

AALBORG WELL SETTLED IN BRUSSELS

In 1951 Aalborg established its first twin town relation and since then the number has reached 25 twin towns all over the world. These international links have provided Aalborg with a great experience in carrying out international contacts and projects and in 1990 the international involvement lead to the establishment of an EU-organisation in Aalborg Local Authority as well as the opening of our representative office in Brussels. Furthermore in 1991 the City of Aalborg, Aalborg Commercial Council and 20 private firms

agreed to establish an office in Riga, Latvia.

This international/EU organisation and the close cooperation between the three offices means that we can offer highly specialised assistance on EU-matters and are able to pursue EU-initiatives and projects which can strengthen the internationalization of business, education, environment, research and culture etc. in Aalborg.

The EU prospects and efforts until 1998 will concentrate especially on:

- EU environmental and urban environment projects
- EU projects in education and research

- EU projects in Central and Eastern Europe and with special attention to the Baltic states

- establishment of EU-financed networks, including the strengthening of relationships with Scandinavia

- EU projects with the purpose of strengthening SME's in the region

- generally increased cooperation with Eastern Europe.

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AARHUS EU OFFICE IN BRUSSELS

Within the last 5-10 years many municipalities and regions have established their own representation in Brussels. What drives this development and what do such representations achieve with their different mandates and strategies. The Aarhus EU Office in Brussels is a succes - here is why.

Background and tasks

The overall objective of the Aarhus EU Office is to work for growth and job creation which in practice means that the work of the office mainly is directed towards project financing with emphasis on the EU budget. The Municipality of Aarhus, with a population of about 300,000, set up the Aarhus EU Office in 1990 as part of a new strategy for local economic development and growth within the municipality of Aarhus. This strategy was decided by the city council in cooperation with the local trade unions and industrial organisations. Since the start of the Aarhus EU Office the scope of operation has been enlarged by agreements in 1994 with 9 smaller municipalities around Aarhus and in 1995 to cover Aarhus County, in all counting approxi-

mately 700,000 inhabitants. Today three persons are permanently employed at the Aarhus EU Office in Brussels. The Aarhus EU Office is mainly dealing with project financing, legal aspects, international contacts and information serving companies, institutions and municipalities.

Results

In terms of direct economic results the Aarhus EU Office generated more than 60 mill. Danish kroner from the EU-budget in the period of 1990-96 in cooperation with its clients in both the private and the public sector. As the EU normally finance 50% of such projects, the total figure of project financing amounts to more than 120 mill. Danish kroner. More uncertain but still positive are many other economic results which have been facilitated by contacts created or information produced by the office. Finally it is also worth noting that the office generates an income of one third of its budget as mainly clients in the private sector pay for the services offered.

Conditions for success

A number of conditions are of im-



portance in order to secure the success of a Brussels representation. First of all, political consensus is necessary before such a project is decided upon. Secondly, clear objectives and a clear operational strategy are highly relevant for the day to day work of the office. Regarding the Aarhus EU Office, being part of the Economic Development Department means that the overall objectives are quite clear - to contribute to growth, economic development and job-creation in the region. Thirdly, a strong and supporting home base is very significant. Again our position as part of the Economic Development

Department ensures the right forum for activities and projects and easy contact with the local business environment. The fourth condition, to have good relations and support from the business environment, is absolutely essential. In the case of the Aarhus EU Office, positive indications from the business environment were already

obtained before deciding to start the office. The fifth condition is to choose the right people with the right combination of skills to translate the world of Brussels into a language understood by the business community and vice versa to the benefit of local economic development. Finally, an office in

Brussels cost money.

In conclusion, the work and outcome of representations in Brussels are very different - depending on their initial objectives, strategies, the people behind, etc. From a cost-benefit point of view it will rarely be advantageous to set up a Brussels representation just because the neighbour-region has done so - it takes more to make it a success!

THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY OF GDAŃSK

Poland is preparing to become a member of the European Union, Gdańsk has always been an European city. Nevertheless this is still a work to be done on different levels of economic, political and social life. So that they have been taking many activities to enhance cooperation between Gdańsk and European countries and cities. This is very important to make citizens understood the significance of European integration.

