

I. BALTIC CITIES BUSINESS COOPERATION

The trade flow within the Baltic Sea Region is increasing by 25 % annually

The Baltic Sea Region is expected to become a major growth region in Europe and indeed in the world in the coming years. The growth rate of trade in the Baltic Sea Region has expanded 25 % annually in the last three years, which is a significant sign that the development is well under way.

The table shows the total exports and imports of the Baltic States and Poland to and from Sweden, Finland and Denmark. The impressive growth rate of trade shown in the table is mainly due to that the countries are each other's neighbours. It is easier to make business with friends close by than with distant countries. Another important factor is of course that the economies are complementary. Industry in the Nordic Countries has found a rich source of highly educated and skilled low-cost workers close by, and the Baltic Countries and Poland have found a market with a high buying power.

As an example, the total Swedish trade with the Baltic States and Poland combined puts the BSR 1997 at the 12th position as trading partner, before for example Spain, Switzerland, China, Australia and other large economies in the world. The development has started from a low level. The exports to the Baltic States and Poland still represent only 2,5 % of Swedish total exports, but the speed of the development is very high. The tendencies for Finland and Denmark are similar.

Machinery and transport equipment are the largest export products

For all three Scandinavian countries, machinery and transport equipment are the largest export products to the BSR. Main imports are more diverse. Semi-manufactured goods are the largest im-

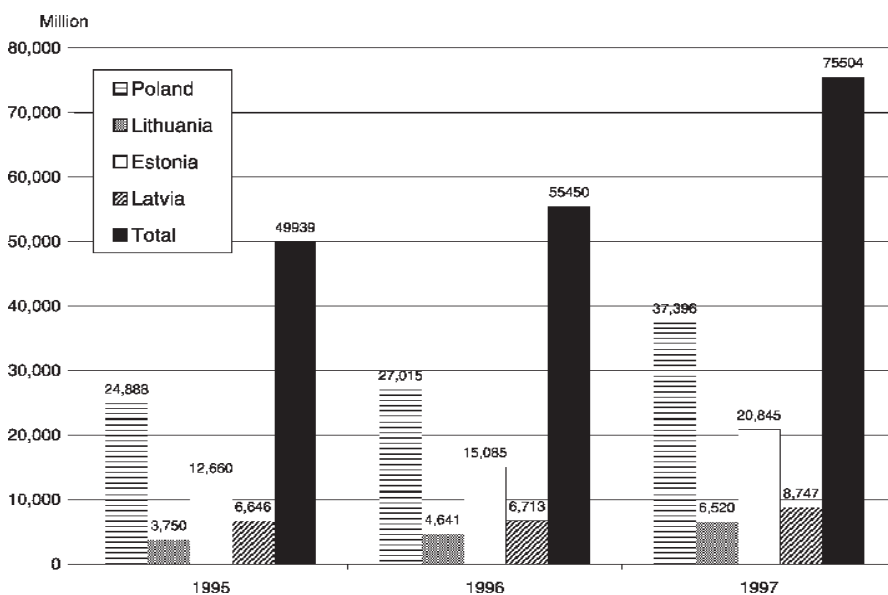
port item with some exceptions. This reflects the growing importance of the industry in BSR countries for the industry in the Nordic countries. Very much of the Nordic Countries imports are used as assembly parts in the industry. There are some exceptions. For example, the largest export item from Latvia to Sweden is fuel, which reflects the importance of transit trade of Russian oil through Latvian ports. Finland imports a lot of coal from Poland.

But things could be even better. Two important factors still hamper the development. One factor is the lack of transport infrastructure. For example, between the Stockholm-Tallinn and the Karlskrona-Gdańsk ferry lines there are practically no passenger ferry lines across the Baltic Sea.

Another important factor is unjustified prejudices from western businessmen perspective. At least in Sweden there still exists a fear of criminals operating in the former socialist countries. Too often I meet people who say they do not dare to travel across the Baltic Sea. Lack of knowledge of the business climate and business opportunities is also a major hindrance.

Maybe the most important mission for the UBC in the field of business development is to build bridges and to increase mutual understanding between the citizens in our cities. From this viewpoint, all contacts in our region are beneficial for business development. So, it might be equally important to exchange children's choirs as it is to create meeting-places for our businessmen to boost business. In any case, the UBC has an important role.

Export-import data source: Northrup Research, Denmark. Data compiled from Swedish, Finnish and Danish national statistics



Total exports and imports to and from Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, to and from Sweden, Finland and Denmark in million US dollars.

By Juhan Janusson

VIEWS ON THE BALTIC BUSINESS CULTURE

The fall of the socialist system in our region has opened for direct business-to-business contacts across the Baltic Sea. But fifty years of different history has created cultural, psychological and legal walls and hindrances that must be demolished. But it takes time to understand each other's business environments and traditions. As the contacts grow and time goes by, we will learn.

The largest problem today is the language problem. Few western businessmen master the languages of the eastern countries, and few eastern businessmen speak other foreign languages than Russian.

During the first steps in the transition period, many western fortune seekers came to the eastern countries to do fast business. It was impossible for eastern businessmen to investigate the background of the westerner, and in too many instances eastern businessmen were deceived and swindled. The consequence today is that many eastern businessmen are very cautious, and it takes some time to overcome the suspiciousness.

Eastern businessmen are also very suspicious against using other means than repeated personal contact to reach agreements. Faxes and telephones are considered as means of communication only. You have to know each other very well in order to reach agreements via telephone calls, which is a common practice in western countries.

Formal business education and long-time business experience is also scarce in the east. This adds to a healthy suspiciousness against the experienced western businessmen.

One specific problem is that even if the eastern business partner might be wealthy in their own countries, their wages in most cases are even lower than that of a simple working man in the west. This means that they cannot travel and have expenses in the same way as their counterparts. As the eastern businessmen are proud, they tend not to confess that even to themselves in many cases.



It is not always easy to navigate correctly in the Baltic intercultural business environment, but no pain, no gain!

This causes many problems in the relations to their western partners.

The legal systems are improving. However, the implementations of the laws still lack stability. Laws regarding protection of partners in agreements are very strong in western countries. It is generally very difficult for a partner in an agreement to unilaterally break it. In eastern countries, the protection of agreements in practice is weaker. Even if the law protects agreements, law enforcement is still very weak. This causes a problem of how to look at an agreement. For westerners, conclusion of an agreement often is the result of a process and can be seen as a result. For eastern businessmen it often sees an agreement as a beginning of a process only. It is easy to find reasons to break it unilaterally.

When a cooperation has started, the probably greatest problem for western businessmen is how problems are handled. The westerner often find that the first reaction from their counterparts is to defend themselves and possibly find someone to blame the problem on instead of at first hand solve the problem. This is maybe a heritage from former times, when it was dangerous to be

blamed for a problem.

The relation to governments, authorities and institutions differ very much. In the east, they are often regarded almost as enemies or at least treated with very much respect. The best is to interfere with them as little as possible. Formalities play a very important role in the eastern countries compared to western practices.

