

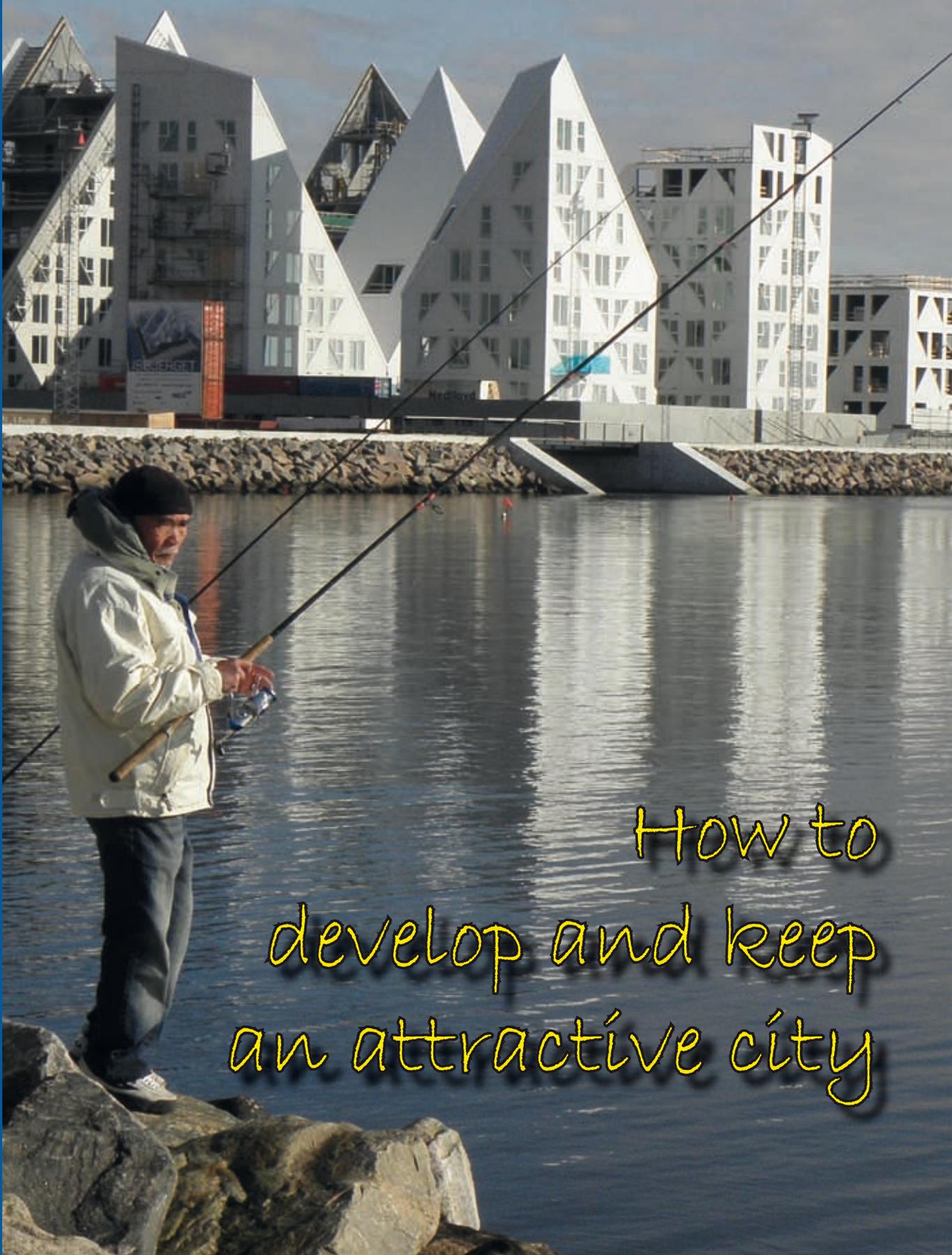
UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES



Baltic Cities Bulletin

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How to
develop and keep
an attractive city



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COVER PICTURE
City of Aarhus
Photo: Leif Petersson

Baltic Cities Bulletin

Dear UBC Friends,

We have just come back from Mariehamn where 200 participants, including mayors, councillors, city representatives, experts and speakers, and over 50 young people met to work out the solutions on how to combat the youth unemployment and marginalization.

The debate included numerous presentations on the situation of the youth from European, national and local perspectives. Detailed reports by mayors from UBC member cities highlighted local solutions, complemented by the input of the trade unions and companies' representatives.

"The situation is difficult but not hopeless", that is how the outcome of the discussions could be briefly summed up. There were numerous practices and measures presented, absolutely worth spreading out.

We treat the Conference in Mariehamn as a starting point to further work. An international Task Force was formed to promote youth employment. Hereby, I would like to invite all the member cities, Commissions as well as all other interested partners to join the work of this group.

The question on how to provide the youth with a comfortable environment for living, learning and working is at the top of challenges the cities have to face nowadays. The decreasing number of inhabitants is a huge threat. How to attract people and investments? How to encourage the youngsters to stay in the city? How to prevent the cities from shrinking?

This issue of the Bulletin will hopefully prompt some good solutions on how the urban planning may make a city attractive.

The cities are changing rapidly around us, being under the pressure in a competitive situation. To be constantly interesting, they have to be very focused on creating their unique positions, to nurse the business life, culture, nature, residential areas and the connections to other cities and regions. At the same time, various challenges are met, e.g. how to save money, how to re-generate the urbanized area, or to protect nature and cultural values.

The recipe seems to be easy. The city has to be open-minded, flexible and should stick to the long-term plans. Let's see how our member cities put this into reality, how the urban projects are implemented, how what is old or degenerated is transformed into something innovative, and finally, how the city space is made more friendly. The experience of our members clearly proves the inhabitants should be involved in the process of city development.

Having attractive cities, we will definitely have an attractive Baltic Sea Region.

With the Baltic Sea greetings,

Per Bødker Andersen
President of UBC



Kolding, November 2013



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Creating public spaces and green areas was assigned as a high priority of the Gargždai urban development.



The youth problems were on focus of the XII UBC General Conference held in Mariehamn, Åland, on 1 - 4 October 2013.

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The Navitas complex is located in the city centre and is due to open in May 2014.
Building owner: Ingeniørhøjskolen, Aarhus Universitet, Aarhus Maskinmesterskole and INCUBA A/S
Architects: Kjær & Richter and Christensen & Co

by Niels-Peter Mohr, Architect, Head of Comprehensive Planning, Planning and Building Department, City of Aarhus
Chairman of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning

This volume of the Baltic Cities Bulletin is dedicated to the very complex and very important question: How to develop and keep an attractive city? Hopefully, you will find interesting answers and ideas which you can learn from and use in your city. Learning from each other and making the whole region more attractive are the clear goals of the UBC. The Commission on Urban Planning has a great experience in exchanging the knowledge of organizing the interactive seminars and workshops.

What is an attractive city? Basically, the answer depends on an individual case, but when it comes to cities (and regions) and to their development policies and strategies, it is for most a question of the ability to attract people and investment. And normally these two parameters come together, or at least when they come together, it is a clear proof the city is attractive, indeed. Business goes where skilled people can be found, companies can be developed, where a turn-over can be made. And people go where they can find jobs, make careers, etc.

To keep a city attractive is also to keep sustainability – a city in balance. A city is like a three-legged stool, if one leg is broken it will fall over, and if one leg is longer than the others it will fall over, as well. In Denmark, and probably all over the Baltic Sea Region, there is a saying that you cannot balance on a knife's edge, so balancing on zero growth is risky. Therefore, all aim to create growth in order to avoid recession, to improve the quality of life for the citizens. But at the same time, the "legs of the stool should grow simultaneously".

A call for stories

Every city is unique and does things in its own way. In August 2013, the UBC secretariat invited the member cities to tell about their policies and strategies in relation to developing and keeping their cities attractive. Some cities have a university, others are home to important industrial businesses, others again are regional centres, some have a harbour or an access to significant natural resources. But they all are operating in the same competitive world and have to adapt to fast changes in the knowledge based business environment and to the global market. The cities were asked how do they do? What are their focus areas? What are the major challenges? How do they involve the citizens in the process?

And when the answers are known, we will be a one step closer to understanding how the cities can develop.

Aarhus – the Capital of Western Denmark

Aarhus is the second largest city in Denmark and the unofficial capital of Western Denmark. Today the city has some 320,000 inhabitants, a figure that grows by over 4,000 every year. The growth is mainly due to Aarhus University, ranked in the top 100 in the world. Every year the university and other educational institutions attract more than 10,000 new students. These bright young minds are the main resource of Aarhus!

If they sleep well, study well, have interesting career possibilities, work well, experience a vibrant urban life, have access to nature, child care, schools, parks, clean water and safety – they will be innovative and create new jobs and exports - to the benefit of the whole city and the Greater Aarhus Region, numbering about 1,2 million inhabitants within approximately one hours drive.

How

TO DEVELOP AND KEEP AN ATTRACTIVE CITY?

Therefore, the strategy in Aarhus is to provide all the above – or in other words: provide all the basics for a good and happy life (love they have to find and cultivate themselves).

But how is this reflected in the city's comprehensive plan and business plan?

According to the Danish Planning Act the City Council has to decide on a 12 year plan every four years. In Aarhus, we have always worked with a much longer perspective. Therefore, in 2009 when we had the last major revision of the comprehensive plan, the City Council decided on the development beyond 2030. And parallel to the comprehensive plan, the City Council decided on a business plan and a very ambitious "climate plan" stating that Aarhus as a whole shall be carbon dioxide-neutral by 2030.

You could say that Aarhus made the transition from being a "provincial player" to a "global player" – a transition which had already been in the pipe-line before the change of the millennium, but definitely a transition which we today have to implement across all sectors and all initiatives in the city. The various initiatives/plans support each other, and the city as a whole is a 1:1 laboratory on export possibilities within a number of specified business areas.

The core values of the city are "A city in motion" and "Space for everybody". Two relatively abstract values. "A city in motion" is all about being open-minded and flexible, to be able to see and pursue new possibilities and of course to allow experiments. "Space for everybody" shall be seen as the background since Aarhus is a city with almost 100 different nationalities, more than 4,000 international students, different income groups – but still a relatively homogeneous population, people with cars and people without cars, a mix of private housing, rental housing and public housing, institutional art and "grass roots", large companies, medium-sized companies and a number of small companies "on the way". A true mix with a lot of potential!

In general, Aarhus is undergoing a transition to a more knowledge-based economy, enabling the mix of workplaces and housing and through this, to higher the urban density to the benefit of urban life, less infrastructural cost, re-use of land, protection of nature and drinking water and the consolidation of the city economy.

The secondary values are about creating a healthy city, a socially sustainable city and an environmentally sustainable city. Since 1997, when Aarhus made the first Local Agenda 21 plan, the main focus

"Be open-minded, make long-term plans, stick to them and be flexible, focus on sustainability, keep moving forward".

has been on these issues and especially on the balance between them and a balanced economy. This is only to underline that city development and creating a sustainable city is a long-term discipline where it is important to be both very persistent and very patient. Developing a city is an never-ending process, but as long you discuss your core values and make plans you are on your way. And remember: Rome wasn't built in one day – and the same also goes for the future attractive and prosperous Baltic Sea Region.

In the comprehensive plan 2009 – which was re-adopted by the City Council in 2013 – there are 34 regeneration areas and 4 new towns with a relative high density, good public transport system (new tram-system from 2016) close connection to parks and nature etc. There is a capacity of 3 million square metres in the regeneration areas, and there is space for more than 50,000 new dwellings and 50,000 new jobs, which will be developed in the period from 2010 until 2030. During the same period Aarhus University aims at increasing the number of students by 20,000 to a total of 70,000.

Business life today – and even more so in the future – is based on and driven by knowledge-based companies within health, engineering, architecture, food production, ICT, culture, research, education, tourism and a wide range of consultancy sectors within energy, banking, marketing, legal matters, etc. Among the icons you find the 800,000 m² Aarhus Docklands, the 450,000 m² new university hospital, the Cultural Production Centre on the former railway freight terminal, immediately behind the City Hall and which will be a corner stone of a new neighbourhood with dwellings, offices and a new school of architecture, and for instance Navitas – which is a co-operation of different engineering studies, a research institute within energy, environmental and climate issues and located almost directly in the city center.

So my answer to the question "How to develop and keep an attractive city?" is:

Be open-minded, make long-term plans, stick to them and be flexible, focus on sustainability, keep moving forward and make friends and business with partners across the Baltic Sea and around the world. There are many challenges to be met, a lot of hard work to be done, and a lot of good people to enjoy with!

MORE

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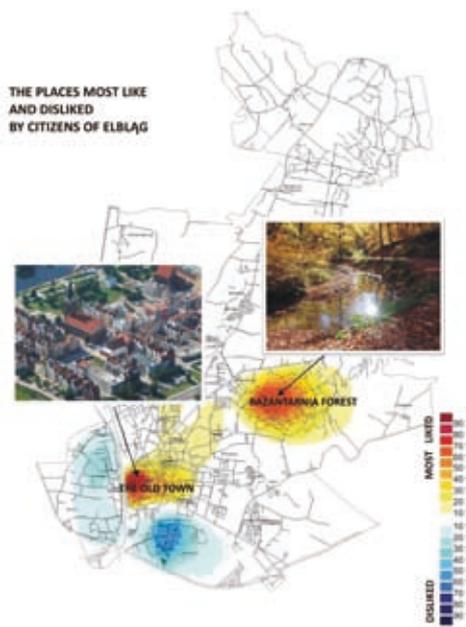
The Power of Inhabitants in Elbląg



by Katarzyna Wiśniewska

Increasingly interested in co-creating the city, people take part in the decision-making process on the directions of city development and ways of spending public money. It is visible in the projects proposed for the 2014 participatory budgeting. Elbląg's inhabitants want to: continue developing bicycle paths, playgrounds, walkways. They also want sun loungers in green areas, repaired fountains in the city and renovated outdoor swimming pool, etc.

In 2010, 1% of inhabitants were asked about places in Elbląg they like most. They mainly mentioned two areas: the Old Town (under reconstruction since 1983) and the Bażantarnia Forest. These two important places, accompanied by extensive green areas, have a great potential to be the magnet for visitors, encouraging them to stay for longer, but their quality should be improved. The "green system", among some other important issues, is the subject matter of Elbląg Development Strategy 2020+ which is currently being developed by almost 70 representatives of local decision-makers. First of all, it is very important to think about increasing the quality of the central areas of the city.



Elbląg struggles with such problems as urban sprawl or the downtown dominated by wide roads, which coincides with scarce parking spaces (Cars now occupy places which should be available for people).

To "give Elbląg back" to its citizens is the key to success and the beginning of development with a view to re-establish the identity of the place. To create a strong urban centre, authorities should listen closely to the voice of the people.

