



# UBC e-News

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## Info

- *48th UBC Executive Board Meeting in Gävle, 8-10 March 2007*

The next UBC Executive Board meeting will be held in Gävle, on 8-10 March. During the meeting there will be discussed, among others, preparations for the 9<sup>th</sup> UBC General Conference, to be held in Pärnu on 27-28 September 2007; also major policy issues to be discussed by the EC in 2007, UBC contribution to the Green Paper on European Maritime Policy, proposal from Umeå to take the lead in the UBC Network on Gender Equality, and more.

## From UBC Commissions

- *Commission on Environment*

Please find here:

<http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/7-9-03-2007/index.htm> the invitation for the UBC Environment Commission meeting in Liepāja 7-9.3.2007. The meeting concentrates on the Baltic Sea actions towards Sustainable Development. A specific topic to be addressed is the Response(s) of Baltic Cities to climate change – from strategies to practical measures. This meeting will offer an efficient networking opportunity for the cities to exchange experiences, learn from each others, discuss of possible common project ideas and establish co-operation, not just within the commission on Environment, but also with other UBC Commissions.

UBC cities are asked to have a look at the practical information on the meeting and send in their registration form to the UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat by e-mail: [stella.aaltonen@ubc.net](mailto:stella.aaltonen@ubc.net) or by fax: +358 2 262 3425.

Guldbrand Skjönberg, Mikko Jokinen  
Chairmen of the Commission

- *Commission on Information Society*

Please be informed that the UBC Commission on Information Society will have a seminar on "New programming period 2007–2013 - New information society cooperation opportunities for Baltic cities". The seminar will be held on 6 March in Brussels.

Please find further information, programme and registration form at: [http://www.baltic.org/events/current\\_events/](http://www.baltic.org/events/current_events/) Preparation of follow-up for the IS Com eCitizen project is now on an active phase, and also this process can be promoted through the Brussels meeting.

Furthermore, there's an interesting "Regions for Economic Change" conference in Brussels right after the IS Com meeting (7-8 March). So, this could make the participation in our seminar even more attractive to the member cities.

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/competitiveness/home\\_en.cfm?nmenu=1](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/competitiveness/home_en.cfm?nmenu=1)

Esa Kokkonen  
UBC Commission on Information Society

- *Commission on Urban Planning*

The UBC Commission on Urban Planning warmly invites you to our next seminar in Vilnius, Lithuania in April 19th-21st, 2007.

The seminar theme is "Planning and the Public - Public Participation and Public Space in City Development". It will deal with two of the most common and interesting questions in urban planning of today - how to create attractive public space and how to achieve involvement and public participation when working with urban planning.

Please find here:

<http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/19-21-04-2007/index.htm> the programme of the seminar together with the registration form. Make arrangements for the participation from your city already today and mark the days of 19th - 21st of April in your agenda!

For more information please contact:

Sirpa Kallio

Chairman of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning

e-mail: [sirpa.kallio@hel.fi](mailto:sirpa.kallio@hel.fi)

### **From UBC Secretariat**

- *News from member cities*

Please be reminded, that at: [http://www.ubc.net/News\\_from\\_cities.html](http://www.ubc.net/News_from_cities.html) there is a link to the chapter on the UBC homepage, presenting news from the UBC member cities.

We would like to kindly ask you to send us information about any interesting event, meeting, project or a conference in your city, to be held in 2007 year.

Please send us also a photo and a logo of this event, if it's available.

- *„UBC Business Mixer”*

UBC Secretariat has just published a UBC Business Mixer – a publication which contains information of economic profile of 40 UBC member cities, opportunities to invest in those cities and lots of other useful information. UBC Sekretariat will send the Business Mixer to all member cities, as well as to many Balic and European organisations and institutions.

If you need more copies, please contact UBC Secretariat.

- *UBC Antena office in Brussels*

UBC member cities are encouraged to use the UBC antena office for a few days when staying in Brussels. The office is equipped with the computer, internet, telephone, library etc. If you would like to book an office for a few days, please contact the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk in advance.

### **From UBC meber cities**

- *Business Kolding Opening Up the “WORLD”*

Business Kolding has established BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK, a global network of business development and service councils and their members that share experiences, information and resources to create and encourage potential growth and development opportunities for local companies. The network functions as a catalyst for creating co-operations between companies, entrepreneurs and business councils that can lead to increased and improved competitiveness, knowledge sharing and cultural understanding.

BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK provides the following services, FREE of charge:

- Contact person(s) within each partner organization;

- Preliminary business counselling on topics regarding local business establishment (i.e. taxation and accounting practices, real estate, business laws and regulations, potential business contacts);
- Office and meeting space, as well as Internet access;
- Link to and information about partner organizations on BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK website.

