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*Welcome to the General
Conference in Pärnu
27-28 September 2007*

*Culture as a Driving Force
for Municipal Development*



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COVER PICTURE
The city of Pärnu
Estonia

Baltic Cities Bulletin

Dear UBC friends!

The IX General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities is approaching. This time we will meet in Pärnu, Estonia, on 27-28 September 2007 to discuss the most burning questions of our times. The main three themes of the Conference will be: climate change – cities' response, culture as a driving force for municipal development and involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society.



In recent years the question of how to prevent the climate change and all consequences it implicates has been one of the most often asked on the governmental and the international level. However, setting the ambitious targets and creating special policies on energy or climate protection is not enough. It is time for local authorities to consider their role in this process, as their commitment seems to be essential for success. What exactly can they do to prevent or reduce the consequences of the climate change? The participants of our Conference will be discussing the effectiveness of different tools and actions such as reduction of CO₂ emissions, use of friendly renewable energy, more efficient use of energy, etc. Moreover, the conference will provide a forum for exchanging ideas on how to prepare the cities for negative effects of climate change, like the raise of sea level.

The UBC is also going to attract the participants' attention to the youth problems. Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society will focus on the question how the economy and society can benefit from the interaction with young people. The Union is of the opinion that the youth is a valuable resource for the development of cities and the whole Baltic Sea Region. The participation of young people brings new dimensions, perspectives and expertise in the municipal work. I have no doubt that the increased dialogue and improved communication with this group of citizens should be one of the main tasks of the local authorities. The Youth Conference organised at the same time as the UBC General Conference will hopefully let the young meet and discuss with the decision-makers.

The next theme, culture as a driving force for municipal development, will provide the opportunity to present the new dimension of the urban development policies. This issue of the Bulletin devoted to this topic shall be a great basis for further discussion on how the inclusion of the cultural perspective into the local strategies influences the city's growth. Interesting articles clearly show that the cultural climate of the city, its tolerant, vibrant atmosphere, diversity of lifestyles and variety of art-scenes are crucial to attract people and businesses.

Welcome to the IX UBC General Conference!

Per Bødker Andersen
President of UBC

Kolding, May 2007



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Cultural climate of the city attracts people and business



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I. CULTURE AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

CULTURE DEVELOPS

The culture and creative industry is a growing sector in Europe. The sectors' growth in 1999-2003 was 12.3 % higher than the growth of the general economy in the EU-30. In 2004, 5.8 million people worked in the sector equivalent to 33.1% of the total employed population in EU-25, more than the total amount of employed in Ireland and Greece put together.

(Source: "The Economy of Culture in Europe", EU Commission)



Dear UBC Friends,

Any city with ambitions to grow and develop has to create new functional platforms for cultural activities. Meeting points such as theatres, operas, public libraries and other institutions within the cultural field have a significant

historical value, but are not the only tools for a creative and innovative society. Within the terms of democracy, broad cultural engagement will always be the most important engine for a sustainable change in society.

The heart of cultural activities must be always established among the citizens. Smaller cells with specific interests create networks and communities for larger institutional work. To maintain a high level of quality in the cultural field the society needs input and support from smaller groups and constellations. Since the word "culture" has a very broad definition, it is necessary to build a cultural framework that is relevant for the citizens. Otherwise, big cultural investments can never be truly successful in the long run.

The strategy of a city should therefore be to strengthen not only the core arts field, but to develop the city within sports and leisure, infrastructure, communications, city development and the quality of life.

According to the World Commission on Culture and Development, economic development is a part of the people's culture. Development stands not only for access to goods and services, it is also the possibility of wanting to live a satisfying and valuable life together with other people. Development of a city is dependent on strengthened creativity, increased attractiveness of the city, and a strong identity.

*C*reativity

Creativity is the basis for social and economic innovation. Creativity is the ability to develop new ideas and new ways of regarding the surroundings. Creativity is encouraged in an environment where



you can meet people with different sets of minds, different backgrounds and different languages. Measures within this area, e. g. new places to meet, variety of

art-venues, development of trust, mobility, encouraging new networks, diversity of life-styles, etc., contribute to the development of new ways of thinking and entrepreneurship. The culture sector is the engine of creativity. It encourages new ways of thinking, understanding and expressing ourselves.



Attractivity

A city must be attractive to its citizens and also involve creative people to build an attractive and prosperous environment for living. A rich cultural life contributes to a higher quality of life, develops our creativity, thereby helping us define our identities. A rich cultural life and a lively cultural environment contribute to attract business and people to a city/ region. Investing money in the cultural sector has been and still is a safe way to develop a municipality.

Identity

Today is the way people regard their regional and local environment more important than it used to be. All citizens have input from the entire world every day. Relevant questions should be: What is my identity? Which culture do I belong to? We know which language we speak, we know which religion and which ethnical group we belong to, but do we know our cultural historical heritage?



We live in a global world, but every human being has a need of finding his/her identity. We have a desire of feeling "at home" somewhere, searching for a cultural connection. The city has to attract people and to give its citizens their identity. Being aware of their heritage, people can find their identity.

Today people have other sets of values and life patterns that are different from those, say 50 years ago. People generally have higher level of education and international experiences and these facts have changed our demands on life quality. The high level of education has also led to a situation where people are thinking critically and questioning society. At the same time education, work and well-being are taken for granted by most. This is why people have greater needs of personal realization and a sense of identity.

ICT

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is an important tool to develop the communicative function of culture and its accessibility. In the independent study, commissioned by the European Commission, published on 13 November 2006, there is a recommendation to realise the Lisbon potential. It suggests we should agree

that the EU budget should focus as much on creativity as on innovation. We must focus on the digital shift to make the most of opportunities field by technological innovation. The use of ICT is a very helpful tool for sharing ideas and various results, especially for cities situated in the periphery.

In this field, it is important to see the creative structure. Art, performances and cultural artefacts can be very helpful in order to develop new and innovative technical solutions. At the same time, digital research will be very useful for cultural implementations.

As a reminder, the word art and technique is in its purest forms synonyms. Art and the Latin word Ars are translations from the Greek word Techne. The shoemaker used one specific technique and the sculptor another.

It is a great challenge we are facing, but it is very stimulating to have the opportunity to work with the development of the city. The UBC is a great network where we can meet new people who will give us new innovative ideas that will develop Europe!

Marie-Louise Rönnmark
Mayor, City of Umeå
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TOWARDS THE TITLE OF CAPITAL OF CULTURE

by Ms Madeleine Evers

The specific impact of cultural policy is dependent on implementation by creative individuals, groups and networks.

Kalmar, is striving towards sustainable development, both cultural, economic, and environmental. This goal connects divergent interests and fills the so

The Program for Regional Development for Kalmar Region clearly states that the future of cities and regions is increasingly dependent on the ability to attract creative individuals. The task of local government is to establish favourable conditions, both economic and cultural, for all segments of society. Economic development that leads to exclusion and social segregation is not sustainable.

called "grey zone" between culture and the business community with a common purpose. More creativity exists in the business sector than is identified. Economic interests, though often unacknowledged, are the driving force in cultural projects. Building cultural bridges and creating meetings across borders is the city's goal in the "European Capital of Culture" project, a title towards which Kalmar Region aspires. The strong

connection to our Baltic neighbours is highly valued and we look forward to cooperation with Riga in this process. The significance of our joint participation will reach far beyond 2014. It will make a lasting contribution to European cultural interaction, sustainable development and the quality of life. In Kalmar, as in whole Sweden, cultural issues have long held a position of prominence on

the political agenda. The traditionally close ties with UN Conventions concerning human rights, the fight against poverty, promotion of cultural diversity and youth and gender equality issues ensure a particularly egalitarian focus in cultural policy making. The economic effects of these policies must be seen in terms of long term contribution rather than specific impact alone. 'Culture' is a concept, with wide ranging implications, which not only refers to the above but encompasses all of the Arts.

Cultural production in the form of 'cultural goods' is indisputably a part of the marketplace and a substantial

contributor to economic growth, as is the cultural service sector. In Kalmar Region cultural goods and services are predominantly linked to existing preconditions, such as cultural heritage and agrarian lifestyle providing urban population with recreational opportunities and attracting investment in cultural tourism. It is evident that 'quality of life' in Kalmar not only has significance for tourism and social sustainability, but also attracts corporate investment. Much publicized recent venture by the Chinese corporation Fanerdun Group in a "Wholesale Commodities Trade Centre" in Kalmar testifies to this fact. It is a sizable economic boost for Kalmar, but it also enriches our architectural and cultural landscape. In cooperation with the region of Changxing in China a "China Culture Week" is planned in 2008.

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FROM PRISON TOWN TO CULTURAL PEARL

by Ms Maia Lindstroem
Sejersen and Mr Ole Wolf

Only 7 years ago the Danish provincial town Horsens, was a dark spot on the map. Horsens was known for the large state prison and a high crime rate. Its bad reputation caused problems for the local businesses, which had problems in attracting skilled labour. Nobody wanted to move here. Today Horsens has turned into a blooming cultural town with international performers, exciting cultural events, newcomers and a booming business development.

In 2002, 52% of the Danish said, "State Prison" when asked about Horsens. In 2006, 53% replied "culture" when asked the same question. During the last couple of years the population has been growing with 1.000 new citizens each year. It has taken many years of hard, determined work and cooperation to turn the image around.

In the 90's, the town agreed to host three large sport and cultural events

with only a few year interval. The events made thousands flock to Horsens. The preparation and processing of the events got the whole community involved. The local associations and clubs, emergency and security forces, the municipality, business community, retail trade and tourist association – everybody contributed to make the events run smoothly. This generated four annual festivals, each attracting a large audience: a Medieval Festival,

Children's Theatre Festival, Crime Novels Festival and Classical Music Festival. 13 managing directors of local businesses agreed to form a sponsoring club with the purpose of attracting large, international artists to perform in Horsens. Bob Dylan was the first, later followed Joe Cocker, Tom Jones, Robbie

Williams, Bryan Adams, David Bowie, Elton John, Paul McCartney, Rolling Stones, Madonna and Dolly Parton. Horsens became famous as a provincial town with great concerts.



On 3 September 2006, the Rolling Stones gave a concert in Horsens, for an audience of 85.000 people. A huge task for a town with only 58.000 inhabitants.

"World of Crime" is the latest project that involves the old - now empty state prison. The plan is to convert the historic prison dating back to 1853 into an international tourist attraction. The town once famous for its prison will now be

famous for a cultural attraction.

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by Ms Marta Jaskulska

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

The main thesis of its culture policy is focused on using cultural and historical heritage to make Gdansk worth the name of European Capital of Culture in 2016. A thousand years of history and beautiful scenery linked with bright lights, lively clubs, galleries, concerts – that all makes the unforgettable atmosphere.

Gdansk stands for the music. Here you can find everything - from classical pieces of Mozartiana, Gdansk Music Spring, Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival, Saint John's Opera Festival, through street musicians, to David Gilmour or Jean Michelle Jarre shows. Gdansk is famous for its theaters – Shakespeare's Festival and the Festival of Street Theaters FETA. At first sight you may see that this vast variety of cultural events is soundly united with the vision of the future.

Similar thought lies at the basics of the revitalization of the historical city districts. The best example is the Gdansk'

Music Congress Centre on the Olowianka Island, close to the Old Town. The new Baltic Philharmonic is a group of buildings of the former thermal power plant from the end of 19th century and the monumental Royal Granary built in 1606. The success of this project relies



on the rapid growth of music lovers.

The Center of Contemporary Art Łaznia is another cultural institution. The Łaznia, Academy of Music, Academy of Fine Arts and National Museum, are all located in the Lower City, a district with long history and social problems such as unemployment and social pathologies. The Łaznia is also a project incorporated in the revitalization. This project can be described in three ideas: identity, public spirit and openness. Lower city district, being a great place for artistic activity, will be more attractive thanks to such institutions as the Outdoor Gallery.

The problem of the enormous areas of the former shipyard is historically tied with the Solidarity Movement from the 80's of 20th century. At the present time you can find several cultural initiatives there, such as Institute of Art Wyspa and a group of young off-theaters. In five

years the new center of the city will be established with the most important building of the European Center of Solidarity – a place where culture com-

bines with history, the present with the future. The impact of the culture is used not only to develop tourist industry, but mainly to attract people to settle down in Gdansk and to improve the quality of citizens' life.

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by Ms Liina Penttilä

FROM eTAMPERE TO CREATIVE TAMPERE

Tampere is an international growth centre with good services, expertise, and creativity. This lively city has been voted the most attractive place to live and to study in Finland. The region's success has been influenced greatly by the top research, solid education and availability of skilled



The old Finlayson factory has turned into a place for creative businesses. Photo by Ville Saha

professionals.

For many decades, Tampere has been recognised internationally for its bold new initiatives aimed at business. Recently completed successful work of the five-year eTampere Programme

transformed Tampere decisively into the world's leading city in the research, development, and application of the 'knowledge society'. In Finnish terms, Tampere is also home to a significant cultural industry and content development cluster. Thanks to time and money invested in this field, there is a great potential for culture to become even more important production factor and pilot of economic growth in the area.

Creative Tampere is the city's new business development policy programme, for implementation in 2006–2011. The programme has been divided into three theme areas: cultural industry, service innovations and structures for creativity.

The main target of the programme is to create new jobs in these selected areas by promoting interaction between representatives of different sectors to develop new creative concepts. It also

provides financial support for changes and modernisation in existing jobs. The

- Targets for the Programme's content:**
- to generate new national and international success stories
 - to strengthen the cultural industry
 - to create new technology-based services
 - to improve the basic environment for creativity

resulting successes will enhance the recognition and image of Tampere Region. Creative Tampere takes a very hands-on

approach in its implementation. All project ideas, project implementation, and administration originate with the parties directly involved.

Tampere is the programme originator and acts as a facilitator, in addition to formulating the concepts and setting targets for them. The implementers are enterprises, research and educational institutions, and associations and other organisations.

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by Mr Rainer Pasternak

BUILDING THE WAY

City development has always been strongly influenced by commercial forces. The increasing importance of tourism in the last years for the economy of cities in the Baltic Sea Region has led to the increasing importance of cultural facilities in city development.