Also, a two-year EU co-financed project was launched on 26 August 2013, called "Elbląg consults!". Its main goal is to teach civil servants how to consult and communicate with the inhabitants. The social consultations for citizens enable them to express their opinions, proposals, and for the authorities – they create

opportunities to exchange information, experiences, and discuss relevant issues.

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Public Spaces in Gargždai

by Giedre Stankevičienė

With the ambition of becoming a socially sustainable town, creation of public spaces and green areas was assigned as the high priority of the town's and the whole district's urban development over the last few years. Several considerable initiatives and projects were undertaken as a result of consultations between the municipality and the community.



The development study of the town park was made to define the key solutions for regeneration of the old public area, with a special emphasis on the involvement of local community members into the designing process.

Conversion of the neglected gravel pits to recreational area is running according to the master plan.

The artificial ponds and their surroundings will be transformed into the green public area with the beaches, small boating and sports facilities, walking and cycling lanes, and camping places.

The reconstruction process of Kvietinių street has started in early summer. The project is to transform one of the oldest streets, running through the central part of the town, into the public space with a variety of distinctive identities. The street will be providing parking areas, squares, playing facilities, bike lanes, pedestrian sidewalks and green zones. Five different kinds of public islands are designed on this elongated urban space. The Market Square will be left with the primary function of parking place, supplemented with some elements of small architecture. The Tourist Information square will serve as an oasis for relaxation, creating a meeting place atmosphere. The square of the legendary canteen Bulvė is designed with double character – parking place and the outdoor eating place with the spot for a monument. The Minijos square will be providing the variety of functions. Landscaped with slopes, playing areas and picnic spots, stationary chess boards, climbing walls, benches and green stage zone, the square will be used for different social groups. The parking area next to the town's park is designed as an invisible green gate to the old park.

Many different functions will be linked together by one street providing a new urban life experience of compact and lively town.

MORE

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by Maria Magdalena Koprowska

Gdańsk has a great potential for development reflected in the city spatial planning. The local plans cover 79% of urban land. The main goal is to re-develop and revitalize the inner city to reverse the tendency for sprawl development what can be achieved by investments in culture, sport and knowledge, public transportation together with bicycle routes, accessibility to green areas, and re-development of post industrial sites.

Economic and political transition in the '90s offered an opportunity for new developments on former industrial and military sites in the Historical Downtown (almost 30% of the whole area) such as: Polish Baltic Philharmonic Hall located in the former power station, Young City district planned on the post-industrial estate reclaimed from the Gdańsk Shipyard, Academy of Music located in historical military barracks, Hevelianum Centre (a complex of the restored 19th century military remains hosting interactive exhibitions), re-construction of the 17th century Elizabethan theatre.

Some significant investment located outside the Historical Downtown are as follows: PGE Arena (constructed for EURO 2012) altogether with Exhibition and Conference Center - AMBER EXPO, ERGO Arena located astride on Gdańsk-Sopot border, enlargement of Baltic University Campus, extension of Gdańsk University of Technology, Gdańsk Science and Technology Park.

Gdańsk is seriously concerned about public transportation. It is regarded as one of the most cycling cities in Poland. There are 152

km of cycle paths in the city and additional 110 km are planned to be built soon. In 2004-2013 67% of city expenses were spent on transportation. Thanks to EU funds new tram line (2.9 km) has been built, about 20 km tram lines have been modernized and 84 modern trams have been bought.

Also, almost whole bus fleet has been replaced by a modern one. Resources in green areas are relatively large (6% of the city surface), but unevenly distributed. About 46% of all housing and housing-services areas are situated beyond pedestrians accessibility to the organized urban greenery or forest; what is more, 27% of them are situated beyond walking distances even to lawns, and small green squares. The detailed studies resulted in 20 new locations for parks what can reduced the deficit of accessibility to the greenery up to 21%.



Due to large number of skaters in Gdańsk, a huge skate park (27 ha) - Velodrom is planned in connection to existing skate path built around PGE Arena.

Photo: PSWE

MORE

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Gdynia – Attracted to Development

by Barbara Marchwicka

Close relationship and interdependence of Gdynia and the port implicates a constant dialogue between the city needs and the needs of the port industry.

Spatial planning in Gdynia focuses on creating land use plans in the areas of former port function and the neighbouring part of the downtown district. The Pomeranian Special Economic Zone and Gdynia are currently developing strategies aimed at making the post-industrial areas more appealing to potential investors. As a place of priority, the contact area between the city centre and the port, is almost entirely covered with the land use plans. This goes in line with the comprehensive analysis of the transportation net, necessary for port operations, as well as for the future downtown areas (e.g. Nowa Weglowa Street, north bypass of the Tri-City Agglomeration, metropolitan railway with transfer hubs).

One of the major projects which is being realized in Gdynia is the new waterfront. Search for new functions and different ways of developing former port zone mirrors the trend of extending the sea access area, popular among the port cities. As a result of the Gdynia Waterfront project, encompassing area around the Sea Towers (one of the highest residential buildings in Poland), Fishing Pier

Gdynia INFOBOX – observatory of changes quickly became an important place of common dialogue between residents and city authorities.



and Nauta Shipyard premises, the historical downtown area will double.

The investment potential of the city is inextricably connected with the standard of living, important both for residents and tourists. Gdynia places great emphasis on the residents' knowledge of the process of land transformation, and carries out information

campaigns to promote urban plans and supports activities undertaken by the district councils. The most spectacular achievement in this field is founding of the Gdynia INFOBOX – observatory of changes. Here one can take a look at a large-format model of the city centre, watch interactive multimedia presentations, and contribute to an open discussion on the local land use plans or participate in a number of cultural events.

Gdynia is currently in the forefront of Polish cities with respect to the quality of life. It gained awards in the competitions organized by the Polish Ministries and remains to be highly appreciated by the non-governmental organizations.

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Urban Resources - the Key to Keep a City Attractive



GULDBORG Sund

Marianne Reinhardt

Guldborgsund Municipality has successfully developed a city area focusing on the involvement of the existing local urban resources. The city area Slotsgade (Castle Street) Quarter in Nykøbing Falster has been the case story for a national strategy of creating an attractive city for the residents and a tourists based on the present urban resources.

Around 1.5 million Euro was used for physical investments along streets and open squares. But the focus was on including the local physical, social and cultural resources of the Slotsgade Quarter in the development process. It was carried out in close cooperation with representatives of the local residents, associations and businesses.

Through this process different interdisciplinary urban qualities have been mobilized to create a more attractive city area. The process has underlined the importance of the city's history for developing the open squares, streets profiles, street lights, re-creative spots and doing outdoor events. Through investment workshops



The Slotsgade Street

and dialogue with existing businesses the project also supported establishment of new businesses in the area focusing on private services and retail shops.

A financing plan on where to invest in the urban landscape was made on the basis of the Slotsgade area's main features analysis in culture, history, business, infrastructure, nature and leisure.

The existing social resources are very important for the process of revitalization of the city area. Yet, they are difficult to expose and to describe. To examine this, the local business college made interviews and was watching street life in the Slotsgade quarter. This was done in the beginning, half-way through and at the end of project. The results showed an increased use of the local city space and the positive attitude of the residents towards improvements of their local city quarter.

It is a dynamic process to keep the city attractive and unique to residents and tourists, and it needs to be done in a close dialogue with the people living there, the local businesses and the local associations. They have a well-founded knowledge on the social and cultural capital on which the attractiveness of a city has to be based. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs.

MORE

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Helsinki Believes in City Planning

by Rikhard Manninen & Douglas Gordon

Helsinki's uniqueness in the EU today is based on the belief that city planning can provide necessary conditions to make the city a good place to live and to work in. This is possible as the city owns 66% of the land. The State owns 13.6%, which in turn is 80% of land in public ownership. Land practices and ownership make Helsinki the 'driver of change'.

Helsinki is plan-led. Its development plan leads the strategic planning for the next 40 years. The city planning is integrated with the traffic and transport systems. When the large new development areas are built, metro, rail and tram networks are connected to these areas. Public transport accounts for 72% of all journeys during rush hours.

Helsinki's Nordic welfare culture aims to have social justice and social cohesion as much as spatial cohesion for its citizens.

Urban Planning Strategies in Helsinki

Presently, Helsinki is preparing a new City-wide Plan 2050. The vision is to strengthen Helsinki's international competitiveness as a spatially balanced city-region to promote well-being and city's attractiveness. The aim is to strengthen Helsinki's urbanism by extending the city centre and making it a 'Network City'. The metro

and tram network will be extended to include two new transversal cross-town high-speed trams connecting the East to the West.



Photo: Helsinki City Planning Department / Tietoa Finland Oy

The Planning Department wants to involve the public in decision-making. It has opened the first platform exhibition space in the Nordic countries in the heart of the Helsinki.

Future Challenges

Helsinki is a world class business and innovation centre and Finland's capital. There are some 400,000 jobs within the city boundaries and nearly 700,000 within the region. City Planning is also about meeting the needs of the private sector to succeed in a competitive world.

The city is aiming to be more energy efficient. 94% of all homes and offices are connected to the district central heating network. Some 55% of energy is created from natural gas. More is still to be done, as the City Council has agreed to make Helsinki carbon neutral by 2050. Today, it is well on its way to meet a 30% reduction by 2020.

Helsinki is involved in cooperation with its city-regional neighbours. Helsinki is also working with the EU to reduce regional disparities.

MORE

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Jēkabpils - Changing for Children

by Laura Afanasjeva

To be family-friendly is one of the main goals in the Development Strategy of Jēkabpils City for 2012 – 2018. This implies improvements of educational, sporting and cultural infrastructure. Each year Jēkabpils is making efforts in urban planning to make it more convenient and friendly for children.

This summer the municipality improved the existing playgrounds and created the new ones within the blocks of flats. The total expenses of setting up four new playgrounds were 33 664 EUR.

In addition, some major changes have been made to improve the infrastructure of the Jēkabpils Elementary School. With the support of the Climate Change Financial Instrument (CCFI) all buildings – the walls and the roof - were insulated, ventilation system was improved, LED lighting was installed. But, most importantly, the school can be now heated from renewable resources. All these improvements have allowed the school to cut maintenance costs and to be environmentally friendly.

Total expenses of the projects amount to 623247 EUR. 85% of the costs was refunded by CCFI.

A safe space for children is an important asset when choosing a



place for living and working. These are only few steps that Jēkabpils has made towards the status of the family-friendly city.

MORE

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Dreams Come True in Urban Planning

by Ilkka Halinen

Jyväskylä is a city of modern architecture. There are 30 buildings designed by the world famous architect Alvar Aalto. It is his heritage that would be one of the strengths to be strengthened. In the strategies it means a strong and modern city design. Over 40 architectural competitions have been arranged, many of them international. Some important initiatives were taken, e.g. working with the star architects like Peter Zumthor. The City Council has accepted the first local architectural policy programme in Finland.

The basic urban planning strategies are:

Compact and controlled city structure. Today 90% of the inhabitants are living at the distance less than 10 km from the city centre. It should be like that also in the future, mostly because of the city economics and services. It means supplementary building and participation, more than before.



How to define architecture? When does the construction turn into the architecture? Le Corbusier said in 1923: "Suddenly you touch my heart, you do me good. I am happy and I say: this is beautiful. That is architecture".



Mitigating the climate change. Compact city means possibilities for better public transport and for pedestrians and bicycles. The pleasant, continuing and easy to reach light traffic roads encourage to leave the car home and take a walk or bicycle ride.

Competitive advantage by standing out. This means reaching a unique and sustainable city by a positive competition, which can give examples to other cities, e.g. projects like City of Light, Wood as Brand or Fantasy of Päijänne lake.

Jyväskylä is a growing city. At the moment the biggest projects are the new age hospital and the expansion of the university. The annual housing fair in 2014 by Jyväsjärvi lake are to be organized. The Kangas developing area is the main building area nearby the city centre for 5000 inhabitants. The architectural competition was organized. The entries were available online and the citizens could share their opinions.

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Planning in Karlskrona



by Ola Swärdh

Karlskrona has been in a phase of intensive growth in recent years and its population has been increasing by about 500 inhabitants per year. The strategy for the future development is to be restrictive on land and water use, while refining and maintaining important qualities in order to become more sustainable. The planning focuses on densifying and mixing different uses of land.



Redevelopment of Pottholmen will make a new city district possible, containing housing, businesses and services in an attractive location close to the sea, the city centre, and local and regional networks.

This facilitates for improved public transport, the use of renewable energy, a greener city, an efficient infrastructure and a vivid countryside. The result is an optimal use of existing infrastructure and services with respect for the preservation of recreational areas and nature near housing areas.

One clear objective of Karlskrona's Comprehensive Plan is public transport, including rail bound communications. Current and new stations are important nodes for the development and add to the

achievement of a sustainable Karlskrona. New city districts are proposed to grow around the stations. These developments follow the national plans of investment in infrastructure.

The example of realizing these strategies is Pottholmen, a new city district. Pottholmen has a strategic location at the entrance of Karlskrona. Today the area holds the city's railway-station, fire-station, businesses and commercial facilities, and so forth. The area is dominated by large-scale infrastructure, such as the highway and train yard.

Beside the declaration from UNESCO of Karlskrona as a World heritage, the archipelago has been acknowledged by UNESCO as a "Man and biosphere"-reserve. In response to that the municipality has started two large projects linked to the archipelago. One is the water- and sewage plan, which aims to radically reduce the pollution from private facilities by building large scale public systems. The other project is a survey-plan for the archipelago. The main purpose of an archipelago-plan is to further develop and vitalize our archipelago, so that people, nature and cultural values grow together in a sustainable way over time.

One of the greatest challenges is to increase the number of permanent residents on the islands, in order to make it a vital year-round community. This work is done in a close dialogue with the islanders themselves.

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Karlstad City Environment - the Official Home!

by Andreas Eliazon

In Karlstad the model for work with the public space is home. The parable is simple: everyone has the same needs for security, comfort and experiences, both at home and in the city. At home, the rooms are furnished as needed, in a personalized style. And the same goes with the public space .

As the home reflects the individual's soul, in the public space the city's soul should be reflected. There are places, squares, streets with the surrounding facades, the green elements, art, architecture and city design. If we are creative enough, the visitors will have a positive experience of the city, says Andreas Eliazon, Urban Designer.

In Karlstad it is the spirit, the uniqueness, the playfulness and the site-specific values that create a greater experience. Karlstad's cultural history as a city by the water is always present, and the art is given much space.

In the recent years a number of projects have been implemented with a focus on attractiveness and creativity.

Sandgrund Park is an award winning park adjacent to the city center created by landscape architect Thorbjorn Andersson in cooperation with the municipality of Karlstad. The park, built in 2007, consists of a 300-metre long promontory surrounded by Klarälvens amazing water. The project Älvpromenaden is to improve the connection with the river Klarälven in the city center. Through a large exhibition in a shopping center and with the help of the social media, all inhabitants had the opportunity to speak up on the project.