However, in general the problems are smaller than you could expect. There are always problems when doing business with someone from other cultural environment than your own. It is said, for example, that it is very difficult for a Swedish businessman to do business in neighbouring Finland. And if Scandinavians can do successful business with such different cultures as the Chinese, problems in connection with doing business with neighbours in the Baltic Sea Region should be easy to overcome.

*By Juhan Janusson
thanking Mr Raivo Pink, AS KoMa,
Estonia, for valuable comments!*

AALBORG - RIGA BUSINESS CONNECTIONS BLOSSOM



Mr Niels C. Pedersen, manager of the Aalborg - Riga Business Development Center, is glad about the good cooperation between the cities.

In 1990 Aalborg and Riga officially signed a twinning agreement and in 1992 Aalborg established the representative office in Riga **AALBORG - RIGA Business Development**. The idea was to make a bridgehead to Latvia and on a smaller scale to the two other Baltic countries so that companies and institutions in connection with specific commercial activities would be able to make use of the office and its facilities. From the beginning the office has primarily serviced North Jutland, but later on it has been possible for companies/institutions from all of Denmark to profit by the experiences of the office.

The office has taken part in a large number of tasks in connection with projects between official as well as private cooperation partners in the countries. The projects have often been supported by the Danish Official Aid to Central and Eastern Europe and one of the main tasks of the office is to keep up to date with present subsidy schemes. The office also assists in filling in applications for co-financing.

Another important task is to identify and establish contacts to Latvian companies and institutions which are "in demand" by Danish companies who want to establish direct commercial cooperation or as a cooperation partner to assist in solving other, not direct commercial tasks. The office is often requested to establish contact to public offices. It is of course obvious that the contact with

Riga City Council is very close after many years of twinning. Danish companies have often asked the office to assist in establishing local, Latvian companies or to find production facilities for a specific production which they want to start in Latvia.

It is the experience that more and more Danish firms understand the advantages of establishing or buying products in countries where the wages are considerably lower than in Denmark - which is the case in Latvia - and the office anticipates a still increasing interest from Danish companies in establishing such cooperation agreements and in making direct investments in Latvia.

Furthermore AALBORG-RIGA Business Development has a close cooperation with the International Department of the Mayor's Office in Aalborg as well as Aalborg EU-Office in Brussels to obtain information and consultancy in connection with EU matters.

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GDAŃSK HOSTS BRIDGEHEAD OFFICES

For a couple of years Gdańsk has developed contacts with regions and cities on the Baltic Sea Area. The city initiates lots of common undertakings.

Gdańsk has many examples of fruitful international cooperation. There were located the Secretariat of the Committee for Spatial Development of the Baltic Sea Region - VASAB 2010 and also the Secretariat of the Union of the Baltic Cities. The agencies of many baltic cities, f.ex. Kalmar (Sweden), Brema (Germany), were established in Gdańsk.

Moreover the long-term cooperation in various spheres of life connects Gdańsk with friendly, not only sister cities all over the world. Worth mentioning is involvement of the city of Gdańsk in preparation of the seminar of industrial cooperation, to be held in September. The event organised jointly with Karlskrona, Kalmar, Blekinge and other cities is addressed to more than 300 small and medium firms from the baltic region. Other initiative concerns the common project of the new centre in Gdańsk. This project started in cooperation with Rotterdam last year and is still developing.

In the nearest years a further development of the cooperation between Gdańsk and those cities is planned, as well as the enlargement of the activity on the field of supporting initiatives which tend towards further development of the cities of the Baltic Sea Region. Maybe these activities will have bigger influence in the region when in accordance with the new administrative reform of the country, Gdańsk, become the capital of the northern Vistula's Pomerania Macroregion.



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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TWIN CITIES AND BUSINESS

The City of Kalmar is strengthening trade and industry contacts in Poland, the Baltic states, Germany, Hungary and USA. The network offers contact persons for enterprises. The work is based on twin city cooperation and business offices.

Twin city cooperation

Kalmar is effectively using twin city contacts for business cooperation. Twin city cooperation Kalmar-Panevėžys and Kristianstad-Điauliai is extended to business development in a common project of these four cities. The activities consist of SME business partneriats and training of SME leaders. A special point of interest is the business climate. This project named Four Cities is lead by the chambers of commerce, SME organisations and city business development departments.

In addition to the Four Cities project Kalmar is developing business contacts with other twin cities too. An interesting view is the possibility to create fruitful contacts between USA and Europe by using the contacts between Kalmar and the American twin city Wilmington.

Business offices

Kalmar has opened business offices in Gdańsk and in Rostock. The offices make it easier for companies in Sweden, Poland and Germany to develop their contacts with companies in the other country. They help with translations, interpreting, advice, market analyses, bookings, meeting rooms, various arrangements and networking. The next office will be opened in Panevėžys - using the concept developed in Gdańsk and Rostock.



FERRY TRAFFIC IS BOOMING IN THE PORT OF ROSTOCK

The Port of Rostock expects to turn over more than 19 million tonnes of cargo in 1998.

Top Rostock handler in 1997 remained ferry traffic. Six and a half million tonnes moved through the port, one million tonnes more than previously, while passenger totals rose by 228 000 to 1 735 000. Main connections with passenger traffic were Denmark and Sweden.

In 1997 altogether 7 720 ships called at the 41 berths in the port of Rostock. Cargo handling totalled 19 million tonnes. Ferries moved 34% of all cargo, second largest was bulk cargo like coal, ores and grain, and third on the list were liquid cargo imports/exports. Combined transport played a big part in the good ferry results.

The Port Administration Company invested DM 34 million in infrastructure improvements in 1997.

Examples are the construction of new berth to tankers, the completion of highway linking of the ferry terminal with the Rostock-Berlin motorway and a multi-functional berth facility for ro-ro and ferry ships.

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TECHNOLOGY DRIVES TAMPERE

Tampere has started an ambitious plan of developing Internet and medical technology.

The city of Tampere has built an information highway on the Internet. The programme comprises public information, feedback facilities and 24h municipal services. The number of Internet users is booming: from 66,000 visits on website in December 1995 till 400,000 visits monthly two years later. In the city 380,000 computers are connected to the Internet and 10% of the population is using the Internet at least once a week.

Moreover, software companies are networking to arrange post-graduate training and IT businesses in the region are considering the possibility of establishing a joint media centre in Tampere.

As well as Internet technology the Finn-Medi medical technology centre is

growing fast. The extension of 45 mln FIM, which represents a 3% increase in the centre's current capacity, is scheduled for completion next year. The extension will house health technology businesses, a business incubator, development facilities for research and information systems for Tampere's university hospital.

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VÄXJÖ FOSTERS COMMERCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Växjö's population is steadily increasing (1997 = 73 500 inhabitants) and so is its business and industry. As an example, there are some 130 companies within the information technology field and the university is renowned for its international profile, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship, logistics and personnel management.

The industrial sector is very diversified. A number of very well known, international companies have plants in Växjö and more than 2 000 SMEs are located there. Växjö is actually best known for its large number of small companies producing high quality, innovative products. Creative clusters with „innovative” companies are today thriving in the city. Due to Växjö's central geographical location in southern Sweden with excellent road, flight and railway connections also the wholesale business is well represented.