Thousands of visitors come to Kiel daily through the newly built Norwegian and Cruise and Ferry Terminals. The length of their visit lasts on average eight hours. Instead of the visitors leaving to visit nearby towns and tourist areas, Kiel wants to offer visitors an attractive cultural program that will



photo: Landeshauptstadt Kiel/3-pix/Schaller

encourage them to stay in the city to visit the museums and galleries. Visiting these places and then going shopping and eating in restaurants will then lead to economic development of the city.

The city has created a new project proposal that entails these mentioned ideas. New cultural opportunities will be built right in the vicinity of the new terminal facilities. A new marine science centre is being planned to be built near the Norway Terminal as a magnet for passengers from Oslo and Gothenburg. The shipping museum nearby has the same purpose for the cruise ship passengers. To connect these two facilities on opposite sides of the harbour, a new ferry connection will be implemented. This ferry will close the ring-formed path between all of the dif-

ferent cultural offerings that are found near the terminals.

Further, a foot path to link Kiel's Old City to the museum ring will be created. The path will lead from the Shipping Museum to the Warleberger House (17th century noble house). From there the visitors will have the possibility to go to the pedestrian shopping area or farther.

The financing of this concept will come from the city and EU grants, but mostly it will come from businesses that are on the harbour side.

The combination of cultural projects and facilities with commercial developments will ensure the future of cultural facilities of Kiel and help business.

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by Ms Anu Kivilo

EVERLASTING FAIRY TALE

Tallinn is taking the Capital of Culture process as an opportunity to place the entire city's space into cultural service, proving that a small society built on a strong cultural foundation can be as much a success as that of larger nations. In being the European Capital of Culture in 2011, Tallinn is eager to celebrate the level of maturity it has attained after gaining independence in 1991. As a free city, it has re-discovered itself and gained the self-confidence to move boldly towards the future. The original objectives of the European Capital of Culture seem purpose-designed for Tallinn, despite the fact that its creators could neither foresee the enlargement of the European Union nor Estonia becoming a member state. Tallinn acknowledges the fact that being a new member on the European map it can attract suspicion from some of the older members. To many Europeans Tallinn is still more like a mysterious fairy tale than a reality.

As the Capital of Culture, Tallinn has the following primary objectives:

– creating urban environment that focuses on fostering development of the

citizens' creative activity and initiative, as well as allocating infrastructure and investments to accommodate the increasing cultural needs of citizens;

- creating guidelines for a creative economy that integrates with Tallinn's business community and becomes a part of the city's overall trademark;
- promoting cultural communication between Estonia's arts community and that of other nations in Europe, developing new projects and cooperation in order to make Tallinn an open, multicultural city, while building the finance and development plans for existing and future public events.
- ensuring Tallinn's recognition as an essential and important market and an attractive destination for cultural tourists.

Never before two European Capitals of Culture have been located so closely together geographically, historically and culturally. Tallinn and Turku can change the Gulf of Finland into the unique Cultural Sea.



Upon completion of the program, Tallinn will possess infrastructure and supporting systems designed to empower the city well into the

future, far beyond its tenure as the European Capital of Culture. Working its way back to the European cultural map will require a flow of people, finance and ideas. And the honour of being European Capital of Culture 2011 is only one part of the long journey.

In 2011 Tallinn follows the slogan "Everlasting Fairy Tale," suggesting that the impossible is possible and that dreams can come true in 2011. The city itself will be bridging the gap between what is real and what was once considered fantasy.

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CULTURAL PROJECTS IN KLAIPĖDA



by Ms Goda Giedraitytė

Today traditional understanding of culture policy (leisure activity, artistic expression, preservation of heritage, etc.) in the context of the European Union is changing. It opens new possibilities to develop international relations, induce creative innovations (especially creative industries), to use European financial programmes, and to evaluate influence of culture on social and economic city development.

Changing environment and evaluation of today's cultural situation led to approval of Klaipėda Culture Policy by the City Council in December of 2005. It determines main priority trends and principles of the city culture development for the upcoming six years (2007-2012). Among them, there are such goals as Creation of Attractive Environment for Artistic Expression, which includes formation of new public spaces for cultural needs, presentation

of Klaipėda culture on international and regional scale, and stimulation of cultural innovations, and Extension of Culture Impact on Economical City Development, including development of cultural tourism, expansion of possibilities to develop creative industries, collaboration between cultural and business sectors.

While achieving these goals, Klaipėda is fulfilling several projects that will propose new areas for cultural activities, create employment opportunities, attract tourists, and thus influence economic development of the city.

Today's social-economical situation, cultural infrastructure of the city and the appropriate usage of the existing potential and resources (heritage, natural landscapes, handicrafts, artists' community, university, etc.) leads to inevitable

reforms regarding collaboration of culture and business. First of all culture

- The project "Traditional Crafts and Arts Yard for promotion of entrepreneurship and tourism along Kurši coastline of the Baltic Sea" (EU supported programme INTERREG III B) The main goals are to reconstruct an area in the Old Town and to create quarter of arts and crafts. The opening: May, 2007.
- The project "Culture Factory" (EU Structural Funds supported). Main goals are to reconstruct an abandoned post-industrial site of Tobacco factory and to set it for new public infrastructure The dates of project realization: 2006-2010.
- Revival of the Castle area and the part of the harbour. It is planned to build a recreational zone with leisure infrastructure - hotels, bars, conference halls, etc. It is thought to be a place of public activities: concerts, meetings, etc.

policy has to become a strong integral part of the whole city development's strategy.

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IDENTITY, MULTIPLICITY AND CREATION



by Ms Ilga Cimbuļe

The cultural policy of Jēkabpils is based on three principles: local peculiarities, tendencies of global development and the satisfaction of people's needs. The target of cultural policy is to promote the identity of culture, multiplicity, creation and active participation of the citizens in the cultural life.

The cultural establishments of Jēkabpils - two recreation centres, three libraries, a museum and others, contribute to the essential needs of the inhabitants for the availability of modern culture providing informative educational process. More than 45 different level and interests groups are running in the recreation centres. The

main task of these centres is to promote the maintenance and development of nation's art traditions, as well as organization of activities for all the inhabitants.

Every year Jēkabpils plans and finances a variety of cultural activities organized not only by the cultural institutions, but also by the private and non-governmental organizations. All inhabitants have a chance to attend the educational, cultural and entertaining events to meet their interests: national holiday concerts,



conferences, exhibitions, classical music concerts, opera performances, open-air, theatre and music festivals. The libraries offer different projects,

directed towards the promotion of literature, attracting popular writers and poets.

The year of 2006 was very important

to Jēkabpils due to several remarkable events. In Struve's park, once called the Crown Garden, a memorial stone indicating meridian point was opened, now placed on the list of UNESCO World Culture Heritage. XI Latvian theatre amateur meeting assembled 40 theatre troupes with over 1600 actors from Latvia.

The local municipality finances the annual City Festival, which becomes professionally better. The Council has created a system of co-operation with the city and district municipal institutions, social organizations, societies and enterprises in order to organize the cultural life and promote wide scale events where the target is to develop creativity and individual local patriotism.

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**Kolding
Kommune**

by Ms Lise
Thomsen

and Mr Stefan B. Andersen

DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL LIFE

In Kolding we see the cultural attractions as a very important factor in developing the municipality. The city also believes that development of its cultural life and a stronger cultural profile externally would support the overall development of the municipality by way of increased population as well as business activity. This goes hand in glove with our industrial policy of establishing the municipality of Kolding as the number one growth centre in Denmark.

Our cultural policy states that the municipality aims at securing diversity, quality and varied cultural attractions and experiences for every inhabitant. This is considered as a way of enhancing the quality of life for each individual.

Cultural attractions are seen as a very wide category, including e.g. theatres, museums, outdoor concerts and other happenings, sport stadiums, swimming pools and libraries, as well as a lively downtown area. We intend to create an interesting, harmonious town centre with a mixture of shopping venues, cultural attractions, educational offers,

businesses and public residences. In the same spirit, happenings and events in public areas are used to create a lively downtown. This would include initiatives such as:

- The Kolding Cartoon Festival - three days of animation – with open workshops, cartoons in the movie theatre for the public schools, a downtown parade;
- Various small concerts throughout

the town centre during the summer - Jazz, rock and pop;

- Eight major concerts with national entertainers in July and August, situated in the historic settings around downtown.

An interesting, aesthetic and well-balanced downtown will, of course, require urban preservation as well as creative development in the historic part of the city. By autumn 2007, the Nicolai cultural complex will be completed. Here, the historic buildings of an old school



Kolding Public Library enhances cultural attractions and educational offers

and the unique gathering space around the school yard will be reshaped into a modern cultural complex.

In 2006, a new Kolding Public Library was opened in the downtown as part of the policy to

enhance the cultural attractions and educational offers. The library includes a large plaza free to be used for exhibitions and several conference rooms as well as smaller meeting rooms, all free of charge. And the location of the new library certainly enhances the liveliness of the downtown area. In 2006, the number of visitors has averaged 40,000 per month.

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CULTURE - A PRIORITY FOR PALANGA

by Ms Lina Šemetulskytė

Palanga implements the cultural policy pursuant to the strategic documents of the town development, including the Strategic Development Plan of Palanga Town and Marketing Strategy of Palanga Resort. Tourist season in Palanga lasts 2 – 2,5 summer months. Culture and entertainment events are aimed at moderating the impact of seasons. In 2007, approximately 70 various cultural, sport and entertainment events are to be organised in Palanga.

For already seven years, Palanga has been allocating funds for cultural projects. Only in 2007 alone, financing was allocated to seventeen projects related to culture and arts, promoting photography,



Opening of Palanga resort season

cinema, music, painting, poetry, dance, folk art and theatre. The National Tourism Policy of Lithuania is also aimed at resolving the season problem for resorts through cultural and entertainment events. In 2006 and 2007, significant financial support from the Lithuanian Tourism Department was allocated to the resorts. As a result, cultural events were organised in Palanga that reduced the negative impact of seasons, as well as encouraged the incoming tourism, improved the image of the resort and the business environment.

Every year, the municipality publishes a calendar of events. In 2006, the resort festival, sacred music festival, Christmas and New Year events caught great interest of visitors. Events, such as the winding

music concert cycle "Summer of pipes", classical music concert cycle, festivals "Palanga summer", "Palanga seals" or "Night serenades" attract many visitors.

Additionally, cultural – heritage tourism becomes more and more popular. Palanga and the Lithuanian Art Museum, aiming at preservation of the cultural heritage object of national importance - Palanga Manor, and for conversion of the manor for cultural, tourism, educational, scientific and artistic needs, have been successively implementing the project "Complex preservation of Palanga Manor and Botanic Garden". Attractive and worthwhile attention, the route "Baltic Amber Road" (balticamberroad.net) was developed upon the initiative of Palanga.

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CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN VISBY

by Mr Olov Gibson

The Municipality of Gotland has the vision to be an attractive place which gives high quality of life. Other aims are to foster creativity and to make the culture more visible and accessible. This year, the Department of Culture and Leisure is working on a modern cultural policy being prepared in consultation with representatives of the cultural life. It will be used as a guide for cultural investments and cultural activities and for the dialogue with the national cultural authorities in Sweden about public support to the regional cultural life.

Investments in the cultural life give often back a lot of money, to the hotels, restaurants, tourist associations and other companies, which produce jobs, not only for the cultural workers. However, a living culture



Visby Wall. Photo by Lars Grönberg

needs not only its institutions, but also creative readiness for unpredictable innovations and changes. It may explain why it is easier to find sponsors for sport activities than for avant-garde cultural activities, even if cultural products have a great impact on the future economy of the society. The cultural authorities of the cities need politicians with the foresight and officials with cultural competence.

Several studies have been made to show the economic result in proportion to the number of visitors to Gotland. The positive synergy effects are large and cannot be completely mapped.

Luckily a large and growing numbers of visitors are coming to Gotland, not only because of the sun and the beaches. They want to experience the offers Gotland has as a cultural meeting place, and to meet its cultural heritage.

The strategy is to develop and exploit these resources. A tendency on Gotland is that

new companies are forming various kinds of cultural industry that creates new jobs, cooperating with the local cultural life and the professional cultural institutions which deliver cultural expressions, knowledge and advice.

This shows that the criteria for stimulating a growing economy on Gotland are not only a question of investing money. It is important for the economy of Gotland that the cultural life is given the means to exist freely on its own terms. Otherwise, the freedom of expression would be lost, as well as the public and the culturally interested tourists. Culture gives also the growing generation self-esteem and fantasy that they will need to manage difficulties and the demand for creativity. That too is economy!

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RICH CULTURE – STRONG CITY

by Ms Lindia Lallo

The 444-year old Kuressaare is a city of about 15,000 inhabitants. The cultural life is an important ingredient of developing a high standard living environment. The Development Plan of Kuressaare regards maintaining and enriching the original local cultural environment and the creative spirit as the objective of the culture policy. Culture has an important role to play in fostering the identity of the local community and in developing social networks. Both folk and professional culture is of high importance for the city. High quality and diversity of cultural life



is sustained in the cooperation of public, private and the third sectors. As Kuressaare is the biggest local government in the County of Saaremaa, culture here

plays an essential role in cultural life of the whole county.

It is important to maintain and develop the local folk culture for next generations. Thus, particular attention is paid to children, music school and art schools providing a wide range of possibilities to develop creativity and take first steps towards professional art.

As tourism is the main field of industry, efforts are taken to provide a diverse cultural life in the city round the calendar. Tourism supports culture and vice versa. The key players in the city are the Culture Centre, City Theatre, Saaremaa Museum and Central Library that is celebrating its

100th anniversary this year. Kuressaare can boast with some traditional large-scale international events, like Opera Days, Chamber Music Festival, Mari-

time Days, Castle Music, etc. A variety of concerts of different music styles, like folk music, choral singing, jazz, chamber or opera music, are significant. In art galleries pieces of local and foreign artists are exhibited, folk and modern dance performed by local, and visiting groups allow people to enjoy themselves.

Physical culture is an essential part of cultural life. During the recent years the city has invested a lot in developing facilities for active living and sports. The Sports Hall, launched two years ago, hosts concerts, shows and performances next to sports competitions. For open-air activities walking, running and cycling trails have been built. Kuressaare is keen to follow the "Healthy mind in healthy body" policy.

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by Ms Karin Moder

CULTURAL GDYNIA

Within the last four years there has been a major change in the quality of Gdynia's cultural offer both in the context of organisation and preparation as well as contents and artistic value. What has basically changed is that Gdynia as a city has become a cultural product. Persistence in identity building as a city open to new modern events and young dynamic artists has resulted not only in interesting projects but first and foremost has made Gdynia a magnet attracting artists and culture organisers.