The Sandgrundsparken consists of ridges and valleys with different vegetation themes and takes advantage of nature and the unique water situation. A major effort was to make all parts of the park accessible for the disabled. The park received 2010 Sienna landscaping prize.



Karlstad municipality allocates 1% of the budget for all major construction projects to art in public space. New art forms are given space and many new items get an artistic design. The latest example is the "Bild på cykelväg" a six-km long art experience on one of Karlstad bike lanes.

All urban projects create good conditions for other major industries in the city. Trade, restaurants, hotels and tourism industry need a well-functioning urban environment in order to attract customers and visitors. The soul, the uniqueness, the playfulness has a built-in appeal.

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Kaunas – the City where You Can Fulfil Yourself

by Renata Bartusevičiūtė

Kaunas urban structure results from its many centuries development. In the last ten years the face of the city has changed dramatically. The arena „Žalgiris“ was erected on Nemunas Island, which is the biggest arena in the Baltic states. New bridges and streets, a city quarter, as well as new shopping and leisure centres were built.



in line with current needs. That is why, we intend to have the city more compact and not to expand suburban areas, - said Nerijus Valatkevičius, Head of Urban and Architecture Division of Kaunas.

Kaunas started growing on the confluence of the Nemunas and Neris rivers, and later territories of the banks of these rivers were also included within the limits of the city. Now, the Old Town

Renewal Plan for Kaunas was approved in 2003. At present, a new Plan is under discussion. Although much has changed during this period, urban planners are still inclined to stick to the same urban vision of city that was established ten years ago:

Kaunas is a Baltic city of university, science, knowledge economy, innovations and high technologies, the centre of multimodal transport and logistics in the corridor between the East and the West, the cradle of culture, sports and river navigation of Lithuania.

Citizens were also involved in developing the General Plan. The authorities received over 230 requests and suggestions from citizens and organizations.

The city is not expanding in its territory. Urban changes will be made modifying inner territories, modernizing them and converting them

is the historical heart of the city, and the most visited place both by citizens and tourists. Ten years ago an intense city development and increased number of inhabitants was planned. Many ambitious and optimistic aims were set. During this period, the number of inhabitants in Kaunas dropped from 420 thousand to 307 thousand due to migrations and people moving to suburban areas and other towns.

The decreasing number of inhabitants determines the improvement of quality of existing residential territories, the renovation of multi-flat buildings, the infrastructure and improvement of green areas.

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Klaipėda on the Move

by Simonas Gentvilas

At the time of shrinking population in the Eastern Europe, Klaipėda witnesses an unprecedented development of its port. The port of Klaipėda is located in the very city centre stretching along its total length of about 25 km. Most recent urban planning is focused on empowering the port activities in order to double its output by 2020, and building buffer areas between the port and the city. Several new exit motorways and expansion of cargo railway infrastructure are planned. Yet, discussions are mostly related to decisions whether Klaipėda needs a bridge connection to the Curonian Spit and an external harbor outside the main channel. The Curonian Spit is a wonderful resort area, part of which is lying within the city boundaries with fragile nature, enlisted on UNESCO nature heritage. An extremely active property market in recent decade has fueled fast suburbanization processes, which sucked the population out



The proximity of the city and the port has steadily increased the pressure on residential environment, which lies just a stone throw away from the harbour.

from the inner city. In order to counteract this, the City Urban Planning Department started preparing plans for the former Soviet era brown field sites conversion into the inner-city. A former abattoir is already being converted into a spa center. The oldest energy plant, strongly dominating the Old Town skyline, is to be relocated by 2018, with conversion into mixed use developments. Meanwhile, two ship repair companies are foreseen to be redeveloped into an attractive waterfront. The Castle area also step by step reemerges after having been used as a ship repair yard for almost one hundred years. Another tactical move is to invest into a residential quarter from the 1960s lying south straight from the Old Town. The planned investment will exceed 50 M Euros by 2020. The newly developed area will significantly raise the inner city's attractiveness.

With other targeted investment in most dense urban areas of the city, finalization of several rapid transit bicycle roads crossing the whole city and other priority measures for public transport, Klaipėda hopes to extend its leadership in urban mobility among Lithuanian cities.

Those are just a few examples of implementing the priorities provided in Klaipėda City Development Strategy 2013-2020. The municipal efforts continue to be directed at qualitative living standards of the community.

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The Tourist Side of Koszalin



by Joanna Wilczek

Koszalin is a very dynamic town, putting emphasis to increase its attractiveness for tourists, investors and residents.

Tourism is considered as the important branch of industry in Koszalin. In 2010 it gained an access to the Baltic Sea which made it an attractive tourist city.



To underline its tourist nature, the town has been improving the tourist infrastructure. That is why the comprehensive investment offer for development of the Chelmska Hill which is a regional tourist attraction, as well as an offer for construction of hotels, are prepared by the

municipality. Revitalization of the seasonal railway connection with the seaside town of Mielno, and a ferry line across Lake Jamno connected with the Baltic Sea, are the additional activities to increase the region's attractiveness.

The city is currently working on the Programme of Tourism Development. It will be the first strategic document to define the vision, the areas of activity and projects, which should be developed in the framework of the tourism activity. Its main aim will be diagnosis of Koszalin's tourism potential, recognition of the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats. To reflect the expectations of dwellers and to enable them to have a real impact on the city development, social consultations of the Programme took place in March 2013.

However, not only development of tourist infrastructure affects the attractiveness of Koszalin, but also education, sport or culture. Some new investments, such as new building of the Koszalin Philharmonic Orchestra, sports hall for 3000 spectators, new sports grounds, animal shelter and bicycle lanes, were made. Among other undertakings there are: thermal modernization of educational facilities, revitalization of the Pomeranian Duke's Park and construction and modernization of roads in the town.

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Kristiansand - Capital of Southern Norway

by Hanne Heieraas Evju

Kristiansand is the growing regional centre of Southern Norway. The city structure is characterized by historical renaissance architecture. The squared city centre (Kvadraturen) offers a view across the sea and hills, open spaces and green areas which together form the city's identity and character. Urban development takes place along the bus metro, stretching from the East to the West, with Kvadraturen in the middle. A bike highway is being developed to make the city centre more accessible for cyclists and to maintain Kvadraturen as a vibrant city centre.

Quality of life

Attractive city spaces, diverse cultural and environmental activities are all factors that fashion Kristiansand into an attractive city. It has a diverse business structure, a solid growing job market and the most buyer-friendly housing market of the Norwegian cities. It is also the natural centre for culture, education and business for the whole region. Large green areas within the walking distance from the city centre and the city's coastline and archipelago create one of Kristiansand's most important advantages: great climate and beautiful, accessible nature.

Focus areas

Kristiansand has three main focus areas for development: the city as a regional driving force, good to live in and a climate-oriented city. The city shall be strengthened and developed, in order to ensure a



Photo: Anders Martinsen Fotografer

vibrant and thriving city centre as a good place to live in. Building on a long tradition and world-class research and production is our vision to pioneer within renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Major workplaces, such as the hospital and the university, are situated outside the city centre, but are easily available. However, availability and limited space can create challenges to keep job opportunities in Kvadraturen. In addition, creating a large commercial space, Sørlandsparken, outside the city center is challenging

Kvadraturen as a hub for trade.

A dialogue with residents

Kristiansand wants a functioning dialogue with its residents and tries to create an alternative space for participation with dialogue-cafes, open technological spaces and brainstorming. It strives to implement elements of public involvement in the work on central documents, such as the municipal plan. Through the Nordic SMS project (community development, participation, social meeting places) the municipality is focusing on better involvement of citizens. The project has three focus areas: public health and outdoor life in the city, development of methods of participation in urban planning, and social impact assessments.

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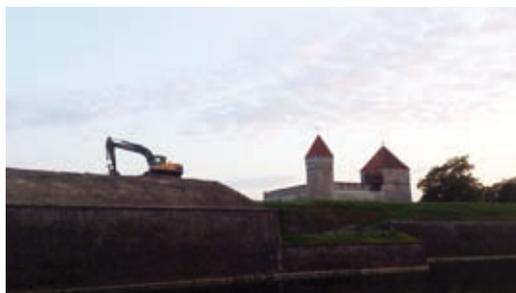


Kuressaare - a Place in Time

by Hannes Koppel

What is the recipe of a livable small city, the cause of attractiveness? It is time, in every way. They say time rests in Saaremaa. And Kuressaare, as the capital of Saaremaa, witnesses it in every step. First mentioned in 1563 and celebrating its 450th anniversary the town has a lot of stories to offer - heritage buildings that look the same as in the old postcards and quality new architecture leaving best practices to the next generations.

Compared to the years before the financial crisis the attention now lies more in the inner values of a town instead of planning suburbs in the nearby municipalities. Sounds fair, but in recent developments the town had to deal more and more with the NIMBY (not in my backyard) effect. Time has done its work again and changes, even positive ones in means of public interest, are difficult to accomplish. In terms of population decline the last decades have left a lot of empty buildings and a slightly paralyzed the city center that offers now, years later a lot of opportunities. New services, like a cinema or up-to-date commercial space in hundreds, not thousands of square meters, still



It is not a lack of ambition preserving the old which is still not bad at all and adding the missing pieces to keep it going for the generations to come.

gives subjects to disputes – where to put the cars, whether to build houses or keep old trees or just the question of taste over architecture and what are the people used to.

The officials search for the best compromise how to develop the city with the initiative of private sector and how to get maximum out of the single plot developments in terms of public benefit in a wider scale. As the budget leaves not much opportunity for developing the public space, typical for a small community, the town is dealing more with fine tuning instead of rapid development. Currently, the county stadium is being renovated, the castle and the city park, building orphanage family homes, a new test facility for the Kuressaare College of TUT is being renovated and built.

Let's add the private and public investments done during previous years and the ones being planned for the future like the visions of a completely re-modelled central plaza, the main street, bus station connected with contemporary youth center.

MORE

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The Master Plan Develops with Lahti

by Johanna Palomäki

Lahti strives to be an attractive and lively, environmentally focused city. The broad goal of the master plan is to answer how Lahti can grow sustainably. In 2009, Lahti initiated the master planning process of the whole city nearly after a decade. Every four-year, as the councilors check the city strategy, the master plan will be revised. Background information, research and surveys are kept up-to-date in the city's GIS system. Citizens, stakeholders, experts and decision makers regularly take part in the discussion about the city's future, building knowledge as a community.

As the master plan is to be kept continuously up-to-date, not only will it give a more accurate long-term perspective of the city's future, but also the politicians will be able to make more appropriate decisions about challenges they face. This unique method of master planning enables two-way feedback: from strategy to grass-root level implementation but also back to the strategy itself, creating a positive four-year cycle from setting objectives to implementation and follow-up. (Graph 1: the four-year-clock of master planning in Lahti)

During the first year of the current council period (2013) the objectives of the master plan are set up in conjunction with the city strategy. Citizens and stakeholders are drawn into the discussion by collecting soft GIS data about how they see their city and living environment in the future. After the city councilors have approved

the objectives, in the second year of the process (2014) the planners devise alternative sketches in collaboration with all interested parties. A systematic impact assessment by nonpartisan experts will be done during the third year of the process (2015) while the plan proposal is produced. The revision of the master plan will go to the city council for approval during the last council year (2016).



The implementation of the master plan for the next council period is programmed during the fourth year of the process. Simultaneously, sustainable development is measured by criteria which reflect economically, socially and ecologically sustainable growth in urban regions. The data are extracted from the city's GIS system. As the new city councilors start revising the strategy, the master plan shows the big picture of the city's development in the next decades whereas the implementation program zooms into the near future. The follow-up report provides a rear-view mirror whereby decision makers can assess whether the strategic goals are reached or, generally, if the strategy is any good.

The city will never be completed, so neither should be the master plan. A developing city needs a tool for continuous discussion for what to preserve, create or change to make the city attractive.

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From Vision to Reality



LULEÅ KOMMUN

by Natalia Tochylenkova

Whirling cranes, set up businesses and stores and flourishing cultural and sports life prove that Luleå is an attractive municipality. It has decided on six programme areas to achieve the community based on sustainability, inclusion and comprehensive view:

All are equal

Coastal city of Luleå

Leading Northern Region

Room for more

Place for meetings

Travel and transport

Characterful and varied residential areas contribute to a mixture of people and businesses. Energy efficient buildings constructed using new materials and new technology provide resource saving and healthy homes. Every village and district has its own centre, making it more attractive and vibrant.

Luleå is an administrative and cultural centre with a steady flow of people and ideas. It is compact, charming and vibrant with a dynamic and harmonious mixture of places of work, shops, homes, entertainment, culture and nature.



Town development was determined by water: river, lakes and the sea.

Photo: Joakim Höggren, Luleå Municipality

The architecture connects the past and the future.

There are prerequisites for a lifestyle that is kind to both people and the ecosystem. Cars are not necessary, as it is possible for everyone to arrive safely either by public transport or on foot. The eco-cycle between the town and the countryside is in working order and the forests, water and countryside resources are thriving.

The journey from rustic seaport to multi-faceted coastal town can be followed in the buildings, street system, activities and meeting places. The sea front areas are places for nature, homes, businesses and activities.

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Malbork - the Town of Changes

by Amelia Graban

Malbork, best known for its largest Gothic castle in the world, built in the 14th century, is now developing its new face.

In 2009 the heart of the town was renewed. With projects such as the Malbork Welcome Centre, work began on a pedestrian precinct with a project called "town furniture" and a Town Information System.

The pedestrian precinct has become not only a meeting place for town's residents, but also a venue for exhibitions, parades, street theatres and fairs. This year on 5 August edition

of a magnificent evening Magic Malbork show took place on the pedestrian precinct. The show, directed by 'Mira Art' – an acrobatic theatre of dance from Gdynia, featured dancing and acrobatic teams with laser and light shows and high-altitude acrobatics. The event ended with a fireworks show. Magic Malbork along with the Siege of Malbork show in July attract more and more spectators every year.

The access routes to Malbork Castle have been rebuilt. New roundabouts give easier access to attractions and to the town centre. The main streets have been decorated with new streetlamps, made in the style of those which formerly existed in Malbork. Coach parks have been built next to the new road sections to give tourists easier access to the castle, and also to improve pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the town centre. In December 2011 the refurbishment of the historical rail station in Malbork was finalised. Currently the environs of the historical station delight with new, well-kept appearance.



Also, the reconstruction of the Latin School in the Old Town in Malbork should be finished by April 2014, where Malbork Education Center 'Latinum' will be opened up with the computerized library, the medieval crafts centre and the observatory.

Another new product is the modern covered ice-rink close to the centre, one of the services offered to promote the town. Alongside the ice-rink is a climbing wall for young

people, and a complex of sports pitches.