Last year Växjö was nominated as the „number one environmental city” in Sweden and it receives several international groups every year to study the water cleaning activities and the city's transfer to a fossil fuel free community as well as the Agenda 21 program. The City has built up a network of trade offices around the Baltic in Rostock, Gdynia (ENA) and Kaunas (Pentacom) to help city's exporters enter new markets.

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Växjö Cathedral dating from the 12th century and totally renovated in 1995.

LAHTI PROMOTES BUSINESS COOPERATION

Lahti is a city of 95 000 inhabitants in Finland and part of the East-West gateway which leads to St. Petersburg. Lahti has an excellent logistical location and its area is highly industrialised being one of the growth centres of southern Finland. Lahti's basic industries are furniture, clothing and food industry, machine engineering and electronics with particular growth in environmental technology sector nowadays.

Lahti Business Link

Lahti Business Link Ltd is an organisation owned by the City of Lahti and its surrounding municipalities. It aims to improve the business environment in Lahti area to create and protect employment by

promoting key business sectors, like plastics, mechatronics, wood and metal as well as exports to Russia. Lahti Business Link markets the region for companies to relocate and supports the internationalisation of the companies in the area and it funds various projects that focus on improving the level of technology, education and know how in the Lahti region. Lahti Business Link assists new companies by advising e.g. on business support measures and helps companies to establish their businesses or invest in the area. A responsive confidential service is provided for investors from receipt of initial enquiry to aftercare.

Green Triangle Finland

Green Triangle Finland (GTF) forms a network of experts and enterprises in environmental technology and know how. With a focus on multilateral international projects and funding, it collaborates with other environmental networks and clusters in Europe. Green Triangle Finland has been very active in St. Petersburg, notably in coordinating a large EU LIFE project on Local Agenda 21 and coastal conservation in the city St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast. Other projects in the area deal with water and waste management, and educational exchanges. GTF is one of the main organiser in the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum process.

Other cross-border cooperation

The Lahti Chamber of Commerce is actively developing cooperation between other cities around the Baltic Sea. They have been working for international contacts several years to find new business opportunities for the companies in the region. The Lahti Euroinfo centre hosted by The Lahti Chamber of Commerce is an active cooperation partner with the EuroLink-project hosted by the EIC Rostock in The Rostock Chamber of Commerce since 1997 which is regionally linking German and Finnish companies together.

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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ŠIAULIAI

Šiauliai became an industrial city in the 18th century. At that time food, leather and metal processing enterprises were started and developed at the end of the 19th century. Today there are many enterprises of traditional industries and all of them have international business connections and export their goods all over the Europe. Some of the major companies are presented below.

Joint-stock company „Rekyva” is one of the leading producers and suppliers of peat products in the Baltic States. The prime purpose was production of peat sods for fuel industry. Nowadays, the company produces for horticulture and over 95 % of the output is exported to Europe. Other company, with strong Lithuanian-Swedish connections, produces knitted-stitched lining, cloth, non-woven needled materials also for the automobile industry, semi-wool, cotton and other yarns. Also a wide vari-

ety of leather articles made from natural leather, raw hides and skins processing services are served in Šiauliai by the leather joint-stock company ”Šiaulių Stumbras”.

Modern technology development

Apart from traditional industries the modern technology has developed in the region. The television company has 20 years experience of design, manufacturing and installation of broadcasting systems, construction of OB Vans. By attending international symposia, exhibitions and presentations the engineers designers stay in contacts with the equipment developers. One of the key parts of the TVT studio and OB Vans are mechanical constructions. The racks and consoles can be designed and manufactured according to the whole studio conception meeting the individual finishing and colour. The greatest evaluation was the design, manufacturing and installation of Moscow Olympic Games television complex.

Šiauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts is a non-profit organisation open for all sectors of industry, trade and crafts in Šiauliai Region. Šiauliai Chamber is a member of the Baltic Chambers of Commerce Association. It seeks further development of commerce and industry in the region, promotes foreign trade and international business relations, collects information.

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The Baltic Sea Region trade. The only way is UP!

WORKING AND LIVING ON THE WATER IN KIEL

- CREATING FUTURE-ORIENTED INFRASTRUCTURE

The state capital of Kiel is pursuing the reutilisation of an industrial wasteland - former docklands - as a contribution to creating a future-oriented infrastructure.

On a site of about 25 hectares at the most southern tip of the Kieler Fiord - an area which is called the Hörn, some 2500 jobs are being created, 400 flats and a new ferry terminal for dual-purpose giant ferries dealing with passenger and freight transport are being built. Under the title „Working and Living on the Water” this ambitious task for both living and future generations will be presented as a decentralised model project for EXPO 2000.

Secured Sponsorships

The Hörn project is sponsored by various official programmes, e.g. by community traffic funds of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein. The development measures promoted by the European Union within the frame of the operational programme according to „Goal 2/EFRE” commenced at the start of 1995 and are scheduled to be finished by the middle of 1998.

The City of Kiel assumes that public start investments of some 130-150 million Marks will trigger off private investments of 600-700 million Marks.

Several results are emerging

Some elements of the concept have already come into existence. The new ferry terminal (Norwegian Quay) was completed in August 1997. Across the new Hörn bridge the city centre, the main bus and railway stations can be reached within five to ten minutes on foot. The bridge for pedestrians and cyclists is an environmentally-friendly solution for connecting Kiel City (West Bank) both with the new quarter and with Kiel-Gaarden (East Bank). This construction is a true technical innovation. The steel superstructure will be folded on one side into three segments during the opening process, moved by a sophisticated, computer-guided drive.

Residential improvements

A new harbour basin developed according to model ecological criteria has

been devised recently. Visiting sailors coming directly to the town centre for short visits may make use of this. Within the overall concept and with the new pedestrian bridge, a public pathway system extending all over the Hörn is being created. The promenade for the new residential and service quarter was constructed and designed according to optimal building and environmentally acceptable solutions. This aspect is scheduled to be completed by the middle of 1998. The completion of the first high-rise complexes on the new harbour basin is targeted for 1999-2000.

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II. UBC TODAY

19TH MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD

The 19th meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 28-29 October 1997 in the City of Aalborg, Denmark, upon the invitation of Mr Kaj Kjør, Mayor of the City of Aalborg.

The first day of the meeting was attended by the members of the Executive Board and the Chairmen of the Commissions. The second day was open for the representatives from all member cities.

New Executive Board

The meeting was opened by Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union. Mr Engström introduced the new Executive Board elected by the IV General Conference in Gdańsk, 12-13 September 1997. The Board consists of the following cities: Aalborg, Bergen, Gdańsk, Kaliningrad, Klaipėda, Pärnu, Rzeszkie, Rostock, Stockholm, Turku.

Election of Secretary General

President Anders Engström proposed Mr Paweł Źaboklicki from Gdańsk as a candidate for UBC Secretary General. The Board elected Mr Źaboklicki as a Secretary General of the Union for a 6-years period.

