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Baltic Cities

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SPECIAL
Conference Edition

- Editorial by Finnish Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen
- Baltic 21, European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign,...
- Local Agenda 21 work in Kaunas, Sundsvall, Sopot, St. Petersburg...



EDITOR

Risto Veivo

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Tuomo Poutiainen

EDITORIAL BOARD

Raitis Arnts, Riga

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Sonja Hilavuo, Tampere

Mikko Jokinen, Turku

Carl Nielsen, Aarhus

Zita Tverkute, Panevezys

Pawel Zaboklicki, Gdansk

*

PUBLISHER

Union of the Baltic Cities

Commission on Environment

Linnankatu 61

FIN-20100 Turku

FINLAND

www.ubc.net

Tel. +358 2 230 2030

Fax. +358 2 253 8613

E-mail. risto.veivo@pp.weppi.fi

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TEXTUAL PROOFREADING

Paul W Harrison, TESL

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Juha Kääriä, Turku

Baltic Cities

Environmental Bulletin

The Baltic Sea Region has changed dramatically in recent years. It can well be described as a kind of geopolitical laboratory where we have tried to heal the wounds of the past. I think that we have been successful in our endeavours.



The region has developed rapidly both in economic and social terms. Yet much remains to be done. A social and economic fault line is a fact in the Baltic Sea Region. We should do our utmost for the welfare of the people and try to promote democratic forms of action.

One of the most ambitious tasks has been to establish the rule of law and to lay foundation for the operation of democratic institutions in the region. Much work has been done to enable the NGO's start their activities and to enhance regional and local democracy.

I am happy to note that people in the Baltic Sea Region are very interested in and also concerned about environmental issues. The concept of sustainable development was first introduced in global contexts but it has been subsequently adopted also in connection with regional endeavours. Finland takes the view that this concept integrates environmental protection into other essential social activities. We underline the importance of creating prerequisites for a better future: Sustainable development is a continuous, controlled process of societal change at global, regional and local levels, aimed at improved prospects of a good life for present and future generations.

Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region is the first regional action programme for sustainable development in the world. While it was being prepared, Finland emphasized the role of local initiatives and measures in the implementation of sustainable development. We have promoted, i.a. in co-operation with the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), Local Agenda 21 activities and networking in the region.

The Baltic Local Agenda 21 was on the agenda of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) meeting in Nyborg, Denmark, on 22-23 June 1998. The Council expressed its appreciation of the support to the Baltic 21 process given, among others, by the participating NGO's. The Council also encouraged the UBC to contribute to the process of implementing the Baltic 21. I feel confident that both the NGO's and the UBC will play a major role in this work especially as far as local agendas are concerned.

I wish every success to the Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference in Turku on 3-5 September, 1998.

Tarja Halonen

Tarja Halonen
Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)...

... is a network consisting of 80 cities from 10 different countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC was founded in September 1991 to develop co-operation and exchange of experiences amongst its member cities. The main goal of the Union is to contribute to democratic, social, economic and environmentally friendly development in the Baltic Sea Region.

The UBC is open to all cities willing to join it. Today the member cities range from charming small towns to big cities such as St Petersburg, Stockholm and Copenhagen. In spite of the differences in size, language, location, economy, etc., the interest towards local level co-operation unites each of them.

The UBC initiates and co-ordinates projects involving its members and promotes the exchange of know-how and experiences amongst the cities by organizing courses, seminars and meetings, as well as publishing newsletters.

The UBC is led by an Executive Board and the Secretariat is located in Gdansk, Poland. The actual work is carried out by eight commissions in the following fields: business co-operation, communication, culture, environment, social affairs, sport, tourism and transportation.

Please contact us for further information!



Baltic 21

- New Challenges to Municipalities

By Mikko Jokinen

In June 22-23, 1998 the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Baltic Sea States adopted Baltic 21, the Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, at the Council of the Baltic Sea States Meeting in Nyborg, Denmark. In addition to the Baltic Sea States, the European Union was represented at the meeting. Baltic 21 is the first intergovernmental Action Programme on regional sustainable development since the UN's Summit Declaration in Rio in 1992. The Baltic Sea Region States and other actors - once again - showed a marvellous example on how fruitful regional co-operation can be!

Baltic 21 is a product of short and intensive preparing work carried out in co-operation with different stakeholders around the Baltic Sea. The starting words for the process were given by the Swedish Prime minister in May 1996 at Visby, where the heads of the Baltic Governments had their meeting. Officially the workplan for Baltic 21 was launched and approved in the meeting of the ministers of Environment in October 1996 in Saltssjöbaden, Sweden.

The approach of the preparing work was sectorial. There were seven main themes chosen, on which the work was concen-

trating: Agriculture, Energy, Fisheries, Forest Sector, Industry, Tourism and Transport. In addition to these, Spatial Planning was also strongly involved in the discussions and background documents. The question, whether Local Agenda 21 work as such should also form an own sector in the programme was intensively discussed as well. As an outcome of these discussions the local level issues were integrated into the defined seven sectors.

The preparing work was steered by a Senior Officials Group (SOG) consisting of members from the official governmental and EU bodies and, in addition to these, from many NGO's and other Baltic organisations. I had the pleasure and honour to represent the UBC.

Concrete Actions Expected

One of the main intentions with Baltic 21 was to make it as concrete as possible. It is written in the form of an Action Program consisting of 30 different actions. These actions are aimed at the transition towards sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Seven of the intended actions are joint ones covering intersectorial issues with many important local level aspects. The rest of the actions are addressing special sector issues and spatial planning with some local level aspects as well.

The implementation of Baltic 21 will start immediately. This means big challenges to the Baltic cities and other municipalities. Many cities have already been forerunners in sustainable development, but the common effort to make Baltic 21 a successful process with real concrete results stresses the need still to strengthen our efforts. The present situation in BSR gives us a good opportunity to do this. Intensive co-operation between cities and other local level partners around the Baltic Sea is very unique already now. We have good and active existing networks, like the UBC and CCB. These existing networks are ready to intensify their co-operation especially in the field of sustainable development.