Gdynia has become a city of festivals and regular competitions, the most important one being Open'er Festival considered by the international press to be one of the 6 major music festivals in Europe. A



nationwide Modern Theatre Festival Report – a review of the best Polish modern plays marks new quality of theatre life in the city. For 7 days it turns Gdynia into country's theatre capital. Gdynia is also a co-organiser of the Polish Film Festival. Owing to a rich programme of accompanying events the festival has evolved from

a branch event into a film feast of the whole city. In 2006 the Literary Award "Gdynia" was initiated. It is presented in three categories to the best literary works on the Polish publishing market within the last year. The press hailed it as prestigious even before it was presented for the first time.

These and other festivals or competitions as well as municipal events have led to Gdynia's regular presence in the media in the last four years. Thanks to live

broadcasts of concerts, live programmes as well as press and radio coverage Gdynia has gained the opinion of a place where there is always a lot going on in all fields of cultural life.

Today Gdynia may choose from a wide range of cultural offers each year directed to the city. There have also appeared many projects of young artists for whom Gdynia is a safe haven. In the summer time hardly any week or even day passes without an interesting cultural event. Event organisers, aware of this fact, reserve dates in Gdynia calendar even one year in advance. Thanks to this the cultural offer of Gdynia prepared for both the inhabitants and tourists is a wide and diverse one.

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by Mr Mikael Karikoski and Ms Leena Ritala

VITAL CITY OF CULTURE

Järvenpää has an unique cultural history and identity. It is a melting pot of old and modern innovative culture and attractive to both national and international visitors.

The strategic vision of Järvenpää - "Vital City of Culture" mainstreams culture as a horizontal priority in all urban development measures. Culture is not only the source of well-being of citizens, but a source of well-being of business life too. Cultural industry, cultural tourism, export of local culture, and cultural education are the key-words of development processes.

The cultural house, Järvenpää Hall, offers rooms for concerts, conferences and for all type of meetings. Among the most important cultural attractions and festivals in Järvenpää there are: AINOLA – Home of Composer Jean Sibelius, Järvenpää Art Museum, AHOLA – Home of Writer Juhani Aho and his wife Painter Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, Sibelius Weeks.

The internal and external cooperation of culture are conducted together with the staff of Järvenpää Hall and with the staff of Cultural Affairs, Business Development and International Affairs sec-

tions. The main international marketing and promotion areas are Scandinavian countries, Baltic countries, Mid-Europe, USA and Japan.

Cultural exchanges funded by European Union are also linked to the culture and city marketing. Järvenpää has participated in many cultural and educational projects funded by EU-programmes Comenius, Rafael, Culture2000 and EYES.

Although cultural affairs are not an obligatory task of the municipality, Järvenpää carries out supporting and strengthening the cultural business environment. Public sector should not compete with enterprises in private sector, but the cooperation and synergic

advantages should be created in the infrastructure. A multisectoral strategic planning group has concluded main measures for development. These measures should encourage more effective cooperation in resources, in international reputation, in development of image, brand and new products and services, in marketing and sales for new customer segments, etc.



Järvenpää-Talo, Cultural House of the City

The city continuously develops products in cultural tourism. Besides the tradition of Artists' community and Sibelius, many important modern artists live and work in the city and international cultural and artists' exchanges are very active and lively.

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CAPITAL OF ESTONIAN JAZZ

by Ms Maria Gritsoshenko
and Ms Nadezhda Bezborodova

Cultural facilities in Sillamäe are important for quality of life, for improving town's "brand name" and for creating jobs. Attracting tourists to festivals, exhibitions and sights results in increasing incomes. Live performances can become a key element in economy and tourist attraction of the town.

Sillamäe keeps and develops the original and multilateral culture as one of its main riches. Days of Slavic culture, exhibitions of foreign artists, multicultural projects, Jazz-time festival and other events take place here.

Jazz Time Festival, the most important event for inhabitants and for the most famous jazzmen in Estonia has been held for the last 5 years. The festival is organized by the Sillamäe Music School and supported by the town government and local enterprises. Every year the amount of participants grows. This year two hundred musicians not only from Estonia but also from other European countries took part in this outstanding

event. The uniqueness of this project is that Estonian young musicians and professional jazz stars take part in the event together and share their experience and talents with the audience. Jazz Time is the unique musical collection of different styles. Every year the level of professionalism grows and there are plans to make the festival more popular abroad and to involve more participants from different countries.



This event not only increases the international contacts and the number of visitors and has local and international effect, but also improves culture quality in Sillamäe. This project has the multicultural meaning.

Culture cannot influence development without proper organisation and support. The municipality supports

cultural organizations: finances events, supports projects and makes other investments.

So now Jazz Time and its cultural variety have become a "trade mark" for the town and make it well-known both in Estonia and abroad. The small Estonian seaside town with its exclusive architecture aspires to be the capital of Estonian Jazz.

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PROMOTION OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

by Ms Ilze Borovska

Gradually Jūrmala becomes a city of culture at the European level. The number of cultural events, scale on which they are carried out, as well as constant growth of visitors are the evidence for it.

In 2000 – 2006 the amount of culture events has significantly increased – concerts of European artists, different international festivals and projects took place in Jūrmala. Such development has been reached because of significant investments in development of culture objects. Also, the city budget for development of culture infrastructure and for organising culture events increases every year. The biggest investments during last years have been assigned

to renovation of Jūrmala City Museum (700,000 LVL), renovation of Dzintari Concert Hall (1,500,000 LVL), as well as to reconstruction of culture houses and libraries. This year a central house of Jūrmala Open-air Museum was also renovated.



ensure opportunities for culture, entertainment and recreation in autumn and winter. A small indoor hall of Dzintari Concert Hall will be reconstructed within the next 3 years. It will allow organising big culture events, and as a result it will increase the number of tourists and guests in Jūrmala in cold seasons.

Traditionally, almost all biggest culture and recreation events take place in the summer time. To decrease the seasonality of entertainment and recreation branches in Jūrmala, propitious environment will be created

A new culture house and a new arts and music school will be built. This school will be not only a place for studying, but also a place for carrying out different events.

Another opportunity for development of entertainment and recreation is promotion of big entertainment complexes in Jūrmala. In 2007 – 2020, it is necessary to promote private entrepreneurs in all districts of city that could offer high quality entertainment centres (cinemas, clubs, shopping centres, active recreation, restaurant services), as it will increase living standards of Jūrmala's inhabitants, as well as create new jobs. In the future, big tourism objects like aquapark "Livu" will gain in importance.

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DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

by Ms Eva Jönsson

City of Malmö

Borrow a prejudice - and get rid of it! - That was the call when the project "Borrow A Living Book" was first introduced at Malmö City Library in August 2005. The idea of offering Living Books to the public comes from Denmark. In 2000, the Danish organization "Stop the Violence" introduced a human library at Roskilde Festival.

Malmö City Library has offered a living library at least twice a year since the start. "Here people meet other people they would not normally meet", says Catharina Norén, an organizer of the living library. Each living book can be borrowed for 45 minutes. The living book and its reader get vouchers for coffee and sit down to talk, an easy way of establishing contact. People who borrow the living books are between 10 and 70 years old.

The titles so far have been: an imam, a veiled Muslim woman, a homosexual man and a homosexual woman, an

animal rights activist, a Danish woman, a transvestite, a journalist, a blind man, a traveller, a Rom woman, a gypsy, a librarian, a businessman, an Arab, a clergyman, an ex-convict, a feminist and a homeless man. These persons represent groups that many people have a lot of prejudices or preconceptions about. "Many people judge others without actually knowing much", says Catharina Norén. Here they get a chance to meet and talk".



Here are comments from the borrowers: "It's a great idea with more social interaction and integration like this", "You learn a little bit more and you gain more knowledge and details than you would normally do reading a book", "This was an eye-opener!", "I had greater prejudices than I thought", "It took away my fear..." and "Living books give a new dimension, this ought to be a permanent project in libraries!".

During the Holocaust Remembrance Day, the library lent out survivors from the concentration camps, with emphasis

on living books rather than on prejudices.

All "books" have been thrilled about the project and would happily take part in the project again.

Both national and international media has shown great interest in Living Books. Articles have been published in several large European newspapers. Interviews have been made by the BBC, as well as by the Radio Live New Zealand and a TV-team from San Francisco.

The Living Library concept has spread to other countries: Norway, Hungary, Finland, Iceland, Austria, the Netherlands, the United States and Canada. Maybe this activity will encourage people around the world to look upon their neighbours with less prejudice and encourage people to be true to themselves. As the transvestite told the young boy: - Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken!

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by Mr Soeren Revsbaek and Mr Per B. Christensen

2007 witnessed the first year with the new local government reform in Denmark, which has created a new map. 98 municipalities replaced previous 271. Næstved municipality now has 80.000 inhabitants - half of them live in Næstved city. The purpose of the reform was to provide the basis for improved local task solution and to qualify the local administrations. In Næstved, the municipality has prepared a paper of visions, stating that we will give priority to highly profiled cultural institutions and activities. The purpose is two-fold: first of all we want to support and develop cultural activities of high standards that live up to the needs and wishes of the citizens. Located only 80 km from Copenhagen, we need to have a vibrant cultural life in the city, in order to attract new inhabit-

CULTURE IS NECESSITY!

ants, especially the well-educated newcomers.

Economic resources are limited and to achieve our objects it is important to prepare specific plans of actions.

Therefore, the Committee of Culture, Leisure and Sport in Næstved this winter has initiated a process that will outline the municipal cultural policy in the coming years.

The political process focuses on different issues, one of which is to outline a cultural policy that regards both the city and the outlying districts. The city will play the role as an cultural locomotive, with professional and amateur-theatre, music-schools for children, exhibitions, public rooms for organisations, etc. We hope to concentrate and develop cultural institutions and activities that produce

The local government reform also deals with new ways of cooperation. As an example, according to a survey of the Association of the Danish Municipalities 60% of the politicians mean that urban planning should link with culture and 58% finds that politicians expect that local cultural policy will be given high priority.

cultural synergy, with effects all over the municipality.

One of the important tasks for the politicians is to create a frame-

work for such a dynamic development. Money is not enough. We need to engage active people and will do so by supporting voluntary organisations such as the private art-society in Næstved. A rich cultural life is essential to well-being and growth. Culture is not luxury - culture is necessity!

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CULTURAL CALENDAR FULL OF EVENTS

by Ms Erika Drungyte

The cultural life in Kaunas is very intense and the city distinguishes for variety of genres, unique projects, and different events on an international level. Every week citizens and guests can visit not only museum exhibitions, but are also welcome to new exhibition openings, educational art critique programs, concerts, all year round exhibitions in libraries, cultural centers. Every Saturday and Sunday at 4 p.m., Maestro Giedrius Kuprevičius or carillonist Julius Vilnonis perform on the unique instrument carillon, which was renewed last year and 14 bells were added up (there are 49 bells in total), in the Vytautas The Great War Museum garden. Every first Sunday of the month "Sunday music" is performed all year round at the Jesuit church. "Lithuanian Theatre Spring" has become an excellent accent of spring. In April Kaunas is also rocked with international "Kaunas Jazz" festival. The lovers of sport dances will

come to watch the international "Gintarine pora" festival, which is organized in May by the legendary Lithuanian dancing couple Jūratė and Česlovas



Pažaislis Festival of Classical and Sacred Music

Norvaišos. The Kaunas citizens celebrate the day of the town in the end of May. All who love poetry may gather around to listen to the Lithuanian and foreign poetry in the international "Poezijos pavasaris" festival on 25 May. Kaunas national doll theatre organizes its festival on 24-27 May, for children and adults. The biggest international XII Pažaislis Festival of Classical and Sacred Music is organized from June until September

in different halls and squares. Dance Day of the Lithuanian Song Festival will be held on 6 July, while the lovers of opera will come to the Kaunas castle on 7-8 July, where an international festival "Operetė Kauno pilyje" will be presented. Kaunas is going to commemorate its glorious Middle Age history and invites people to "Hansa Kaunas 2007" celebration in the end of August. A unique international modern dance festival will be held on 4-8 October. Textile biennale "TEXTILE 07" will be held in October-December. It will present the works of world textile artists. Such a biennale is exclusive in Lithuania. On 23-25 November, the sacral music, performed by chamber choirs in different churches, will be presented by "Cantate Domino" festival.

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by Ms Svetlana Sikoza

CULTURAL LIFE OF KALININGRAD

Cultural life of Kaliningrad is becoming more and more intensive and diverse. Only here you can visit the Art Festival "The Baltic seasons" or the International Contest of the Organists. The fairs of arts and crafts, photoexhibitions, literature meetings with the representatives of the different cultures take place in the city.

The 7th International Book Festival "With a Book – towards the XXI Century" was held in Kaliningrad. Every year the Festival is getting more and more interesting and attracts more citizens. Implementation of such projects is of great importance and interest in Kaliningrad. It's not a secret that currently reading is often substituted by television, media and the Internet. The year of 2007 was announced the year of the Book and the Russian language.

The citizens express much interest in cinema. Significant renovation of the Kaliningrad movie theatres contributed to this. Several new modern cinemas have been opened up lately.

Those who love classical music are always welcome to enjoy the fascinating sound of organ in the Kaliningrad Philharmonic Society. The most famous and talented organists from all over the world perform the pieces on stage.

Nowadays, in the ancient Cathedral, which is the heart of the cultural life of Kaliningrad, the second organ is being installed. Excellent acoustics of the Concert Hall of the Cathedral has been highly appreciated by musicians.



Renovation of the unique part of Kaliningrad – the "Unost park"

is the gift of the famous citizen Lyudmila Putina to her native city. The park comprises a playground and amusement rides installed in order to teach children the driving rules. The Centre of Russian language and literature situated in the

park is to be open up very soon.

After the large – scale renovation implemented before the 750th Anniversary of the city, the Central square (Pobeda square) became brighter and more comfortable. The citizens can enjoy the beauty of the new fountains and listen to the classical symphonies and suites broadcasted in the square. In the evenings and at night the square is lit by 26 original lamps.

Kaliningrad maintains neighbourhood relations with many European countries and five newly opened parks, built in partnership with such countries as Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, serve as an evidence of this friendship. Having harmoniously merged with the city's landscape, the parks attract the citizens and tourists.

