

CONTACT CONVENTION '98

Entrepreneurship is considered a major road to freedom. Economic development which is still our leading goal is executed in cooperation with our Baltic neighbours.

There are many actions trying to bring the Baltic countries closer together. Worth mentioning are the Baltic Sea Partenariat, "Baltic Bridge" with the Swedish-Polish marketing researches, TEM-ARCA promotion of the future Oslo-Athens transport corridor and many other projects, which exist in our region.

"Contact Convention'97" is considered as a first and a new approach to the

business meetings which took place on the board of the ferry plying every day between Karlskrona and Gdynia. The next "Contact Convention'98" will be organised in September this year. Many people in Karlskrona and Gdynia are working now on the preparation of this trade and business meeting. The Baltic Business Center in Karlskrona, some other Swedish cities, ALMI and regional authorities of Sweden are main architects of the event. On the Polish side the City of Gdynia along with the City of Gdańsk, Pomeranian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pomeranian Development

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Agency and ARCA are involved in preparation of this event. They work in for efficiency and profits of the "Contact Convention'98" and also the next ones.

Maybe "Contact Convention'98" will be a matchmaking event for several joint ventures around the Baltic and particularly inside the recently established "Euroregion Baltic".

BALTIC BUSINESS CENTER IN KLAIPĖDA

This year started with an important event for the city - on January 5 a newly refurbished building of the Baltic Business Center was opened. Klaipėda with its large port and Free Economic Zone becomes a very good place for investment.

This process was caused by expanding business possibilities in Lithuania that appeared with new communication lines. The international business map which was semi-blank a decade ago nowadays almost daily is replenished by new colorful signs and symbols noting the appearance of new joint ventures companies and communication lines.

The first small Klaipėda office for Swedish - Lithuanian business contacts was established in 1994. It has expanded rapidly and today has 9 employees and an elegantly renovated building. Now they have possibilities to host the coming companies in a special cosy conference hall, they also have a bar and a salon for the visitors to feel comfortable.

At present Klaipėda Baltic Business Center is involved into a network of similar Baltic Business Centers in Lovisa, Liepāja, Ronne, Rostock, Arendal, Gdynia and Karlskrona. The headquarters are in Karlskrona.



The Mayor of Klaipėda, Mr Eugenijus Gentvilas (right), congratulates the Baltic Business Centers President, Mr Bengt Johanson (left).

Although the staff intends to open the doors to everybody who needs information, contacts or professional assistance, the BBC is oriented towards foreign small and medium sized companies wanted to come to Lithuania. Large corporations can use other establishments such as the Swedish Business Council in Vilnius. However Klaipėda Business Center cooperates with the Council and also has entered into good contacts with the Swedish Ambassador to Lithuania. The Center has established a well functioning network and has contacts with different companies, from pro-

ducing fishing machines to chocolate. The BBC is acting as mediator to find the necessary business links and as consultants on Lithuanian business environment.

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