Evaluation of the IV General Conference

Mr Anders Engström underlined that the IV UBC General Conference titled „Baltic Sea Cooperation Forum” was attended by the highest number of member cities so far - approx. 250 participants representing 63 member cities and 50 international organisations. The keynote speakers - leaders of major Baltic organisations, foreign ministers and EU Commissioner - significantly contributed to



The UBC Board discussed perspectives upon commencing their work on the new UBC strategy.

the conference success. During four workshops the conference discussed the most challenging topics of the Baltic Sea region. The Board expressed cordial thanks to the City of Gdańsk for hosting the conference underlining Gdańsk hospitality and its unique atmosphere.

Union Policy and Strategy

President Engström stressed that in the beginning the Union's main goal was to initiate cooperation and exchange of experiences between its members. Now, after six years of activity, there is a demand for UBC to review and develop its policy and strategy of work. During extensive discussion the Board highlighted the following issues, which must be reflected in Union's policy:

- * Development of the network cooperation and exchange between the member cities

- * Promotion of democratic, economic, social, environmental and urban development

- * Safeguarding and promoting the in-

terests of Baltic Cities towards national and international organisations especially the EU.

The Board urged all member cities to contribute to the process of forming UBC policy by answering the following questions:

- * what does your city expect from UBC membership ?

- * what aims do you consider important to be included in UBC general policy and the working programme ?

The Board decided to establish a working group responsible for formulating the policy on the basis of the above questionnaire. The working group shall consist of the UBC Presidents and representatives of four cities appointed by the President.

EU enlargement

The President informed that four member cities from Latvia and Lithuania requested the Board to express support for

their countries in the efforts to begin the negotiations for EU membership at the same time as other applicant states. Mentioned cities are of the opinion that all applicant states from the Baltic Sea region shall start negotiations at the same time, in order to assure equal conditions for future development of those countries. The members of the UBC Executive Board gathered in Aalborg issued a statement supporting the cities in applicant countries in the efforts to support their states to qualify for EU-membership and for equal negotiation chances.

UBC and LA 21

Mr Mikko Jokinen, chairman of UBC Commission on Environment, informed about the latest developments in Baltic Local Agenda 21. The process is developing on two levels i.e. Baltic 21 - the governmental level and Baltic LA 21 Forum - the local level. UBC is represented at both levels. In September 1998, UBC will organise a Baltic LA 21 Forum conference in Turku. Mr Jokinen also informed that a working group consisting of 7 member cities have been appointed to work out the UBC Local Agenda 21 strategy.

UBC-EU Project

Mr Bart³ omiej Sochański, UBC Vice-President, reported from the UBC-EU

Conference in Tallinn attended by 200 participants from over 30 member cities. The conference was the major event of the UBC-EU Information Project aimed at preparing UBC member cities from applicant countries for the EU enlargement. Mr Sochański stressed that in order to achieve its objectives the project should be continued.

Mr Anders Engström informed that following UBC initiative, the leaders of major Baltic organisations i.e. UBC, BSSSC, CPMR, BCCA held an informal meeting. The major Baltic organisations agreed to hold annual meetings in order to discuss common actions and policies.

Ms Petra Hamann, Rostock, informed that the Commission on Social Affairs included the health issues to the scope of its activities. The Commission discussed cooperation possibilities with the WHO Healthy Cities Office in Turku. Moreover the Commission started the project called the UBC Social Market Place - member cities have been asked what used equipment (medical, school etc.) they could donate to other cities.

Mr Pawe³ aboklicki introduced the last issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin which brought information on extensive cooperation between the Baltic cities, latest

Union's activities, UBC „who is who” directory, news from member cities and more. The Board expressed its appreciation to the Editorial Board for the professional level of the bulletin and encouraged all member cities to contribute actively to the next issues of BCB.

Ms Sonja Hilavuo, chairman of the UBC Task Force for Public Relations and Communication, reported from the second TF meeting held in Kalmar on 5-7 October 1997, attended by over 30 participants from 25 member cities.

Additionally the Board stressed that more emphasis must be put on propagating successful projects carried out by member cities, so other cities could implement similar projects at home. The Board suggested to use for this purpose the UBC Internet homepage managed by the city of Kalmar. The UBC website could also be used as project partner search forum. The Board authorised the Project Manager to prepare regular written information on EU and other programmes available for the cities, including the deadlines.

Following an invitation from Mr Anders Engström, Mayor of Kalmar, the Board decided to hold its next (20th) meeting in Kalmar on 27-28 March 1998.

COMMISSION ON BUSINESS COOPERATION

The UBC Commission on Business Cooperation had its first meeting in Stockholm on March 13 - 14.

The meeting agreed on the goals of the commission, discussed the working methods and made the commission's first decisions. Over twenty member cities were represented.

Goals of the Commission

The UBC Commission on Business Cooperation aims at increasing the exchange of experiences and information

between the UBC member cities. Promoting contacts between the business communities is also an important goal. In addition to serving the mutual cooperation between the member cities the commission will act as an opinionmaker towards the European Union.

Working Methods

The commission will arrange one meeting per year. A network of civil servants dealing with trade and industry in the member cities will be established. City of

Stockholm will build up an information system for the network. An information page will be prepared for every issue of the UBC newsletter.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be organized in Gdańsk/Gdynia, Poland in March/April 1999. The main topic of the meeting will be working with the European Union funds. There will also be presentations about cooperation between municipal authorities and business communities in the member cities.

A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE UBC

Since its creation in 1991, the Union of the Baltic Cities faced a number of political changes within the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe. Also, the UBC experienced a dynamic growth from 32 founding cities to 80 members in 1997.

Democratisation of life, changing environment, as well as new challenges for the cities in this context evoked the need to develop the strategy for the Union of Baltic Cities that would contribute to the "sustainable development of the Baltic cities and this Region in Europe. Especially, as it is the common desire that the Baltic Sea Region shall be a region with a strong identity enabling it to play an important role within Europe and the world, as well as a region of diversity of mutual relations.

The Baltic Cities are crucial players in the Region, who can be also perceived as a central gateway for trans-national cooperation, expanding very rapidly in

these days due to its concerted teamwork of cities undertaking international activities in the BSR.

With its unquestionable position and role in the Region, the Union of the Baltic Cities should adapt the new quality of its activities to produce a recognisable hallmark. Prompted to start writing the Strategy, the first meeting of the working group was held in Copenhagen on 30th January '98, where the UBC Presidency decided to take the lead in drafting out a possible long-term vision that could form the basis of a coherent UBC Strategy, relevant to all the member cities.

The purpose of the said Strategy would be to increase the UBC's profile in the Baltic Sea Region and to achieve sustainability of the Region by developing UBC's role as a major actor facilitating the cooperation and relationships between the Baltic cities, as well as representing their interests.

A successful UBC Strategy will give rise to a number of benefits. A more active role for the UBC and cities in the wider European arena will generate a more positive image of the BSR. The Strategy will provide a clear framework through which future development of the BSR may be resolved. The UBC members participating in the overall strategic partnership will benefit in a number of ways. Through the co-ordinated drive to seize opportunities, the Strategy will maximise the benefits for the cities, their citizens and the UBC. In terms of the member cities the Strategy will ensure the quality of life is improved, appreciate the significance of interest and practical value.

It is also hoped that with the coherent Strategy, the UBC will facilitate joint efforts to tap European Funds to the organisation.