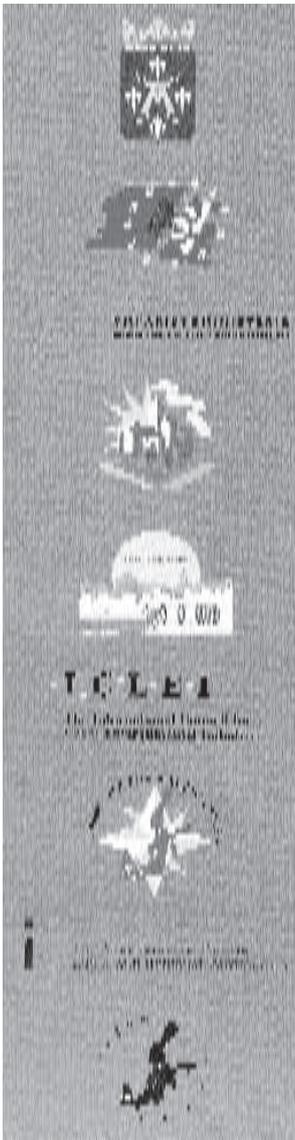
The Role of the Cities

Now, when the Council of the Baltic Sea States has adopted the Baltic 21 programme, and it is being supported by the European Union as well, a re-allocation of resources for supporting the local level sustainability work is to be expected from their part. In the case of the Baltic Sea Region, it is very useful and important to do this work together with international partners. Cities should now be active in this field and initiate new projects with their existing or new twin cities and other partners to strengthen the Baltic 21 process with joint actions.

The UBC is also prepared to strengthen its role in this process, e.g., by making its own Local Agenda 21 Strategy. The UBC is also creating active partnership with other Baltic local level actors by being one of the background organisations in the new Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum (BLAF), which is supposed to act as a common activator in stimulating new Local Agenda 21 processes in the Baltic Sea Region. Our common aim should be that all the cities in the Baltic Sea Region will have their own Local Agenda 21 processes started and properly carried out as soon as possible.

The writer, Mr. Mikko Jokinen, the Head of the Environmental Office of the City of Turku, is the co-chairman of the commission on Environment of the UBC. He represented - together with Mr. Peter Gavelin from Sundsvall, Sweden - the UBC in the Senior Officials Group which steered the preparation process of Baltic 21.

For more information, see:
<http://www.ee/baltic21/>



Welcome to the Baltic Local Agenda 21

Health and Sustainable Cities Conference!

With this special conference edition, the UBC Commission on Environment Secretariate would like to wish you a warm welcome to the Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference. We are convinced that this conference will be a remarkable step for all of us.

This special edition contains a lot of information about the Local Agenda 21 work going on in different UBC member cities. The best thing about it is that there is so much to be told! In addition to this, the bulletin presents various important organisations and networks working for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. The European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, ICLEI, the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum and the WHO Healthy Cities Project are bound to have a positive effect on the lives of the millions in the Baltic cities. These organisations and others alike need and deserve all our support and co-operation in their work for our common future. Special thanks the Secretariate wishes to express to all those wonderful organisations and persons that have made the Conference possible.

<http://www.turku.fi/kesvi/baltic/>

The Turku Conference can be seen as a follow-up to:

- The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio, 1992*
- The European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Aalborg, 1994*
- The Second European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Lisbon, 1996*
- The International Healthy Cities Conference in Athens, 1998*
- The Council of the Baltic Sea States Meeting in Nyborg, 1998*

The Turku Conference can be seen as a forerunner to:

- The European Union Urban Forum in Vienna, 1998*
- The Regional European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conferences in Sofia (1998), in Seville (1998), and in The Hague (1999),*
- The Pan-European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference, 2000.*

Some Background Documents:

- Agenda 21, The Aalborg Charter, The Lisbon Action Plan, Athens Declaration for Healthy Cities, and Baltic 21 (Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region).*

Some of the Goals of the Turku Conference

Statement (as Seen by the Members of the International Planning Group):

to launch the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum,

to promote the Local Agenda 21 work in the Baltic Sea Region,

to show the Baltic region as a part of Europe rather than as an isolated region within Europe (the willingness of the Baltic Region to form partnerships across Europe should be demonstrated),

to illustrate the relevance of having a "Baltic" conference (the common denominator which brings represented cities/countries together and illustrates the value of partnerships on the local, national and international levels),

to affect the formulation of the urban policy of the EU,

to affect the re-structuring of the structural funds of the EU,

to contribute to the future development of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign,

to recognize the values of health and sustainability,

to have a futuristic call,

to emphasize the social component of sustainability,

to demonstrate the necessity of inter-sectoral approaches,

to recognise the importance of networking between local authorities (and with other actors, e.g., local businesses),

to show the necessity to tackle economic and social questions.

European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign "Goes Baltic"?

- An Interview with Anthony Payne and Peter Löffler



By Risto Veivo

The European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign was launched in 1994, after the First European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Aalborg, Denmark. At this conference, the so-called Aalborg Charter was adopted, which sets the basis for the Campaign's activities. To date, more than 400 European local authorities have joined the Campaign by signing up to this Charter. The participation in the Campaign can indeed offer a lot to joining local authorities. We interviewed Anthony Payne, the Campaign Co-ordinator, as well as Peter Löffler from the Campaign Office in Brussels.

Local authorities which sign up to the Charter recognise their responsibilities for many environmental problems humankind is facing and their specific role in solving them. Cities are key players in bringing about the necessary changes. It is therefore stated in the Aalborg Charter that every local authority should seek to achieve social justice, sustainable economies and environmental sustainability through a local, balance-seeking process. A range of concrete steps is proposed in the Aalborg Charter to implement these objectives. For instance,

every city should strive to assess the environmental consequences of its activities and involve the whole community in all steps undertaken, such as increasing the eco-efficiency of buildings, implementing effective land-use policies, creating long-term jobs, or reducing greenhouse emissions.

Support for Local Authorities

According to *Anthony Payne*, the overall objective of the Campaign is to promote local sustainable development and to give, in a number of ways, support to local authorities striving to achieve it. A concise guide for local authorities is not only the Aalborg Charter but also the



The Campaign Co-ordinator, Mr. Anthony Payne, would like to see more and more Baltic cities joining the Campaign and committing themselves to sustainable development by signing up to the Aalborg Charter.

Lisbon Action Plan, adopted in 1996 at the second European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns.

