



AIR QUALITY & URBAN TRANSPORT SEMINAR

For one day Gdańsk had a chance to host the international seminar on atmospheric pollution and transport related measures to tackle this problem. On 25th September 1998 over 70 experts in the field of environmental protection and transport from all over Europe met together to discuss the possibility of fighting poor air quality

in urban areas and thus improving the environment and comfort of living in densely populated agglomerations. The seminar was organised

by the Car Free Cities in cooperation with the City of Gdańsk and the Union of the Baltic Cities with the financial support of the European Commission DG XI.



The direct purpose for organising the seminar was to provide representatives from the European Cities with an insight into the EU Directive on Ambient Air Quality that provides framework for local measures to improve the quality of ambient air. So far the Directive has covered the entire territory of each EU Member State. In the light of the EU enlargement process, though, the Directive will also affect local authorities in CEE Countries. Indeed, preparation for accession must take into account the enforcement of EU environmental legislation and the need for implementing sustainable transport policies in urban areas. Hence, the focus of the seminar was to discuss action plans and policies, which European Cities will have to comply with in order to fight poor air quality.

Car Free Cities members presented the air quality standards required by the European Union as well as the measures which

have to be taken in order to meet the above mentioned standards and help European Cities to solve car-related problems. Several case studies on urban transport management and restraint, which have proven effective towards improving air quality were presented. The seminar ended with an open debate which allowed all the participants to exchange their views and experience, as well as to debate the problems caused by increasing traffic and possible solutions.

Owing to the seminar and its location in the heart of Europe Gdańsk had the opportunity to become a natural centre of know-how on air quality related problems and a bridge between Eastern and Western European Countries, which appears significant in view of Poland's accession to European Union.

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KIELER WOCHE

A traditional part of the programme of 'Kieler Woche' is the visits paid by naval units from all around the world. During 'Kieler Woche' the city also awarded its Culture Prize. The international social and political forums will be held under the general motto "The future of the seas" next year and in 2000. This year's focal point was "Tradition and high tech".

Over two million people from over 70 countries of the world visited 'Kieler Woche' from 20 to 28 June this year. Above all, it was the cosmopolitan atmosphere prevailing in the capital of the State of Schleswig-Holstein. Together with senior members of the diplomatic corps, Germany's President, Roman Herzog, took part in a great parade of windjammers on board the "Gorch Fock", a training sailing ship belonging to the German navy.

When 'Kieler Woche' was launched in the form of a sailing regatta 116 years ago, nobody could have guessed that it would one day be the world's biggest sailing event. While more than 5,300 sailors in 1,900 dinghies and yachts ensured new registration records for the regattas organised by Kiel



Thousands of participants took part in 'Kieler Woche' 1998

Yacht Club and the associated sailing clubs, new high points were also being achieved on land.

This year the response to the social and political events was greater than ever before. Thus, 'Kieler Woche' and the City of Kiel have consolidated their position as the focal point of the dialogue in the booming Baltic region. This success is an incentive for Kiel to continue expanding this fundamental element of the event. The social and political significance of 'Kieler Woche' was underlined by the International City Forum on the relationship between business and the communities with parliamentarians from the Nordic and Baltic countries focus on the impact of globalisation on the labour markets.

Kiel's Mayor, Norbert Gansel, was extremely satisfied with the results of the 1998 'Kieler Woche'. "The good working relationship with the university made a significant contribution to raising the level of 'Kieler Woche' even higher. It is very good that we are continuing with the subject of the 'Future of the seas' until 2000 and will be setting special scientific and economic accents in this field."

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