

TASK FORCE MEETS IN SZCZECIN

The UBC Task Force for Public Relations and Communication will hold its annual meeting and seminar in Szczecin, Poland on May 25-27, 1998. The latest meeting in Kalmar attracted over 30 international city executives, project managers and EU coordinators from 25 cities, so don't miss out from this information-packed and fun-filled event where networking is the name of the game!

The theme for this year's meeting is "Strategies and practices for effective UBC cooperation" which will include discussions on best practices with different EU programmes as well as an open auctioning for new projects and partnerships. The highly successful UBC Project Curriculum Vitae will get continuation as its edition number II will be compiled during this meeting. The programme offers something to every one, all newcomers will get an effective UBC crash course while the senior members of the TF can tackle with certain strategic issues of UBC cooperation. The deadline for the registrations is May 3rd, 1998.

It's never too late to join the TF activities, see you in Szczecin!!!

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UBC-EU INFORMATION PROJECT - TO BE CONTINUED?

Apparently, the UBC-EU Information Project became the buzz - word of 1997 in the Baltic Sea Region and among the cities.

With its both seminars in Copenhagen and Szczecin, and the conference in Tallinn, the project addressed a number of the EU institutional and European integration related issues, as well as analysed the situation in and the role of local governments in this context.

Though the project touched only the tip of the iceberg, its first year turned out to be a success, and contributed to spreading the EU knowledge, offering an interesting agenda on the table of the two seminars and the conference. First hand exposure to how democratic and market systems work, as well as the successful adoption of democratic values and systems in culturally diverse societies helped the local level to prepare towards the forthcoming accession.

After the one year project period it seems clear that local authorities should combine efforts. Accession to the EU, as well as European integration is, in general, a tremendous task. Cities, especially from the post-communist countries lack enough knowledge to fully and actively participate in the integration process, understand it, and benefit from it. Naturally, the present

situation is that only a few of them have some appreciable knowledge of or experience in coping with the EU. Therefore the scope of training to be conducted and information to be provided seems to be enormous.

The first step has already been taken. It is planned that the project can be continued with the support of the European funds. In the new application, four Task Forces have been planned and their mission will be to find out what programmes are available for cities. The Task Forces will tackle social problems, such as unemployment, the elderly, etc., environmental protection issues, democracy and local involvement issues.

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