In its early days, the Campaign was predominantly in place to raise awareness. After issuing the Lisbon Action Plan, it has increasingly sought to encourage concrete action. The step-by-step actions of the Lisbon Action Plan have provided

concrete suggestions for local authorities to undertake when developing sustainable development strategies at the local level. It also could be said, states Anthony Payne, that the two documents provide a checklist to help decide whether proposals, projects or actions have sustainable or unsustainable consequences.

Greatest Success - Local Enthusiasm?

The fruitful co-operation between various international networks of local authorities in the framework of the Campaign has been a success, as indeed has been the ability of the Campaign to play its part in activating 400 European local authorities to sign the Aalborg Charter. According to Anthony Payne, the Campaign needs to be seen as an initiative or concerted action of local authorities. "We have also been able to raise the issue of sustainable development with officials from a number of different Directorates of the European Commission, and the Campaign is increasingly known in European institutions", relates *Peter Löffler* with at least a little pride in his voice.

Biggest Problem - Secure Funding?

The Campaign is a major European initiative for sustainable development and local agenda 21. The expectations placed on it are therefore very high. So far, the Campaign has been in the beneficial situation of receiving financial support from the European Commission (DG XI), the City of Aalborg and, in 1998 the City of Hannover on a yearly basis. The financial commitments made to date have led to a number of projects and activities for campaign participants, which with the exception of the work of the Campaign Office have been led by international networks of local authorities and certain participating cities and towns of the Campaign. Without this support it would have been difficult for the Campaign to sur-

vive. However, due to the lack of a pluri-annual commitment in financial terms, it has been difficult to plan a coherent long-term work programme, says Anthony Payne. The Campaign has therefore developed on a year by year basis. "It would have been better if we could have planned for the long term with a more strategic approach", he confesses.

Participants from CEC countries?

At the moment, a certain geographical concentration of Campaign participants in some economically important areas of Europe can be perceived. Also, pro-active cities in terms of sustainability policies are largely represented. There are concentrations of Campaign participants in, e.g., the Barcelona and London areas, and many Campaign participants are located in the UK, Spain, North Italy, the South of Scandinavia, or Germany. Anthony Payne is especially glad, that an increasing number of local authorities from CEC countries are now joining the Campaign. The area of influence of the Campaign reaches across 31 European countries. It goes far up to the North of Europe, where e.g. Tromsø in Norway joined the Campaign, and there is also a participating city far beyond Moscow.

Why Join the Campaign?

Cities and towns all over Europe are struggling with similar problems and developing innovative mechanisms to overcome them. The Campaign provides an opportunity to learn from others and exchange experiences. The organisation of conferences such as the Turku conference provides good opportunities for this. There is much evidence that networks such as the Campaign have tremendous innovative power, claims Peter Löffler. He continues by saying that it is worthwhile if you come home from each event even with only one excellent idea for your own town or city, and the know-how and impetus to implement it.

The Campaign is able to inform local authorities of the latest initiatives, programmes and other opportunities coming out of the European Commission and other European institutions, emphasizes Anthony Payne. EU-Programmes such as Tacis City Twinning and Ecos-Ouverture provide funding opportunities especially for CEC local authorities to work together on a range of activities, including sustainable development and Local Agenda 21. The Campaign provides a forum for local authorities to search for partners for such programmes. This can be done, for example, through our quarterly newsletter, at conferences, or our soon-to-be launched inter-active website, Peter Löff-

ler explains, and continues by saying that all those interested are warmly welcome to contact the Campaign Office.

Baltic 21 - An Example for Other Regions?

It is important that all levels of Government are committed to the sustainability process. This provides a framework within which the local levels can co-operate. Baltic 21 has been developed in conjunction with a variety of stakeholders. The active participation of the private sector, NGO's, and financial institutes is essential if the agenda is to move forward. A regional dimension to the Campaign could be part of the future scenario. The creation of an action plan endorsed by all nations of the Baltic Sea Region may provide a framework to bring this a little closer to reality. The creation of such an inter-governmental Agenda 21 could help to encourage similar processes in other parts of Europe as well, Anthony Payne reasons in regard to the relevance of Baltic 21 to the Campaign.

Evaluation & Visions of the Future

At the moment, an evaluation of the Campaign is being initiated. It aims at assessing the progress made to date and receiving feedback in respect to the effectiveness of the Campaign. As a first step in order to launch the evaluation process, a questionnaire will be distributed to all delegates at the Turku Conference. The answers will provide an initial survey and give important indications on how to shape the future evaluation work. This may lead to a review of the Campaign activities and will help to further develop the Campaign according to the needs of local authorities, says Peter Löffler.

The concept of sustainable development is the creation of solutions to tackle environmental, social and economic issues simultaneously. It is about improving the quality of life and making sure that we are aware of the global consequences of our local actions. According to Anthony Payne, this requires holistic and integrated approaches if sustainable development is to be delivered.

In the European context, he would also like to see sustainable development treated in a more holistic sense. The forthcoming Urban Forum (Vienna, Nov 98), which is being organised by the European Commission, shall provide a strong opportunity to address sustainable development within the urban context, at the European level. If this occurs, initiatives such as the Campaign and sustainability in general can become mainstream within European thinking and policy.

The Lisbon Action Plan (First Part)

1. We believe that the adoption of the Charter of European Cities & Towns Towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter) is one of the best starting points for a Local Agenda 21 process.
2. We believe that the local authority should be the main facilitator of the Local Agenda 21 process.
3. We believe that the Local Agenda 21 process requires the involvement of the entire local authority - whether city, town or rural community.
4. We shall enter into consultation and partnerships with the various sectors of our community to create synergy through cooperation.
5. We shall seek to get our own house in order by implementing the principle of negotiating outward.
6. We shall carry out systematic action planning to move from analysis to action.
7. We shall integrate environmental with social and economic development to improve health and quality of life for our citizens.
8. We shall use advanced tools for sustainability management.
9. We shall establish programmes to raise awareness among our citizens, interest groups, as well as politicians and local government officers of sustainable development issues.
10. We shall gain strength through inter-authority alliances: associations, networks and campaigns.
11. We shall build North-South and West-East alliances for sustainable development.
12. We shall go ahead in concert with the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign.



Peter Löffler from the Campaign Office welcomes all those interested in the Campaign to contact the office for further information.

