



COMMISSION ON URBAN PLANNING

ACTIVITY REPORT 2010-2011

Meetings

Seminar in Tampere, 14-17 April 2010

The Tampere seminar theme "Edges of the City Centre and Reuse of Traffic Areas" concentrated on an acute question in many cities, namely increasing the density of city centres and avoiding urban sprawl. Also climate change and sustainability in urban planning were taken into account in the seminar programme, as Mr Oras Tynkkynen, the Finnish Government Climate Policy Specialist, gave a presentation on urban planning in low-carbon societies.

The seminar workshops concentrated on two traffic areas: the first workshop on a lake shore area next to a busy highway that needs to be connected to the urban structure, and the another workshop on the reuse of the former railway cargo station area. The City of Tampere is planning big investments in the form of a tunnel and a new sports and concert arena to improve the areas, and the workshops made their own proposals for increasing the city density in those areas. The former traffic areas and creating new use to them is a common problem in many Baltic cities. Also, an important part of the seminar has always been the exchange of experiences between professional urban planners. This time there were 37 seminar participants from 21 cities in Russia, Scandinavian countries, Baltic countries, Poland and Germany.

Seminar in Šiauliai, 7 - 9 October 2010

Like many North European cities, Šiauliai is suffering from loss of inhabitants. One of the aims of the CUP seminar "Visions for an Attractive City and City Centre" was to find ways to increase the attractiveness of the city and to discuss how urban planning could help the city to keep its present inhabitants and possibly even increase the number of population.

The seminar concentrated on finding good examples of positive urban development. There were very interesting presentations from Hamburg, Odense and Umeå, where the local administration's active approach to solving problems has led to fine results despite the economic and political difficulties. One of the main conclusions was that the cities active in finding ways to solve their problems are the ones that survive. Seeking financial possibilities together with private enterprises and different state or EU programs has made possible to carry out ambitious projects.

The seminar workshops focused on creating new use for the former Frenkelis leather factory area and on developing the city centre and the surroundings of the pedestrian street. There were lots of useful proposals for renovating old industrial buildings for education, culture, NGOs purposes and apartments, and for creating new parks, pedestrian and biking routes, light and new places of attraction for inhabitants. There were 36 participants from 18 cities and 8 countries in the Šiauliai seminar.

Seminar in Växjö, 11 -13 April 2011

CUP had its 23rd seminar "Innovative Districts" in Växjö. Already for 15 years the city of Växjö has been working for environmentally friendly urban development. That is why the seminar participants visited the wooden multi-storey housing complex on the waterfront of Trummen Lake. There were also lots of other interesting practical solutions to see for planners working with the questions of sustainable urban development.

The seminar workshops concentrated on Samarkand, an industrial and commercial area that needs certain updating, and the Trummen area with the Linné University and the wooden multi-storey housing project. The community feels these areas are placed apart from the city centre and thus the urban structure needs improvement. That is why the ideas of the CUP network of urban planners were appreciated. There was Mr Martin Möller from the Århus University's Alexandra Institute to tell about how business life and university meet and inspire each other for new development. Ms Sidsel Jensen from the Gehl Architects gave an inspiring presentation about Samarkand, another workshop focus area. The workshops resulted in many new proposals for future urban development, including new housing and business building possibilities and cooperation with the university researchers.

45 participants from 20 cities and 8 Baltic countries took part in the seminar.

Seminar in Tartu, 19-21 September 2011

The 24th CUP seminar "Planning the History and Future in Consonance" was in Tartu in September 2011. Tartu is often considered the intellectual and cultural hub of Estonia, especially since it is home to Estonia's oldest university from 1632. The historical elements of the Tartu city centre make it a very attractive city for its residents, university students and tourists, but the pressure to attract business life is also considerable like all over the Baltic Sea region. How to combine the historical features with modern commercial needs combining the values of the old and bringing new ideas, was the theme of the seminar.

Together with the late 1700's and 1800's empiric style old town the seminar participants visited unique large wooden housing areas Karlova and Supilinn. There were also special lectures from Denmark and Sweden about how to support city centres' commercial activities and keeping city centres the real, alive centres they should be, taking into account both city inhabitants' social behaviour and traffic needs.

The seminar workshops concentrated on finding creative, good-quality solutions of combining historical city landscape with the needs of business life and creating modern attractions that the city needs to maintain its vigorous spirit.

The Tartu seminar had nearly 60 participants from 23 cities and 9 countries.

Coming seminars in 2012

The Commission on Urban Planning will have its 25th seminar in Halmstad, Sweden, in May 2012 together with the Commission on Environment.

In autumn 2012 the CUP will have a seminar in Elblag, Poland.

Changes in the CUP Steering Committee

In the end of 2010, Mr Lars-Göran Boström from Umea left the CUP Steering Committee due to getting ahead on his career. Instead, Mrs Isabella Forsgren from Umea joined the Steering Committee.

After the Tartu seminar in September 2011 Mrs Sirpa Kallio left her position as the Chairman of the CUP and a member of the Steering Committee due to getting ahead on her career. Mr Niels-Peter Mohr Nielsen was appointed as the new CUP Chairman.

At the end of 2011 the Steering Committee of the Commission on Urban Planning has altogether 4 members: Mrs Mara Liepa-Zemesa from Riga, Mr Marek Karzyński from Gdynia, Mrs Isabella Forsgren from Umea and Mr Niels-Peter Mohr from Aarhus as the chairman of the Commission.

ACTION PLAN 2012-2013

The Commission on Urban Planning (CUP) is a network of professional planners, researchers, architects, engineers and sociologists around the Baltic Sea Region.

CUP

- Wants to keep Baltic Sea Region cities on the map of Europe and the world by supporting local planners' professional skills and sharing knowledge
- Supports city servants in their work of building better cities, increases awareness of urban planning, architecture and construction

Also in the activity period of 2012-2013 CUP will have the following goals in its activities:

- Better quality of life in cities in the Baltic Sea Region
- Positive economic development in cities by initiating dialogue between city residents, private (commercial& industrial) and public sectors
- Sustainable development in the Baltic Sea cities

Urban planning and construction that reflects the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the cities is a tool to achieve these goals.

The Commission on Urban Planning will have its 25th seminar in Halmstad, Sweden, in May 2012 together with the Commission on Environment.

In autumn 2012 the CUP will have a seminar in Elblag, Poland. Also, there are preliminary plans of arranging a seminar in Umeå in 2013.

In the future the Commission on Urban Planning still tries to follow the principle of not collecting seminar participation fees.