

The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2009

The city of Umeå, Sweden, is the winner of the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2009. The winner was announced at the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) tenth General Conference in Kristiansand, Norway, on 25th September. The value of the award is 5000 EUR.

“The competition between the candidates was hard, as there was only one point of difference between the candidates. The Umeå nomination fulfils the award criteria – innovativeness, relevancy and quality – with high scores.” says Mikko Jokinen.

As many other cities in Europe, Umeå has problems with air pollution. In fact, Umeå exceeds the limits, and that makes it one of the biggest challenges for the town. The winning practice, No idling taxicabs in Umeå, has contributed a lot to the environmental goal for improving the air in Umeå. In Umeå, there are 200 taxicabs that run an average of 300 days/year. The goal was to make visible that idling taxicabs was a problem, to stop unnecessarily idling, and to reduce the discharge of carbon dioxide. This was done through education of all taxi drivers. The drivers were also challenged to a competition. The drivers that could reduce their fuel consumption of their cars the most in relation to the quantity of kilometres driven would win a very special price! Also the media was made aware of the project so that passengers would remind the drivers when they forgot to turn off their engine.

The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities award committee, deciding on the awards, consisted of the co-chairman of UBC Commission on Environment, Mikko Jokinen, Head of Environmental Department Øystein Holvik from the city of Kristiansand and Environmental coordinator So Hie Kim-Hellström from the previous award winner (2007), Växjö.

More information about the winner at www.ubcwheel.eu