European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign
Rue de Trèves 49-51, box 3
B - 1041 Brussels
Tel: + 32 2 230 53 51
Fax: + 32 2 230 88 50

Together with the E.C. Expert group on the Urban Environment, the Campaign forms part of the Sustainable Cities Project. The Campaign is supported by five major networks/associations of local authorities: Eurocities, UTO, CEMR, ICLEI, and WHO Healthy Cities Project.

BLAF - Born to Run!

By Päivi Saarnia

The preparation of the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum was started in the city of Lahti, Finland, where a working seminar was organised in September 1997. The event was organised by Green Triangle Finland with financial support from the Finnish Ministry for the Environment. As a result of the seminar, it was decided to set up the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum. The forum has its basis on the Rio, Aalborg and Lisbon documents as well as the Baltic 21. Several networks, like the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and WHO Healthy Cities have participated in the forum efforts.

The purpose of this forum is to pool and network the sustainable development programmes and Local Agenda 21 efforts taking place in different Baltic Sea countries. Municipalities, areas and NGOs can benefit a lot from each other's experiences. More and more municipalities should start the Local Agenda 21 process. The Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum provides a framework for building up the capacity to carry out local agenda 21 processes within the local communities in the Baltic Sea Region.

The concrete tasks of BLA21F are to initiate new local environmental projects, facilitating in finding financing and technical assistance in making project proposals, information dispersion via the various existing channels (even to the smallest towns in the region), and organising training and seminars. The basic idea is to unite different actors in the field of sustainable development in the region to work in favourable co-operation for Local Agenda 21 activities.

The Objectives of the BLA21 Forum:

to provide concrete examples of the goals and nature of the local agenda 21 processes based on partnerships and bottom-up approaches, and to publicise the results of local agenda 21 initiatives in order to increase public awareness and to show the potential of these efforts to local decision makers and officials, to share the lessons learnt and to pool human and financial resources through joint activities,

to provide a local input into the Baltic Agenda 21 (BA21), and to reach concrete results on the local level for environmental protection of the Baltic Sea.

Baltic Region Healthy Cities Project Office

By Mari Hakkala

The WHO Healthy Cities Project launched the concept of sub-regional centres in the Healthy Cities Maribor business meeting in 1996. The purpose of sub-regional WHO Healthy Cities centres is to expand and reinforce the capacity of WHO to support project cities and national healthy cities networks. The centres will be in a better position to establish closer and frequent contacts with project cities and local networks; build a knowledge base of local needs; be closer to the field of action of international donors; and draw more easily on the technical resources of the countries of the sub-region.

In the WHO Healthy Cities Project, Phase III: 1998 - 2002, training, capacity building and resource development will be high priority areas for the whole European region. Introducing the Healthy City Programme to the cities also in the Baltic Sea Region including the Sankt Petersburg and Kaliningrad area is an important strategic objective. Given the above mentioned priorities and especially the existing interest for the Healthy Cities processes in the Baltic cities, negotiations were initiated between the WHO EURO Centre for Urban Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland and the City of Turku to establish a sub-regional Healthy Cities Project Office in Turku. The Ministry and the City of Turku are responsible for financing the Project Office.

The central tasks of the Project Office relate to coordinating and supporting the Healthy Cities projects and networks in the Sub-region, developing a knowledge base about the needs and conditions in the cities in the Sub-region, initiating and maintaining collaboration between partners in health, both official and unofficial, creating information and communication networks between partners and assisting in the best possible expertise and experience exchange in the sub-region.

The city of Turku was among the first eleven cities to initiate a Healthy Cities

Project in Europe in 1986. Turku has long-term twin-city links with Sankt Petersburg (since 1953), Gothenburg, Gdansk, Rostock and Aarhus. These links were activated when Turku started a Baltic MCAP on Environment and Health under the Healthy City umbrella in 1991. Several of the issues dealt with within the work of the Baltic MCAP would today fall under the concept of sustainable development or Local Agenda 21. The city of Turku emphasizes that it accepts and would welcome the further development of the present organisational structure into a fully fledged WHO Baltic Healthy Cities Centre.

The main areas of work of the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Project Office:

Training and capacity building for the cities

Maintaining and facilitating contacts between partners in health in the Baltic Region

Networking and information exchange on urban health and health promotion

Development of tailor-made tools and resource packs in local languages

Promoting the local, national and international partnerships for healthy sustainable urban development

Systematic fund-raising and resource development in collaboration with network partners

Developing a knowledge base of urban health conditions and needs in the Region

Cooperation with EU and other International and Regional Bodies

Support for the WHO Healthy Cities Project Office in accordance with need

Business meetings, conferences, training, consultations, missions and analysis will be organised.

Further Information:

Mr. Ilmo Parvinen, Health Director

Ms. Mari Hakkala, Consultant

Tel: +3582 269 2929 (Mr. Parvinen)

Tel: +3582 2514 909 (Ms. Hakkala)

Fax: +3582 2515 226

E-mail: ilmo.parvinen@turku.fi

e-mail: mari.hakkala@turku.fi

ICLEI in the Baltic Sea Region

- A History of Eventful Relations with Baltic Cities and Towns

by Barbara Anton

The mission of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is to assist local authorities in improving their environmental management. Promoting Local Agenda 21 has always been shown to have a strong appeal for the Baltic cities and towns. After 6 years of operation, the ICLEI European Secretariat in Freiburg, Germany can now count one fifth of its members as coming from the region bordering the Baltic Sea.

From the very beginning, the Northern region has been a venue for numerous important events. Already in 1993, a meeting was co-organised with the City of Riga in order to bring together city networks and bilateral co-operation projects in the Baltic area. During the same year, 'Global Concerns (and) Local Solutions' were discussed during a seminar taking place in the Finnish cities of Lahti and Padajoski.

Good Partners and Relations

Committed project partners in Poland and Latvia allowed the production of a comprehensive manual on local environmental management. The first two volumes of the Polish version - the second being the European Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide - were published and widely disseminated to Polish cities and towns at the beginning of this year.