European direction:

participation in the East-West Committee of Eurocities with the Lord Mayor of Gdańsk as a president, which is to co-ordinate co-operation between Eastern and Western European cities, participation in the IULA (International Union of Local Authorities), participation in the CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)

Baltic direction:

Secretariat of the Union of Baltic Cities, the Secretariat of VASAB 2010 in Gdańsk, cooperation with the Baltic region cities in the framework of the ICLEI to protect the environment of the Baltic Sea, cooperation with the partner cities: Bremen, Sefton, Turku included

European programmes

ECOS-Ouverture programme - the Polish office established in Gdańsk as the next step in developing the inter-

regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea area taking its place beside other ECOS-Ouverture offices in Denmark, Sweden and Finland. All these offices' main task is to provide a complete support for regional and local authorities to help them in implementation of European projects, British Know How Fund to improve municipal administration, MATRA programme - the Dutch government programme for local authorities „Communication management and Community Development for Social Innovation and Administrative Reform”, PRELUDE - to prepare an strategic plan for Gdańsk urban development and to establish a strategic policy for the Tri-City Agglomeration.

Millennium celebrations - culture and sport events on European range

New Hansa Days from the 26 to 29 June 97 - meeting of the representatives of over 100 European cities, European Championship in Kyokushin Karate on the 24 May, World Sailing Championships: Finn Class, ILC 40 Cup Royal Cup from the 3 to 13 July, European St.Dominic Fair - between 2nd and 16th August.

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GDYNIA FOSTERS EU COOPERATION

Since 1990 many initiatives have been taken in Gdynia to promote union, cooperation and understanding among the people of Europe. The main economic events include: EUROPARTENARIAT Polska 1994 - a largest economic meeting of European SME and undertaking of similar kind, and the Baltic Sea Partenariat 1996, both initiatives of the European Commission.

Also the City Hall of Gdynia has undertaken several concrete initiatives aimed at developing society awareness about the EU.

- The City Board of Gdynia has carried out a competition “Gdynia ways to Europe” for all our inhabitants in 1996 and 1997. Participants had to submit projects, which will ensure popularisation of European solidarity, institutions and friendly cooperation between Gdynia and its twin cities inhabitants. The awarded project are realising e.g. organising of workshop for Gdynia’s teachers focused on the theme of European integration and education.

- Many brochures, folders and magazines about the EU institutions have been distributed to all schools in Gdynia and to Gdynia NGO’s office (there was established a small, opened for everyone reading-room) and to Municipal Public Library. The European schools and libraries collections

are permanently completed with new publications.

- European Clubs were established in six schools, the activities of which develop knowledge about European integration among youth.

- Gdynia has celebrated the Europe Day on the 5th of May for the last two years. A special edition of the Ratusz-newsletter of Gdynia City Board and Council including some basic infor-

mation about the EU was published on this occasion. In addition to this, short articles focused on the EU theme started to be published in the weekly edition of the RATUSZ.

The town of Gdynia has also been recognised twice for its achievements in EU cooperation. The first award was from the European Commission called The Golden Stars of Twining in 1995, and the second time Gdynia received

the Flag of Honour of the Council of Europe in 1996 for its efforts on the field of promoting European integration.

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KALININGRAD & TACIS

The City of Kaliningrad appeared on the world map only in 1991; for nearly 45 years it was completely closed for foreign visitors. Today Kaliningrad is the capital of the smallest and westernmost region of the Russian Federation, which, after the split of the Soviet Union, is separated from the main land of Russia. One of the best possibilities to learn from our western partners alongside with bilateral relations is participation in EU projects.

The City of Kaliningrad has participated in four projects funded by Tacis City Twinning Programme. They are:

- ”Improvement of the environmental situation in the harbours of Kaliningrad through training and exchange of experience and foundation of an environmental protection unit within the port administration of Kaliningrad” - in partnership with the City of Copenhagen in Denmark

- ”Support of SMEs” - in partnership with the City of Aalborg in Denmark

- ”Energy saving in the Central District Heating Network of Kaliningrad” - in partnership with Bremerhaven in Germany

- ”Support in creating sustainable transport system” (is still going on). EU Project Leader Authority is Southampton City Council in the UK.