STRATEGY TIME-TABLE

On March 27-28 the UBC Board met in Kalmar. The main point discussed was the new UBC Strategy. It is important for the democratic process in the UBC that as many cities as possible can take part of the creation process of the Strategy and give their views.

A working plan for the process was discussed and adopted by the Board, as follows:

Kalmar, Board Meeting, March 27-28

- Circulation for comments to UBC Commissions and the UBC Board cities. Deadline for comments May 15th.
- UBC Strategy Working Group meeting May 28th. Preparation of final proposal.

Klaipėda, Board Meeting, June 26-27

- Circulation for comments to all UBC Member Cities
- National meetings if necessary

Szczecin, Board Meeting, November 6-7

- Adaptation of final proposal.

CITIES OPINION ON THE UBC AIMS



The UBC Board Meeting in Aalborg decided that a simple questionnaire should be sent to the UBC Member Cities. The cities have been asked what they expect from the UBC membership and what aims should be included in the UBC Strategy. The answers are used as a background in the process of shaping the new UBC Strategy.

The City of Copenhagen has compiled the results of the questionnaire in the table. The alternatives shown in the table were not given in the questionnaire. Instead the classification was done during

the compilation. The table is not intended to give a scientific view. In spite of this it gives an interesting view of what the cities expect from the UBC. Issues like experience exchange and projects are often mentioned, as well as EU issues. Surprisingly many cities mentioned different issues to be changed or added to the UBC activities, like the UBC structure and strategies. This is encouraging, since the member cities wishes to develop the UBC to a strong organisation that is able to look after the interests of its members.



SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TASK FORCE MEETS IN SZCZECIN

The UBC Task Force for Public Relations and Communication will hold its annual meeting and seminar in Szczecin, Poland on May 25-27, 1998. The latest meeting in Kalmar attracted over 30 international city executives, project managers and EU coordinators from 25 cities, so don't miss out from this information-packed and fun-filled event where networking is the name of the game!

The theme for this year's meeting is "Strategies and practices for effective UBC cooperation" which will include discussions on best practices with different EU programmes as well as an open auctioning for new projects and partnerships. The highly successful UBC Project Curriculum Vitae will get continuation as its edition number II will be compiled during this meeting. The programme offers something to every one, all newcomers will get an effective UBC crash course while the senior members of the TF can tackle with certain strategic issues of UBC cooperation. The deadline for the registrations is May 3rd, 1998.

It's never too late to join the TF activities, see you in Szczecin!!!

Further information:

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UBC-EU INFORMATION PROJECT - TO BE CONTINUED?

Apparently, the UBC-EU Information Project became the buzz - word of 1997 in the Baltic Sea Region and among the cities.

With its both seminars in Copenhagen and Szczecin, and the conference in Tallinn, the project addressed a number of the EU institutional and European integration related issues, as well as analysed the situation in and the role of local governments in this context.

Though the project touched only the tip of the iceberg, its first year turned out to be a success, and contributed to spreading the EU knowledge, offering an interesting agenda on the table of the two seminars and the conference. First hand exposure to how democratic and market systems work, as well as the successful adoption of democratic values and systems in culturally diverse societies helped the local level to prepare towards the forthcoming accession.

After the one year project period it seems clear that local authorities should combine efforts. Accession to the EU, as well as European integration is, in general, a tremendous task. Cities, especially from the post-communist countries lack enough knowledge to fully and actively participate in the integration process, understand it, and benefit from it. Naturally, the present

situation is that only a few of them have some appreciable knowledge of or experience in coping with the EU. Therefore the scope of training to be conducted and information to be provided seems to be enormous.

The first step has already been taken. It is planned that the project can be continued with the support of the European funds. In the new application, four Task Forces have been planned and their mission will be to find out what programmes are available for cities. The Task Forces will tackle social problems, such as unemployment, the elderly, etc., environmental protection issues, democracy and local involvement issues.

Further information:

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E-mail: krs.int@ob.CopenhagenCity.dk

LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROGRAMME FOR UBC

On 27-28 February 1998 the Commission on Environment organised a meeting in Nacka, where a Local Agenda 21 programme for the UBC was discussed. Nine persons representing member cities and universities discussed and came up with ideas for a common programme.

Proposed activities for the programme

The Local Agenda 21 work can differ very much from city to city. The participants agreed on four general criteria for Local Agenda 21 work. The work should (1) include participation of citizens and (2) deal with their lifestyles. Furthermore, it should (3) involve all sectors of the city and (4) be a democratic process. It was also stressed that Agenda 21 is an ongoing process and that the time dimension is not one or two years but instead generations.

The participants proposed many activities for the programme. For example environmental indicators, a mobile exhibition, bicycle projects and education were proposed to be included in the programme.

Local Agenda 21 in the UBC

The participants discussed also how Local Agenda 21 could be integrated into



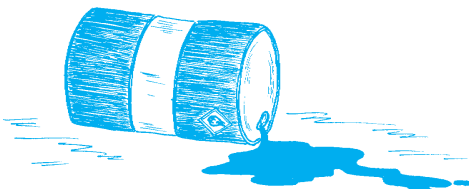
UBC Local Agenda 21 being discussed in Nacka.

the work of other commissions of the UBC. It was stated that the work for a sustainable development should be included in the work of all the commissions. Sustainable development should also be integrated into the statutes of the UBC, and therefore these have to be revised. It should be pointed out that Local Agenda 21 is not connected only to the environment and that this work has to be done in cooperation with all sectors. The commissions have to be invited to take part in the work and the Local Agenda 21 - concept has to be cleared out for all partners.

The Commission on Environment Secretariat in Turku will prepare a first draft of the programme. The goal is to have the programme ready before the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Conference in Turku on 3 - 5 September. The next meeting where the programme is discussed will be held on 17 - 18 May.

Further information:
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SEMINAR ON CONTAMINATED SOILS



On February 20-22 the Commission on Environment arranged a seminar on contaminated soils in cooperation with ECAT Lithuania and with financial support from the Nordic Council of Minis-

ters. Altogether 110 persons representing cities, universities, companies and organisations took part in the seminar which was held in Birstonas, Lithuania.

The contamination of soils is a large and expensive problem in all countries round the Baltic Sea. Polluted sites can be found practically anywhere in industrialised countries, being any kind of industrial sites, agricultural areas, military facilities, former and current waste dumps; areas where spills have happened or where pollution from another source

has migrated to. Frequently the polluting activity have taken place several years or even decades before.

The programme for the seminar was divided into two different parts; 1) an introduction to soil pollution and 2) cleaning methods for contaminated soils. In the first part definitions, methods for surveying and monitoring potentially contaminated sites, contamination profiles as well as prioritization of contaminated sites were presented. The presentations gave a good basis for the second part of the

programme, which started with a brief introduction to common remediation methods and their costs. The methods presented after that were containment and stabilisation methods, thermal cleaning methods, use of air for cleaning contaminated sites, phytoremediation as well as in-site and off-site bioremediation. The participants were pleased to hear that there are many different solutions to solve the problem with contaminated soils. However, there is still much work to do in this field. On the third and last day of the seminar the participants visited the former military fuel storage Valciunai, which is a contaminated site south of Vilnius.



Participants on an excursion to the Valciunai oil terminal.