I.C.L.E.I

The International Council for
Local Environmental Initiatives

Close working relations with numerous Baltic cities were also established in the course of ICLEI's European Local Agenda 21 Guidance and Training Project. With representatives from Aalborg, Gdansk, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Kouvolaa, Lahti, Linköping, Odense, Oulu, Storstrøm County, Tampere and Tartu, the proportion of Baltic participants who committed themselves to learning more about LA 21 was rather high - another example of the outstanding dedication of the region's cities and towns to being up-to-date with modern theory and practice of local management. This is also true for ICLEI's European Campaign for Climate Protection, with especially strong support from 23 Finnish cities, which outnumber involvement in all other countries.

"Baltic Charters" Arising

As a consequence of being host to an important conference, local policy papers nowadays often carry the name of a Baltic city. Thus, we now have the 'Kouvola Theses' highlighting requirements for a sustainable interregional transport management. Most crucially, there's the well-known 'Aalborg Charter', the basis for the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, which will now further be strengthened by another event in the region, the 'Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference' in Turku.

ICLEI has also been very grateful that the City of Gothenburg has not only taken the initiative to organise a seminar for interested members but also to host the ICLEI European members *European Cities 21* last May. More plans are being made for the future. ICLEI acts as a consultant in the development of the Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum and together with UBC developed a project within the Forum's framework for raising awareness on local sustainability. Also, efforts are being made to raise funds for the continuation of existing projects.

This is just a brief highlight giving some insight in the Baltic cities' activities for a better environment. ICLEI is glad to know so many competent and ambitious partners in the region and hopes for even more opportunities for co-operation in the future!

Baltic Pilot City Sought

By Christoph Erdmenger

Why should natural resources such as air, water, soil, flora and fauna or human health be managed with less care than an artificial resource, money? This question was the starting point for a comprehensive research, development and pilot project run by ICLEI, with three cities and one county involved. In imitation of local financial budgeting, a budget for natural resources and environmental quality set up and passed by the local council is being executed during the course of a budget year.

The main targets of this new environmental management system are to both budget for and control the consumption of environmental goods throughout the budgeting period, to balance the amount of pollution and use of natural resources in the community, to enable the decision-makers and the administration to set priorities in a transparent way, and to present the state of environment in a way that is understandable to the public as well as comparable with environmental targets.

The Budget Plan consists of 5-15 environmental indicators representing environmental spending. For each indicator, a figure is planned for the next year which can be compared with a medium-term target considered to represent the natural budget limits. Environmental Budget Controlling (accounting) serves to avoid "ecological overspending" in the course of the budget year. ICLEI is now seeking pilot local authorities in Baltic countries who are interested in joining a project to test the applicability of the EcoBudget model in their own countries.

Interested local authorities are warmly welcomed to contact the ICLEI European Secretariat!

ICLEI European Secretariat

Eschholzstr. 86
D-79115 Freiburg
Germany
Tel: +49-761-368920
Fax +49-761-36260
ICLEI_Europe@compuserve

Clean Workplace!

An Agenda 21 Project with a Female Touch

By Marie-Louise Henriksson

With approximately 8000 employees, the Municipality of Sundsvall is responsible for almost as much pollution as a major industry. For this reason, the Agenda 21 project, Clean Workplace! started in 1993. The project has now ended and a final report of the results is under production. The Clean Workplace! project has, as an environmental project, played a particularly important role in the municipality's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The idea behind Clean Workplace! is that by being a good example you inspire others to follow suit. Each workplace appoints two or more key persons to be trained in the Clean Workplace! methodology. Together with their co-workers they devise an action plan containing measures to reduce the workplace's environmental impact. The results at all participating workplaces are followed up through get-togethers, study visits, courses and by support from the project office.

The project has been a great success. In January 1998, 200 workplaces (of the total 240 workplaces in the municipality's organization) were voluntarily participating in the project. Over 4500 employees were actively involved in this work; people at day-care centers, schools, those caring for the elderly and others, officeworkers and people at a number of other workplaces such as garages, sewage treatment plants, gardening etc.

The Clean Workplace! project has not only helped in saving the environment,

but it has also saved money. A report in 1996 proved that the participating workplaces saved in the range of SEK 1.4 million annually by reducing waste volumes, being more efficient in purchasing and so forth. If all municipal workplaces followed the good example of the project it would mean savings of roughly SEK 5,5 million annually.

The Female Starting Point

The method, which was created for the project and builds upon focusing on the workplace's own daily activities and their effects on the environment, has been successful. This way of working has proved to be especially appreciated by women, something that has been essential, since as much as 85 per cent of the municipality's workforce consists of women.

The female starting-point regarding changes - more often than in the case of men - begins from personal experiences rather than from general principles and goals. The women who have participated have found it challenging, meaningful and nice to be able to discuss with their workmates about how to alter work routines in order to make them more environmentally sound and thereafter to carry out the changes found to be important.

Based on their own experiences, work plans have been formulated on how the set goals are to be reached and at what pace that work is to be set. This is completely in accordance with the ideas for Agenda 21.

Awareness Raised at Workplaces

The Clean Workplace! project has meant that a high degree of consciousness in regard to the environment has been established at the various workplaces. This has created pride and joy and has enabled those engaged in the project to grow.

We have found women in the forefront, and their experiences will now be essential when the plans for how the future work is to be carried out are drawn up.

For anybody who wants to know more, there are a number of papers and booklets in Swedish. You will also find them

at web site www.sundsvall.se/s-kommun/miljo. A summary of the project will be completed in English during the autumn of 1998.

Agenda 21

Chapter 24 (part of)

Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development.

"The international community has endorsed several plans of action and conventions for the full and beneficial integration of women in all development activities, which emphasize women's participation in national and international ecosystem management and control of environment degradation.

Effective implementation of these programmes will depend on the active involvement of women in economic and political decision-making and will be critical to the successful implementation of Agenda 21."

One of the proposed objectives is "to increase the proportion of women decision makers, planners, technical advisers, managers and extension workers in environment and development fields."

It is also emphasized that all UIN bodies involved in the implementation of Agenda 21 "should ensure that gender considerations are fully integrated into all the policies, programmes and activities".

Further Information

Ms. Marie-Louise Henriksson
Project Leader
Tel + 46 60 191398
Fax + 46 60 128191
marie.louise.henriksson@sundsvall.se

UBC WOMEN'S NETWORK
Hjördis Höglund
Tel/Fax: +46 60 122241
hjordis.hoglund@ebox.tninet.se
Fredsgatan 24 C
852 35 Sundsvall
Sweden

How to Raise Environmental Awareness?