The City of Kaliningrad has also participated in two projects funded by the Ecos-Ouverture programme. The

first project - TROS - “Training of retired officers” gave us the possibility to solve at least partly the problem of re-training of the officers, who retire not because of age, but because of the reduction of the army. The results of the second project - RUSSTI (Russian Short Sea Transport Investigation), were also very effective. A team of Russian and foreign scientists, experts and business people had the possibility to investigate the cargo and passenger flows in the Baltic Sea and propose the optimal - from their point of view - model of the short shipping in this area.

We must also mention one of the most successful projects in partnership with Aalborg (DK) and Bremerhaven (D), funded by the EU’s Life-fund and ECAT-Kaliningrad (Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology), which, in its turn, generated more than 20 projects on the most vital problems of the city.

Participation in EU projects gives the City Hall a possibility to solve simultaneously a wide range of issues. It gives us a chance to strengthen the existing relations with local authorities and promotes the development of the new ones. Also, it provides good training opportunities for our specialists.

Further information:

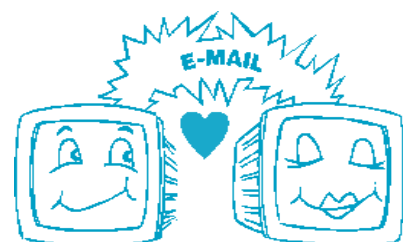
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NET FOR NETS IN KOTKA

Kotka is a city with about 56 000 inhabitants on the southern coast of Finland near the Russian boundary. Kotka has been one of the pioneers in developing the idea of an information society. A proposed service office project, “NET for nets”, has been presented to the Telematic Applications Programme of the European Commission by the city of Kotka together with the city of Kouvola, Kouvola Region and Regional Council of Kymenlaakso.

The location of Kotka is of great importance in the proposed project, since one objective has been to develop a consistent network around the Baltic Sea. The definite decision-making of the Commission takes place in the autumn 1997.

“NET for nets” was initiated by telematic companies from Finland (Novo Group), Germany, Italy and Spain, which are part of the European Local Authorities’ Telematic Network ELANET. “NET for nets” was presented to selected innovative cities, which joined the project enthusiastically.



cally.

The main aim of the project will be to produce and demonstrate municipal telematic platforms, a consistent package of public-oriented telematic services such as kiosks (self-service touch-automat) and telematic counters

for the citizens. These services will be presented in the Internet. The citizens have 24 hours access to the political apparatus and administration. By constructing telematic services for the future, Kotka and the other project partners will be on their way to a future

information society.

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CITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Since spring 1995 the two UBC member cities, and at the same time twin-cities, and Nykøbing F. (Denmark) and Liepāja (Latvia) are running a project to establish a City Development Planning for Liepāja with the headlines: Requirements, Chances and Perspectives. The German twin-city Darmstadt of Liepāja and its contact-city Freiberg (Saxonia) also participate in the project. The ECOS/Ouverture-Programme of the European Union is the main financier.

The preparations for the project have taken some time, but the project is now approved by the ECOS/Ouverture-Programme in the Winter 1996/97.



The project consists of the following elements:

- Land use plan
- Green area concept
- Traffic
- Environment

The work has been going on for some time. There will be some seminars and work-shops, before the

project is completed, probably at the end of May 1998. The total budget inclusive the co-financing from the EU is at the amount of 380.900 ECU.

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LÜBECK INTERPRISE 1997

7 Business Development Institutions Join Forces Under EU Programme.

Under the project management of datalink LS Lübeck, a business development project originally initiated between the Hanseatic City of Lübeck and the county administration of Malmöhus lan/Skurups kommun, 7 business development institutions around the Baltic Sea have joined their forces with the help of the EU INTERPRISE programme.

The aim of datalink LS INTERPRISE is to identify, match and invite SME's in the participating Bal-

tic Sea regions which have an interest in cooperating with each other. This is supported by DG XXIII as part of their INTERPRISE programme. Although it took nearly one year from the first meeting of the project group to the final approval of the European Commission the cooperation with the Brussels office has been extremely smooth in comparison with other EU programmes.

Our project is split into a project management group with reps from Kotka (FIN), Lübeck (D), Naestved (DK) and Skurup (S) and a project partner group with participants from Panevėžys (LIT), Sopot (PL) and St.

Petersburg (RUS). Apart from arranging the venue as such a multi-language Internet presentation has been created with is outlining the project and above all the participating companies (<http://www.datalink-ls.com>). Further regions especially from the Baltic States are welcome to join us.

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