The town offers a new beach volleyball area, and one of the largest Jumpy Parks in Poland. Another project is also under way to develop the embankments along the Nogat river, including a yachting marina, and to develop the North Park, where in the future recreation centre and aqua park will be built. In cooperation with the Castle Museum, a project has also been initiated to develop the von Plauen embankments near the castle. A modern open-air show venue has obtained funding from the Province of Pomerania's Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013. This year the place will become a centre for cultural events, not only those of a historical nature, but also major public events, such as concerts, exhibitions, and musical and theatrical performances.

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Cooperation for a Sustainable Future

by Katarina Pelin

Malmö, located in the Öresund Region, has been a strong motor for sustainable urban development for many years. In working towards sustainable urban development, the city has cooperated widely with other actors. Cross-border and cross-sector cooperation are keys to building an attractive and sustainable city.

Building sustainable cities is part of global survival. Malmö is at the cutting edge of sustainable urban development and part of the success is partnerships and dialogue, not only with other cities but also with citizens, industry, academia and other important actors. Malmö is located in the dynamic Öresund Region that aims to be a regional "powerhouse" in Europe for sustainability, innovation and clean-tech. Academic institutions, local governments, regional authorities and clean-tech businesses in the region are already working actively towards sustainable urban transformations. But there is a great need for a more cross-border and cross-sector cooperation to reach a faster and better development for both Malmö and other cities in the region.

The project Urban Transition Öresund is a good example of cross-border and cross-sector cooperation. Urban Transition Öresund is a cooperation project between Swedish and Danish academic institutions and local governments in the Öresund Region, and the city of Malmö is one of the partners. The project is developing cross-border and cross-sector methods and tools for sustainable urban development within three different themes; sustainable planning processes, guidelines for sustainable construction and sustainable finance. The methods and tools are developed and tested in development areas and case-studies in the region.



The strength of the Urban Transition Öresund is being a platform for conversation, debate and problem-solving on sustainable urban development. In the project good practices are shared, the barriers are overcome and the new solutions are developed.

Urban Transition Öresund is focused on knowledge-exchange and cooperation between different actors in the Öresund Region that will enhance and develop existing work on sustainable urban development. One tool that has been developed within the project is the Urban Transition board game. The board game allows for different actors to gain a holistic view on urban development through a neutral platform. By understanding both the economic, social and ecological factors that influence sustainable urban development the players can gain new perspectives and find common priorities.

Cross-border and cross-sector cooperation thrives on the fact that different actors bring their own distinctive purposes, capabilities and expertise. The ability of different actors to address common challenges through cooperation is central to building world-class sustainable and attractive cities.

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Narva – Opening up to the River

by Madis Tuuder

Narva developed as a city whose importance was conditioned by its historical location at the crossroads of trade routes. The Narva river, on which banks the city is located, was the most important gateway between Scandinavia, Europe and Russia.

Because of its geographic position Narva constantly found itself in the middle of military conflicts. During WWII most of the city was destroyed and after the war Narva was rebuilt anew as a vital industrial center; consequently, the look of modern Narva does not reflect its grand historical layers. There are rare exceptions representing the housing architecture of the pre-war times: the castle, the town hall, and several churches.

Regardless of the dull post-war architecture, the greenery and the great variety in natural landscape the city has, as well as large parks and alleys, wide and mighty river compensate for the generally repetitive style of buildings. The Narva river stands separate in creating the attractiveness of the city. In addition to its natural beauty, the river has another symbolic aspect - it is a border river.



The attractiveness of the river as part of the city location has until recently been poorly used. In the centre some parts of the embankment were in the state of disorder and the access ways to the water at the historical Krenholm manufacture were completely closed. The main challenge for Narva today is to open the river to the public, making use of its full potential as recreational area. With this idea in mind the city has been working out all the recent projects.

In the last few years several international projects have been implemented, which expose the beauty of the embankment of the Narva River and add attractiveness to this area of the city for both residents and visitors. The most comprehensive one is the currently implemented project on the development of the promenade area, which will be a kilometer long. The project will develop the city beach area at one end of the promenade, and connect it with the river port with the infrastructure for handling river vessels on the other. Once the projects have been completed, the city on the river bank will be able to open up to people who live here, just like it did back in the day when the river "gave birth" to the city here.

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How to Distinguish a Non-distinguished City?



by Malene Schrøder & Søren Revsbæk

Næstved, with its 40,000 inhabitants (80.000 in the municipality) is the largest city in the South Zealand, and in fierce competition with other cities on Zealand when it comes to attracting the incomestrong residents and tourists. The city is surrounded by the forests, a fjord and a river. The city itself offers an original town atmosphere and has a number of historical attractions. But that could also be said about a number of other towns in Zealand, so how to get a city to stand out?

Catch them while they are still young

Freedom of choice, welfare, gender equality, safe environments and no corruption has secured the Danes first place, as the world's happiest people year after year. In order to make Næstved an attractive working municipality attractive jobs for both sexes and welfare services of a high quality are reassured. Næstved has a high proportion of families with children in middle-income levels, and they are the ones to focus on. Ideally, it is to catch the young before they start a family, and then to keep them. Næstved has therefore put a great emphasis on the creation of attractive educational institutions, including University College Næstved and planning of a brand new Campus. Næstved also prides itself in youth institutions and a talent school



where young people can express themselves artistically.

The trickiest balance

However, to make a city attractive is about creating space for the free enterprise and saying "yes" instead of "no". "World-conquering urban quality of life requires the trickiest of balancing acts inbetween progress and preservation, stimulation and security, global and local" according to the lifestyle magazine *Monocle*, which has named Copenhagen the world's best city to live in. Looking at this equation, Næstved must be careful not to incline towards too much in favour of security and preservation at the expense of progress and stimulation. It is a long haul to leverage the management to adopt "yes" policy, not least because Næstved has a high proportion of senior citizens who tend to object to change, but in order to maintain a prosperous city, changes need to be made.

What you don't have, you must borrow

Næstved is located 90 kilometers away from Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. Travelling time by car is approx. one hour and 50 minutes by train. Since a lot of the attractive jobs and a lot of cultural activities are located in Copenhagen, the shorter we can make the distance, the more attractive the city can be made. New high-speed trains and a new motor highway between Næstved and Copenhagen are therefore also high on the political agenda in Næstved.

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The Future of Oskarshamn is Bright

by Eva Hjalmered

At the Urban Planning Department, the plans for the Inner Harbour have been proceeding rapidly since 2012. A number of investigations have been made regarding prerequisites for the transformation of the area. To build a city with housing, offices, meeting places, etc. in a former industrial harbour is not an easy task. The solutions need to be found when it comes to the traffic noise and transports of dangerous goods for example. Although it is challenging, the area offers great opportunities with a 2 km long shore in the best location of the city. Also, connecting the city centre with water and making the harbour a part of the city life make this area extraordinarily attractive.

The Urban Planning Department made a layout plan for the area clarifying the most important questions in the planning work, which was the basis for a competition. Over 30 architectural teams were invited to perform parallel assignments in the continued work. In the meantime, different theme groups were created to give their contributions. One



Oskarshamn is looking forward to seeing the results of the planning work. Will the children's visions be realized?

group worked with energy, environment and sustainable solutions. Another worked with attractiveness. Also, a pre-school class was invited to give its input. How do you perceive the area if you are just over 1 meter tall? A lot of suggestions came in. For example, a glittery tunnel to crawl in, a lot of greenery and possibly a tree of candy!

Three architect teams were chosen to proceed. The anticipated results of the teams are suggestions:

- for a town building structure that will be the starting-point for the future development of the Inner Harbour,
- a well thought-out strategy to develop the town over time in different expansion stages.

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Paide - the Heart of Estonia

by Piret Virkoja

Due to its location, Paide is also called the heart of Estonia. Currently it has slightly less than 9000 inhabitants. The problem with small towns is that those bigger ones attract inhabitants with universities, better jobs and living conditions and social life. The number of residents decreases from year to year and urbanization is not only Paide's problem.

As Paide is one of the smallest towns in Estonia, it still needs to be attractive and to justify its role as the administrative and economic centre of the county. During recent years Paide has developed significantly with the support of EU funds. The infrastructure and public services are at a remarkable level. The only thing missing is this distinguishing feature that could be known all over the country.

This summer Paide decided to invest in image building programme and to promote the slogan "Paide – the Heart of Estonia" nationally. The aim was to introduce Paide as living, working, entrepreneurial and tourist destination town. The first step was that all of the town subunits (all together 15) were marked with colorful heart logos. Even some of local entrepreneurs were interested.



Flags with the logo started to wave in the town square and during all local events. Big and attractive logos were placed near the entrance to the town and a lot of money invested in TV commercial that introduced Paide and its slogan.

The most expensive but lucrative was the entrance symbol of Paide made of limestone. The campaign lasted for the whole summer and is about to end for this year. Paide will continue this programme to introduce its message. Next year it is planned to involve inhabitants more. The challenge is to survive as the centre of the county and stop the outflow of residents.

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Palanga Improves its Infrastructure

by Jurgita Vanagė

Palanga has been establishing new infrastructure facilities to become more attractive to both the natives and its guests.

Kurhaus is a restored symbol of the resort. Now, the works are being done inside the building to adapt it to the needs of the society for cultural activities. By the winter, the masonry part of the building, belonging to the Municipality, will be fully completed.

Universal Sports Complex, to be opened up in spring, is another investment which responds the needs of the residents. Its shape will resemble a broken sea wave and will have the total surface area of more than 4 thousand square metres. It will be possible to transform the sports hall into several different areas with the help of a special net so that the training and matches of basketball, volleyball and handball could take place at the same time.

The Camping Site, which will meet the European standards, is being established right next to the sea, amidst pines. The camping site's territory will cover a 4.6-hectare parcel surrounded by the state forest. The very first guests visiting Palanga in travel trailers or caravans will have the possibility to try out a new camping site next year.

This autumn is the season when the Music Hall restoration works will begin. The former summer stage, after reconstruction, will be



Kurhaus, the restored symbol of the resort, will definitely catch the eyes of Palanga citizens and guests, who decide to take a walk along the main alley of the city – J. Basanavicius Street.

given a rounded shape with an area of 4 thousand square meters. Later on, another bulk will be undertaken – approximately 900 square metres of art school, and finally, the Culture Centre will emerge with a total area of about 250 square metres.

Also, works are being carried out in former palace of Count Tiskeviciiai. Now the palace serves as the Amber Museum. The building has undergone restoration works and, as a result, has become more spacious. Furthermore, comfortable conditions are provided for the disabled. In the spring time a representational conference centre for the Baltic cultural meetings will emerge in the semi-basement of the palace.

Every day a huge number of visitors come to Palanga Birute Park which is also improving its appearance: last year it had its paths, roads and lawns done; part of the irrigation water supply system was reconstructed; bridges and Birute hill stairs were renovated, also fountain, and the Small Parterre. The second phase of works, to be implemented this year, will include strengthening of the banks of the pond in the park and clearing its bottom, fixing and cleaning of the paths leading to the pond, installation of new lights, repairing the Great Parterre, restoration of the fountain and installation of the entrance gate in the central part of the park.

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The Development of Panevėžys Seven Years Ahead



by Asta Puodžiūnienė

Panevėžys City Council has approved the Strategic Development Plan for 2014-2020. According to this plan, the city development is planned in three priority directions: strengthening of competitive (metropolitan) potential, provision of quality life conditions and high social welfare, and sustainable development of urban territories and infrastructure.

In Panevėžys an intensive recreational activities are foreseen. The optimal forms of activities will be searched for, and rational, efficient usage of the possessed resources will be guaranteed.

The River Nevėžis is an essential nature spot forming the location of the city and its esthetical view and image.

Taking into consideration the importance of the River Nevėžis in forming the city identity, the new planned 7-year-period foresees the expansion of public spaces, the development of nature, recreational potential, and the increase of their attractiveness by better using green areas, squares, and parks in the city. Active rest and tourism infrastructure on the banks of the artificial lake is planned. Quay by the River Nevėžis will be constructed and used for tourism. In seven coming years recreational territories will be arranged in an attractive way for the inhabitants and guests of the city.



The network of cycling paths is dense and well developed. Living and industrial districts of the city have rather good bicycle connection. Still, the paths in residential districts are less developed. Bicycles as means of transport for inhabitants will be more and more promoted with the development of cycling paths.

Panevėžys is the most densely populated city of all major cities in Lithuania. Taking into consideration the city demographical situation and the wish of the city dwellers to create their private housing system, the City Master Plan was amended. The areas of the former apartment houses were decreased. The territories for construction of private houses were expanded. Gardens' area will be converted into the district of private houses.

The projects of new modern track RAIL BALTICA which is planned via Panevėžys, establishment of Logistics Centre are included into the City Strategic Development Plan. This will definitely stimulate business development.

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Restoration of Urban Coastal Meadow Complex in Pärnu

by Katrin Alliku

Pärnu meadow's close proximity of the beach, significantly increases the potential of the site as a valuable recreational area. Currently, the area is used unco-ordinatedly – the trails that have developed in the area are used for walking, health and adventure sports, etc. The attractiveness of the protected area significantly increases after the restoration and maintenance, so one can expect increase of visitors' interest.

A five year long project URBANCOWS - restoration and public access of the urban coastal meadow complex in Pärnu was initiated in 2012. Its aim is to restore the Pärnu coastal meadow nature reserve, resulting in the increase of value of the coastal area as a recreational environment, and therefore creating and maintaining a healthy, safe and attractive environment.

What makes the project unique in Estonia and even in Europe is the fact that the grazing takes place at the heart of the city. An analogous grazed area is located in the outskirts of the Copenhagen, on the Saltholm Island, but there, the city and cows are still separated by the sea. In Pärnu, the main grazing area is located in the outskirts of most densely populated district, where 17% of the urban population is living in the blocks of flats.

The aim of the project is to establish necessary infrastructure (steady fences, shelters, etc) for grazing in the urban environment and prepare the area for future management, by restoring the habitat complex of coastal meadow. It is planned to set up infor-

URBAN COWS is one example of how an attractive nature environment can be developed sustainably, and how to get more actively used urban space.



mation boards to all the accesses describing the nature values. It is also planned to develop a special nature trail connecting existing trails with a board-walk and establishing observation platform and information panels.

Establishing visitor infrastructure (trails, observation platforms, etc) is foreseen to open the natural values for visitors. This helps to educate the local community and the visitors about coastal meadow habitat and opens up new trails where people can involve themselves in an active and healthy lifestyle.

The project will end by 2016. The coordinating beneficiary is the Environmental Board and the associated beneficiaries are Pärnu City Government and University of Tartu Pärnu College. The project is carried out with the contribution of the EU LIFE programme.

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Pori is Investing in the Attractions of the City Centre



by Olavi Mäkelä

The Pori Promenade City Center Project [0], adopted 20 years ago and still updated, is the means by which the City Board makes decisions on the city plan. Through this process, the initiative to apply to the Ministry of Environment for a resolution on the establishing of a national urban park, was born. The Pori National Urban Park [1] is now 11 years old.