There is no cost for joining the network. Partner organizations simply agree to offer the above-listed services and resources, also at no cost.

Additional services offered by BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK include:

- Support from the BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK head office in Kolding, Denmark;
- Quarterly newsletters to all partner organizations informing of current developments and business possibilities;
- Use of BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK partner logo.

Being a part of BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK will increase the services partner organizations can offer their clientele, thereby helping the clientele enrich their business activities, expand their markets, and potentially increase their profits.

BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK is in the initial stages of formation and is looking to strengthen its member base to provide the greatest opportunities for knowledge sharing and business development. Interested organizations and departments are encouraged to contact:

Ms. Adele Domenco  
Project Manager  
BUSINESSWORLD-NETWORK  
Phone: +45 51526031  
e-mail: [ad@businesskolding.dk](mailto:ad@businesskolding.dk)  
[www.businessworld-network.com](http://www.businessworld-network.com)

- *Partner search for the project: "Mathematics in the pre-primary schools"*

At: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/Comenius\\_Maths.doc](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Comenius_Maths.doc) you will find the partner search for the project: "Mathematics in the pre-primary schools" from the Eden Pre-primary school in Malmö, Sweden. The school would like to exchange good practices with other pre-primary schools in Europe (1-6 year old). They are interested in comparing teaching contents, methods, values, planning, and how to lay the critical foundation for the child's interest for "mathematics" at an early stage.

If you are interested in this project, please contact Ms Gabriella SJOBERG, European Officer, City District of S. Innerstaden, City of Malmö, Sweden, on:

[gabriella.sjoberg@malmo.se](mailto:gabriella.sjoberg@malmo.se) or call +46-40-34 50 22 before the 28th of February 2007.

- *International Teachers' Exchange Week in Göteborg, Sweden - 30 September to 5 October 2007*

For the 5th time we have the honour to arrange an international teachers' meeting in Göteborg, Sweden. This is an excellent opportunity to meet teachers from different countries, exchange experiences and establish contacts with schools in Göteborg and other countries. This is also a great opportunity to get to know our city as the program includes, besides the school visits, a guided tour, cultural events a seminar program, etc. If you want more information, please do not hesitate to contact me! I hope you will find the program interesting and we look forward to meeting you in Göteborg this autumn! [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/InvitationITEW.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/InvitationITEW.pdf)

Gunilla Engberg  
e-mail: [gunilla.engberg@frolunda.goteborg.se](mailto:gunilla.engberg@frolunda.goteborg.se)

▪ *Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award*

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs presents each year good efforts to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea with the Swedish Baltic Sea Water Award.

We, the Stockholm International Institute administer the Award and would like to ask the Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat, whether you could help us distributing information about this award within your network.

You will find our short press release and the link to the electronic nomination form on our homepage.

<http://www.siwi.org/sbswa/sbswanominate.html>

Stephanie Blenckner

E-mail: [stephanie.blenckner@siwi.org](mailto:stephanie.blenckner@siwi.org)

<http://www.siwi.org>

**Conferences attended by UBC representatives:**

- EUROCITIES General Meeting, Manchester, 22-25 November 2006 (Soeren Revsback, Deputy Mayor of Naestved)
- 67th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 6-7 December 2006 (Per Bodker Andersen, UBC President, Pawel Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)
- Hearing with José Manuel Barroso, Structured Dialogue between the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the European and national associations of regional and local authorities, Brussels, 7 December 2006 (Marie-Louise Rönnmark, UBC 1st Vice President, Umea)
- Conference of the Association of Major Cities of Latvia, Riga, 8 December (Maciej Lisicki, City Councillor, Gdańsk)
- "Training Workshop for the Territorial Cooperation Project – Planning", Ancona, 9 February (Anna Sosnicka, UBC Secretariat)

UBC will be represented at:

- Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities "policy and Strategy" working group meeting, 8th March in Coventry, (UBC Commission on Environment)

**PIMMS: study best practice in mobility management**

PIMMS ("Partner Initiatives for the development of Mobility Management Services") calls all new EU member state municipalities. We're offering 16 visits to study best practice in mobility management. Are you involved with a municipality or region in a new Member State that is trying to tame the car in its streets? Are you interested in learning from successful actions elsewhere in the EU? Maybe PIMMS can help. The project has recently received extra funding, and can now offer Study Tours and Staff Exchanges to any municipality from any of the 12 new Member States. The visits must be to one of the PIMMS partners. Financial assistance is available for some of the visits. A total of 16 visits are "on offer".