UBC WOMEN'S NETWORK - CALL FOR COOPERATION

It is found to be necessary to involve the women in the UBC cooperation. Women's participation and influence of the work at all levels will strengthen the Union and is a democratic need. UBC Women's Network is established to support and ensure this development. The base for the Network is contact persons from the member cities and there is an address list of their names.

Use the UBC membership

The message to the women is to see and use all the possibilities of the Network and the UBC for getting in touch with women in other member cities, for searching partners in a project, for sending or receiving information, invitations to seminars, conferences and meetings, writing articles in the UBC Bulletin. Ideally one should search, identify and cooperate with other persons in one's own city, who are active in the UBC work, e.g. the representative for the Task Force for Communication and Public Relations. It is of great importance that there are both women and men in the different commissions and working teams. When both women and men contribute with their experiences, expertise and knowledge, we will also have a stronger UBC.



Mrs Hjördis Höglund, Coordinator of the UBC Women's Network.

Further information :

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www.ballad.org

Commission on Culture calendar of events

5-7 May, Visby
MARE ARTICUM session

8-9 May, Stockholm
MARE ARTICUM seminar within
the programme of ArtGenda

28-31 May, Szczecin
Baltic Choir Festival Szczecin'98
"Choir Music in the UBC Cities -
problems and possibilities"

24-26 July, Klaipėda
Action of the Earth and art "Games
in sand"

27-28 August, Riga
MARE ARTICUM session

Further information

Commission on Culture
Ms Magdalena Lewoc
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E-mail: mlewoc@um.szczecin.pl



III. MEMBER CITIES IN ACTION



5TH NORDIC-BALTIC CONFERENCE REGIONAL SCIENCE



The 5th Nordic-Baltic Conference in Regional Science titled "Global-Local Interplay in the Baltic Sea Region" will be held in Pärnu, Estonia, on October 1-4, 1998.

The conference will discuss global-local interplay and new challenges for local and regional governance in the context of post-industrial and post-socialist transition in the Baltic Sea Region. The conference will be organised by scientific institutes from Estonia, Poland, Sweden together with the City of Pärnu and UNDP.

The conference will focus on the following topics:

- prospects of globalisation, localisation and regionalisation;
- political and economic impact of European integration on the Baltic Sea Region;
- EU regional policies and regional development;
- new local and regional identities, opportunities for indigenous development;
- migratory and demographic processes in the Baltic Sea countries;
- post-industrial and post-socialist urban and regional planning;
- Baltic studies, future studies.

Further information:
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Vanemuise 46
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Internet: www.geo.ut.ee/nbc



ACTIVE TOWNS CONFERENCE IN ST. PETERSBURG



The VIII International Conference of local authorities within the framework of the Programme EUROGRAD-XXI will take place on 27-29 April 1998 in Saint-Petersburg. The topic of the Conference will be „Active towns: strategy and marketing to increase the competitiveness”.

The social significance of the Conference is connected with the appearance of new organisational technologies. They started to be applied for urban development activation and for raising the competitiveness of towns and regions. The use of these technologies in West Europe allowed to overcome the economic decline in great part. It also allow to increase organisational potential of governance, to attract new investment, to gain more success in finding solutions to social and economic problems. The study and use of the

experience gained by active European towns may become an essential development factor for towns and regions under the conditions of economic and financial instability and increasing competition for investments among towns and regions.

Conference objectives are

- to discuss theoretical and practical aspects of application of new organisational capacities in local government,
- to evaluate their positive influence upon finding solutions to particular urban development problems
- to share the views on the possibility and advisability of introduction of these capacities in Russian and NIS towns.

The participants suppose to be representative of active West European and Russian towns and representatives of different national and European organisations. All the more the organiser of the Conference is Institute EUROGRAD in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Foundation, St. Petersburg Government, EUROCITIES, Institute for Social and Economic problems of Russian Academy of Science.

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URBAN INVITES TO EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE IN ROSTOCK



View over the URBAN-funded quarter in Rostock.

More than 80 cities of the continent are busy with the European Community initiative URBAN.

The main objective is to increase the living conditions of the inhabitants in undeveloped quarters of larger cities. Rostock is one of the 12 German cities which were accepted for getting funds by the EU.

In the quarter Kröpeliner-Tor-

Vorstadt of the Hanseatic City of Rostock you can observe one of the most effective realizations of the URBAN Programme. The project headquarter is inviting to an international exchange of experience to Rostock on 26 to 28 of August 1998, where the topic is: Revitalization of undeveloped quarters in large cities - Finding of integrative economic, ecological and social solutions.

We are expecting interested participants from other European cities, from German URBAN-funded cities and especially from Eastern Baltic cities. Plenary discussions, workshops and visits to the URBAN-funded quarter of Rostock are planned as well as cultural events, taking place in the Kröpeliner-Tor-Vorstadt.

You are most welcome to take part to our conference in summer '98 and to be our guests in the Hanseatic City of Rostock and Kröpeliner-Tor-Vorstadt.

Further information

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HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAYS IN ROSTOCK

The Healthy Cities Project coordinator and the Divisions for Health and Environment Protection of the Municipality of the Hanseatic City of Rostock are organizing following events:

- a Health and Environment Market Place with participants from local and regional initiatives, institutions, self-aid groups on the 10th of June,
- a conference with the topic "Healthy City and Local Agenda 21 - common strategies" on 11th of June,
- a conference on the specific topic "Environmental Influences and their Effects on the Health of the Citizens of Rostock" on 12th of June.

Working language will be German.

Further information:

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Project, Rostock
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ALBATROSS CALLS TO KOTKA!

An international Youth Camp welcomes young people at the age of 13-16 years from all UBC cities to participate in this major event in Kotka, Finland on July 31-August 6, 1998. The price of the camp is 750 FIM/person.

The theme of the event is THE MEANING OF THE BALTIC SEA TO THE PEOPLE IN THE PAST AND PRESENT.



The perfect description of this fun can be seen in internet:

<http://kotka.fi/liikunta/htm/alba2.htm>

More information and applications:

Tel. +358 5 234 5494
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Fax +358 5 234 5424
E-mail: karna@kotka.fi



LAND ART IN KLAIPĖDA IN JULY

Klaipėda invites artists from the UBC cities to participate in the traditional action of land art. The action will take place on the amber beaches of the national park Smiltyne during the Sea Festival on July 24-26, 1998.



Sand, Water, Stone, Imagination...

The artists will let sand, water, stone, branches of trees and other natural objects materialize in sculptures and art conceptions. The goal of the action is to bring people nearer to the unique beauty and originality of the coastal nature, and to induce protection of the dunes and the sea. One purpose of the action is also to bring together artists from the UBC member cities to communicate freely in the process of creation.

Arrangements for the Artists

Municipal Department of Culture together with Klaipėda County Association of Artists are responsible for the arrangements. The authors of the most original and interesting creations will be awarded. The project also embraces a seminar for the artists. Accommodation and maintenance for two days will be covered by Klaipėda.

Registration letters should be sent before June 1, 1998. Please, write about yourself and your expectations for the event.

