg, 23-24 February 2006 (Mikko Lohikoski, the City of Turku)

During the meeting a pan-European dimension of the CLRAE was stressed, and its importance as a forum for an exchange of ideas, for sharing and promoting good practices in various regions and municipalities. Participants discussed the role of CLRAE towards National Associations, expectations on both sides, proposals of cooperation, communication policy, consultation of the associations on the major texts prepared by the Congress, and more.

- CLRAE Spring Session, Brussels, 15-17 March 2006, (Maciej Lisicki, Councillor, City of Gdansk)

Debates on new information technology and cultural diversity were among the highlights of the session. Among the other topics, a report on typical regional products in the face of globalisation and one on young people and new information technology was examined; new instruments to promote European cultural diversity were considered.

- This month UBC will be represented at the conferences:

- International Conference on Interregional Co-operation in the Black Sea Basin, Constant, Romania, 30 March (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General, Vytautas Juodagalvis, City of Kaunas). This Conference is organised by Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and its aim is a discussion on creating "Black Sea Euroregion".

- 5th Forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty's (WACAP), Valencia, 29-31 March (Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth, City of Rostock).



**Internet discussion on the future of the EU**

The European Commission launched on 27 March an internet discussion on the future of Europe. The discussion, which all European citizens are encouraged to join, is part of the commission's "Plan D for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy." Plan D was launched last year and is a direct response to French and Dutch voters' rejection of the EU constitution in referendums in the early summer. "I often hear people say that they have lost confidence in the European Union because they feel that it has taken on too many responsibilities and has become very complex and difficult to understand," said communications commissioner Margot Wallstrom. "We want to know what your hopes for Europe are and what worries you as a European?" she continues in a welcome message on <http://europa.eu.int/debateeurope/>. Feedback from the discussion will be part of the commission's report on the period of reflection on the constitution. The first comments have already begun appearing on the online forum, with comments on the future of the bloc, the role of the EU and the size of its budget. "The European Union should be a 'free-trade zone' with no ambitions in regulating the economic activities of people. The budget and bureaucracy must be reduced substantially and most directives and regulations should be cancelled," wrote a person from Prague. A UK citizen insisted that "There needs to be an independent system (simple equation) to work out how much a country should pay into the budget and how much it should receive. Then all the politicians would have to argue over is the size of the budget and any 'base rate' which is necessary in the equation." "If this discussion is about what sort of European Union we want, we should not only be able to post 'wishes' but vote and trade the importance of its features," a person from Vienna wrote.

*Source: EUobserver*

**Single driving licence for EU citizens by 2012**

A new common driving licence for the EU was approved by transport ministers on 27 March in a bid to fight fraud and raise road safety across the 25-member bloc. The new driving licence is to be implemented by member states by 2012 at the latest, and will replace the 110 EU driving licence systems in place today – including one dating from the German Democratic Republic, which reunited with Germany in 1990. "We needed this new updated system," EU Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot told reporters. "The European driving licence is of vital importance for road safety and for the fight against fraud. It will make travel around Europe easier and without bureaucratic difficulties," Mr Barrot said in a statement. The agreement is part of a fight against "driving licence tourism" where persons from one country who have lost their driving licence due to a serious offence can move to another EU state and easily get a new licence. The new document will have the form of a credit card with a regularly updated photo and some anti-falsification measures - possibly a microchip. As part of the new scheme, licenses for mopeds and motorcycles will also be standardised, with licenses for mopeds only available after an obligatory theoretical test. EU citizens under 24 will not be able to obtain a driving licence for heavy motorcycles unless they have two years of experience on lighter types, while anyone wanting to have a motorcycle licence will have to do so progressively for the more powerful bikes. Although the number of fatal road accidents has fallen in Europe, the number of fatalities among motorcyclists has increased in the last few years. Member states will also have the freedom to decide whether or not to have medical checks at each renewal. The new EU driving licence directive has the informal backing of both the European Commission and the European Parliament, which should secure its speedy adoption. The old types of driving licence are

expected to completely disappear by around 2032.

*Source: EUobserver*

### **EU to slash mobile call costs**

Telecom companies have criticised new EU proposals to slash the cost of international roaming as damaging and unnecessary. EU media commissioner Viviane Reding is due to unveil tough new legislation on Tuesday that will force telecom operators to cut the cost of cross-border mobile calls. The Luxembourg commissioner does not believe that industry has moved quickly enough to reduce roaming costs, and has decided to take more direct action. European leaders backed her plans at last week's summit in Brussels, and the new rules could be in place as early as next year. Reding told national regulators last month that she would not be proposing an "ideal roaming price, but that she wanted to ensure that "international roaming charges are not higher than national roaming charges". "Roaming charges are paid for using the network of another operator, and thus should not be higher in an internal market just because the other network is placed in another EU member state," she told the ERG meeting in Paris. She said that the legislation was likely to follow the same line as new rules on cross-border payments in euros, which states that bank transfers in euros between member states must not be higher than domestic bank transfers. In concrete terms, this is likely to mean that national rates would apply to all calls made from abroad to the user's country of origin. In other words, a call to Belgium from a Belgian mobile would be charged at the national rate from anywhere in Europe. Reding first criticised the high cost of international mobile calls in November 2004, and a website launched in October last year has "named and shamed" the companies that charge the most for trans-border calls. International roaming prices for making a four-minute peak time call currently vary between €0.20 and €13.08, according to the