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CAPITAL OF FOLK MUSIC



by Ms Epp Alatalu

One of the most wonderful and challenging public tasks in Viljandi this year is the restoration of the former Viljandi manor house on Kirsimägi in the Castle ruins into the Estonian Traditional Music Center or Traditional Music Storehouse.

If one says Viljandi, the first to come to mind are the Viljandi Folk Music Festival and the Viljandi Culture Academy. This small town is certainly considered to be the capital of folk music by lots of Estonians. The Viljandi Folk Music Festival is organized since 1993 by Estonian Traditional Music Center. The festival is well known among folk music fans around the world. The mission of the Center is to promote and teach traditional music, to give people back their "musical mother tongue", as Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodaj said. And to entertain and make traditional music an active part of our everyday life. Viljandi Folk is a 4 days long party held annually at the last weekend of July (26-29 July, 2007),



with more than 100 concerts in Viljandi castle ruins, churches, indoor venues and throughout Viljandi County - 5 open-air venues, 10 workshops, 3 indoor venues, exhibitions, an instrument-fair, handicraft yard, fairytale room, more than 400 performers. The audience is becoming more and more international.

To keep the spirit of the festival up all year round, the Estonian Traditional Music Center is building its own home in Kirsimäe ait. This is an early 18th century Viljandi manor storehouse, situated in the castle ruins. It is being rebuilt into a concert house where one hall with adjustable acoustics is for an audience up to 400 people. A smaller hall for educational programs, traditional mu-

sic library and phonothèque will also be opened. The Storehouse of Music will be completed in spring 2008.

The restoration of the storage house has become an international project. The request for support from EU funds has got a positive answer. The project will be co-financed by: EU Regional Competitiveness Improvement Programme, Estonian Ministry of Culture and Viljandi.

To cover the gap caused by more than 50% rise of prices in recent years, the Center has initiated nationwide raising of extra money and search for donors. Estonian Traditional Music Center lists the supporters on a Thank You stand in the Music Storehouse.

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by Ms Magdalena
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THE CITY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE ART

Słupsk is the city where the past mixes with the present. Culture unites inhabitants, tourists, young and old, businessmen and intellectuals. Thanks to long-time, cyclic cultural events, Słupsk has become famous in Poland and abroad.

The Festival of Polish Piano Music has been taking place here every year since 1967. Its 40th edition of it took place in 2006. The best Polish pianists of different generations appear on stage.



In the history of the festival such artists as Barbara Hesse-Bukowska, Halina Czerny-Stefańska, Piotr Paleczny, Krystian Zimmermann, Krzysztof Jabłoński, Lidia Grychtołwna, Andrzej Jasiński, Rafał Blechacz and others performed.

The Festival of Organ and Chamber

Music is equally famous. The Festival takes place in the mystic scenery of the castle church. It is the international event highlighting the significance of music's role for the city. It is possible to listen to the virtuosos of the organ play, choirs, vocalists, instrumentalists and famous chamber groups, both from Poland and from abroad.

Every year Komeda Jazz Festival, devoted to Krzysztof Komeda – a worldwide famous jazzman, instrumentalist, composer, great European from Słupsk, is organized here. Artists from all over the world come to the festival and it gathers enormous crowds of fans. "Niemen Non Stop" Festival, the only festival in Poland during which young people perform repertoire by Czesław Niemen, a famous Polish artist, was introduced last year.

Not only music but also the art attracts inhabitants and tourists. The Puppet Theatre "Tęcza" is the organizer of international festivals of puppet theaters Eurofest. The Amateur Theatre "Rondo" prepares big out-door shows, which attract thousands of people.

The Polish Philharmony "Sinfonia Baltica" under the direction of Bohdan Jaromłowicz, was nominated to the Grammy Prize in 1998, and has come to the top. It gives concerts in the country and abroad.

In summer season many mass events are organized in different places of the city. Słupsk has to integrate its inhabitants and build its specific solidarity to develop.

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THE NATURE INFLUENCES VAASA CULTURE

by Ms Tarja Hautamäki

The unique UNESCO Kvarken World Heritage Site has had a large influence on the cultural life in Vaasa in many ways. The Ostrobothnian Museum has a special nature department called Terra Nova, involved in the implementation of the five-day-long international WildLife Vaasa nature film festival which is organised every second year. A local film centre called Botnia is now being started.

The modern working area for professionals within culture involves constant consideration of the relationships between work and local, national and international perspectives. Professionals working within culture must also consider the kind of image they are trying to build and whether there is enough content to build on. Terra Nova and the WildLife Vaasa nature film festival are

excellent examples of how the museum has been able to respond to the challenges of modern society and use a unique nature heritage as a work tool.

As museums are institutions based on collections and are part of our collective memory, they are needed in order to help

The economic impact of the Kvarken World Heritage Site in other places than the cultural sector is almost impossible to estimate. It is good to keep in mind that the core of culture cannot function according to commercial and economic principles. The compromise between economic viability and the real aims of cultural work is something that has to be continuously searched for.

to create our identity, and to ensure the continuous development of our society. Terra Nova implements the basic task of the museums by saving and protecting the Kvarken Region

nature heritage, as well as by stimulating local development, especially in the form of a film festival.

During the festival, touring performances are arranged in schools for children and youngsters in Vaasa, and open performances are arranged for the public. Showing the films in this way brings the museum closer to people, and reaches out to audiences that otherwise wouldn't visit the museum. On the other hand, the festival occasions arranged at the mu-

seum itself have managed to persuade people also to have a look at everything else that the museum has to offer.

The Ostrobothnian Museum's Terra Nova department and the Wildlife Vaasa festival have both had a positive influence on the fact that the Kvarken region was chosen to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the summer 2006. This nomination will probably increase nature tourism in the region.

The latest innovation, where Terra Nova and the Wildlife Vaasa festival have played a part, is the creation of a regional film centre, called Botnia, which is starting its activities this spring and is partly financed by the Ministry of Education. The aim of Botnia is to specialise in nature and environmental films.

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by Ms Kristi Aavakivi

Võru is a small town in which the cultural life is closely connected with the overall development. For its citizens, the availability of cultural events locally is of great importance, as the location of the town sets certain limits to visiting bigger centres.

All major events are financially supported from the town budget, the largest ones being the Võru Folklore Festival and the Anniversary of the Town of Võru. Organising public events noticeably influences the number of guests of nearby hotels and catering companies.

A greater part of cultural events is organised by non-profit institutions. A number of such institutions has been steadily growing and many active citizens have become involved in their activities as well.

After its renovation in 2005, the activities in the Kannel Community Culture Centre got a new impetus. The number

of staff and the range of activity areas have increased considerably. All this has led to a growth in the number of people engaged in the cultural area and has consequently increased the volume of the town budget.

Cultural life is inseparable from its sports events. One of the best examples of culture as the driving force for municipal development was the completion of the Võru Sports Centre in 2006. Namely, the choice of the location of the sports centre initiated the construction of a new street and by now two shopping centres are about to be completed alongside the street.

In the recent years, Estonia has had to encounter the issue of labour force and the concentration of population in the capital. In order to remedy the situation, the towns in the peripheries of the coun-

try, like Võru, have to create added values to attract people to live and work there.



One possibility for doing this, is to offer as much diverse recreational opportunities as possible. The aim of Võru is also to attract outside investors by promoting

such values.

Culture is the sphere in which the citizens of Võru and its guests are ready to invest their time and money. Similarly, many entrepreneurs regard the funds contributed to culture as investments in the future rather than expenses.

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by Ms Agita
Ikaunieca

RIGA CHOIR MONTH 2007

Supporting national art is one of the priorities of the Department of Culture of the City Council. Included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the National Song and Dance Festival has been the central cultural event in Riga since 1873.

As an essential part of the National Song and Dance Festival, the Riga Choir Month is held each year and its main objectives are the following:

- to provide acquirement of entire repertoire of the National Song and Dance Festival in time;
- to gather information about quantita-



tive structure and level of choirs;
• to encourage choirs of Riga for a more arduous participation in the creation of the Festival and the related events.

Within the National Song and Dance Festival 2008, the Ave Sol organisation of the Department of Culture of the City Council is organising Riga Choir Month 2007 or "Quarterfinals of Synchronous Singing". 13 choral concerts with 95 choirs from Riga participating are held within this event. The concert of all choirs singing together on the embankment of the Daugava River makes the final.

Since 2006, the Ave Sol has been "dressing" the Riga Choir Month in a sporty uniforms, hoping that this would inspire conduc-

tors and singers of choirs to prepare attractive performances to participate in this singing competition. Performance of choirs is evaluated by a professional and not less sportive and attractive jury. Choirs perform in the 13 concerts divided by groups – minority nationalities, seniors, women and men, as well as several mixed chorus groups. Each group enters concerts with a special sportive name created for this event.

Sportive spirit and festive atmosphere link the singing events of the Riga Choir Month.

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BERGEN - A EUROPEAN CITY OF CULTURE

by Mr Øyvor Johnson

Bergen places emphasis on the importance of art and culture in building good social economy and an attractive city for residents and visitors. Art and culture are essential to sustainable urban development. The city has therefore developed a cultural strategy for the period 2003–2013. One of the crucial resources for urban development and knowledge economy in the years to come lies within this area. Cultural policy shall be fundamental to the development of Bergen as a whole; as a good place to live, a good place to visit and for cultural socio-economic development. Ten strategic elements show how culture can drive forward the development of the urban society:

1. The arts and culture as the predominant factor in the development
The arts and culture form an integral part of total planning in the political strategy. The competitive development must be based on further advancement of competence, creativity, culture and communication alike.

2. Cultural wealth – competence as a base for encountering the future
Competence is central to the experience, expression and execution of the arts and culture. An unbroken chain of

competence consists of training and education, artists and producers, a critical public administration and well-informed end users/public at large.

3. Cultural democracy – participation, voluntary effort and variety
Bergen aims to satisfy the needs of everyone, providing a good quality of life for all and to promote participation and voluntary contribution to civic life.

4. The creative force of the young in creation of wealth
Bergen aims to provide young people with new opportunities and new challenges through a new youth policy.

5. Bergen as a venue for artistic and cultural festivals
Bergen will encourage the development of festivals in order to strengthen and stimulate cultural activity and productions.

6. Regional – Western Norwegian – cultural policy
Bergen aims to contribute to the increased national and international exposure of the region's culture and cultural personalities.

7. International cultural policy
Further reinforcement of the city's standing as a national artistic centre.

Cultural activity affects various aspects of society:

1. Culture is an economic sector in which
 - a) culture itself is an industry with a substantial turnover
 - b) cultural activity has financial consequences for other commercial interests
 - c) culture is essential to the tourist industry
2. Culture is an important contributor and catalyst
 - a) it has a significant role in development and aesthetics
 - b) culture plays a significant role in the total cultural wealth
 - c) culture promotes health, well-being and identity

8. Cultural industry – culture and commerce hand in hand

Certain basic conditions for future innovation and development and growth should be wrought at the intersection of commercial policy and cultural policy.

9. The arts and culture as a basis for development of the tourist industry
Tourist industry should be deeply rooted in the breadth and variety of artistic and cultural activities.

10. Focus on artistic and cultural pivots/quarters for a vibrant society
Bergen should have profiled artistic and cultural pivots and increase public access to artistic and cultural experiences.

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CULTURE IN MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

by the City's Department on Culture

Rostock plays an important cultural role for its inhabitants, as well as for the people living in the area around the city and for visitors and tourists coming to Mecklenburg-Vorpomern. Additionally, the city has taken responsibility for the cultural glowing of the whole Federal State into the North European area.

The change that has reached all social parts of the society opens quite a lot of possibilities for the city and its inhabitants. To use them we all need a climate of openness, tolerance and creativity. Culture in its widest sense is definitively a part of the development, and therefore it needs special attention.

Municipal cultural policy is geared at the distinctive, historically grown character of the city, it preserves this special breeding ground and at the same time promotes new spaces for different ways of life that cannot only be reduced to the commercial and functional aspects.

Urban culture, as a whole, not only bases on different cultural aspects, but also promotes and develops them. Cultural diversity implies tolerance and respect for different thinking, action and feelings. It offers space for realisation of different interests, the reflection of the world's wide cultural diversity and lets

people feel well in the city and identify with the urban community.

Advancement of cultural diversity also means facing the cultural challenge that comes with the information and media society of the 21st century. Rostock supports the dissemination of new cultural skills in media projects and the integration of new media into the work of cultural institutions. Beside the institutionalised culture, the development of cultural initiatives as part of a civil society, is a main requirement for the realisation of equal opportunities, participation and social integration in the community.

An important part of the city's culture are not only the institutions, almost completely financed und run by the municipality e.g. the theatre, different museums, music and arts schools, but also the commercial offers made by agencies, cinemas, publishing houses, book shops, galleries, etc.

The cultural economy represents a wide range of extrapolated but often

networked branch of trade.

The city's cultural and educational policy gives a lot of space for private

commitment and financing as well as for the organisation of events by private agencies and, as a result, strongly promotes the commercial link between culture, sports and tourism.

These three

supporting pillars of Rostock's cultural life: municipal institutions, their activities and projects, the organisations that get municipal grants with their very differentiated work and offers, as well as commercially organised events, all together bring about the effect that culture in Rostock is much more than the so-called "soft location factor".



Museum cultural history - Cloister of the Holy Cross, Rostock
Photo: Irma Schmidt

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by Ms Natalia Orava

NARVA CHESS FESTIVAL

The general idea and aim of the "Chess Festival" Project is to make Narva, a historical border-town, to become renowned for its cultural events and develop into a famous tourism centre on the Eastern border of the EU. Direct goals of the project is to promote Narva in the Baltic Sea countries, to increase the number of visitors, to make tourists stay longer in the city, and to prolong the summer season in Narva and, as a result, to influence the economic development of the region.

The city of Narva is the birthplace

of a famous Estonian chess-master Paul Keres. The festival, which will take place from 7 to 13 October 2007, will be dedicated to Keres. Chessmen will revive in a show called "Live chess".

Both citizens and guests will have a chance to see and play with real kings of the chess world – international grandmasters.

Serious battles will take place under the vaults of the medieval castle. The national teams of Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia

(St.Petersburg) and Estonia are invited to participate in the 3rd International Youth Team Tournament of the Champions of the Baltic Sea Countries "Chess Stars of

the Baltic Sea".