Further information:

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Foreign Relations Dept
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III BALTIC SEA CONFERENCE IN KAUNAS

The nations living around the Baltic Sea enjoy long-standing trade links and cultural traditions. Today, in the process of creation of new and open Europe, these relations gain particular importance and need to be developed and strengthened.

Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania, has been chosen to be the venue for 3rd Baltic Sea Conference in April, 1999. 1st Baltic Sea Conference, initiated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), took place in Helsinki, in 1993, 2nd – in Norrköping, in 1995. CLRAE is responsible for the cooperation of local and regional governments on different political and technical issues. Half of its ongoing programmes are devoted to the cooperation between Municipalities and Regions.

Kaunas witnesses the confidence of the

European Council in the country and the efforts to evaluate Baltic countries as equal partners and potential EU candidates. Realising the importance of the conference to Lithuania in general and Kaunas in particular, the Steering Committee is composed of top political and administrative authorities of Lithuania. To assure the successful organisation of the conference Kaunas has established a Working Group of local and regional politicians and administrative personnel.

3rd Baltic Sea Conference is a 3-day Forum during which the following themes will be discussed:

The overview of the activities carried out by institutions, which have been established to promote the cooperation in the Baltic sea region;

City management and self-government;



Local government policy on provision of social services and diminishing of environment pollution;

Long-term political perspectives of local government in Baltic Sea region.

Further information:

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KVINNOR KAN IDEA AND TRADE FAIR

Boundaries exist. Between countries, generations, languages, religions, municipalities, men and women, women and women. Boundaries can be opened or closed, respected or transgressed, arouse curiosity or fear. Cooperation across all boundaries is the theme of the next Kvinnor Kan Idea and Trade Fair in Linköping-Norrköping, Sweden, in May 14-17, 1998.

Kvinnor Kan (Women Can) – once again

Hundreds of thousands of visitors have attended Kvinnor Kan Fairs over the years. From the first Fair in Gothenburg in 1984. Now it is time for the eighth Fair. In the twin cities

Linköping and Norrköping less than 2 hours south of Stockholm. Around 500 exhibitors from companies and organisations of all sizes, will show their ideas and products at the Trade Fair. Women from organisations, companies, the Universities and many other fields will talk and debate at the 140 seminars on all different topics of interest to women and men.

Young Women – a fair within the fair

Older women and younger women have different experiences. The idea of Kvinnor Kan is to provide a forum for different groups of women. Kvinnor Kan is arranging a special meeting-point for young women with uninhibited, stimulating and at times even provocative seminars.



The Baltic Plaza

Baltic cooperation has entered a new phase now that Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have applied for membership of the EU. The region will become a new marketplace and open up the borders between the countries in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries.

The EU Plaza

At the EU Plaza we present the EU's Swedish network. A number of mini-seminars will be held around the issues that interest women most and the Commission's policy in these areas.

Further information:

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E-mail: info@kvinnorkan.se

EUROFEM CONFERENCE

EuroFEM is a network comprising currently 60 projects. The projects deal with the infrastructure of daily life. Results of the projects are analysed and displayed at the EuroFEM conferences. The next conference will be organised 10-12 June, 1998 in Hämeenlinna, Finland by the City of Hämeenlinna in partnership with NGOs, local authorities, Finnish ministries, and the European Commission.

Will women's projects make a difference and reveal a new approach to development in urban and rural settings? How can the negative effects of global economy be dealt with? These questions will be discussed at the Conference from various points of view.

The Aims of the Conference

The main theme of the conference will be Local and Regional Sustainable Human Development from the Gender Perspective. The aims are to facilitate the dialogue between decision makers, politicians, administrators, experts, and women at the grassroot level; to present and discuss

better practices for improvement of the infrastructure of everyday life in both urban and rural settings; to present researcher's results of the analysis of EuroFEM- projects and experiences; and to make policy proposals for local and regional development from the gender perspective.

Workshops

Workshops will be arranged on themes such as Planning, implementing and evaluating supportive structures of everyday life in urban and rural settings; Creation of employment opportunities; Participative local governance; Women's visions; Methodology of mainstreaming; Women and information society; Challenges of the globalisation of markets; Integration of gender aspects and ecological issues; Involvement of children, young and older people in planning; and Multicultural dialogues between North and South.

The plenaries and main workshops will be translated into French. A methodological toolkit for involving women in local and regional development will be prepared for

and tested at the Conference through workshops run by Christine Booth, Rose Gilroy and Liisa Horelli.

A Joyful Polyphony to Decision Making

Ms Sirpa Pietikäinen, MP and the President of the Conference, exclaims in the invitation: "The aim of the EuroFEM network is to bring into decision making a joyful polyphony which is open to the beauty and different shades of life. EuroFEM also tries to raise awareness of the diversity of women and men and the necessity to empower them with tools for participation. It is more important to be able to listen and to ask questions than to give the "right" answers. The EuroFEM conference wants to provide a forum where women's multiple talents can meet and be channelled into innovative solutions for improvement of local and regional development."

Further information:

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E-mail: info@tsgcongress.fi

www.htk.fi/hm/Eurofem



BALTIC LOCAL AGENDA 21 CONFERENCE

The European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign will hold four regional conferences in 1998 and 1999. One of these will be arranged in Turku, Finland, on 3 - 5 September 1998. The conference will focus on the implementation of Baltic 21 at local level, fulfil the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign and bring into focus the health aspect in local sustainable development. The target group for the conference are administrators and politicians from the cities, ministries and other authorities as well as NGO's and other interested organisations. Thanks to financial support from the EU and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment it will be easier for representatives from eastern cities to take part in the conference. On the last day of the conference a study tour to the Åland Islands will be arranged.

Call for Papers

Since the conference will focus on local level work and issues relevant from the cities point of view, the Commission on Environment is encouraging the UBC's member cities to suggest case studies to be presented at the conference. Please send your suggestions to the Commission on Environment Secretariat in Turku before 15 April. You are also welcome to contact the Secretariat and discuss possible ideas and topics for the conference.

The UBC will organise the conference in cooperation with the City of Turku, Association of Finnish Local Authorities, European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign, The Finnish Ministry of the Environment, ICLEI and WHO.

Further information:

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GDAŃSK AND LOCAL AGENDA

Gdańsk, in comparison with many other regions of Poland, has today relatively good environmental conditions. Some reduction in the number of tourists visiting the city has been caused by a false but prevalent opinion about Gdańsk as an area of ecological danger. In the 70's the bay was dirty and beaches were closed. A lot has been done later on, and today the city's environmental policy is quite advanced.

The Heritage of Past Decades

Political and economical changes in the early 80s entailed a mentality change in the Polish society. The economy entered a new phase, which after 40 years of another rule wasn't easy to start. Also the attitudes about environmental protection had to change. During the previous 40 years not much attention was paid to the dangers to the environment. The most important thing was production. There were neither money for ecologically friendly investments nor for environmental protection.

The Early 90's - Getting Started

Since 1991 the Environmental Protection and Agriculture Department in Gdańsk's City Hall has been publishing an annual report on the state of environment in the region. Analysis of data included in these reports give an idea on the city's development and activities taken by enterprises in order to act in an ecologically friendly way. According to the data collected by the department, the state of environment in the region improves every year.