PIMMS involves eight cities from different EU member states. Our aim is to increase the use of mobility management in the regions of Europe. To do this we have assembled a database of best practice in Europe to identify their "Critical Success Factors". The core of our work is a structured programme of Study Tours and Staff Exchanges. These visits are carefully prepared so that the visitor's key decision-makers (politicians, administrators or technicians, as appropriate) have the chance to understand why their 'host' has succeeded and how this success can be replicated back home. For an info pack and application form contact [secretariat@pimms-eu.org](mailto:secretariat@pimms-eu.org). For more info about the project visit our website at [www.pimms-eu.org](http://www.pimms-eu.org). Applications close on 30 April. Applications will be selected on their merits, and we will issue our decisions by 18 May. Visits must be completed by 30 September.

### **Nine states call for revival of social Europe**

A group of nine member states have issued an open declaration calling for more promotion of social Europe, asking that the issue raised at an EU leaders summit in two weeks time. France, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Hungary, Belgium and Greece have all signed up to a two-page long declaration in which they argue that the 27-country bloc should be more than just an internal market. Calling their statement, "enhancing social Europe" the currently nine-strong group want to use the ongoing negotiations on the EU constitution as a springboard for their ideas. "A link between enhancing Social Europe and a new impetus of institutional process is needed," says their declaration, which has also been supported by EU social affairs commissioner Vladimir Spidla. It continues by saying that a Europe of 27 member states "cannot just be a free trade zone but shall guarantee the necessary balance between economic freedom and social rights." Social Europe is defined as a set of "common values" such as social justice, equality and solidarity. The countries call on the European commission, parliament and member states to work out a future for Social Europe "by promoting (...) reforms and adaptations related to globalization, industrial restructuring, technological innovations, demography and migration." This should be done to strengthen employment and work quality while protecting social rights enshrined "in the European tradition." They also call on their ideas to be "endorsed" in the conclusions of the next EU leaders meeting on 8-9 March. The idea originated at a recent meeting of EU social and employment ministers with Italy putting out the feelers for the declaration and France and Spain quickly jumping on board. "We thought it might feed into the discussion around the Berlin declaration," said a French official, referring to the EU's 50th birthday text - a highly symbolic declaration that is supposed to resonate with citizens and re-engage them in

the European debate. The call for more social Europe goes to the heart of a debate in Europe about the extent to which the bloc should adapt to the force of globalisation and the extent to which it should set certain social, environmental and work standards, which detractors say could hamper growth and competitiveness. Pro-business EU commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso recently suggested "solidarity" and "social cohesion" should be part of the EU's birthday text while the German EU presidency has also put social Europe at the heart of its agenda, with chancellor Merkel mentioning it once again in a speech to MEPs on Wednesday. "It's about removing fears that the EU is just a community where the aim is to make things easier for companies. We must give greater expression to the social dimension of Europe," German EU affairs secretary Guenther Gloser said recently about the anniversary declaration. So long as declarations are symbolic and have no formal standing then they are likely to be uncontroversial with more liberal minded states such as the UK, but diplomats fear that entangling calls for more social Europe with the ongoing debate on the EU constitution will unleash deep divisions within the bloc. Even calls for a protocol on social Europe to be attached to the EU constitution as a way of reaching out to French citizens - largely thought to have rejected the EU constitution for being too Anglo-Saxon - are likely to cause rifts with some states worried about Europe getting any sort of foothold into social policy - a jealously guarded national domain.

*Source: EUobserver*

### **MEPs calls for tougher EU climate change targets**

The European parliament has called for more ambitious targets in the fight against global warming. In a resolution adopted on 14 February, MEPs urged the EU to cut CO2 emissions by 30 per cent by 2020 - much more than the 20 per cent cut called for in the

European commission's energy package. The resolution also says the EU should be more ambitious on renewables, calling for a 25 per cent increase by 2020 instead of the 20 per cent advocated by Brussels. MEPs want binding targets for individual sectors including electricity generation and heating - something which was missing from the commission's text. Finally, on biofuels, MEPs say the minimum target of 10 per cent of vehicles by 2020 should be increased to 12.5 per cent. The biofuel target is one of the issues seen as problematic by several countries and is likely to be the matter of some debate. Tackling climate change will be high on the agenda of the EU's spring summit on 8-9 March and has been named as a top priority of the German EU presidency.