These two major themes direct the development of the city centre. At present, several projects are being realized. By the riverside of the Kokemäenjoki River, the following developments are under construction: Pori Puuvilla Shopping Center [2] (the area of the old cotton factory), reuse of the grid plan around the beer factory [3], reconstruction of the Pori River Centre (including the banks and bridges) [4], and Kirjurinluoto Event Arena [5].

In the district of Karjaranta a new riverside city is being built [6]. There are preparations for arranging the National Housing Fair in Pori in 2018, in the district of Karjaranta and Hevosluoto Islet [7]. The objective is to gain international status. The grid plan for the central Pori is growing in the directions of Karjaranta [6], in the West,



and the swimming hall, in the East [7]. In Porin Puuvilla (the old cotton factory) [2], the University Consortium of Pori was founded in 2003. The Puuvilla complex is being enlarged by 50000 sqm., which doubles the present surface. The complex will house various public and private services, government and businesses.

The Pori Travel Center [11] is also in the stage of planning as a joint project between partners from the city, the state, traffic contractors and private entrepreneurs. The Travel Center is joined to a large developing theme, Pori Portal [12].

Pori's image as a city of culture and events, is being developed. Pori Promenade and Pori National Urban Park are committed to improving public space, recreational areas and services. Yearly, there are ten different events organized in the city centre, in Kirjurinluoto Islet and in the Sports Centre. Pori Jazz is the most internationally famous festival [13].

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Development of the Centre in Pruszcz Gdański

by Ewa Piechowska

The spatial layout of Pruszcz Gdański was determined by Radunia Canal and the location of the earlier village, which originally had an oval layout with a central square in the middle, later transformed into street system. The Canal led through the centre of the village and provided drinking water to the citizens, filled the moat and drove the mills of the Old Town in Gdańsk.

Spatial development is regulated in two planning documents: the Study of Conditions and Directions of Development Planning and Local Spatial Development Plans.



Photo: J. Swis - Sillstra Studio

The town was granted an award for the Best Public Space of Pomorskie Voivodeship in 2008 and Honorary Award of Polish Town Planners Society for the best developed public space in 2009 in the category 'Newly created public space'.

In the centre there is a concentration of service development. Residential development is located in the eastern part of the town (the dominance of single-family housing) and western part (the dominance of multi-family build-

ings). In the southern and south-western part mainly industrial and service functions are located. The Baltic Investment Zone becomes more and more interesting to entrepreneurs thanks to its convenient location – closeness to Tricity bypass, A-1 freeway, trunk roads connecting Gdańsk with the south of Poland, as well as the main railroad connecting Gdańsk and Warsaw.

The town along with the development of road infrastructure concentrates on the creation of public space. For a long time Pruszcz lacked a dense urban area acting as a boulevard - the central square of the town. That is why the revitalization and development of the town centre is a great achievement. A functional public space where streets and small architecture harmonize with each other was created from scratch.

Currently, the development of the centre in the north direction is being worked on. An interesting public space is going to be integrated with historical Krótka street – one of the oldest streets in town. Special attention should be paid to the reconstructed ancient amber trade village from Roman times 'Faktoria'. The object was opened in July 2011. In 2012 Faktoria was visited by 19 500 people.

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City Life Moves to the River Banks



Riga City Council Development Department

Public space regeneration has been at the heart of recent changes in the Riga environment. Citizens' growing interest in the urban lifestyle has encouraged the city to open new public spaces and improve the existing ones. The positive feedback from the citizens has in turn acted as a driving force for further public space improvement that have resulted in a diverse and lively urban environment with a higher quality of life. The main focus of the recent public space regeneration projects has been the waterfronts to re-



Renewed promenade of Spikeri Quarter.

new the city's long lost connection to its main symbol of identity – the River Daugava.

This August one of the major urban regeneration projects – Spikeri Quarter – was completed. It is located to the South from the Old Town, right next to the

River Daugava and until now was completely separated from the river bank by a six lane highway. As a result, an attractive public space with renewed access to the waterfront was established by opening a pedestrian tunnel. A new cycling path was also created and public bathing grounds are in the pipeline.

Further to the south, along the River Daugava, you will find a large scale residential area called Kengarags. Since 2006 the Riga Municipality has been investing intensively in the Kengarags' public amenities to create an attractive waterfront promenade. The future plan is to connect this promenade to the Spikeri Quarter waterfront and extend it further until it reaches the southern border of the city, thus creating a continuous path along the river.

Drawing from experiences of other European countries, Riga has also opened new bathing grounds, two of which are located in the downtown. Lucavsala bathing grounds can be found on one of the largest islands in the city, where the bathing spot is a part of a larger public park that has been attracting hundreds of people throughout the summer. The other new bathing grounds were opened right in the heart of the Old Town – Kipsala.

To continue work on public space regeneration and to gain better understanding about efficient public space management practices, this year Riga became a partner of the URBACT II network's project "Sustainable and Efficient Urban Regeneration: Changes and Conflicts in Using Public Space" (USER). The project is being carried out in close cooperation with the city inhabitants, local businesses and professionals who are interested in the public space improvement.

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Restoration of the Prince Route in Słupsk

by Iwona Chrapkowska

Poor technical and aesthetic condition of monuments, public buildings, residential buildings and public spaces, insufficient educational, cultural, sport and recreational infrastructure - these were the main reasons for implementing of the project entitled: "Restoration of the Prince Route in Słupsk in the debatable area of the Local Restoration Project of Słupsk for years 2009 – 2015".

The main objective of the project was to restore lost functions of the downtown area while giving it a new and unique feature through activities affecting the social and economic mobilization of the area. To achieve the objectives defined below it was required to carry out a series of measures (investment and non-investment) that have a positive impact on the change in the present situation.

As a part of the project during the year 2010 - 2013 the square in Starzyńskiego Street and the pedestrian zone in Wojska Polskiego Street were rebuilt, the tenements were modernized. Some new parts of the infrastructure were built, namely the Centre of Sport and Leisure, the pottery workshop, the Centre for Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Economy, the theatre "Rondo" and the "Cultural yard" which enjoys popularity of the residents. The area of the yard is used for cultural and leisure activities. The yard is almost 4000 m². As a part of the project pedestrian streets with parking spaces for residents, a small square with a fountain area, a children's playground, a gym "under a cloud", bowers and a covered stage were developed.

In the summer, the yard is filled with performances, theater festivals, workshops and cooking competitions, juggling workshops. It is a meeting place in the downtown but all citizens can take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city life. The area of the cultural yard covers a newly built pottery workshop, which has aroused a great interest of the citizens.



The Prince Route in Słupsk

The most important part of the restoration process is the human aspect. Today it may be firmly expressed that the restoration of the Prince Route is a project made by people and for the people. Widely consulted in the preparation of both the concept and the execution stage has been fully accepted by the local community.

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Public Participation in Developing Söderhamn

by Fredrik L'Estrade

The citizens and elected politicians in the municipality of Söderhamn have visions on how the municipality and everyday living can work as well as possible for everyone. To create this atmosphere it is important that all citizens are involved.

The "City Centre Development 2013-2015" is a project where requests for the design of the future urban core is collected from the citizens and compiled into concrete proposals that the Municipality Executive Board can then consider. The Board has allocated 13.5 million SEK to develop parks, the connection to the river, traffic and buildings and is part of the municipality's focus target - the attractive archipelago municipality.

A citizen in Söderhamn wants to develop the central part of the city and have more contact with the river. It is about creating an attractive and safe road environment where people can stay and move adjacent to the river in Söderhamn, says Johnny Olofsson, infrastructure strategist and project manager. Our vision is that the city centre in Söderhamn, within ten years, is a vivid and accessible city centre with the feel of the archipelago and with attractive meeting places for people, he continues.

To get the highest possible involvement of the citizens, a practical part of the project was arranged in the form of a theme day (mar-



Civil dialogue was held indoors and in small groups of around ten people in each group – an effective way to get everyone involved.

keted locally) to collect and to document the observations from the citizens. The municipal officials met with the citizens during a day in the Iron Park - one of the parks in the neighborhood - to outline and discuss the city centre design. The result - many suggestions on improvements - was prepared for presentation at an additional meeting - this time it was a public dialogue with the politicians.

The proposals were documented as a basis for officers to develop proposals for decision of the Municipal Executive Board.

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The Creative City Strategy Method

by Ewa Kurjata

The city of the future needs to be thought of differently from how we considered cities in the past. To achieve this goal, the new creative city strategy method has been adopted in Szczecin. The Floating Garden vision determines all activities in the urban functions. In particular, it reflects the city's investment projects that should follow the idea of an environmentally friendly and modern city.



Visualisation of Miedzyodrze Isles Development. A model.

This innovative long-term management strategy, complemented by the new city image identification system translates the city's efforts into the city's viable and vibrant brand as "a new Baltic Neopolis", built up by numerous variables working together. It is thought to be the city's road map from today into the future.

Within the overall planning process, the creative city approach is a form of strategic planning undertaken within a specific perspective. Key elements are: a conscious recognition that creative thinking is a serious input to any planning exercise, and an appreciation that potential resources for planning are far more extensive than usually considered. The confidence that can be drawn from a city's history, traditions and values or the lateral imagination of local communities are of utmost importance. The creative city method highlights the significance of pilot projects and new kinds of indicators and introduces fresh ideas like a strategy of influence to

open people's thinking. This is because it is people's skills and creativity which drive urban development.

The adopted method is an attempt to change outmoded views on the importance of imagination and culture as creative forces in the renaissance of our city. It is to show how new modes of thinking can help regenerate the city. The method is most useful while planning revitalization. The city authorities try to encourage people to work with their im-

agination that goes well beyond the urban engineering paradigm in city-making. This focuses largely on hard infrastructures such as roads, monotonous housing developments or undistinguished office buildings, even though, like frenzied bees, architects try to create 'iconic' buildings. It requires, instead, a combination of both hard and soft infrastructures. Soft infrastructure includes paying attention to how people can meet, exchange ideas and network.

The Planning Committee continues to prioritise the accessibility and appeal of the Szczecin's city centre. The most challenging project the city is currently working on is regeneration of the Miedzyodrze area, and in particular Lasztownia Isle.

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Tartu Brings Participatory Planning Process into Downtown



by Raimond Tamm

In recent years, Tartu City Government has been working on the long-term development of the downtown. One of the major aspects of the planning process has been involving citizens and facilitating their participation.

Compared to the earlier plans, dating from 15-20 years ago, the concept of the downtown has changed dramatically, the city centre has grown and its functions have transformed. The new vision of the city was brought into the conscious development. First, several competing development scenarios were drafted. After that, a development strategy was created which became the basis for the final downtown master plan. At each stage, the citizens were involved via public seminars, media discussions, and promotional displays. Also, the city government turned to the relevant stakeholders directly.

Five scenarios were drawn up. The first one depicted downtown mostly as a residential area. In the second, it would become a traditional town centre, local government hub and shopping area. The third scenario envisioned the city centre as a national and international hub, bringing together the university town and a business centre. The fourth scenario continued the current habitual development without any specific directions. In the fifth scenario, intensive development transformed the whole cityscape into a metropolitan city image.



Photo: Ireen Trummer/Wikimedia Commons

A public seminar and workshops were attended by local residents, civic associations, architects and other professionals, entrepreneurs, state agencies, universities, and representatives of the City Council. The scenarios were on public display in September 2012, followed by an open debate. In October,

a seminar was held to discuss the proposals from the public display. After that phase, the development strategy project was created, which assessed the functional development of the city centre, and drew the directions for spatial trends. Scenarios II and III were used as a basis for the development strategy. Implementation of this strategy will shape the downtown into a symbiosis between a historic university town, a modern international business centre bringing together the smart jobs, and a regional urban centre, all together resulting in a densely built and more active city centre.

The development strategy was approved by the City Council in February 2013. It will become a basis for a comprehensive plan, providing stricter land use conditions in the future downtown. Also, citizens' feedback will be widely used in the planning process.

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A Sustainable Growth of Umeå

by Olle Forsgren

Umeå is one of Sweden's fastest growing municipalities and observes a desired population growth from the current 120,000 inhabitants to a population of 200,000 by 2050. The target is set high and requires an even faster growth than in the past. This forces the municipality to think more structurally in order to handle the growth in a long-term and sustainable manner. To achieve the target of a growing population the city of Umeå has updated its comprehensive plan including the central parts of the city. The plan was awarded the Swedish Association of Architect's "Plan Prize" in 2012. The aims of that policy in terms of its ambitions is to facilitate population growth and new, dense, mixed-use development within already built-up areas, and to involve new approaches to traffic and public space. The plan presents a number of strategies for sustainable development based on the Aalborg Commitments. These clarify the desired direction towards a more sustainable urban development, and will hopefully serve as a "checklist" for the years to come, so that the planners do not lose focus in their daily practices as professionals involved in the current physical and mental transformation of Umeå's city centre.

The challenges towards a sustainable growth of Umeå are numerous. One of the major ones is cultural heritage, how to approach the older buildings and cultural environments of the city centre. The plan was preceded by intense work by both the municipal-

ity and the County Administrative Board and they found a way to enable development and growth without harm to the cultural heritage.

Another challenge is that making Umeå denser puts completely new demands on traffic. During winter air quality in the central parts of Umeå can become so bad that forceful action is needed to allow further city growth. Umeå's air quality problems must be solved through urban planning which places a clear focus on creating a dense, mixed-use city that benefits pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport.

Much of the heavy traffic in the city centre will be re-routed with the completion of a ring road in a few years and change in behaviour must be accomplished by a variety of means, utilising the entire range of enforcement options from prohibition and increased tariffs to better service frequency of public transport, green parking purchases, and information campaigns.

During the work with the plan focus has been on dialogue, both with business community representatives and citizens. The dialogue focused on strategic issues facing Umeå's development and provided a good basis for setting common goals.

Public consultation and participation has been used frequently, for example in the Urban Forum network.



Powering the Good Life

by Marketta Kujala

The Vaasa district is one of the most successful urban districts in Finland. It is an extremely skilful, international cluster of energy industry and a lively university city. Within this urban district, which is home to more than 110,000 residents, a concentration of a significant part of the energy technology industry in Finland and, indeed, of all of the Nordic countries, is present.

The daily lives of the residents here flow between their homes, jobs, schools, shops and hobbies. People, goods and ideas move around both locally and more widely into the world. Through collaboration, strong networks, research, education, a well-functioning infrastructure and good services, the region is able to secure the growth of all companies in the energy technology cluster and support their continuing march towards the future. The challenges of urban planning in the region have to do specifically with logistics and strengthening the energy-efficient, charismatic community structure and living environment and also with creating common service strategies.

