



WELCOME TO TURKU, CHRISTMAS CITY OF FINLAND

The celebration of Turku, Christmas City of Finland, is an annual series of events over more than a month forged around the City's history, culture and Christmas traditions. This year, the Christmas City pageant was inaugurated on November 30th and will close on St. Knut's day on January 13th, 1998.

Turku was first proclaimed the Christmas City of Finland in 1996. The inaugural season's programme consisted of over 300 events run by thousands and followed by hundreds of thousands of people. This year's programme is even more varied. And for the future, Turku will also participate in the international Christmas City project "Destination Christmas" linking the Alsace region of France, and the cities of Bethlehem, Naples, St. Petersburg and Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland. One of the project's goals is to create a common, international tourism product around the Christmas tradition.



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Centuries long traditions as Finland's gateway to Europe and the country's former capital combine with Turku's contemporary culture to make the city the home of Finnish Christmas today. The best known of Turku's Christmas traditions is the declaration of the Christmas Peace on Christmas Eve. Turku is the only city in the Nordic countries where this declaration has continued unbroken since the Middle Ages.

The museums of Turku display old-fashioned Christmas table fare and arrange Christmas exhibitions and events. The Christmas City offers a special, extended programme on

Independence Day, December 6th, and on St. Lucia's Day, December 13th.

Beautiful Christmas carols are sung in all Turku churches throughout the Christmas season, in Finnish, Swedish and English languages. Turku Cathedral is Finland's national shrine, from where the Christian Christmas message has spread throughout Finland since the 13th century.

Turku Cathedral also conveys the Christmas message to all the peoples of the world. Along with the Christmas Peace declaration, the Appeal for Peace is another unique event that has developed in Turku. On Christmas Eve at noon, enlivened by festive music, Turku declares the Christmas Peace for the whole of Finland according to a mediaeval ritual from the Old Town Square.

And Christmas City events continue after Christmas, too. Among the highlights are the New Year festivities, Turku Castle Knight Days, a joyful St Knut's Day party and the Christmas season closing ceremony in the Market Square.



COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT IN VENTSPILS

Lately both governmental and non-governmental institutions have expressed their anxiety about the degradation of the ecological system of the coastal territories. Although the Latvian coastal zone has preserved countless places with unspoiled nature, still human activities have caused a large load on the coastal zone and the fragile ecological systems. The intensity of these activities has significantly increased during the last years.

Last July the project "Integrated Management and Running of the Coastal Zone" was launched for the Latvian part of the Baltic Sea coast. The project is financed by the PHARE programme and is supported by the World Bank.

The objective of the project is to work out a procedure and mechanism for the running of the coastal zone and management integration. In order to

ensure a sustainable development and environment protection of the coastal zone, the project provides a national and local action plan, preparation of investments and demonstration programme with an active participation of all interested parties.

The following issues will be harmonised in this plan:

- * What kind of development is needed ?
- * What kind of investments are needed ?
- * What and where should be protected ?
- * What kind of nature protection regime is necessary ?
- * How to coordinate different coastal zone plans if they represent different interests ?

The project will not replace, revoke or change the existing or future territorial, national, private or economical plans. It should formulate the directions and raise the public awareness as regards the

coastal environment and its future.

Both local and governmental specialists of various qualifications, including Ventspils municipal experts, are involved in the development of the plan. The Irish Development Cooperation Agency (DEVCO) in cooperation with the Dutch Industrial Planning company (TEBODIN) give us technical assistance and consultations concerning the project.