website. But Europe's mobile operators are opposed to any new regulations. "Further roaming regulation is unnecessary and could have unforeseen consequences," said Rob Conway, CEO of the GSMA, the mobile industry's global trade association. "We believe that competition is the best way to meet the needs of customers across the whole range of mobile services," he added. "From the limited information publicly available, the European commission's proposals appear to be based on an outdated and incomplete view of the roaming market and the wider mobile industry," he added. Conway said that European roaming costs had already dropped by an average of 8 per cent last year as companies responded to Reding's criticism. Many operators have introduced new roaming packages for regular travellers, which have substantially reduced the cost of some international calls – by as much as 30 per cent in the case of Vodafone's Passport scheme.

*Source: EUPolitix*

### **EEA: Traffic-related pollution "alarming" in EU cities**

A new European Environment Agency report on 'Air pollution at street level in European cities', published on 23 March 2006, has found air pollution above recommended levels in each of the 20 European city surveyed. The samples were taken in 2000 in Antwerp, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, Gdansk, Graz, Helsinki, Katowice, Lisbon, London, Marseilles, Milan, Paris, Prague, Rome, Stuttgart and Thessaloniki. "Air quality limit values, which are aimed at protecting public health, are frequently exceeded especially in streets and other urban hotspots," the EEA writes in the report. "The improvement of air quality is therefore imperative," it adds, pointing to high human exposure to air pollutants in densely populated urban areas. "Evidence of the adverse health effects of fine particulate matter is continuously emerging and it is alarming that most of the traffic-

related emissions are in the fine particulates range [below the PM2.5 scale]," the EEA writes. Fine particulate matter (PM) in the nanometer scale (PM2.5 and PM1) are of particular concern to human health as they are capable of penetrating deeper inside the lungs. EU lawmakers are currently examining new 'Euro 5' rules that would limit emissions of particulate matter by diesel cars to 5 mg/km. Environment ministers on 9 March expressed broad support for including long term limits in the proposal presented last year by the Commission. They also called on the Commission to come forward "as soon as possible" with proposals to reduce pollution from heavy-duty vehicles ('Euro 6'). Furthermore, the ministers acknowledged that current policies would fail to significantly reduce the health impacts of air pollution by 2020, saying "additional action must be taken to combat air pollution."

*Source: EurActiv*

### **European women still earning less than men**

More women are getting jobs in Europe but they tend to have lower-paid and part-time posts meaning they earn 15 percent less than men overall, a new study suggests. According to the 2006 equality report unveiled by the European Commission in February, women's employment rates have risen to 55.7 percent, up 0.7 percentage points over one year, but the figure is still 15 percent lower than the job rate for men. The report praises the rise in women's participation in Europe's labour markets, but it points to continued segregation, both in terms of different sectors and occupations. "More than four in ten employed women work in public administration, education, health and social activities, compared to less than two in ten men," states the study. On the other hand, women account for only 32 percent of managerial jobs in the private sector, and represent 10 percent of company boards and 3 percent of CEOs of larger EU enterprises.

Moreover, 32.6 percent of women work part-time, compared to 7.4 percent of men, with young mothers experiencing a 14.3 point drop in employment, while young fathers represent a 5.6 point hike in job rates. In Cyprus, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, Greece and Malta the job gap remains high. However the same trend is evident in Scandinavian countries, which enjoy the highest female employment rates. Less than one-tenth of women work part-time in Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Greece, while in Luxembourg, Belgium, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, up to 40 percent of part-time workers are women. The pay gap is lowest in Malta, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Greece and Poland, and highest in Cyprus, Slovakia, Estonia, Germany, the UK and Finland. The commission is planning to adopt a road map with concrete actions that member states should consider in order to improve gender equality. One of the key instruments should be a push for better reconciliation of professional and private life, by creating high quality child care centres and creating equal opportunities for both mothers and fathers to take parental leave. However, the commission argues social policy alone might not be enough. "Some studies show that while the EU has better social policy than the US, more American women are employed and more of them work in higher positions," said social policy spokesperson Katharina von Schnurbein. She argued that a different mindset - not biased by gender-related stereotypes - would be crucial for changing European trends in this area.

*Source: EUobserver*