During the chess festival everyone will have an opportunity to visit and participate in different events such as a concert, an exhibition dedicated to Paul Keres and many others. The culmination of the festival will be a laser-show, devoted to the ancient game.

The project "Chess festival" is supported by the foundation "Enterprise Estonia" in the framework of the programme "Developing Regional Competitiveness".

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II. UBC TODAY

Welcome to the IX UBC General Conference!

The next General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities will be held in Pärnu, Estonia, on 27-28 September 2007. For the ninth time, a number of mayors and city executives, representatives of governments and international organisations and many key actors active in the Baltic Sea Region and Europe will gather to discuss the most burning issues.

The main themes to be discussed:

- Cities response to the climate change
 - What cities can do to stop climate change - reduction of CO₂ emissions, use of renewable energy, energy efficiency
 - How cities should prepare themselves to climate change, e.g. problems resulting from the raise of sea level
- Culture as a driving force for municipal development
- Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society

As usual, the second day of the Conference will be devoted to the UBC internal matters, such as reports, elections, finances and meetings of the UBC Commissions.

48TH BOARD MET IN GÄVLE

The preparations to the coming UBC General Conference in Pärnu was one of the main topics of the 48th meeting of the Executive Board which was held on 9 March 2007 in Gävle, Sweden, upon the invitation of Ms Carina Blank, the Mayor of Gävle.

The participants were acquainted with the information on invited keynote speakers and proposed themes, as well as on the venue of the conference. The discussion resulted in formulating three main themes to be raised during the Conference: "Cities response to the climate change", "Culture as a driving force for municipal development" and "Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society".

Additionally, Mr Żaboklicki informed that in parallel with the GC, the youth conference entitled "Under the Surface" will be held in Pärnu. The conference will be organised by the UBC Commission on Youth Issues within the project "Different History - Common Future



- youth as a resource in the Baltic Sea Region" funded from the EU "Youth" Programme. Mr Vilis Bruveris, representing the Commission on Youth Issues, informed the Board about the plan of the youth conference and possible interactions between both conferences.

As far as the EU policy is concerned, Ms Jessica Rabenius, Stockholm Region Office in Brussels, presented the European Commission's work programme in 2007, priorities of the German Presidency, perspectives in 2008 and the EU related funding possibilities.

The Board's members were also informed that first draft

of the UBC contribution to the Green Paper on European Maritime Policy was prepared by the city of Turku and the work on the position paper will be continued.

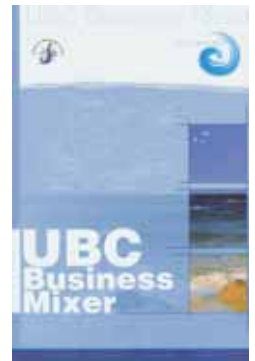
During the meeting in Gävle, new UBC members were accepted: city of Słupsk, Poland and the city of Gargzdai, Lithuania. Moreover, the Board adopted the budget for 2007.

UBC BUSINESS MIXER

40 member cities took part in the Business Mixer project. The aim of the new UBC publication, published upon the initiative of the UBC Secretariat in February this year, was to encourage the business environment of the UBC members to effectively use the Union as an economic forum of making new contacts, establishing partnerships, initiating common projects.

It contains an interesting and up-to-date material concerning economic profile of each city, investing opportunities, contact details to the city's departments, responsible for entrepreneurship and development, and to the organisations supporting business, etc. Thus, the business circles received one more opportunity to "mix" with the local authorities to make their cooperation more dynamic and fruitful. This publication can serve as a useful directory for those who are seeking partners and areas to develop their companies.

The UBC Business Mixer has been published in 6.000 copies and spread out among all members, regional and European organisations, and business institutions.



The Board took also decisions concerning two networks. Namely, the UBC Network on Gender Equality was transformed into the Commission on Gender Equality with Umeå as the lead city, and the EU-coordinators Network was re-activated with Rostock as a leader.

The next, 49th Board meeting will be organised in Jekabpils, Latvia, on 15 June 2007.



FROM BOOK OF DEMANDS TO BOOK OF POSSIBILITIES

The Commission on Youth Issues held its 3rd meeting on 8-9 November 2006 in Liepja, Latvia. About 25 persons from 15 cities participated. The major aim was to plan the youth conference „Under the Surface” to be held in September 2007.

„Liepja has always been a good example to other municipalities in Latvia when it comes to the work with the youth. The city has created one of the first municipal youth centers in the country. The Liepja Youth Centre is taking active part in the work of the Commission. This work gives possibility to young people from the whole Baltic Sea Region to

share experiences and best practices in order to implement them in their municipalities,” says Deputy Mayor of Liepja, Mr Gunars Ansins.

Participants of the meeting worked in three different groups (youth, civil servants and organisations in the BSR – UBC, BSSYA) in order to find out what the needs and expectations for the upcoming UBC Youth Conference are.

Young people stated that they want to meet new people, share ideas and put the „Book of Demands” (result of the previous Youth Conference) into practice. Civil servants working with youth issues want to acquire new tools for working with youth councils and youth networks. Expectations of the representatives of organisations working in the region (UBC, BSSYA) concerned a possibility for local youth to meet, and for cities to learn best practices.



The Commission decided that the outcome of the Conference in Pärnu should be a „Book of Possibilities” as a follow-up to the „Book of Demands”. There will not be any regular Commission meetings in 2007.

„Under the Surface” – from demands to possibilities

The conference will take place on 27 - 29 September 2007 in Pärnu, Estonia. It will be organised within the “Youth” program and the project “Different History - Common Future - Youth as a Resource in the Baltic Sea Region!”.



Themes of the conference

- The Young today - What & how can we learn from young people?
- Youth info society - How can society and youth workers access and benefit from young people. A virtual world?
- Youth and NGOs - youth involvement necessary for the social economy?
- Tolerance & intercultural learning - to learn from history and work towards a more integrated and tolerant region
- EVS (European Voluntary Service) - a tool for international cooperation
- Keeping the door open - micro-projects for youth

Participation in the conference will be open to the young and civil servants from all UBC member cities. For more information, please see www.ubc-youth.org or contact Vilis Bruveris E-mail: vilis.bruveris@kalmar.se, Skype: [ubc-coy](https://www.skype.com/user/ubc-coy)

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YOUTH AS A RESOURCE

The project with the long name “Different history – common future, youth as a resource for a sustainable future in the Baltic Sea Region – cooperation of municipalities, NGOs and youth” is an EU project that runs in 2007-2009. The partners in the project are: Kalmar as lead partner, Tallinn, Liepāja, Kolding, UBC Secretariat in Gdansk and the “supporting” partner of the Baltic Sea Secretariat of Youth Affairs in Kiel.

The purpose is to establish a platform for generating knowledge, best practices, policies and structures to foster youth as a resource for development of the Baltic Sea Region and building local youth policies. The project seeks to give young people access to participation in policy instead of disregard and exclusion. Young people seem to be not

engaged anymore.

- The main project will work towards:
 - Developing a common, dynamic and lasting platform for youth workers and leaders of NGOs, young people, politicians and civil servants;
 - Establishing learning mechanisms for sharing of experiences, results and lessons;
 - Enstablishing virtual learning and discussion platform & online communities for youth;
 - Installing local Youth Info-Centres at central places;

The projects activities are divided in to three main work packages: “Youth communicating”, “Youth exchanged” and “Youth engaged”.

Youth communicating - creation of website containing online knowledge

base for youth and also for civil, organising youth “tolerance” trips in order to increase tolerance and to promote intercultural learning.

Youth exchanged - organising two large scale BSR Youth conferences, establishing a network of organisations working with EVS programme and innovative Youth Info Centres;

Youth engaged - setting up international workshops where different issues concerning EVS and youth involvement in the NGO’s will be discussed, youth microprojects.

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CLIMATE CHANGE IN FOCUS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS

The Commission on Environment held its first annual meeting in Liepāja on 7-9 March 2007. 30 participants from 13 UBC cities concentrated on the issue of climate change in the Baltic Sea Region. In the future extreme weather conditions will increase, and there will be more algal bloom if the temperatures rise, as Urmas Lips, the lead scientist at the Marine systems at the Tallinn University of Technology, explained.

The effects of climate change on the BSR cities included an example of flood that affected Pärnu, Estonia, and damaged the infrastructure in winter 2005. Many cities in the BSR have already gone from strategy to concrete measures. Örebro shared their experiences about breaking down national environmental objectives into concrete activities at the local level. This has included educating the citizens and cooperating with companies.

Erika Langdzina from REC Latvia pointed out the necessity of translating the practical measures in the cities into climate change terminology. The main

challenge for the Commission is to find the right indicators, measures and tools on how to do this in the BSR cities, she said. Practical actions related to the climate change taken by the UBC members were provided in the presentations of ASTRA, BUSTRIIP, MUE25 and SUSTAINMENT Projects.

The UBC cook book for climate change was initiated in a brainstorming session chaired by Guldbrand Skjönberg. The book will gather the practical adaptation and reduction measures related to climate change taken by the cities. All UBC cities will be invited to take part in the book, which is planned to be available by the end of 2007.

In the meeting, the name of the Environment and Agenda21 Secretariat was changed to Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat - describing better the work that the Secretariat is

carrying out. The participating cities identified a need to have a clearer mandate for the Commission acting on behalf of the UBC since the Commission on Environment is a strong and wanted/well-known stakeholder in the European Sustainable Development arena.

The representatives of Mariehamn also proposed to set up a working group to look over the prerequisites of establishing Marine Reserves in the Baltic Sea. As a result, such a working group will start in this spring.

THREE TOOLBOXES UNDER PREPARATION

How to implement an integrated management system and sustainable development strategies? What is a Sustainability Management Center (SMC) and what does it have to offer city administrations? How to make a sustainable urban transport plans (SUTP) for city centers struggling with the dominance of private cars and congestion? The Commission on Environment has been trying to answer these questions within its three major projects - BUSTRIIP, SUSTAINMENT and Managing Urban Europe -25. All projects are now at the stage of collecting the most fruitful results that will be provided in practical and user friendly toolboxes. Eventually, local authorities across Europe can make use of the work the pioneering partner cities have carried out in these projects. The Commission is currently developing a knowledge management database that will further assist cities.

Managing Urban Europe -25: Guidance for integrated management system will provide an on-line guidance and manual

for cities wishing to implement an integrated management system in their cities. It includes case studies from cities and comprehensive guidance on issues such as target setting, stakeholder involvement processes, indicator selection and organisational setup. This toolbox will benefit cities aiming at implementing the Aalborg Commitments and sustainable development through management systems. The toolbox will be launched in the beginning of 2008.

SUSTAINMENT: Competence Development Package is in the process of creating an interactive on-line module. It will provide cities with basic, but tailored guidance, resources, and concrete examples on how to develop an organisational unit to effectively and efficiently drive the sustainable development process in their cities. The final on-line product will be supplemented with a CD and a limited printed text version in nine languages. This will be launched at the final conference in Gdansk

in November 2007.

BUSTRIIP: Moving sustainability - SUTP Toolbox builds on the findings from the Peer Reviews carried out in the 12 partner cities. The toolbox provides an appealing and hands-on guidance for delivering Sustainable Urban Transport Plans in cities. This final product will appear on-line and in print in eight languages by the final conference, held in Turku on 7-9 November 2007.

The Best Environmental Practice Award in Baltic Cities

The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2007

From Local Action to Sustainable Development

Practice categories are: Sustainable energy management
Use of sustainable economic instruments/incentives
Communicating/reporting the state of environment

Winner of each category will be rewarded with a gift and a diploma. In addition to this, one city will be presented with a grant of 5000 euros.

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Deadline for application is 31 May 2007!

Download application form at: www.ubc.net

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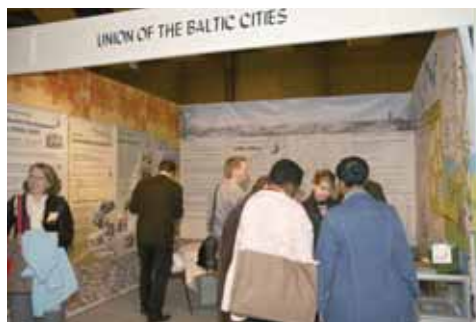
BUILDING THE "SPIRIT OF SEVILLA"

The 5th European conference of Sustainable Cities and Towns was held in Sevilla, Spain, in the end of March. The UBC Commission on Environment was one of the conference preparation organizations and also led an active role by providing information about the sustainable development work carried out by the UBC member cities. The UBC also arranged a BSR forum, hosted by the President Per Boedker Andersen. The BSR forum was a successful meeting point for the BSR in Sevilla with more than 80 participants. Sevilla was a milestone highlighting the importance of sustainable development for local politicians in Europe.

Sevilla 2007 was built upon previous conferences, notably the Aalborg +10 Conference, 2004, which resulted in the Aalborg Commitments - a set of policy commitments that have been recognized by the European Council in the new European Sustainable Development Strategy as the focus for local sustainability process.

"The Spirit of Sevilla" reaffirms the

Aalborg Commitments and promotes advanced implementation of development strategies in order to achieve local



At the UBC stand the conference participants from all over the world received valuable information about the BSR and the work of UBC."

Photo: Stella Aaltonen

sustainability in Europe. Cities and towns will now take the Aalborg Commitments to the streets by engaging their citizens and stakeholders to ensure progress in local sustainability. This is expected to inspire and motivate other cities and local authorities to enter into the process by signing the Commitments. As a result of the conference over 1,600 delegates from European local governments have

already committed to act immediately and implement advanced policies for local sustainable development.

"The conference participants were both interested in our projects and our network. We got a lot of new contacts as well as ideas for future projects", said network manager Stella Aaltonen, who was in charge of the well visited UBC stand.

The Commission is also engaged in the process of supporting the signing and implementing the Commitments through their hosting of the Nordic-Baltic Aalborg Commitments Network, together with the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities since the beginning of this year.

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COMMISSION ON ENERGY IN ACTION

Ever since the industrial revolution took of some 200 years ago, mankind has emitted large quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This is globalization in its pure form since what you do locally directly affects the whole world. As we are sharing the same ecosphere, we are all exposed to the consequences that have accumulated over the years. The lesson is that each of us now has to change behaviour and energy and transport systems. But how, and what to do?