This urban district consists of eight self-governing municipalities. Each of them has their own democratic decision processes for the planning and implementation of both land use and services. This equation is quite challenging in the current tightening economic situation. Setting common goals for the whole region is more im-



The plans and decisions made now will have a significant effect on the region's vitality and the quality of its environment for the future generations.

portant than ever. The Vaasa urban district is one of those which the government has laid out as requiring a rationalisation of the municipal structure. The location of administrative divisions is not important for community structure. Residents move effortlessly across the borders. For the regional economy, what is important is the unity of the community structure and the appropriate use of resources.

To clarify the region's common targets and the goals for its physical environment, a planning project for the region's strategic land use, known as the structural model project, and the preparation of an implementation agreement relating to it, was launched in 2012. The objective is a sustainable, energy-efficient urban structure. The task is to make residential, industrial, commercial and service areas, the transport network, recreational areas and community development a functional whole, by working interactively with the many different players – elected officials, holders of office and representatives of trade and industry – by 2040.

These targets were defined through a current state analysis and an interest group survey, on the basis of which three alternatives for the structural model were created: a model that stays on track with the current development, a development corridor model and a service centre model. The optimal model will be selected from these, based on comparisons and an evaluation of their effects. A strategic land use plan will then be made, to be jointly accepted by the relevant municipalities, and a plan of the most important measures for implementation will be incorporated into it. The estimated completion date of the project in this form is in the spring of 2014.

Changes in the physical environment are slow. Although the bulk of the urban structure of the future already exists today, pieces of it change all the time. An effort has to be made to influence these changes deliberately and perseveringly. The plans and decisions made now will have a significant effect on what the region's vitality and the quality of its environment will look like for future generations. Energy grows in an energetic environment and we want to share it.



Umeå 2050

The six designated strategies for sustainable growth are:

- ▶ The five-kilometre city – the dense city!
- ▶ Attractive public spaces during all hours and seasons
- ▶ Openness, democracy and equality in all planning – everybody should participate!
- ▶ Addition of new urban quarters as a vitalising force – more urbanity!
- ▶ The growth in public transport corridors and renewal of thoroughfares.
- ▶ Greater density is created through the introduction of new urban quarters with dense, mixed-use developments.

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Växjö - a Sport Capital of Sweden



by Anders Franzén

Växjö is a dynamic city in the southern Sweden with over 85,000 inhabitants, increasing by over 1000 persons every year. This is thanks to its growing university, well diversified business with a large number of SMEs, especially in the IT sector, and a strong progressive public sector. Gradually, Växjö has also become an attractive tourist destination and a city of sports. Development of new city areas for houses, offices and industry have been a continuing process and during the latest years Växjö has been focusing on a specific district development project named the Arena City. This area is surrounded by a number of commercial complexes. Within the Arena City offices, school and many residential apartments are to be built but its main part is designated for sport facilities. In the framework of a private public partnership the city and some of its main sport clubs have signed arrangements that have resulted in five new arenas in three years. At the same time five different teams have been qualified to play in its respective top national league, namely hockey, football, floor ball, squash and track and field. This is unique for a city of this size and it also brought Växjö the honorable title of the Sport Capital of Sweden.



The Arena City in Växjö is now one of the Sweden's premier sport complexes. Fifteen different sports are practiced here. Four new arenas have been built by its respective sport clubs in close cooperation with the city. Vida Arena is for hockey and figure skating. Myresjöhus Arena for football. Telekonsult Arena for track & field. Fortnox Arena for floor ball, the first specific arena for this sport in the world. The city has also built a new sport hall for gymnastics and a number of outdoor fields for football, track & field and throwing. Within the arena the High Performance Center – HPC complex is developed as training and testing centre that can provide optimal opportunities for athletes to develop physically. With its medical centre and rehabilitation department, HPC is able to provide leading edge expertise to meet various needs of the sport community, from youth groups to world elite. HPC offers comprehensive training camp packages for both individual athletes and large groups in close cooperation with the Linnaeus University and the Swedish Olympic Committee.

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Vilnius Municipal Support for Investors

by Gabija Guscevičienė

Vilnius is the EU easternmost capital with a rapidly developing infrastructure, a stable number of mostly educated residents, and, at the same time, a platform for further business development to the East. These are the key factors of the development strategy of this half a million city.

16 million people live within the radius of 300 kilometres around Vilnius. Cities like Riga and Minsk, which have more than a million residents, fall within this range. In Eastern Europe, Vilnius is second only to Warsaw by the number of people living in its surrounding areas, therefore here, entrepreneurs can plan their activities not only in the EU markets, but also in the markets of eastern countries - Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

provide all possible assistance to foreign investors implementing large projects. We have chosen Vilnius as the region's leading city easily accessible to millions of people living nearby.

A few other most recent examples of successful investments are two hotels that were opened in the autumn of 2012, namely the 5-star Kempinski Hotel Cathedral Square Vilnius in the Old Town and the one close to the bus and train stations, the Comfort Hotel LT. 4.000 jobs are planned in Quadrum business centre currently being built on the right bank of the Neris river, with investments reaching LTL 260 million.

Detailed plans, construction permits, access to networks, a possibility to establish companies online - the speed of all these actions depends on local government, and now these procedures can be carried out as quickly as possible. For example, detailed plans for the construction of IKEA were drawn up in 6 months, which at the moment could not have been done by any other Lithuanian city or a neighbouring country. Vilnius City Municipal Government takes a clear position that no bureaucratic obstacles should interfere with businessmen's wish to invest, and the decisions made should be clear and transparent.



Kempinski Hotel, Vilnius

Photo: Saulius Žilora

Favourable geographic position simply obliges Vilnius to put all efforts in attracting investors to the city. The words by Sigurdur Palmason, the Head of UAB Felit currently operating the IKEA store, which opened up in Vilnius in August this year, prove that the city is good in doing that. He said *local government is proved to be able to*

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UBC Executive Board met in Kiel

The high level of unemployment among young people is particularly severe. What is still lacking is effective practical help for the youth –

said Dr Susanne Gaschke, Mayor of Kiel, welcoming the UBC Executive Board at the meeting in Kiel on 20 June 2013. The XII UBC General Conference devoted to the young generation received the focused attention of the participants.

Apart from the organization of the UBC GC, the cooperation with the Baltic Development Forum was discussed. Helle Bechgaard, Vice Chair of BDF, presented the BDF-UBC areas of joint actions and highlighted the BDF recent activities. UBC and BDF have developed a project application for a "Baltic Urban Forum for Smart Cities" approved by EUSBSR Seed Money Facility Secretariat. The aim is to establish a network for medium sized towns and cities to facilitate dialogue, experience sharing, learning and joint action on green technologies and innovations in urban areas. The Lead Partner of the BUF project is Tartu Smart City Lab representing the UBC.



Also, UBC development was on the agenda. The Board went through the proposals included in the Task Force report and commented on by the UBC member cities. The Board worked out the proposals of amendments in the Statute to be presented to the General Conference. Next, the question of consolidation of the Commissions was discussed.

Three Commissions presented their activity reports, as well as plans for the forthcoming months, namely the Commission on Business, Environment and Local Safety. Following the Commissions' evaluation criteria adopted in Rakvere on 24 May 2012, the Presidium, authorized by the Board, decided on the Commissions' funding for 2013.

On 22 June 2013 members of the Executive Board took part in the 37th International City Forum "The convention on the rights of people with disabilities and its implementation in Kiel and its partner cities". President Andersen gave a speech presenting status of convention implementation in the BSR.

The Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN)

The CECICN workshop at the OPEN DAYS

The 11th OPEN DAYS, European Week of Regions and Cities, took place on 7-10 October 2013 in Brussels and was attended by more than 5460 participants from all over Europe. Cross-border cooperation was on the agenda of a number of workshops.

More than 230 participants attended the CECICN workshop on "Territorial cooperation and single market: how to create tangible added value for citizens in cross-border territories and interregional networks". Jean Peyrony, MOT Director-General and CECICN Executive Director, moderator of the workshop, presented the CECICN network, the objective of which is to place European territorial cooperation at the heart of European policies in the 2014-2020 programming period and the Europe 2020 strategy.

The representatives of the Union of Baltic Cities, the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA and the Iberian Network of Cross-border Cities (RIET) illustrated three examples of territorial cooperation contributing to the single market.

Marcus Andersson, for the UBC, discussed the mobility of talented persons between the Baltic cities to meet the needs of the employment market and promote the development of the territory to the benefit of mobile persons. Nevertheless, a number of obstacles to such mobility remain to be eliminated.

Patrice Harster, Director-General of the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA, presented the issues of the cross-border employment market on the French-German border. According to Xoán Vazquez Mao, Secretary-General of RIET and CECICN, this second generation of cooperation must be the generation of the internal market. Olivier Girard, member of the cabinet of Internal Market and Services Commissioner Michel

Barnier, stressed the need to promote another vision of the single market, too often criticized.

Bernard Soulage, Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes region, chairing the workshop, concluded the discussions by stating that "territorial cooperation is a major political issue, an essential brick in the construction of a European political and democratic space. [...] The aim is to remove all remaining barriers, including those that prevent close contacts between the inhabitants in the cross-border territories."

The CECICN workshop was complementary to the workshop of the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions "The European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation: cross-border players in the Single Market". Both workshops were followed by a common networking event gathering about a hundred people. The CECICN presented its network and activities over culinary specialities from its member networks.



More than 230 participants attended the CECICN workshop.

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By Mikko Lohikoski, UBC Strategy coordinator, Director, External Affairs, City of Turku

FOCUS ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND UBC DEVELOPMENT

Combating youth unemployment and marginalization has become top priority issues among European societies. Young people are paying the heaviest price for the continued economic and social crisis. In the crisis-stuck Southern European countries, every second young person is out of work or study place, and in the countries in the Baltic Sea Region, youth is disproportionately affected, too.

Cities, as the democratic structures nearest to the citizens, are directly facing these problems.



Photo: UBC Secretariat

Christian Weinberger, Senior Adviser in DG Enterprise and Industry, presented the European Commission's plans how to promote the youth employment.

but also national policies and local conditions have an effect on how acutely the youth employment is hitting different cities.

Youth situation “difficult but not hopeless”

The outcome of the debate could be shortly summed up by saying that “the situation is difficult but not hopeless”. The measures implemented in various countries to tackle youth unemployment are of special interest. Among these, the German model of involving companies in training of youth is worth a closer look. In this dual-track approach, a youngster can learn her/his future occupation in real circumstances, on the company shop floor, while finishing studies. In this way, young people also can develop personal contact with companies, their future employers, which makes it much easier to enter into professional life after studies.



Photo: Robert Lang

Therefore, it was quite natural that youth employment and well-being was chosen as the special focus of the XII UBC General Conference.

The Mariehamn debate included numerous presentations on the situation of the youth from various perspectives: European, national and local levels. Detailed reports by mayors of UBC member cities highlighted local solutions, complemented by representatives of trade unions and companies. It became obvious that the situation differs from country to country, from city to city. Naturally, the overall economic situation of each country is a major factor in this,

There are many reasons to say that UBC has achieved much during the last two years. Some of the major achievements are:

- ▶ Adoption of the UBC Communication and Marketing strategy,
- ▶ Adoption of common criteria for the evaluation of UBC Commissions,
- ▶ Working out guidelines on cooperation with the business sector,
- ▶ Proposals on how to activate UBC advocacy work towards European institutions in Brussels,
- ▶ Cooperation with the Baltic Metropolises and the Baltic Development Forum, a joint initiative with BDF to create a Baltic Sea Region Forum for Smart Cities,
- ▶ Stronger role of UBC in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region,
- ▶ Closer cooperation between UBC Commissions, with joint meetings,
- ▶ New methods of fruitful cooperation between member cities, e.g. the cooperation of Finnish cities to prepare an Action Plan of Cities for Youth Employment and Well-being.
- ▶ The work of the task force on the UBC Strategy implementation and on the UBC development.

Another example was the Finnish “youth guarantee” scheme, which aims at securing every young person a place to study or work. It has been recently introduced by the Government of Finland.

UBC establishes Task Force on youth, invites others to join

Preparations of the Mariehamn General Conference also included a “social innovation”, worth noting: Ten UBC Member Cities from Finland had formed a Task Force to prepare a detailed Action

Plan on youth employment and well-being. The Task Force was composed of experts in different fields, including education, social affairs and health, youth, etc., each bringing in their expertise and contributing to the work. According to the members of this Task Force, the joint work was very fruitful, and this method of “doing it together” could well be applied also in other fields of UBC activities.



Photo: Robert Lang

The General Conference was a chance to discuss the youth perspectives but also to evaluate the UBC work. From the left: Jan Martinsson, Kalmar; Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General and Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC

The Mariehamn discussion on youth employment and well-being was just a beginning. The General Conference established an international Task Force which shall work until the next General Conference (Gdynia, 2015). UBC invites all its member Cities, Commissions as well as all other interested partners to join the work of this group, which is encouraged to present proposals and initiatives to the UBC Board, member cities and all interested organisations.

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UBC streamlines its working methods and structures

In addition to the open forum on youth issues, UBC also organized its statutory bi-annual General Conference in Mariehamn on 3 October.

The most important task of the General Conference is to evaluate past achievements, plan the road for the coming years and to elect the leadership to implement these plans. The last two years since the General Conference in Liepāja have been dominated by intensive internal renewal aimed at ensuring that



the UBC can better meet new challenges and take use of existing possibilities and serve its member cities and their inhabitants. The world around us is changing, and we have to change, too. Status quo would mean going backwards.

UBC firmly on path of renewal

In fact, the UBC Strategy for 2010 – 2015 obliges us to have a critical look at ourselves, to be innovative. To be better. This does not mean we have failed, quite the contrary. UBC has become the leading representative of cities and their inhabitants in the Northern Europe, whose voice is increasingly listened to in Brussels and where decisions are made.

Next challenge to implement decisions, continue renewal

However, we have only entered the road of renewal, and much remains to be done. In the coming two years, UBC must continue this renewal, even accelerate it.

Primarily, the decisions concerning UBC working methods should be implemented without delay. This means that our meetings must be better prepared and conducted, a proper follow-up system on implementation must be instituted, and in general the work of the Board must be more effective, more goal-oriented.

Also, decisions concerning the division of responsibilities, within the Presidium as well as in the Board, should be implemented from the very start of the new Executive Board's work. We must ensure that each Commission shall have a nominated contact per-



Photo: UBC Secretariat

The main responsibility to implement these decisions falls on the newly elected leadership of UBC: President Per Bødker Andersen (Deputy Mayor, Kolding), Vice-Presidents: Marie-Louise Rönmark (Mayor, Umeå), Jarkko Virtanen (Deputy Mayor, Turku) and Taavi Aas (Deputy Mayor, Tallinn). Member cities of the Board 2013-2015 are Næstved (Denmark), Elva (Estonia), Jyväskylä (Finland), Rostock (Germany), Liepāja (Latvia), Šiauliai (Lithuania), Kristiansand (Norway), Gdańsk (Poland), St. Petersburg (Russia) and Växjö (Sweden).

son among the members of the Executive Board or Presidium.