SPA Baltic Sea Project

By Tanja Tuulinen

A lot of data is available on the state of the Baltic Sea. There is also considerable will to save the sea. However, improvements in the environmental state of the sea are taking place too slowly. It seems that all the information is not being used efficiently. Not enough people want to - or can - take the environment into consideration in their everyday life. What may be done to change this?

We do things on the basis of our motivation and ability, knowledge and prevailing conditions. In other words, we do what we want and what we can do. Environmental awareness is one of the most important factors that regulate the environmental friendliness of our way of life. If you are highly motivated to do something for better environment, and if you know how to do the right things, you enjoy a high environmental awareness. If the community where you live offers you the possibilities to act in an environmentally friendly manner, you do so.

Working with Different People in Different Countries

Fourteen countries belong to the Baltic Sea catchment area, which has about 85 million inhabitants. They have different backgrounds due to the cultural, social and economical differences between the countries concerned. Of course, people do not form a homogeneous group within a single country either: the life of uni-

versity professors, farmers and journalists is not similar! Differences must be taken into account when distributing environmental information. Furthermore, information really should be made available to all groups. All of us have an impact on the state of the sea.

Despite the differences, there are plenty of good ideas and work to be shared. People working on different fields in dif-



ferent countries can indeed learn a lot from each other. At its best, co-operation facilitates the running of big projects in order to really reach the goals. A precondition for success is that the partners know the differences and similarities between each other.

The SPA-Project

The Finnish Environment Institute (FEI) and HELCOM are carrying through a project called "Strategic Guidelines for Improving Public Awareness and Environmental Education in the Baltic Sea area", briefly "The SPA Baltic Sea project". The objective of the project is an improved public awareness on environmental issues and, in the end, a cleaner Baltic Sea. These goals are being applied through collecting ideas about effective ways of distributing environmental information and through making concrete conclusions on the basis of these views.

The collected ideas and opinions will be analysed and combined. As a result, there will be a selection of useful hints for any organisation that desires to improve the Baltic Sea state through raising environmental awareness in the area. The guidelines will be useful in starting international co-operation and in making it more efficient. In addition, they might be re-

ferred to when the European Union makes decisions on funding new projects.

Everybody is an expert

A large part of the ideas are collected through a questionnaire. It has been sent to a group of key persons from various fields of work in each country of the Baltic Sea catchment area. These people help to create a picture of the status of environmental issues in their own field of work. The picture is further elaborated in an international workshop in October-November 1998.

Because receiving and distributing information is more or less a part of everybody's life, all of us are experts in these issues. Who could know

the current situation better than the one who works every day in the field or lives in the country in question? In the SPA Baltic Sea project, everybody has a chance to express his/her views. The questionnaire can be answered on the internet: <http://www.vyh.fi/fei/intercoop/spa/question.htm>. If you like, you can also order the questions by fax, mail or e-mail.

The results, i.e., the strategic guidelines, will be published in summer 1999. They can be freely used by any actor who needs ideas and advice in distributing environmental information. If more people around the Baltic Sea had a higher environmental awareness, saving the sea would proceed faster and perhaps more easily. Let's help each other in this task!

Further Information

Mr. Pekka Harju-Autti
Tel: +358 9 4030 0670
Fax: +358 9 4030 0690
Email: pekka-harju-autti@vyh.fi

Ms. Marjut Partanen-Hertell
Tel: +358 9 4030 0671
Fax: 358 9 4030 0690
Email: marjut.hertell@vyh.fi

MEA - A Tool for Local Agenda 21 Work?

By Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen

There are several benefits for municipalities conducting MEA. It offers a remarkable contribution in systemizing the environmental work conducted in the municipality. After having conducted an environmental auditing, the decision makers will have clear information on the state of the environmental legislation, the responsibilities of different municipal authorities and a priority-based action plan for environmental investment decisions.

The MEA model is based on a broader concept of environmental management systems. The development of environmental auditing tools leans heavily on the private sector's interest in evaluating cost efficiency and to creating a consistent quality management system with specific quality standards. The MEA model is constructed in accordance with the guidelines of British environmental management standard BS 7750, which developed into the ISO 14001 standard launched in 1996, and on the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme for local government developed in the United Kingdom (HMSO 1993).

EU and International Standards

The MEA model owes a great deal also to the Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), developed by the European Union in 1993 in order to harmonize existing practices and to offer an environmental management tool to EU memberstates (Council Regulation No 1836/93). The background to international environmental standards is political. EMAS is connected to European Union's action programme on sustainable development, and it is an instrument to fulfill environmental concerns of the Maastricht treaty.

Businesses or municipalities carrying out EMAS - in the case of UBC member cities MEA models - are one step further in fulfilling key EU environmental directives in countries pursuing EU membership in the future. As private and public sector environmental concerns and functions are very different from each other, the MEA model created by the UBC tries to offer a good basic environmental management tool for the use of its member cities.

After having conducted a MEA, municipal environmental authorities have compatible skills in implementing the MEA model elsewhere in the region. They are also equipped with the organisational know-how to work in an international project. They will have sufficient technical vocabulary and working experience on environmental management systems. This is a great advantage in future involvement in international co-operation.

What is done during a MEA?

After the municipal authorities have committed themselves to performing the MEA there will be an audit planning where an independent and impartial auditing team is put together in order to start the auditing work. In the first step, all those to be involved in the auditing and collection of the data have to be well acquainted with the principles and procedures of MEA. The specific targets and objectives of the auditing have to be determined.

The concrete auditing work consists mainly of collecting and analysing data about the city's environmental state, performance and legislation. After having analysed the data, the auditing group will write an audit report with results and proposals for improvements. Local authorities are expected to make an environmental strategy including investment plans to reduce the most urgent environmental risks found during auditing.

How does MEA support Local Agenda 21 work ?

The MEA model offers municipal authorities and political decision-makers a tool to ensure the citizens of their ability to react to changing environmental threats. The MEA model in itself includes assessment of the citizens awareness of environmental questions and evaluates the

information flow between local authorities, NGO's and private citizens. Raising awareness on environmental matters is best done by offering the citizens adequate information about the urban environment and the municipalities' activities to ameliorate the current situation. If the city has conducted MEA and drawn together an environmental policy, it ensures at the same time that its inhabitants will have reliable information about their own environment.