The UBC Energy Commission is working on a simple and yet powerful catalogue of actions that can be implemented by local communities, cities and by individuals. They are based on the latest scientific and academic knowledge and should represent the best practices at a given time in the future. The energy-climate relationship is complex and misconceptions are frequent. For instance, a lot of car owners believe they will reduce the gas emissions if they switch fuel in their cars from gasoline to ethanol. Wrong – the emissions of greenhouse gases will increase by 10%. But the source of energy is then renewable and

that increases the sustainability.

We have to consider energy production and consumption already when we plan new housing and industrial projects. Houses can be built in such a way that they hardly need any special heating systems most of the year. The technology is called "Passive houses" and has been tried in the Baltic Region over the past ten years. It works. By using the right construction method, tight insulation, special windows and doors, the energy consumption can be radically lowered. The normal set of household machines, like refrigerators, TVs and other electric equipment, generate enough energy spill together with the heat generated by the people living there, to keep the house warm and comfortable. Modern systems for solar heating of warm water can make the household independent of gas or electricity during 6-9 months of the year even in the Arctic regions. Enor-



mous energy savings can be achieved just by changing normal light bulbs to low energy lamps. Within the industry sector there are well documented and tested methods available that can save up to 60% of the energy consumption and at the same time lower the emissions of green house gases by 325%. Economic growth and a more energy efficient society is no contradiction.

The Commission is working hard in order to put together the catalogue of best practices for its member cities to speed up the transformation to more energy efficient and sustainable communities in the region.

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THE UBC ANTENNA OFFICE OPENED UP

The official inauguration of the UBC Antenna Office took place on 6 December 2006. Two months after the settlement of UBC on the Brussels arena, representatives from member cities and different Commissions of UBC, gathered in Brussels to give visibility to the organisation and to the decision of strengthening UBC's significance in European affairs.

About 75 persons attended the opening event which took place at the Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union. Beside the member cities, representatives from several European institutions and from regional offices, representing different parts of Europe, were curious to get to know the organisation.

After a welcome drink, and with a background composed by pictures and presentations of the UBC member cities,

speeches were made. Mr Karl Skybrant, Head of Chancery at the Permanent



Representation of Sweden to the EU, welcomed all the guests and highlighted the difficulties of the network to survive throughout the years and congratulated the UBC for succeeding. The President of UBC Mr Per Boedker Andersen introduced the network for the participants and took the opportunity to promote the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Thomas Friis

Konst, Managing Director of Stockholm Region stressed the importance of being present on the Brussels arena and the need of the newly opened Antenna Office to receive input from the network's members.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen declared the Antenna Office opened with its working space for the UBC members, equipped with computer, internet, telephone etc, to be used by member cities whenever needed.

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ISCOM MET IN BRUSSELS

What will the new programming period offer for the Baltic Sea Region cooperation – especially in the field of Information Society? How has the information society development proceeded in the city of St. Petersburg? These were the questions discussed in the seminar "New programming period 2007–2013 - New information society cooperation opportunities for Baltic cities", organised by the UBC Commission on Information Society (UBC IS COM) in the premises of Finland's Permanent Representation in Brussels on 6 March 2007.

The successful seminar gathered over 50 representatives of different cities and organizations from over 10 countries.

After opening speeches and the presentation by the Stockholm Region Representation in Brussels, some of the most suitable forthcoming financing programmes for BSR cooperation were introduced to the participants. Dr Elis-

abeth Helander from the DG Regional Policy talked about the European territorial co-operation from the Baltic Sea Region point of view. All three strands of the INTERREG programme, as well as the URBACT development network programme can be used in developing new projects in the area. According to Dr Helander, first calls are supposed to open in autumn 2007. The ICT policy support programme, included in the Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme (CIP) and presented by Mr Juan Gonzales from the DG Information Society and Media, included just the right elements for projects within UBC IS COM interest areas. The first call is supposed to open already

before summer.

An important part of the event was to present an overview on the recent development of information society performance in St. Petersburg, a current chair of UBC IS COM. St. Petersburg

participated in the event with a high-level delegation. With the presentations by Mr Igor Lonsky and Mr Alexander Pochatkov, the city was introduced as a lively, international city with a huge potential in the sphere of ICT and Information Society. The seminar ended with a discussion on future project ideas, where the INTERREG IIIC financed project "Challenge of eCitizen" was presented as a good example of cooperation with concrete results in partner cities' information society development. These results are acknowledged also by the EU Commission that has considered the project as a starting point for a Fast Track network on e-government.

The seminar participants took home up-to-date information about the upcoming opening financing programmes, some new contacts and a better understanding of St. Petersburg as a possible partner in information society cooperation. UBC IS COM hopes this will eventually lead to new projects and novel forms of cooperation.

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Ms Elisabeth Helander presenting European Territorial cooperation



THE UBC CULTURAL PRIZE TO CĒSIS

The UBC Commission on Culture organized its 9th Annual Working Session in Vaasa on 24-26 November 2006 under the theme "Cultural Festivals as Strengtheners of Local Identity", gathering together 40 participants. On Friday morning the UBC Cultural Prize was awarded to Cēsis City Council "for conscious use of cultural heritage to shape

an image of the town, and strengthen its identity, and raise the awareness of cultural values of life". Additionally, the book of the speeches held in the Session "The Role and Value of the Museums in the Modern World" in St. Petersburg 2006 was presented.

The official program consisted of presentations on cultural festivals ex-

plored from 11 different viewpoints. On Saturday, the participants could choose between two parallel sessions supervised by the CoC board members Agrita Ozola and Olov Gibson. In Ozola's session participants discussed identity and how to develop festivals and maintain their vitality. Jolanta Sausina gave a short presentation of the festivals organized by Cēsis. In Gibson's session, the main topics were the Commission on Culture in general, project for Umeå 2014 - European Capital of Culture, possible co-operation and various project ideas.

Participants admitted that the work done by the CoC is important. It was concluded that a calendar of festivals in the Baltic countries could be useful.

"European means for cultural cooperation" - the 10th Annual Working Session in Visby has just been held.

The invited participants were active in the cultural fields in all the countries around the Baltic Sea. The invitations were sent out to the Municipal Cultural Departments and other cultural institutions.

The main aim of the session, organised on 4-5 May, was to stimulate new cross-border cultural cooperation and to apply for funding from the EU and other European cultural organisations. Lectures informed about these possibilities. The session gave possibilities for cultural managers to meet colleagues from other countries and to discuss projects that can be of mutual interest for the local cultural life in the Baltic Sea Region and also in other parts of Europe.

In many municipalities, as well on the regional and on the European level, it is in our days an established opinion that a rich and innovative culture is contributing to the development of the society and its individual members. The languages and expressions of the arts are basic fundamentals of the democracy and stimulate economy, public health, tourism and the intercultural dialogue between different cultures and peoples. The Commission on Culture is therefore happy to notice that the main theme of the workshops during the General Conference in Pärnu on 27 of September 2007 is "Culture as a driving force of municipal development".

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TOURISM IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

On 21-24 March 2007 a working meeting of the Commission of Tourism was held in Palanga, Lithuania. The meeting was to sum up the upcoming work period and present the projects scheduled for accomplishment this year.

In total, 8 delegates from UBC member cities from 4 countries – Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland participated in the meeting. The sessions were chaired by Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski, Chairman of the Commission.

Ms Irena Satkauskiene presented Palanga describing the tourist infrastructure development, history of the SPA and the best attractions. The next presentation performed by Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski pertained to Koszalin. The Chairman proposed the following issues were discussed: how to identify the best attractions of the town/city, how to prepare the local tourist product based on those attractions, how to promote it and how to assess effectiveness of the action taken.

Natural beauty, clean environment,

sport and entertainment facilities, rich SPA & wellness offer, rehabilitation and medical treatment offer, cultural events, interesting history, famous people and local legends, etc. were listed as the factors contributing to the attractiveness of the city.



Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski presented two projects – 3rd edition of the "Fotosuch & Quizfahrt", which started on 15 March and the project called "Baltic Sea Region – Perfect Tourism Zone", that resulted in publishing the catalogue in 5.500 copies. The catalogue is aimed at increasing interest in the BSR among potential tourists. The Commission announced issuing the 2nd extended and

updated edition. The catalogue will be distributed among the member cities through the UBC office at Brussels, the Secretariat in Gdańsk, during G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm near Rostock and during the UBC General Conference in Pärnu.

The Chairman presented the idea of organising this year a competition on knowledge about the Baltic Sea Region named "Meet BSR – your homeland". The first finals were proposed to be held in December 2007 in Koszalin. The Commission approved this project.

The annual meeting of the Commission of Tourism UBC will be held in September 2007 in Pärnu, Estonia, on the occasion of the UBC General Conference.

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GENDER EQUALITY TAKES A NEW LEAP IN UBC

As part of the long term goal for all citizens within the Union of Baltic Cities, is to achieve gender equality in our communities. This Commission on Gender Equality can be used as a resource, and for supporting gender equality issues.

The main task for the UBC Commission on Gender Equality will be to increase the importance of gender issues and gender mainstreaming as a strategy toward democracy.

There are several focus areas of great importance for the development of our region and for the well-being of the citizens. The Commission plans to focus on three specific areas. These are: combating prostitution and trafficking, gender aspects on the labour market and finally, social planning – urban planning and planning work.

These focus areas are of vital significance and play an important role in the development of the quality of life for both women and men in the Baltic Sea cities and region.

Sharing best practices, experiences and knowledge is one way of moving ahead and this is part of a planned increased cooperation regarding gender issues.

Increasing awareness of gender issues within the focus areas is an important part of the common goal of achieving gender equality. The Commission can play a vital role in supporting, strengthening and accelerating the work on gender equality in the UBC.

The Commission will be led by Umeå Municipality in the region of the North of Sweden. Umeå has been working with gender equality questions for several years. Umeå has a Gender Equality Committee that works close to the municipal council. The committee, as well as other politicians and employees, have a vast experience of working with gender equality which hopefully will be beneficial to the UBC. Umeå hopes that experiences from active work with gender mainstreaming will help the Commission to reach out to the member cities and to be of quality-



tive and inspiring support.

The main aim of 2007 will be to gather the commission and arrange a meeting. It is important that all members in the commission feel familiar with the three focus areas. The commission will meet in order to set up strategies and goals for a successful gender equality work.

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THE UBC EU COORDINATORS NETWORK

During the last meeting of the UBC Executive Board in Gävle, Sweden, in March 2007 the resolution to re-vitalize the UBC-EU Network passed. Although established several years ago, it was inactive for about three years as no city wanted to take the responsibility to manage this work.

Currently, the Hanseatic City of Rostock, Germany, is undertaking this task. The Europäisches Integrationszentrum-Rostock e.V. (EIZ) will be here the competent point of contact. The EIZ presented the idea of the re-viving the UBC-EU-Network already at the 47th Meeting of the Executive Board in

Gdynia, 19 -20 October 2006.

The EIZ will now start the work and will contact the UBC member cities.



These contacts will be the first step to find partners who are willing to actively support the networking.

The first meeting for discussing further steps of cooperation with the UBC Antenna and other interested cities is planned for 27 – 29 June 2007 in Rostock. We plan to concentrate our work around:

- Information about the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy in the Baltic Sea Region,

- Information about the implementation of the Plan D in the Baltic Sea Region,
- Information about examples of "Best Practices" in the Baltic Sea Region,
- Strengthening the continual Public Relations for the benefit of the UBC.

We look forward to receiving more suggestions and requests from cities on a well-functioning UBC-EU Network.

Do not hesitate to contact us and to make your own proposals! We are still under formation and will be glad to hear from you!

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DEBATE ON POVERTY

On 13 April 2007 a small group met to detail further activities of the Commission on Health and Social Affairs which were decided on the Annual Meeting, 3-5 October 2006 in Rostock. In October the discussions took migration and integration into thorough consideration. On that occasion a core group of participants pronounced its will to continue working together and to join experiences in a project on Combatting Xenophobia in Municipalities. As this term is typically used to describe fear or dislike of foreigners or in general of people different from one's self, the theme shall be approached in a wider range. An application to the European Social Fund will be prepared to be handed in at the beginning of 2008.

"Economy Is Booming - So Is Chil-

dren's Poverty", this could be found as one of the headlines in *Süddeutsche*

Poverty deserves to be looked at on a higher level and constantly, especially the poverty of children who are the weakest within societies and economic systems all over Europe. Occasional newspaper articles won't help children and their families who try to make ends meet.

Zeitung on 23 April 2007. This article was only one of several that German media felt urged to publish on a newly conducted study by an institute for labour market and youth welfare issues. Surely you are familiar with this kind of news in your own country.

The Annual Meeting of the Commission has just been held on 15-18 May in Kristiansand/Norway and was devoted to "Combatting Poverty and Social Exclusion of Children". As poverty is an increasing phenomenon in European

cities it is necessary to put light into it and to learn what cities can do to meet the problem. Poverty of children is strongly correlated to the situation of the families they live in. It is often due to economical reasons that families drive off to social marginalization. The consequence is a lack of chances for children to take an active part in social life with all its possibilities. Local politicians, social workers and executives were invited to the meeting in order to debate on this topic of high relevance.

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PLANNING AND THE PUBLIC IN VILNIUS

The Commission on Urban Planning held a seminar in Vilnius on 19-21 April. The theme was "Planning and the Public", which covered public participation and involvement in city planning processes, planning of public spaces and how the public spaces are experienced by their users.

Vilnius, a beautiful city with half a million inhabitants with an exceptionally beautiful historical old town and a dynamically growing new business centre, tempted almost 40 city planning professionals to hear interesting presentations on public participation both in Vilnius and in the US and about experiencing public spaces. Vilnius has a new master plan for 2006-2015 with 500 hectares of potential development areas, 120 hectares of which are in the central parts of the city.

As usual, an important part of the seminar was exchanging knowledge and discussing hot topics in city development. As an example of development of planning instruments, the participants heard about Umeå's research on using Google Earth as a tool of planning and presenting plans to the public, a method

that will certainly be a part of everyday planning in the future.

Two of the seminar workshops were about Zverynas, a beautiful and popular old dwelling area close to the city centre with a history from the 16th century and 12,200 inhabitants. The workshops analyzed the problems, values and opportunities of Zverynas and made

the city districts divided by the river and to construct an all-year-round oasis of leisure, art and culture with flowers, bushes and green areas. Also, the groups suggested improvement of planning and material quality of the old concrete structured river banks with new lighting fixtures and benches for pedestrians.