Bringing the UBC structural reform to a conclusion is our next urgent task. The present structure of UBC Commissions is – to a large part – not optimal and even hampers our further development. The General Conference obliged the Executive Board to ensure that starting from 1 January 2015, the UBC shall have between five to seven Commissions which start to be operative from that date. The old Commission structure with 13 Commissions ceases to be in force on the same date.

Renewal gives UBC more strength to promote BSR cooperation

Conclusion of the organizational restructuring is important so that UBC will be in stronger position to promote its goals, especially to participate in implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, which continues to be our top priority. The UBC, which included Russian and Norwegian cities as its members, has

a unique position to promote true pan-Baltic cooperation.

Stronger Commissions will also be in better capacity to develop projects and to apply for external funding, when the new European multi-annual financing framework is starting in 2014.

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Youth exchange “The Baltic Youth” in Mariehamn



Photo: Gerr Nögu

On 28 September - 5 October 52 youngsters from 14 cities in the Baltic Sea Region gathered at Mariehamn, in Åland, to take part in a youth exchange “The Baltic Youth”. The youth exchange was funded by the European Union program “Youth in Action” and by the Turku Youth Service. The main topic of the project was youth unemployment.

The youngsters participated in 3 informal workshops: creative writing, forum theatre and flashmobs. They were focused on the high youth unemployment rate in the European countries. During the workshops the youth could learn about the current situation in the job market. They also tried to find solutions to a problem in a creative way.

The outcomes of the workshops were introduced during the UBC General Conference which was focused on youth unemployment and marginalization. The politicians and civil servants were surprised by the flashmobs, creative writing posters and a theatre play. One of the participants – Johan Andersson from the city

“An ocean of unknown I walk, but it is not alone for we are all here for the same we are here to make a change”

Augusta Solberg

of Falun held a speech at the plenary session. The reactions of the politicians were very positive. Many of them quoted the sayings on the creative writing posters and mentioned the forum theatre play in their presentations.

The youngsters did not only provide the representatives of the Baltic Sea cities with the entertainment, but also attended the plenary sessions, held meetings with the politicians and participated in the workshops together with the adults.

Beside the hard work there was some time to get to know each other better and had fun. There was a tour around the beautiful Åland and to the Mariehamn Maritime Museum organized. The participants spent some quality time together at the local youth house to learn about different cultures during the intercultural evening.

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Building Urban Safety through Citizens Participation

Commission on Local Safety (CoLS) has submitted an application for the Seed Money Facility. Seed Money is EU funding to prepare projects that contribute to one of the priority areas or horizontal actions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The project 'Building urban safety through citizens participation' refers to the Priority Area Secure – Protection from emergencies and accidents on land. Its general objective is to identify threats in the local environment.

Most communities in the Baltic Sea Region face similar risks. That is why many practices might be shared through transnational cooperation. CoLS has been created as a partnership of municipalities, so its structure supports exchanging regionally-proven solutions by developing unified methodology.

The project will help to build public space for integrating different kinds of interest groups: municipalities, law enforcement agencies, local communities, NGOs, entrepreneurs. All these groups should be united in care for local safety and security. It is expected that universal digital tools, such as an interactive threat map with a mobile device application, would cause greater citizens' engagement. Social responsibility for the public space takes an advantage of new technologies. They offer wide range of options for easy participation, including online forums, hopefully leading to tougher

The project partners are: Gdańsk Municipal Guard (Lead Partner), Liepāja Municipal Police, Vilnius Municipality.



activeness, for example, neighbourhood watch.

Among the products of the main project there is also a poll on feeling secure. Conducting a unified survey allows to gather reliable information about the state of public security based on the inhabitants' opinions. The analysis of the results would provide knowledge of what actions should be taken to improve the sense of security among the citizens by reducing the diagnosed public danger.

MORE

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Meetings of the Commission on Local Safety

The 8th Commission's meeting took place in Karlstad on 17-18 October 2013. The participants from 6 cities discussed mainly systems of safety and crisis management on the local level. The main goal was to implement better safety and security policy for citizens and visitors. The participants were also acquainted with the results of XII UBC General Conference organized in Marienhamn.

The member of Commission's secretariat reported on the results of ongoing work on European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) flagship project, priority area 14 - Security.

Botkyrka and Tallinn representatives introduced the "Neighbourhood Watch Program" that could be introduced in other Baltic Sea cities. A neighbourhood watch, also called a crime watch, is an organized group of citizens devoted to crime and vandalism prevention. In the United States it builds on the concept of a town watch from the Colonial America. Neighbourhood watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programmes in the cities, bringing citizens together with law enforcement to deter crime and make communities safer.

Currently, several European cities have such systems that gives positive effects.



The participants of the meeting in Karlstad.

The Commission as a partner of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime – European Commission (ISEC) project under Lithuanian Presidency has been asked to provide some experience on prevention of domestic violence in the cities. The topic was also discussed during the meeting and summary will be presented in December during European Crime Prevention Network (EU CPN) Board in Vilnius.

Also, Jelgava hosted the Commission's meeting earlier this year. On 13-14 June 2013 the representatives from ten cities: Jelgava, Riga, Vilnius, Liepāja, Gdańsk, Botkyrka, Nacka, Karlstad, Tallinn and Turku discussed the issues connected with "Street violence – prevention and elimination".

Sebastian Sperber, the European Forum of Urban Security (EFUS), presented "Security, democracy and cities – the manifesto of Aubervilles and Saint Denis and its recommendations on collective violence".

He summarized the results of the conference. He stressed that European institutions should take a more decisive action in the fight against organized crime, not only through actions of the police, but also through prevention policies and by supporting local communities. EFUS created an online portal to bring together knowledge and practices about street violence. The project had been carried out by many organizations and obtained support of the Commission.

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Cities in Transformation – Creating Potentials for City Life

The joint seminar held on 15-18 September by the Commissions on Culture and Urban Planning was to find out how to use urban planning and culture as a joint driver for urban development. The aim was to work together using design processes on specific cases in Kolding and sharing experiences, tools and thoughts across the UBC borders.



was the concept of bringing water elements into the city, reflecting connections to the harbour, the stream and the Koldinghus castle lake. Another idea was to use vacant space in the station building to clarify Kolding as a design city. One reappearing idea was to develop a new student area surrounding the University with housing, creative work places, rehearsal rooms, show rooms, green spaces and cafes.

One of the questions posed at the seminar was how small scale cultural projects can have a huge impact on how the city is experienced.

50 Danish and international urban planners, architects and people from the cultural sector were introduced to some basic tools of cultural planning by Keld Buciek, a lecturer on Cultural Planning at the University of Roskilde in Denmark. The programme contained short presentations on Danish projects, where implementation of both culture and planning has been the driver. Finally, a presentation of the role of art in public spaces was delivered.

The participants worked with three areas: the inner harbour, the station area and the new campus site. These areas pose a common challenge of non-existing connections to the city centre. The main task was to overcome different barriers and to create environment for city life. Also, the participants focused on how to create a creative, functional and attractive environment for students in Kolding developing as the university city.

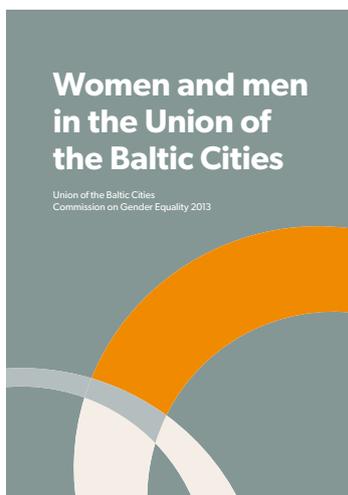
The results of the workshops and the reflections from the participants working together gave a new view on the potentials for cultural planning in the given case areas. Among the ideas there

Commission on Gender Equality

Women and Men in the Union of the Baltic Cities 2013

The Commission on Gender Equality has produced an updated gender equality report "Women and men in the UBC 2013" based on the previous report from 2009. The report was released and presented at the XII General Conference in Mariehamn in October 2013 and was financed by the UBC, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and the city of Umeå.

The report highlights the importance of a continuous work to promote gender equality, as well as the needs for further action to improve the status of women around the Baltic Sea. It shows that some progress has been made, for example in the distribution of income between women and men, but gender inequalities are still dominant. Women are



still underrepresented in political and economic decision making and have a limited access to the labour market, as well as lower incomes. The report also shows that human trafficking and men's violence against women are still major problems in the region that need to be addressed.

The aim of the report is to serve as a tool for other commissions in their work with gender equality and as a knowledge base for cities as it offers a framework for the development of gender equal societies. The updated report includes the method of gender budgeting and good practices from some of the member cities. It demonstrates how concrete actions can lead to sustainable changes towards gender equality.

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Cultural Prize 2013 goes to Art Line project

Art Line is an international art project investigating and challenging the concept of public space. 14 partners from 5 countries around the Baltic Sea join to create a co-operative platform for art and academia in Poland, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Lithuania. The platform will strengthen the institutions, create opportunities for artists, and interact with people in public space, on the Internet, in exhibitions, and on the Stena Line ferries between Gdynia and Karlskrona. The project period is 2011-2014. Art Line consists of different undertakings, e.g. using the ferry for artistic features, a seminar on the use of public art.

The Commission on Culture has selected this project because it is a cultural project with a genuine co-operational spirit between the UBC cities.



Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Union



CH4ALLENGE project

Saving energy, leading a more sustainable lifestyle and improving the quality of life are becoming increasingly important for European cities and local authorities. Urban transport is a major consumer of energy and emitter of greenhouse gases, and cities of different sizes have thus a crucial role in contributing to EU 2020 targets of improving the energy efficiency and cutting down greenhouse gas emissions.



Achieving these goals can ensure the attractiveness of cities as places worth living, today and tomorrow.

In order to meet these targets, cities need to adopt a more integrated approach to sustainable mobility planning

and policy making to deal with the complexity of urban transport systems in the best possible way. There is a wide consensus that sustainable urban mobility planning contributes to a better quality of life and is a way of tackling transport-related problems in cities in a more strategic way. However, cities frequently face major barriers while creating their own Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP).

CH4ALLENGE supports cities in sustainable mobility planning

CH4ALLENGE (2013-2016) project, funded by the IEE-programme, addresses the four most pressing challenges in SUMP development

and implementation and develops innovative and transferable solutions in the areas of:

- Stakeholder participation and citizen involvement
- Institutional cooperation between sectors and disciplines
- Identification of the most effective policy measures
- Monitoring and evaluation of progress in SUMP development

Nine European cities, supported by a group of SUMP experts, will develop strategies and implement pilots in these four thematic areas. CH4ALLENGE also supports 26 Follower Cities outside the consortium that are committed to improving their mobility planning, among them 7 UBC cities: Tartu, Kotka, Turku, Riga, Kaunas, Gdynia and Kalmar. UBC Commission on Environment coordinates the communication and dissemination activities in CH4ALLENGE.

Based on the lessons learned and results of the project, four CH4ALLENGE Kits including brochures, manuals, and e-learning modules will be developed as the main output of the project. In addition, CH4ALLENGE offers a great variety of training activities, including training workshops, national seminars, summer schools, as well as e-learning courses open to all interested cities. Cities with a rich experiences in integrated planning approaches and cities initiating the SUMP process will benefit from the results of CH4ALLENGE.

MORE

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Baltic Urban Forum for the Smarter Cities

Together with the Baltic Development Forum and City of Turku, the UBC Board has taken the initiative to prepare a concept for a "Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities". The initiative has recently got initial financing for the preparatory activities from the EUSBSR Seed Money facility.

The main project will establish the "Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities" – a forum that will play an important future role for enabling urban areas in the region to move beyond "pockets of smartness" to become genuinely smart.

Rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) in all sectors, new environment-friendly solutions, integrated water and energy systems and multi-model mobility planning, and new ways of thinking, provide cities and towns with an increasing set of new innovative opportunities. Those tools allow to generate, transmit and use energy with less pollution; to support citizens mobility by better and cleaner solutions in transportation; to communicate, discuss and co-create with the citizens the future of cities through online platforms, to create services that are better reached and tailored, etc.

Cities and towns have a number of opportunities to be smarter both as consumers of resources and producers of services. However, no matter how "smart" they are – also



The first project development meeting open for all interested partners, will take place on 20 January 2014 in Tartu, Estonia. All UBC cities, businesses and citizens organizations are invited!

in terms of economic benefits – a number of available and even proven green economy solutions are not adopted as daily practices. Formation of an international and regional space for the cities to discuss those issues, learn from each other and share best practices will help bridge this gap.

The questions to be answered during the main project are: How to be smart? How to implement smart city innovations and approaches in policies and service delivery in cities and town throughout the Baltic Sea Region? What we can learn from each other? What practices are transferable and adaptable to other cities and towns – and how to roll out these practices at scale and with speed in the Baltic Sea Region?

For this purpose – identifying, adapting and multiplying good practices in being smart about urban development – the Union of Baltic Cities, Baltic Development Forum, participating cities and towns and innovation agencies will develop the "Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities". The concept must be ready and presented during the Baltic Development Forum in June 2014 in Turku, Finland. The project is led by the Smart City Lab Tartu on behalf of UBC.

MORE

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NEWS

from Member Cities

St. Petersburg develops for Investors

St. Petersburg actively interacts with the Baltic Sea Region in finding solutions to various urgent problems and discussing long-term development plans. The city cooperates with many intergovernmental organizations and has more than once been a venue for the meeting of parties interested in development of the macro-region.

St. Petersburg is the most convenient and cost-effective transportation and logistic hub connecting the Nordic Countries with the Russian Federation and many other countries along the North-South and West-East international transportation corridors. There are good prospects for development of joint projects for construction and operation of highways, railways, and pipelines; for modernization of port facilities; for logistics, etc.

The city, along with its status of the Capital of Culture, has substantial reasons to be qualified as "an intelligent city", i.e. a hub of innovations, education, and advanced science and industry, with a competitive system of higher education and research institutes. Many of the world's leading companies, which favour highly skilled personnel and closeness to scientific developments, choose the city as a location for their production facilities. Currently, Technopolis, the famous Finnish company, is implementing several projects in St. Petersburg targeted at developing innovative infrastructure and hi-tech cluster, attracting foreign and international companies to the Russian market, encouraging Russian companies to enter foreign markets and cooperate with foreign companies, and de-

veloping the regional innovative potential in the high-tech sphere.

Another strategic area is the development of the Nordic marine territories and cooperation in the Arctic Region. St. Petersburg is open for the projects that con-

tribute to social welfare of St. Petersburg residents, to qualitative growth of the top-priority industries in the city's economy, to development of infrastructure, and to an increase in labour productivity.