Participation for the Future

One of the most important dimensions of the Agenda 21 process is that it is a programme of action for sustainable development worldwide. It focuses in achieving a higher quality of life for all people, without endangering the future of the generations to come. It also stresses the active involvement of all concerned citizens to participate in decision-making processes in reference to environmental issues. The Agenda 21 work should be a forum of active citizens, where people who are concerned about the environment can work together in pursuing lifestyles and practises in accordance with the principles of sustainability. The local authorities' role in forwarding these practices is to ensure a long-term strategic environmental action plan in which concerns and wishes of citizens are represented.

The MEA model offers the Baltic municipalities a ready-made environmental auditing system that contributes, in a holistic way, to the improvement of both the current environmental state of the municipality and its environmental planning. It also strengthens the municipalities' role as a future part of the European Union network in regional co-operation, as well as part of the worldwide strive towards sustainable development.

The UBC Commission on Environment carried out the MEA-project in 1996-1997. During the pilot project the model was developed, and the first MEA was carried out in the City of Tallinn. The next phase is to start new audits in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Those interested in further information are welcomed to contact the Commission on Environment.

LA 21 in Kaunas

By Laima Galkute

Principles of sustainable development and the global Agenda 21 were adopted on the governmental level in the Lithuanian Environmental Policy in 1996. They set a new challenge for the municipalities. Inter-sectoral action plans should be devised in accordance with local conditions, and these plans cannot just simply concentrate on environmental protection.

Kaunas - starting last year - was the first municipality to begin the Local Agenda 21 process. A working group consisting of municipal administrators, representatives of the Healthy City Institute and NGOs, scientists and other experts was established. A remarkable step in the work will be the PHARE corresponding project in co-operation with the Municipality of Tampere, Finland. The project agreement was signed in June this year.

The intention with the PHARE-project is to further develop the municipal environmental policy in conformity with Baltic 21. Environmental issues are to be integrated into all sectors, and a cross-sectoral "Cupertino" is to be achieved. Promoting environmentally friendly lifestyles and encouraging public participation are important goals, as well as raising environmental awareness. The new policy has to gain active support from the citizens. Co-operation in the project is expected to stimulate the process and provide new concepts.

The other goals of the Project include, e.g., assessment of the correspondence of the environmental policy with national and EU legislation and international agreements, evaluation of the environmental management system, assessment of social planning and the state of public health, investigation of value identity to promote community development and PR, training and development of an integrated city environmental management system.

The LA 21 work of Kaunas will also act as a good example for other municipalities. The transfer of know-how from EU member countries is an important step in the integration process.

Further Information:

Ms. Laima Galkute
Fax: +370 7 206 724
Email: laima@kaunas.sav.lt

Rostock for Co-operation

By Dr. Dagmar Koziolk

The Hanseatic Town of Rostock - one of the first member cities of the UBC - is looking for UBC partners to cooperate with the city in municipal environmental protection. Rostock passed a resolution to establish a local Agenda 21 already back in 1995. Recently, there have been discussions about the main guidelines for sustainable community development.

On the first of May, 1998, an agenda bureau was founded to co-ordinate and organize the activities. The environmental department is going to contribute to the agenda work in the fields of climate protection, the use of energy (economy, district heating, renewable energy) and Municipal Environmental Audit (MEA).

Rostock aims at building up a MEA-system. Practical experience in using this new environmental tool is recently being collected in the field of municipal supply. Referring to the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) of the EU, some selected materials and technical devices were checked in their environmental impact assessment. Based on these facts, targets for the environmental quality shall be determined and a controlling system shall be created. Our aim is to introduce the MEA in schools and selected city departments as an example. That's why we were especially interested in the demonstration project respective to Tallin and Turku.

Noise is an omnipresent environmental problem. Rostock has a complete data collection of the emissions of noise and also an examination of the immissions. A noise reduction plan is being developed and special concepts for bicycle traffic and public transport are planned.

The drinking water supply for the region of Rostock is ensured by taking the wa-

ter directly from the river Warnow. Problems of water quality, drinking water protection and the reliability of water supply are resulting. The possibilities to bring groundwater from the far environs of Rostock have been investigated recently. An additional problem is protection against floods.

Since 1991, over 3,500 suspicious land-sites have been registered in Rostock. About 300 contaminated areas were investigated and a risk assessment was carried out. 60 of them were cleaned up, but some higher contaminated sites still require remediation. Great risks were assessed near the drinking water production.

The environmental advice centre offers advice to citizens and especially to children and young persons. This centre is offering information brochures and folders, organising conferences, training and discussions, and coordinating projects and other environmental actions. The main targets for advice are traffic, waste, children and the environment as well as the preservation of natural beauty and wild life.

The Port of Rostock and its related industries are the highest industrial concentration within the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern area. The planned expansion of the seaport is connected with numerous environmental problems. A municipal environmental impact assessment was carried out, which presented essential conflicts between harbour development and environment. The detailed investigations made the prognosis of negative effects on air quality and noise level, and presented recommendations.

The Environmental Bureau of Rostock welcomes all those interested in cooperation in the above fields to make contact! The first municipal environmental report of Rostock, which is available free of charge, contains more detailed information.

Further Information:

Dr. Dagmar Koziolk
Amt für Umweltschutz
Kopernikusstraße 17a
18057 Rostock, Deutschland
Tel.: +49 381 4562871
Fax: +49 381 4562765



Local Agenda 21 in Sopot

- An Effort for both Locals and Tourists

By Ms. Diane Emanuelli

The City of Sopot is located along Gdansk Bay, between the cities of Gdansk and Gdynia. The city boasts approximately 43,000 permanent residents. A considerable number of tourists stay in the city every summer. The conscious municipal action for sustainable development started in 1990, and after the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992 the actions were gathered under the name Local Agenda 21. The special challenge and impetus for the agenda work in Sopot are the interests of tourism

Two documents have been the turning points for Local Agenda 21 efforts in the city. The Strategic Plan by the board of Councillors on April 24, 1996 and the Report on the State of the Natural Environment in Sopot by the Department of Engineering and Environ-

mental Protection in 1996. The Strategic Plan was written by a group of 85 representatives of academic institutions, health service, local tourism and leisure businesses and non-governmental organisations, along with the Governor, the Provincial Autonomous Council, the police and the political parties. Also included in this group were Sopot's Council 13-member Strategy Commission and the Ruling Board of the Town Council. Together they made up the Strategy Preparation Team. One of the visions of the Strategic Plan is: "Sopot is a safe health resort, with high quality tourist, leisure, cultural and conference facilities".