The seminar participants also talked about involvement and participation of the public in the new development projects and proposed e.g. discussion forums on the city website, as well as other methods of participation. It is important to keep in mind that the development is made to create opportunities for better quality of everyday

life for the inhabitants of the city, and therefore a democratic planning process with clear responsibilities is vital.

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Public green area meets the new Vilnius city development at the Right Bank of River Neris
Photo: Lars-Göran Boström

proposals for future development, like improving traffic conditions, turning the old wooden hospital into a spa and building new parks, playgrounds and sports fields for the needs of the area's inhabitants.

The other two workshops were about the north bank of the River Neris, where a recreational area with new functions should be built to highlight a new business centre with the tallest skyscrapers in the Baltic countries. The workshops proposed to build a tunnel to connect



SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN THE CITY - GRANT COMPETITION

Focused mainly on public transport and mobility management, the UBC Commission on Transportation is involved in various actions promoting effective transport solutions and thus improving life quality of BSR inhabitants.

One of the negative factors affecting the quality of life is heavy traffic which is a source of pollution and noise, cause of diseases and leading to more road accidents. Bearing in mind its numerous harmful effects, the Commission has decided to support different projects dedicated to reducing the use of cars, informing people of the drawbacks connected with increased private car use as well as improving traffic safety.

Therefore, in April it announced a grant competition for the UBC member cities entitled "Sustainable Mobility in the City", the purpose of this initiative

being to select and award the most interesting actions complying with one or more competition priorities, which are:

- encouraging city inhabitants to use public transport or other alternative modes of transport (walking, cycling, car-sharing and car-pooling, etc.)
- raising awareness of the negative effects of increased use of private cars (growing air pollution, increased noise, traffic congestion, accidents, etc.)
- promoting traffic safety rules in order to decrease the number of traffic accidents ("traffic safety" classes for children, campaigns against drink driving, speeding, etc.)

Projects and initiatives submitted may encompass informational campaigns, trainings, competitions for inhabitants,

direct actions promoting sustainable transport, etc. They must be realised in the period between 1 June 2007 and 30 November 2007.

The Commission will have taken its decision by mid-May presenting the best project with a grant of 2.000 EUR and three other most interesting ones with a grant of 1.000 EUR each. We hope that this competition will provide an incentive for the member cities to look for sustainable transport solutions.

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SPORT – A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE

The UBC Commission on Sport Annual Meeting entitled "Sport – a Healthy Alternative" was held in Karlskrona, Sweden on 19-21 April 2007. It gathered representatives of 8 cities from 7 countries: Estonia, Finland, Germany,



Participants of the meeting of the Commission on Sport, Karlskrona, 19-21 April 2007

Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden.

With sport as a healthy alternative being the main subject of this year's meeting, Karlskrona speakers (among

whom there was a Sweden's Governmental Drug Coordinator) presented ways of preventing unhealthy and addictive lifestyles (such as drug addiction, doping), whereas in the second part of the meeting speakers from Turku (Finland) and local ones from Karlskrona focused on methods of promoting healthy habits.

Additionally, meeting participants had an opportunity to see the implementation of healthy lifestyle policies in practise, and thus visited the Karlskrona Indoor Athletic Arena and Telenor Arena Karlskrona.

Moreover, during the meeting, Ms Beata Łęgowska was re-elected as the Chairperson of the UBC Commission on Sport, and Ms Camilla Brunsberg was nominated the Commission's Vice Chairperson.

Furthermore, at the meeting there

was presented 2007 grant awarding procedure entitled "Always Active". By allocating the grants the Commission wanted to award those projects which encouraged elderly people to keep physically active and increased their functional capacity as well as promoted sport as a way of preventing various illnesses. As usual the Commission's grants were addressed exclusively to UBC member cities.

The projects eligible for the 2007 grant session should be realised in the period June 1 – November 30, 2007. The deadline for sending grant applications was April 30, 2007.

Further information:

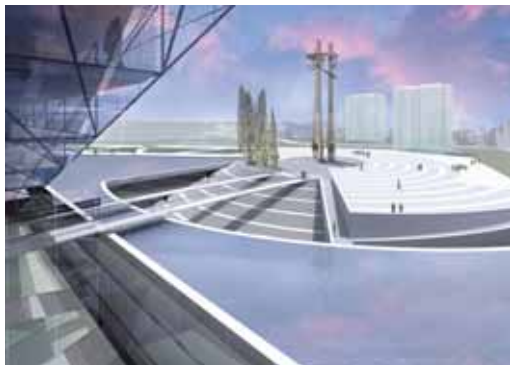
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III. NEWS FROM MEMBER CITIES

THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CENTRE IN GDAŃSK

The European Solidarity Centre (ESC) is intended to be the driving force for spreading the ideas of democracy and independence. It is to be raised in the historic area of the Gdańsk Shipyard. The BHP Hall which witnessed the signing of the historic August Agreements in 1980, Gate No. II to the Yard, and the promenade of freedom arranged as a broad pedestrian track to lead down to the piers are all meant to be integrally included in the centre. Alongside conference halls and a hotel section it will include a museum to commemorate the recent Polish history (1944 – 1989) and modern archives storing the abundant documentation relating to the times. Lech Wałęsa and the Solidarity Centre Foundation will have their offices at the ESC.



The target date for completing all

works is set for August 2010. The architectural shape of the future ESC has not been determined yet. ESC may be composed of several buildings arranged in close proximity to one another. Alternatively, it may take the form of a

single structure, interesting in its design, rising high into the sky and divided into sections. The major functions envisaged are as follows:

- to initiate and organise symposiums, conferences and lectures spreading the idea of solidarity in the world,
- to maintain contact with national and international institutions which propagate human rights and democratic order in countries world wide,
- to create archives, a library and reading room that will meet the demands of the 21st century, documenting the anticommunist opposition after the

year 1945,

- to archive the actions taken by the free world countries in support of the underground Solidarity movement in the testing times of the marshal law and onwards up to the year 1989, and to keep record of those who exerted pressure on the communist regime,
- to establish a museum that will preserve the national and cultural heritage, now started in its kernel form of the permanent exhibition entitled: 'Roads to Freedom',
- to pursue activities pertaining to the development of science, culture, and education through e.g. organising topical expositions, various national and European competitions.

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LET'S MEET IN SŁUPSK IN SUMMER 2007

Słupsk will host the 13th World Sports Competition of Polonia on 28 July - 4 August 2007. It is the greatest sports feast of people of Polish origin as well as all sympathizers of Polish culture spread all over the world.

Słupsk will be for the first time the organizer of the sport competition of such an importance.

The First World Sports Competition of Polonia took place in 1934 in Warsaw. The course of the sports events was disrupted by the World War II and its political consequences. The idea was reactivated in the 70s of the passed century. Post-war editions were held in Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Poznań and Sopot.

World Sports Competition of Polonia is a sports and cultural event designed to spread the message of fair play, orderly manners and honesty and to

strengthen the bonds among youngest generations of Poles abroad and the land of their fathers and grandfathers.

During the Sports Competition, a great number of accompanying events will take place.

"Fish Festivity" is one of them - it's the only one event of its sort in Poland and it will be held from 3 to 4 August. It is the fest of Polish fishers and producers of fish assortments, all people connected with the sea and inland fishing, which have already become a part of calendar of the economic and cultural events of Słupsk. This year it will be the 11th edition. The main aim of the event is most of all popularisation of the fishing industry. Słupsk, which from the ages has been connected with the Baltic Sea through a harbour in the nearby Ustka (18 km), is still associated with the sea. Economy in the Słupsk Region has had

the sea character from ages.

There are exhibitions of the biggest fish breeders, producers of the fish and fishing assortment from the region. As always the event will be accompanied by an interesting discussion about fishing industry in Poland and Europe, its problems, possibilities and successes.

There are numerous events of entertainment character, fishing competition and show of fireworks.

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EUROPEAN DAY OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

EDE is a promotion event of entrepreneurship to promote and encourage entrepreneurship locally, nationally and internationally. Turku organizes EDE on 12 June 2007 for the fifth time.

In 2007, EDE Turku is going to be more international than ever. It will be an official part of the EUROCITIES' Economic Development Forum (EDF) and will serve as a pre-conference of the World Conference of ICSB (International Council for Small Business).

To make the best out of the synergy of the joint events, EDE and ICSB are going to have a joint programme. The Night of Entrepreneur is going to be open for the participants of the all three events to create larger forum for networking.

Selected topics:

Megatrends – Networking around the

Baltic Sea

- Demographic challenge – less working-age population in Europe (Cases: *Posting Polish workers abroad to provide services* *Global Employment and Education programs for immigrants in Turku*)

- New potential for SME startups, fast aging society in Europe, Networking, Products (cases: *Nutrition for Health. The knowledge society, International networked education, Tourism, Latest Developments of Wood Composites Vocational Education and Training Centre Rostock*)

ICSB Policy Forum

- Innovative measures in fostering entrepreneurship

- Cases from Columbia, Spain, Germany and Puerto Rico

- Innovative practices in supporting

growth-oriented and innovative firms – a case of Finland

- Financing innovative and growth-oriented firms
- BornGlobal Internationalization Services – Supporting internationalisation of innovative and growth-oriented firms
- Supporting commercialisation of research and innovation
- Commentary to the Finnish Cases from the perspective of European policies in support of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Further information:

www.edeturku.fi/english
www.icsb2007.org



MARITIME HANSEATIC TRADITIONS

The Baltic Sea will be the sea of the traditional ships in 2007! The twin cities of Rostock - Aarhus and Szczecin - are starting and finish ports of the "Tall Ship's Races in the Baltic", organised by Sail Training International. Other ports on the route are Kotka and Stockholm. The amazing wind fleet is the reason the new brig TRE KRONOR will be prepared for its maiden voyage in the capital of Sweden.

In July it is celebrated the 700th anniversary of the establishment of Halmstad, a city on the Swedish west coast. The traditional ships are the honoured guests. This is a prelude to the meetings of the Baltic Sail in Gdańsk, Klaipėda, Karlskrona, Rostock, Helsingoer, and Travemuende. As a passenger on traditional sailing boat, under guidance of an experienced crew, people can enjoy a trip in the eleven ports of the Baltic Sea area.

The Hanseatic City of Rostock, meanwhile, became the centre point of attraction of the traditional sailing boats travelling in the Baltic Sea for many skippers and crews. At the second weekend of August, 300 schooners, barques, brigs, galleasses or museum ships, like the legendary steam ice-breaker STETTIN, will attract more than one million visitors, again into the city at the river Warnow.

The trumps of Rostock are the attractive participating trips and the pictures on the sea in front of seaside resort of Warnemuende, which - like in a maritime kaleidoscope from the cog up to the ultramodern ferry boat - present more than a half millennium navigation history. So the city becomes annually the



largest and most lively maritime free air museum of the world on those four days of August.

Again a fleet of medieval cogs will meet the liners in the sea canal of Rostock. The squadron of the replications have been travelling since the Hanseatic League had their premiere in 2006. There again is also the Asiatic junk KUBLAI'S KAHN II, which sailed after the spectacular sea voyage of China, over Venice to Rostock, in the Baltic Sea. Their crew prepares themselves and the ship for the return journey into the realm of the cen-

tre to the EXPO 2010 via Rio de Janeiro. Welcome to the 17th Hanse Sail from 9 to 12 August 2007!

What is missing today is a permanent joint marketing platform for the Baltic Sea as a first class sailing area. Many maritime cooperative suppliers conduct their own marketing activities, but this leaves valuable potential untapped.

The MariTour Initiative has been launched to exploit this potential to it's fullest. Headed by Hanse Sail Rostock, it enables marina operators, event organisers, and operators or traditional vessels to pool their marketing activities under the sail-BALTIC label and thus improve the market conditions for all those who are involved in maritime tourism.

sailBALTIC will be transformed into a lean but strong organisation, responsible for Baltic-wide maritime marketing in 2007.

You're welcome becoming a member of the crew!

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THE CHILDREN'S ART GALLERY IN BALTIJSK

The Children Art Gallery has been opened in Baltijsk. It is situated on the ground floor in the building of Baltijsk City District Administration.

In the first exposition, works of the participants of the children's paintings competition "My city nowadays, in the past and the future" are displayed. About 100 works took part in competition, 78 of them are selected for an exposition in the gallery. Painters' age is from 4 till 17

years. In four age group nominations, 12 prize-winners have been named.

The special prize of the head of the BCD Administration was presented to the youngest artist – 4-year-old Denis Khorunzhy. All children who were at



the opening ceremony of the exhibition received gifts. Heads of the municipal enterprises, representatives of District Deputy Council and the Baltic garrison awarded the children. During the opening of an exhibition a mass interactive

action "The Image of Future City" with participation of the head of the district, Mr Feodor Yaroshevich, young artists, visitors and invited guests took place. Children and adults have drawn a picture of the native city in the

future. Music underneath the Gallery opening was provided by musicians of accordion ensemble from I.-S.Bach Children School of Arts.

The adults who participated in creation of Gallery did not remain without awards.

The Baltijsk Administration awarded the schools' directors, chiefs of kindergartens, teachers and the tutors, who supported children in this creative undertaking, with letters of thanks. After the opening ceremony, Mr Feodor Yaroshevich, representatives of administration, children and adults were photographed.

Making comments on results of the last action, Mr Yaroshevich told that support of children creativity and creation of the special cultural atmosphere in Baltijsk is the major condition of district development.

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THE CITY OF THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

The rapid development of Kaliningrad, marked by the 750th anniversary of the city celebrated in 2005, is accelerating. Kaliningrad has discovered Cannes and serious investors have discovered Kaliningrad. Ten large investment projects of the city were presented in Cannes during the annual commercial real estate exhibition MIPIM-2007. It is the second year since Kaliningrad has been presenting itself as the city worth to invest in.

Among the ambitious projects of Kaliningrad in Cannes, the projects on the development of the historical centre of the city: The Royal Castle, "Altstadt", hotel complex "Bellevue", "Admiral", "Kaliningrad-city" including the business centre and commercial and hotel complex as well as the "High-rise ring" were presented.