In 1992 work on ecological policy really begun. The action wasn't called Local Agenda 21 as we didn't know it yet. We were discussing ecological priorities and proposal of working out the ecological policy with City Council, different social groups, Commission of Environmental Protection, agriculture associations, trade unions, professional groups, enterprises, scientists and ecologists. Based on the results of these discussions ecological policy for the region has been worked out.

Plans and Resolutions - Towards Agenda 21



The environmental policy of Gdańsk is being led in accordance with short-, medium- and long-term plans as well as in accordance with the Resolution of the City Council on Environmental policy dated 20th July 1993. Following the resolution we have issued Local Agenda 21 brochure in 1995. This part of the information process accomplished the first step in our LA 21 process. At the end of 1996 we have issued Environmental Quality Assessment - Changes in 1991 - 1996". This report is also a part of carrying out the Local Agenda 21.

Dialogue with Citizens

In September 1996 the second step begun: verification of the policy with the needs of the citizens. We started the dialogue with citizens living on Sobieszewska Island. At the moment being we are organising meetings in several districts of the City. Thanks to these meetings we will be better informed about problems which people living in the districts expect to be solved.

The dialogue is a very important part of the LA 21 process. We will do our best in order to meet our citizens' needs. We find the meetings the best way of getting in touch with as many citizens as possible. Having their opinion we will do the analysis of needs and effects, after which the third edition of Local Agenda 21 will be prepared and published.

Further information:

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LOCAL AGENDA PROCESS IN LAHTI

Local Agenda 21 really started in 1993-94 with a partnership between many NGOs, some enterprises and city of Lahti. The aims are to develop strategies and carry out pilot projects which lead to a long term sustainable development. Lahti has the biggest experience in developing of Local Agenda process in Finland.

The objectives of Lahti Environmental Forum have been:

- to make sustainable development a matter of everyone, at home, work and leisure
- to work out an action and participation-oriented Local Agenda 21 for the Lahti Area by the year 1996
- to activate wide sectors of society in order to participate in sustainable development

Today Local Agenda process is made together by Lahti, St. Petersburg and Leningrad oblast, These cities are starting „The Local Agenda 21 Forum” on the Baltic Sea Region. Naturally UBC is involved in this process.

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Danish UBC Cities met in Aalborg

The UBC Member Cities of Denmark held their first National Meeting on Friday, March 20th, 1998 upon the invitation of the city of Aalborg. The discussions focused mainly on UBC strategies and policies. The importance to further develop UBC to a modern and effective organisation was stressed. It was decided to carry out Danish UBC National Meetings once a year in the future.



THE GLASS PALACE IN HELSINKI - OLD BAZAAR TURNED INTO A MEDIA CENTRE

The Glass Palace Film and Media Centre (Lasipalatsi) in Helsinki has been nominated an Urban Pilot project for the years 1997 - 1999 by the EU. With a total cost of 6,5 million ECU's the project will turn this old temporary bazaar building into a proud showcase of modern Finnish information society.

A Mixture of Good Ideas

In EU's decision to support the project with 2,7 million ECU's a special emphasis was put on innovation, combination of urban culture and historical aspects, preservation of architectural heritage, utilisation of information technology and cooperation of the public and private sectors. In its future use the Glass Palace will offer a lot to many. Innovative multimedia and network companies will use it as a testing ground for new technologies, big media companies will be there to get in the middle of the people, it will give the citizens a free access to the networks. And indeed, the primary aim of the project is to find new functions for a historical building.

A Remarkable Building in the Right Place

The Glass Palace was built in 1935 as a temporary bazaar building. Now, after decades of dispute, it is one of the most prominent examples of functionalist architecture in the center of Helsinki. Across the street is the completely new Museum of Modern Arts, a block away an old Olympic building, Tennis Palace, which is going to be an Ethnographic Museum and Movie Centre. In the early years of the next millennium the neighbouring bus terminal square is going to be rebuilt into a new business and shopping centre. Hundreds of thousands of citizens will then pass the Glass Palace every day, and many of them will not just pass by.

Further information:

Mr Kimmo Lehtonen
Communications Planner
City of Helsinki Cultural Office
<http://lasipalatsi.lib.hel.fi>



BALTIC BEETLE TOUR



Old automobile lovers from Elbląg arrange the brave excursions around the Baltic Sea. The route includes 31 UBC member cities. They would like to visit all of them.

The club is preparing the trip that join together the automobile achievement with coming into new contacts with the similar environments around the whole Europe. "Beetle Club Elbląg" already cooperates with similar organisations in Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Czech Republic. The Baltic Sea Region, although politically divided for many years, is of very coherent culture. The next trip, which will either have the features and advantages of the tourist experience and will create the friendly network between the automobile clubs in the neighbour countries.

After the last tour in 1997 - Garbitour Atlantic - to the Atlantic coast on French-Spain border the club worked out a very effective travelling system for up to 10 cars (max. 30 persons). The extensive route of the trips requires driving for 500 km/ a day. Besides, there are also foreseen few days for visiting the most interesting places and cities as well as taking part in the automobile events, held on the way of the trip.

The course of new excursion will be reported by the international monthlies such as German "VW Scene International" and French "Super VW Magazine". The results of the trip will be showed on the fairs and the "Motor Scene" exhibition in Dortmund (Germany). Also Polish northern broadcastings are open for the initiatives.

Further information:

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BALTIC MEETING POINT

Baltic Meeting Point is the new meeting place for discussion of important issues concerning sustainable community development in the Baltic Region – sustainable in an ecological, social and economic sense.

Here researchers and representatives of society and industry are able to meet and forge contacts leading to new products and shared research and development projects. Baltic Meeting Point demonstrates good ideas which participants may be inspired to put into practice back home and initiates a process which brings dynamism and new networks to the region.

Baltic Meeting Point comprises interesting workshops, exhibitions and cultural events. This year the workshops will address the interplay between town and countryside, water issues and energy. Presentations address new solutions, the ways in which new technologies can both affect and be affected by democratic and socio-cultural processes, as well as health and the environment. The event will also demonstrate how new ideas can be converted into profitable products through entrepreneurship and skilled decision making. It all adds up to an important meeting of research, industry and society.

The three days will conclude with a summary by participating students. The process will then continue in the form of projects, run by various groups of participants, which may be reported on at subsequent meetings.

To form a creative atmosphere, time has been set aside for discussions and meetings where participants can seek cooperation partners. The programme also includes cultural events, exhibitions and social activities.

The finer details are down to the participants, who will be drawn from the entire Baltic Region. Together with the organisers and local industry, they are the force which will create Baltic Meeting Point's image and the factors for its success.

Further information

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ATTENTION Member Cities !!!

The theme of the next bulletin will be 'EDUCATION IN BALTIC CITIES' and everyone is welcomed to send material to be published in it. The deadline for your contributions is September 7, 1998 - please respect it!

The Editorial Board wishes following contributions to the bulletin:

- Stories related to the theme
- Short news about activities in the cities
- Vivid and creative photographs to the stories

Please do not hesitate to contact the UBC secretariat in any questions relating to the Baltic Cities Bulletin!

EDITORIAL BOARD

