

THE BALTIC INITIATIVE OF SAINT PETERSBURG

In order to aid the process of integrating Russia and Western Europe, a number of regional structural programs have been developed.

They are based on projects and proposals which seek solutions to the task of developing the North-West region of Russia, and many of them are being carried out jointly with partners in European states and organizations. The main projects are:

“St. Petersburg 2003 – Gate to Europe.” This program is directed towards the creation of an integrated, transnational space (market for products, services and technologies, exchange and cooperation in social and cultural programs) and will serve in the process of integrating Russia and the European Union. With these goals in mind, it will maximize the potential of St. Petersburg as the largest Russian center on the Baltic Sea and Russia’s gateway to Europe, as well as Europe’s route to Russia and central-east and south-east Asia.

“St. Petersburg – the Cultural Capital of 2003” depends on UNESCO declaring St. Petersburg the cultural capital of Europe in the year 2003, the 300th anniversary of the city’s founding.

As part of the celebration of Petersburg’s 300th birthday a series of cultural programs are planned, such as “The International Music Academy - Music Without Borders,” and an exhibition of world masterpieces entitled “Results of the Millennium”.

“The Baltic Bridge” is a project for a combined transport corridor “Hamburg-Schlesweig-Holstein-St. Petersburg-Leningrad Region-Moscow” including a considerable part of the sea route.

“The League of Peace and Consent” The urgent need to perfect economic and cultural cooperation, carry out projects for development of infrastructure and economic revival is considered in the form of a long-term European regional development program intended to unite the forces of the main port cities of the North and Baltic seas.

“The Ecological Armies” - the development of civilization demands that sufficiently serious measures be taken to avoid the consequences of natural and technogenic disasters and the familiar, but no less dangerous pollution of the environment. The special feature of the ecological armies is that they will serve as an “ecological ambulance,” humanity’s last resort under conditions

of increasing contamination of the environment. Such armies could be made up of small, compact professional sub-units, the company or battalion. On the basis of this sub-unit national reserve formations would be trained. This would be a good alternative to military service. For example, young men called up for alternative military service could be used to help clean up bodies of water after large oil-spills. St. Petersburg could use its scientific, technical and industrial potential to host a scientific and educational center of the UN “green helmets.”

“Baltic Humanitarian University” includes the creation in countries of the Baltic Sea region of a network of humanities departments specializing in such fields as literary theory, linguistics, art history, history, archeology, etc. and enabling the cooperation of the peoples of these countries.

“Clean City” - a program intended to create a regional system for the improvement of the environmental situation in cities of the Baltic Sea region.

“Circular Highway” - a project for the construction of an auto beltway around St. Petersburg as a component part of the European road system connecting Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Moscow and from Moscow to Helsinki through St. Petersburg and back to



Skyline of St. Petersburg behind the River Neva.