The issue concerning the cultural heritage of the westernmost regional centre was vigorously voiced during the celebrations dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the region. Yury Savenko, Mayor of Kaliningrad, proposed to renovate the Royal Castle at the suggestion of the intellectual elite of the city. Georgy Boos, Governor of the Region, as well as Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, who visited Kaliningrad during the festive days, shared this opinion.

The Order Castle later the Royal Castle was founded in 1255 by the King Přemysl Ottokar II and served as the symbol of the Eastern Prussia for many centuries. The Royal Castle was destroyed as the result of the British bombardment in August 1944. The soviet authorities that inherited the ruins of the Castle decided not to renovate this symbol due to the ideological principles. During the period since 1959 till 1976 the ruins of the Royal Castle were eventually dismantled and

the Central Square and the House of Soviets were located at this site.

Today the transformation of the historical centre of the city is considered to be one of the priority cultural objectives. It is believed that the renovated Royal Castle as well as the Church of Christ the Savior, situated in the Victory Square, the Cathedral and the King's gates will become the visiting card of the city. On the one hand, the Royal Castle is a historical heritage of the city which marked the beginning of its history, on the other – an expensive land which can be used for the construction of a 5-star hotel

and 400 parking places. Therefore, the government counts on culture, tourism and budget replenishment. In any case, the cost of the project will amount to several million dollars.

After the return from Cannes Yury Savenko informed that more than 100 potential investors expressed their interests in the presented projects. Half of these investors have already given their consent to sign the corresponding agreements. It will obviously happen when investors come to the amber region. Meanwhile, the investment boom in Kaliningrad is thriving. Kaliningrad is surpassing the North-Western Russian cities and St. Petersburg regarding the rates of construction development. According to the Mayor, having preserved and partially renovated the symbols of the past that attract tourists to the city, Kaliningrad will become the city of the future in 4-5 years.

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NEW ART MUSEUM OPENED IN VAASA

The Kuntzi Museum of Modern Art was opened to the public in February 2007. It is situated in a former customs warehouse in the Inner Harbour of Vaasa. The building has 2,000 m² space, which has been planned exclusively for museum activities. Thanks to the new museum, both national and international exhibitions of modern and contemporary art are now a permanent feature of Vaasa's artistic life.

The base collection in the new museum is the Kuntzi Foundation's art collection – one of the most important classic collections of contemporary art in Finland covering pop art, kinetic art as well as committed art, informalism, surrealism,

new expressionism or postmodernism... Over 900 works forming the collection are a cross section of modern art history,



Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Mao 1972, silk screen, collection Swanljung, Kuntzi Museum of Modern Art

Photo: Mikko Lehtimäki

from international modernists to the Finnish artists of today, e.g. Joan Miró, Auguste Herbin, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, Kain Tapper, Kimmo Kaivanto, Leena Luostarinen, Paul Osipow. But most of all, it is the classic collection of Finnish contemporary art created in the 1950s and onward. The Kuntzi Foundation, founded

in 1970 by Consul Simo Kuntzi (1913-1984), had the clear intention from beginning to provide the public with different aspects of contemporary art, as well as to collect and present art

phenomena from the art world's recent history. This mission is now continued by the new museum.

Kuntzi Museum of Modern Art is also a forum for inter-artistic collaboration: music, literature, dance and theatre form a self-evident part in the museum's operation. The new museum functions also as a teacher in art education. Different advised activities, guided tours, art clubs, workshops and lectures are organized in the museum. And an atelier called Studio has been especially designed for younger visitors. The Simo Museum Café, a museum shop and an art library are also available for visitors

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FRENCH SPRING IN RIGA

Festival "French Spring 2007" in Latvia embraces main fields of bilateral relations between Latvia and France – economy, culture, art and tourism. Up to now Latvians used to know France by novels of Zola and by songs of Edith Piaf. France for Latvians means Catherine Deneuve and the fashion of Carl Lagerfeld. Latvians would seek for Matis and Toulouse – Lautrec in Louvre. Having ascended the Eiffel Tower Latvians remember a fairy-tale about Riga, being the Little Paris told by grandmother, and then realize that they have not had even a smattering of France – just a beautiful and fictional reality which explodes in Riga showing its real essence, turning legends into specific real experience in life and art, allowing to be touched by anyone through pictorial circus performances, as well as the French Film Week, concerts and TV programs.

Riga invited guests from the partnership city of Bordeaux in France to the Conference "Riga – Bordeaux: City Projects" and exhibition "World of Vineyards in Bordeaux Colours, World's Vineyards". The "Fauve Perspective. French Painting at the Beginning of the 20th Century" exhibition from the Bordeaux Art Museum at Latvian National Museum of Art offers

an insight into the world of the early 20th century French paintings. At the Centre of Culture and National Art "Small Guild"

the concerts of "French Spring" are continued by Christian Vieusens and Valdis Muktupāvels, together with Benat Achary. Brilliant dancing technique and bright emotional message – "French

Spring" falls in Riga with a shining poetic message fascinating visitors and allowing immediate approach to French culture.

Culture takes its routes in the secrets of theatre, art, literature, life style and gastronomy, which Latvia finds out this spring also within the frames of the legendary French Cuisine Festival, envisaged to be a magnificent cookery adventure for Riga's citizens and visitors of the city as well. Cookery Show with participation of several restaurants offering various French dishes and giving insight into winery traditions of the Bordeaux Region and the world philosophy of wine. Students and lecturers from the Paris Grégoire Ferrandi



School participate in the Festival. Involving Association of Latvian Restaurants, French students demonstrate their skills

at several restaurants in Riga and Jūrmala, working together with Latvian cooks and offering traditional French dishes from genuine products.

"French Spring" allows to experience the truth of

lightness of the French existence which is not just a myth any more in the consciousness of Riga's citizens and which makes the long cherished tale of France making this country closer.

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MARITIME CENTRE VELLAMO IN KOTKA

Maritime Centre Vellamo in the Central Harbour of Kotka celebrated a topping-out ceremony on 29 March 2007. Six months before, the cornerstone of the museum centre was laid, among others, by Paavo Lipponen, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament. The Provincial Museum of Kymenlaakso and the Maritime Museum of Finland, which will be transferred from Helsinki to Kotka, will move to the building in the autumn of 2007.

Maritime Centre Vellamo, which represents modern architecture, is being erected in a maritime setting in the Central Harbour (Kantatamama) of Kotka. The building will be complete in the autumn of 2007 and opened to the public in July 2008. Vellamo is not only a significant cultural achievement but also a sizeable investment by the city. The building will cost almost 40 million EUR. The building with a maritime design has been planned by Architects

Lahdelma & Mahlamäki. It will have a total area of over 14,000 square metres and will provide a workplace for some



Image: Architects Lahdelma & Mahlamäki

– such as the steam icebreaker Tarmo, the lighthouse ship Kemi and several coastguard vessels – moored to Vellamo's quay will render the Central Harbour an attraction which also provides room for visiting ships.

Information Centre Vellamo will also be established in the Maritime Centre. The Information Centre shared by the Palmenia Centre for Continuing Educa-

tion of the University of Helsinki, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Provincial Museum of Kymenlaakso, and Maritime Museum of Finland will be a pioneer in integrating the expertise of museums and higher education. It will offer library, archive and information services ranging from maritime history and local history to museology. The same service point will be a source for literature, electronic publications, databases in various fields, ships' drawings, historic maps and photographs.

In addition, Vellamo will be a pleasant venue for various types of events, meetings and seminars. The building will house an auditorium for 200 persons and also smaller conference facilities.

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INVESTMENTS IN PALANGA RESORT

Palanga is an international seacoast resort and home to active recreation and rehabilitation, oriented towards a wide range of entertainment services with a developed modern infrastructure. Around 900 thousand tourists visit Palanga annually.

In the first half of 2006, direct foreign investment amounted to 23.7 million Lit. Investment was most intensive in the areas of construction, real estate, and tenement. Currently, the implementation of large investment projects to be completed by 2009 has been started in Palanga.

In summer 2007, hotel "Vanagupė" is planning to open a new SPA health centre "Vanagupė" with a total area of 2,000 m². A swimming pool with sea water, saunas, rooms for various massages, beauty salons, etc. will be available there.

In 2008, the company "Baltijos aktima" will be ready to build a unique health complex in Palanga resort where mineral water would be used for treatment purposes. In the area of ca. 80-ares, a multi-storey building should be built, which will accommodate a SPA complex, treatment rooms, rehabilitation centre, a hotel, restaurant and conference cen-

tres. It is planned to build and equip a swimming pool, bath complex as well as mud and mineral water baths with therapeutic pools.

The company "Pinus Proprius", which belongs to the worldwide famous concern "Inter Ikea", is planning to build a modern SPA centre with conference halls and the largest hotel in Palanga on the other shore of the river Rąžė, instead of the former pool of sanatorium "Jūrate". The hotel with 210 apartments and total area of more than 20,000 m² will be named "A Capella SPA Palanga".

By 2009, K. Gecas trade company is planning to build a sea and mineral water therapy centre (SPA centre) near hotel "PALANGA", that would reflect the style and spirit of the old Palanga architecture.

In 2006 UAB "Baltijos pirkliai" has started construction of the entertainment and recreation complex. It comprises twelve villas with sauna, conference hall, cafes, restaurant and commercial premises. In 2007 the company plans to build two 5- and 3-star hotels at Šventoji and one 5-star hotel in Palanga. A water park and SPA centre with the total area of almost 22,000m² is being



Recreation and health complex in Šventoji

designed for those coming to relax and to regain strength. The centre will comprise saunas, massage rooms, therapeutic baths, beauty salons, relaxation rooms, recreation Water Park, bowling, billiard hall and restaurants. The family health centre will be able to accommodate 3,200 people at the same time.

Palanga expects that the above leisure, entertainment and health centres will create a larger flow of incoming tourists and holidaymakers, as well as will extend the recreation season in the resort.

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THE BORDER AS A TRIGGER FOR DEVELOPMENT

The cross-border cooperation between neighbour border-cities Narva (Estonia) and Ivangorod (Russia) has entered the active stage with signing the Municipal Agreement between two cities in August 2006 in the framework of the project "City Twins Co-Net", supported by INTERREG IIC and TACIS. Based



on the Agreement, a Cross-border Cooperation Strategy has been elaborated and has successfully started, namely there has been developed a number of common projects, approved by INTERREG IIIA programme, which are now being developed:

1. EstRusFortTour – development of the unique ensemble of the Estonian and the Russian fortresses as a single tourist product and conservation of cultural and historical heritage. As a

results of this project a single tourist product (tour around Narva and Ivangorod fortresses) will be created,

a network between cross-border tourist companies established and documentary studies for inclusion of the complex of fortresses into pre-list of the world heritage UNESCO implemented.

2. Narva River

Water Routes – developing the Narva River water tourist routes and integration of the local ports into the Baltic Sea small harbours network. The project is aimed at development of water tourism in the basin of the Narva River. To ensure safe boat tourism, navigation studies will be implemented. To attract more boat and yacht tourists and to make their stay more comfortable infrastructure of ports and marinas will be improved.

3. Narva and Ivangorod historical riverside – integrated development of the historical riverside protection area in Narva and Ivangorod. The project will contribute to creation of promenade areas in the historical riverside protection zone in Narva and Ivangorod.

Thanks to the common projects Narva wants to attract attention to the potential possibilities of the cross-border region and to make the border serve not as a barrier but as an additional trigger for development. Our future plans are ambitious – Narva is getting ready for 2007-2013 EU financing period.

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SPRING IN JŪRMALA

The Latvian "Spring of France" is held from 21 March till 21 June 2007.

In Jūrmala, the events are organized in close cooperation with Jūrmala's twinning city Cabourg. A rich programme of events has been prepared in two main stages, first of which includes a visit of Cabourg Dive Estuar commune's Music School's chamber orchestra in Jūrmala with the aim of strengthening the ties between Dive Estuar's commune (region of Cabourg) and municipality of Jūrmala.

"Spring of France 2007" started in Jūrmala on 3 April with the concert of Dive Estuar commune's Music School's chamber orchestra in Kauguri Culture House. On 4 April, a photo exhibition "Vie privée" was opened. Pieces of art from the archives of National Fund of Modern Art of France – centre of plastic arts - will be exposed till 6 May 2007. There are compiled works of 18 modern artists. The Dive Estuar commune's Music School's chamber orchestra that came to Jūrmala pleased the visitors of exhibition "Vie privée" on its opening, as well as in 3 other concerts in the city - a

united concert of Cabourg Dive Estuar commune's Music School's orchestra and Jūrmala Music school's brass band, a big band concert in Majori Jazz Club, as well as Easter concert in Dubulti Lutheran Church.

The second stage of "Spring of France 2007" will start with the opening of art project "Les Reflets" and "Days of Cabourg in Jūrmala". The art project will be opened on 31 May at 18:00 on Dubulti square, and it will be exposed till 15 September 2007. The nature exposition will be composed from works of Lionel Scoccimaro, Natacha Lesuer and Philippe Ramette.

On 1 June a conference "Marcel Proust and Cabourg" will be held. In the City Museum an exhibition of works of two artists from Cabourg – Laurent Duval

and Eric L'Hotellier will take place. Photographer Eric L'Hotellier will exhibit 15 black and white photos of



Cabourg beach. Aquarelist Laurent Duval will not only bring his pictures of the Cabourg to exhibiton, but will also paint new ones during the visit in Jūrmala. The exhibition will be open till 17

June 2007.

Any additional information about the events of "Spring of France 2007" is available at www.francijasparvasaris.lv.

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The 48th UBC Executive Board Meeting was held in Gävle, Sweden, on 8-11 March 2007

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Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of over 100 cities from all ten Baltic Sea countries, with an overriding goal of contributing to the democratic, economic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Union has based its operational activities on thirteen working Commissions on: Business Cooperation, Culture, Education, Energy, Environment, Gender Equality, Health and Social Affairs, Information Society, Sport, Tourism, Transportation, Urban Planning, Youth Issues and EU Coordinators Network. The Commissions coordinate and execute specific projects, activities and special events. Each city is capable to have its own creative and fully independent input to the Commissions' work.

The Union has an observer status with the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), the Committee of the Regions, the Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). The Union is also a Special Participant in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The UBC cooperates with numerous Baltic and European organisations.

The Union is open for new members. Any coastal city of the Baltic Sea or any other city interested in the development of the Baltic Sea Region may become a member of the Union by making a written declaration of its will to enter UBC.

Please contact the UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk for more information about the UBC work and the rules of entering the Union.