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Vaasa Takes the Lead as One of the INKA Five



The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy has selected five themes for INKA, Innovative Cities, Programme beginning next year. The Vaasa Region has been appointed as one of the engines for the whole

country under the theme "sustainable energy solutions".

The aim of the programme is to boost international competitiveness and to amplify projects that will create new kinds of business with the cooperation of the cities and the state. Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, is in charge of directing and funding the programme. The EU's Structural Funds will provide some of the funding to subsidies from the state and the cities.

Vaasa's theme has been prepared in cooperation with the Technology Centre Merinova, the Vaasa Region Development Company and the region's industry and universities. The backdrop of the theme is the intensely growing export market for decentralised

Poetry Day in Jēkabpils



For the 49th time "Poetry Day" took place in Latvia. There were several events taking place in Jēkabpils with a vast participation of the youngsters. School children were writing their favourite poems and quotes of the city with a chalk. This kind of activity has been taking place in Jēkabpils for several years, and each time it is attracting an interest of the locals and city guests – people stop, read and tweet what the city streets are saying. This year more than 2000 youngsters took part.

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and renewable energy.

Vaasa will lead the development of energy efficiency for industry, transport and housing. A new vessel that runs on ecological fuel is being designed for transport in the Kvarken Region of the Gulf of Bothnia and smart grids are being designed for the district of Palosaari in Vaasa.

With INKA Programme, the Vaasa Region is undertaking considerable responsibility for the changing economic structure of Finland. The region has shown that it is internationally competitive, and it is now committed to a significant growth plan for the export industry.

INKA will be in effect from 2014 to 2020. The other cities acting as engines with various themes include Oulu (health in the future), Joensuu (bioeconomy), Tampere (a smart city and renewing industries) and Jyväskylä (cyber security).

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Archive services cooperate in border regions

Narva became a partner in the cross-border project "Increasing capacity of local authorities in providing e-services in Ida-Virumaa - Leningrad oblast cross-border area" (e-G2C). The project aims to create and implement socially significant electronic services in municipal archives operating in the border towns of the North-East of Estonia and the Leningrad region of Russia. The project's objective is to enable the archives of border municipalities to use modern information technology and develop e-services.



Border population faces administrative, linguistic and other barriers existing on both sides of the border. But services provided are not in compliance with modern information society.

The project plans to identify bottlenecks in the provision of information by archives at the request from citizens. It will also develop specific solutions and introduce two e-services – provision of official endorsement on burials, work and employment record. A guide how to use e-services is developed, archivists trained in the provision of e-services, a variety of dissemination events are held.

The project has 7 partners from Estonia and Russia. The Lead partner is "E-Governance Academy Foundation" (EE). Also the partners from Estonia, namely International Association "e-Signature Without Borders", Narva BAS Foundation, Narva City Government and from Russia – e-Government Centre of NRU ITMO, Municipalities of Kingisepp region and Slantsy region take part. Associate Partners are Rēzeknes Augstskola (LV), PRIOR North-West (RU), Certification Center AS (EE), Committee for Telecommunication and Informatization of the Leningrad region government (RU).

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The 20th Forum in Klaipėda

The 20th Forum Sweden 2013 "Integrated strategy for culture, business and society" took place in September in Klaipėda.



A large group of young people joined the Swedish delegation. The youngsters' programme included a reception at "Varpas" gymnasium, an educational event at Lithuania Minor History Museum, and excursions.

The organizers came from the Lithuanian-Swedish friendship societies in both countries. Almost 100 Swedes and Lithuanians arrived to the Forum: social field municipal staff, SME business and seniors.

The Forum's plenary sessions with interesting reports were backed up by study visits in four topical groups. Culture special-

ists visited Castle Museum, professional art galleries, held meetings with artists and photographers. An urgent task for Klaipėda culture sector is to protect regional culture, identity, to create conditions for cultural diversity development, to cherish the community's creative potential, to promote innovations, to develop the sector of cultural industries. These issues were discussed during the seminars.

A significant part of the Forum's time was allocated to promotion of entrepreneurship. Delegates visited three SMEs operating in wood processing and village tourism. Entrepreneurship and SMEs are globally recognized engines of economic and social development inscribed in the EU political priorities. The organizers expect such Forums to contribute to extra opportunities for companies in the international market.

The highly developed social welfare system in Sweden made visits to Womens' Shelter and other social services centers an excellent arena for experience exchange.

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SAFE WAY TO SCHOOL

Gdynia has undergone the BYPAD - bicycle policy audit in June this year. One of the its recommendations was to increase the number of primary schoolchildren travelling to school by bicycle by implementing a measure called "Safe way to school".

Within the first stage Gdynia conducted an analysis of children safety on their way to schools. It was based on observations of behaviour and movement of children and their parents before or after and during lessons. The analysis has shown that parents, giving their children a lift to school very often cause danger parking in the immediate vicinity of the building, too close to (or even on) road crossings, as well as places where it is illegal. They also bar sidewalks and lawns. As a result, other children are often forced to walk down the street and have a problem with crossing the road. Drivers do not respect the priority to children who are waiting to cross the road and notoriously exceed the speed limits near schools.

Many elements of road infrastructure is in a bad condition: uneven, cracked surfaces of road crossings, kerbs, sidewalks and stairs, which expose children and other people to injuries or threatening situations,



like being splashed by water from puddles.

The analysis of safety around schools includes a list of gaps in the road infrastructure and the description of problems encountered by children on their way to school, summarised by a "to do list" for each primary school in Gdynia.

The analysis is a basis for the local working group, composed of representatives of different units in the municipality office. They will elaborate detailed recommendations for safety

actions for schools starting with the highest risk of road accidents. To reach maximum effects, high participation of school authorities and parents is expected. Gdynia will introduce "30 zones", successfully applied in other countries. Moreover, Gdynia will plan renovations of sidewalks, crosswalks and road safety barriers near schools.

The aim is also to change parents' and children' mentality and travel behaviour and encourage them to use other means of transport. It will be coherent with the projects, which have been successfully held in Gdynia, such as "Walking Bus" and "Eco-Way to Kindergarten".

MORE

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A landfill in Saaremaa turned into a recreational area

What to do with an old landfill that no longer meets the environmental requirements? It could be covered up and left to stay closed or it could be sorted out and opened for public use. The latter was done in Saaremaa, close to Kuressaare where in September a former Kudjape landfill was opened as a recreational area spreading across 4 hectares of land.



Kudjape landfill, used for waste disposal from the beginning of 1970's until 2009, is now a green area with jogging paths that can be used for skiing and sledging in winter.

When Estonia joined the EU one of the agreements was to close all landfills that did not match the safety criteria by July 2013. The Kudjape landfill closing down project started in 2005. Usually, the landfill's closure operations include gathering all the waste, covering it with watertight layer and building leachate and landfill-gas collection systems. After that the area is closed for access for 30 years as the threat to the environment cannot be excluded.

In Kudjape a more innovative approach was taken. Firstly, most of the waste in the landfill was sorted out – hazardous waste and material for covering the area was extracted. In addition, the recovered materials were used to produce oil, fuel and plastic profiles, some of it was used in Iru Waste to Energy facility on the mainland Estonia. In total, 11 610 kg waste was excavated.

By collaborating with scientists and researchers from the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Linnaeus University (Sweden) closing down Kudjape landfill has become an international science project that cost almost 2 million euros. 89% was financed by EU Cohesion Fund through the state-owned foundation Environmen-

tal Investment Centre. The rest was covered by Saaremaa Landfill Ltd and its owner municipalities – Kuressaare, Kaarma and Pihtla.

As Kudjape is the first mixed municipal waste landfill turned into a recreational area in Europe, it has become real object of interest and a guide for all others.

MORE

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New Metropolitan Icon

Szczecin's traditional "Konzerthaus" was destroyed during the Second World War. Designed by the Spanish architects from Barozzi Veiga Studio, the new Philharmonic Hall brings back the lost function to the city's central site, highlighting the new cultural heart of the growing cross-border metropolis.



The Philharmonic Hall is a 1,145-seat concert, dance and talks venue within the downtown area in Szczecin. As a structure, it is technically stretched, and is situated on the West Bank of the River Odra, not far from Długi Bridge. Just a stone's throw from the hall,

the Turning Points Museum, has already come out of the ground.

With its 2 underground and 5 above ground floors, of the total cubic volume of 98,200 m³, the hall will host symphonic, organ and chamber music concerts. The architects designed two concert halls inside: the large hall with 953 seats and the small one for 192 persons. The main hall stage will accommodate a 120-person orchestra and a 110-person choir. On the wall behind the stage, the magnificent organ will be configured to suit the architectural and acoustic requirements.

The genuine edifice is a contemporary metropolitan icon, a new artistic 'cathedral' for the city that completes the existing tourist route, and at the same time serves as a perfect revitalization project example. The architectural expression of the project is a continuation of the historic heritage of the region: the sheer roofs and distinct vertical divisions of neighbourhood residential buildings, neo-gothic adornment, monumentality and verticality of Szczecin's churches.

The project offers a good balance between mass and verticality. The glass façade reflects the impressions of the city, and changes with the seasons. During the day, the building appears as a shiny object in front of the grey city background. In the night, it becomes a spectacular bright lighted cathedral.

The Szczecin Philharmonic Orchestra will be resident in the hall. The hall is to be officially opened by the end of 2013.

MORE

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Sillamäe Full of Events

In July the first Sillamäe Maritime Days devoted to 10 years of Port of Sillamäe were organized. The most honorable guest of the celebration was the legendary sailing ship "Krusenstern". There were a lot of cultural and sport events in the town visited by the guests from coastal cities of Tallinn, Maardu, Pärnu, Kuressaare, Kärdla, Narva-Jõesuu.



In the renovated building of the Sillamäe Centre of Culture the concert of classical music performed by St.Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra "Klassika" took place. Also, the visitors could take part in different workshops held by the sea.

In September 2013, the International Festival of Amateur Theatres "Lyubitelivy" (eng. "Doyoulove") was held. The Director Vladimir Vaikert wonders how to call people who devote their lives to the theatre? Are they professionals? But they have no salary. Are they amateurs? Fans? But they have many years of experience on the theatrical scene. Such fans are welcome to the theatre festival "Lyubitelivy".

Performances are evaluated by a professional jury. The festival got a support from Sillamäe Town Government, cultural funds and sponsors. The next theatre festival in Sillamäe is to be held in 2015.

Also, traditionally in the autumn the David Oistrakh Festival takes place. Classical music lovers can to listen to famous artists from Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Italy and Russia.

MORE

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Umeå Urban Forum

Umeå Urban Forum is a network for developing ideas and methods for long-term sustainable city development. During the European Capital of Culture 2014 in Umeå, Urban Forum will focus on the city's public spaces and masterminding several social, technical and cultural activities. The latter include dialogues, major rebuilding and temporary installations in Umeå. Urban Forum is the result of a general municipal management assignment based on openness, democracy and equality. Some Urban Forum project examples during 2014 are:

The eight seasons park

As part of developing the city area between Umeå's bridges, Lugn och Ro – de åtta årstidernas park (Peace and Quiet – the eight seasons' park), is officially being opened during 2014. Through a co-creative process the residents will be encouraged to fill the park with contents that play with scales, functions, colours and materials.

Broparken

The Broparken park contains surfaces for urban farming and occasional trade, and also a variety of surfaces for performances and activities. Areas for sunbathing and board games are also available in the park. The new design is the result of a long collaboration between



Photo: c-omb-h-ne/Umeå

Umeå municipality and the young. Representatives of parkour, snowboarding, stage and dance have contributed their ideas.

Vasaplan

Vasaplan is the heart of public transport in Umeå and the focus will be on how it can be developed. The challenge is to realise concepts such as 'discovering', 'transforming', 'making accessible' and 'communicating'.

Sävar and Riga

On test sites in Sävar (Umeå) and Riga (Latvia), the project "Urban Forum in the Baltic Sea Region" will develop and test business models for the creative industries in the arena of sustainable urban development and improve public dialogues in urban planning and development. The project will also create long-term co-operation between the creative industries, municipalities, universities and other partners, e.g. through the establishment of public consultation platforms and think-tanks.

MORE

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A Festival for the Spirit and Soul



The culture and art festival "The Walks in Tukums" took place for the first time in August this year in Tukums. For four days, the town was filled with theatre, art, literature, music, and special creative children and youth adventures in various previously unclaimed and intriguing territories, such as in the closed police courtyard, in the yard of the special boarding school, in the square in front of the skating rink.

The festival offered more than 30 activities, a half of which were performed by the professional guest artists, e.g. outstanding concerts. Tukums is the only place in the Baltic States (and perhaps even in Europe) with a Straw Workshop-Museum. During the festival, the children hands were giving shape to self-invented straw figurines. The kids together with a beloved Latvian children's book author Indra Sproģe wrote an original alphabet of Tukums and made it into a cartoon. Meanwhile, the youth were entertained in an exciting orientation game "50 things to do in Tukums", using special reference guides to find special places and objects in the town.

The theatre repertoire was very ample, in essence – a festival within a festival. Theatre companies from other Latvian towns and even from Russia and Argentina gave excellent chamber theatre performances. The idea "Art goes out onto the streets" generated positive emotions, when large-format paintings, created specifically for the festival, were exhibited in squares and plazas of Tukums and these paintings still adorn the town today. The police courtyard experienced surprising changes as it turned into a romantic "Poetic café".

MORE

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Planning for the Public Health

Along with Jūrmala's mild and beneficial climate, local mineral water springs and medicinal mud are used at the city's resort and spa centres to strengthen the immune system and to nurse ailing visitors back to health.



During the autumn season, Jūrmala's rehabilitation centres, resort hotels and spas are offering special programmes of various kinds, including juice cures, cleansing and vitamin-rich cures, as well as aromatic pearl baths with sea salt, bathing in mineral water and seawater pools, oxygen cocktails, along with various anti-stress and ecoterapy programmes for the mind and body.

The municipality is taking care of its inhabitants offering different health improvement programmes. The municipal subsidy is focused on the senior group, allowing to attend the Nordic walking classes. Also, physiotherapy course is offered for inhabitants and water gymnastics for pregnant women.

Jūrmala's 26 km long beach is already having 4 Blue Flags, thus proving compliance with the water quality, safety and environmental management criteria. Besides, the first beach for people with special needs is now available. The Jūrmala City Council has provided the descent made from a special plank surface with small width of spaces, marked with bright yellow wide band to help keep the focus of area for the visually impaired. The width is also designed for people in wheelchair to move comfortably.

Tandem bicycles, chess, and special balls that sound when being played were purchased to make people with visual impairments more active.

MORE

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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 the following Commissions on: Business, Culture, Education, Energy, Environment, Gender Equality, Health and Social Affairs, Local Safety, Sport, Tourism, Transportation, Urban Planning, Youth Issues. 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.