*Source: EUPolitix*

### **Wealth can't always buy child well-being, UNICEF study finds**

A study of wealthy countries ranks the Netherlands and the Nordic countries on top, whereas the UK and the US get the worst average ranking in terms of children's well-being. A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) study measuring and comparing child well-being in the OECD countries gives top position to the Netherlands. Also, the small Nordic countries rank in the top five, whereas the UK and US find themselves in the bottom third of rankings for most of the different indicators reviewed. The study, published on 14 February 2007, compared six different criteria - material well-being, health and safety, education, relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people's sense of their own well-being - in 21 countries. The scope of the study is, however, limited as not enough internationally comparable data exist. Furthermore, key areas such as mental and emotional health, child neglect and abuse are omitted. "OECD countries find themselves with widely differing rankings for different criteria," said Marta Santos Pais, director of the UNICEF

Innocenti Research Centre, and the report stresses that no strong relationship between GDP per capita and child well-being exists. The study's findings prompted the president of the Party of European Socialists, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, to praise the "Nordic social model as the best for children with regard health and poverty". The Nordic countries' scores in family and peer relationships or in subjective well-being of young people, however, are not very positive, and Italy wins in the category of "best relationships".

*Source: EurActiv*

### **What position should EU take in sports?**

A public consultation seeks citizens' views to provide input for a planned EU White Paper. An online consultation for the White Paper invites citizens, institutions and organisations to answer a questionnaire concerning the societal role of sport, its economic impact and organisation. Stakeholders are, for example, asked whether they think the time for physical activity should be increased in school and what, in their view, are the main values that can be taught through sport. They are also expected to comment on the role that the EU should play. The consultation is open until 3 April 2007. The White Paper is expected to be published in June 2007.

*Source: EurActiv*

### **Eastern Europe has deadliest roads, report Says**

Eastern Europe has the EU's most dangerous roads while the northern member states and Malta have the safest, according to a newly released report. The report by Eurostat - the European Commission's statistical office - compared 2004 statistics from the member states and found that since 1994 there has been considerable progress in road safety in all countries for which data is available. However, a west-east divide remains along with a less noticeable north-south gradient. Latvia, Romania, Lithuania and Slovakia



record the highest number of persons killed in road accidents per million registered passenger cars, with 752, 749, 571 and 507 deaths respectively. Malta, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany record the lowest ratios with 61, 117, 121, 126 and 129 deaths per 1 million registered passenger cars respectively. North-west European urban regions are the safest as regards the number of fatalities in road accidents. In 2004, the German urban region of Bremen emerged as having the lowest fatalities with 23 deaths per million cars, while Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm and Brussels are among the safest capitals in the EU. The report showed that the regions with more registered cars had lower fatalities in road accidents. Out of all transport modes, road transport is clearly the most dangerous and the most costly in terms of human lives. According to the Community Road Accident Database (CARE), there were about 1.3 million car accidents in the 25-member bloc in 2004, in which about 1.8 million persons were injured - 285,000 of these seriously. Of these cases, 43,358 lost their lives, which translates as an average 95 road deaths per million inhabitants in the EU in 2004. Brussels has already taken measures to cut road fatalities across the bloc. In December last year the European Parliament and the bloc's member states agreed to harmonise driving licenses, stopping license tourism. The EU executive is also considering making it compulsory across the bloc to have the car light on at all times saying it could reduce deaths by 3 to 5 percent, equivalent to 1,200 to 2,000 fatalities a year across the EU.

*Source: EUobserver*

### **EU outlines digital age strategy**

The European commission has unveiled a strategy to promote better access to online scientific information. Speaking at a major conference in Brussels, EU research commissioner Janez Potocnik outlined how Europe can best capitalise on the "excellent work" of its researchers. "New ideas are

usually built on the results of previous research," he said. "We must make sure that the flow of scientific information contributes to innovation and research excellence in the European research area," he said. On the eve of the event, a 19,000-name petition from the research community was handed to Potocnik calling on the commission to guarantee public access to publicly-funded research results shortly after publication. The conference, on scientific publishing, heard that digital technologies are reshaping how research information is viewed and published. Potocnik said the commission had earmarked around €50m to help coordinate infrastructures for storing scientific data across Europe. A further €25m has been set aside, he told delegates, for research on digital preservation. To improve current and future access to scientific information, he said the EU will also support experiments with "open access". "There is no quick fix," Potocnik said. "That is why we have to look at how we can find a way forward."

*Source: EUPolitix*

### **British magnate offers prize to fight global warming**

Virgin founder Richard Branson, backed by US Democrat Al Gore, is offering more than 19 million euro (\$25 million) for solutions to global warming. The science and technology prize, announced on 9 February 2007, is to encourage viable technology to remove at least 1 billion tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere. Branson said: "If the greatest minds in the world today compete, I believe that a solution to the CO2 problem could hopefully be found – a solution that could save our planet - not only for our children but for all the children yet to come." However, environmental groups cautioned that the prize should not take attention away from the need to reduce human-related emissions of greenhouse gases.

*Source: EurActiv*