Progress Evaluated

The Report on the State of the Natural Environment in Sopot by the Department of Engineering and Environmental Protection includes information on the state of Sopot's 14 streams running to Gdansk Bay, the changing over of larger coal-fueled heat-only boilers to smaller ones, environmental education, and the state of the forests, parks and green areas throughout the city. Since the conditions have changed during the past two years, the Department plans to complete another report using an environmental audit scheme presented by the Union of the Baltic Cities. The department will use these reports to see how much progress has been made and where more efforts are needed.

The environmental health of Sopot is very important to its residents and also

to the tourists, many of whom come every year. To boost the efforts Sopot has applied the status of a spa/health resort. At present the information needed has been sent to the Ministry in Warsaw for approval. We hope that Sopot will achieve the status of a spa in order to facilitate our efforts with tourism and encourage residents and tourists alike to take care of our environment here in the city as well as in their own towns.

Raising Awareness

As part of Sopot's efforts to improve the awareness in the community about environmental protection many committees and organisations have been formed. The leading committee is the society called Sopot for the Environment. Some other examples are Ecotour, Phare and Dialog. These groups combine citizens and members of the city administration in efforts towards environmental education for all age groups and other activities in Sopot. They want to teach the young people how to take care of the environment now, so they will continue to take care of it as they grow and then teach their own children to do the same.

Sopot's efforts to keep the public aware of the environment around them can also be seen in the annual Earth Day and Clean Up the World Day. Starting with the strategic plan and continuing with the efforts stemming from that plan, Sopot is constantly working towards the goals set up in our Local Agenda 21 for the years 2001 and 2012. As each goal is reached, many more are formed and work on these starts. Our city realizes that even if the Local Agenda 21 may have ending dates for achieving goals, there is no ending date for the efforts geared towards protecting the Earth.

The writer, Ms. Diane Emanuelli, works at the Department of Engineering and Environmental Protection at Sopot City Hall.

Green Guides in Aarhus

- An Local Agenda 21 Project

By Mr. Ole Skou Rasmussen

During the recent years a lot has been done to secure sustainable development in the Danish cities. Research has been undertaken and many new interesting pilot-projects invented. In order to guarantee that research and development results lead to sustainable development, it is an absolute necessity that citizens are really involved. Getting a larger part of the population to act in a more environmentally friendly way was the reason "green guides" were started in 1996.

The direction of development can really be altered only when the daily life of individual households is changed. Every single citizen must acquire a sense of responsibility for his or her town, environment and natural resources. It is a difficult task which does not succeed overnight. Patience is required and it is necessary to look for new methods of addressing the problems. Based in local communities, the "green guides" aim at reaching population groups that are not readily motivated to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

The Green Guides' Networks

Even though the green guides act in their local communities, they are bound together by a network in order to benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences. Simultaneously, a common education for all green guides has been established. The aim is to have 100 green guides nationwide. The total number of green guides in Denmark at present is 66. Seven green guides work in the vicinity

of Aarhus. The guides are not public employees but rather are employed by cooperative housing societies, house owners' societies, sports clubs and other organisations. This arrangement guarantees local support. Over a three-year period, the state provides 70%, while the Municipality of Aarhus provides the remaining 30% of the salaries of the seven guides. A prerequisite for achieving public support is that a guidance council for each green guide is formed. The guidance council provides a local network for the guide. It consists of representatives of local societies and institutions. The intention is to strengthen the bonds between the guide and the local community.

Working Areas

The size of a local community for a green guide varies. The smallest local community has 3000 inhabitants while the largest has about 55 000 inhabitants. Three of the green guides are located in the centre of the city while the remaining four work in suburban settlements. The areas of work are defined by the local community. A close dialogue between the inhabitants and the green guide is thereby secured. The local community for each guide is clearly defined, both geographically and socially.

The initiative to establish a green guide function comes from societies with interest for promoting green development in the local community. In Aarhus, the initiatives have come from a group of home-owner societies, a cooperative housing society, an educational institution and a society for ecological housing and construction.

Local Projects

Green guides have undertaken several projects in their local communities. They have established a car-sharing arrangement for the inhabitants of central Aarhus, organised campaigns to save water, heat and electricity in the households, given free advice on accommodation, energy and material checks and resource consumption, participated in shows and fairs and organised practical environmental courses, etc. All green guides edit a

letterbox once a week in a local newspaper.

Several of the projects have been undertaken in cooperation with the Municipality of Aarhus. The green guides have proven that they are better than the traditional municipal administration in motivating the inhabitants of the local communities. An example is a major municipal campaign against the use of pesticides, which received valuable help from the green guides. The green guides, for example, carried out demonstrations of gas-burners as an alternative to pesticides on the local squares, and provided good advice to interested inhabitants.

Co-operation Brings Results

The starting point of the cooperation between the green guides and the municipality are single projects. It is an asset that the guides have a sound local network, so that the problems can get a good local evaluation. The guides are able to secure that the communication between the inhabitants and the municipality develops and improves. At the same time, the guides can ensure that focus is put on the problems that are important to the individual local community. The projects of the green guides show that the differences between the local communities must be taken into consideration when major plans and initiatives are initiated by the municipality.

The green guides have shown that involvement of the local population sets new demands on local authorities. Creating an administration which meets local needs requires new forms of work. Even though it is still too early to see the result of the green guides' work, my opinion is that they can contribute to the development of these new forms of cooperation. Changing peoples' behaviour through changing their attitudes takes time. An overall evaluation of the green guide arrangement will be undertaken in the year 2000.

The writer, Mr Ole Skou Rasmussen, works as a planning executive at the Municipality of Aarhus

Lahti and St. Petersburg Co-operating for LA 21

By Päivi Saarnia

The Cities of Lahti, Finland, and St. Petersburg as well as other municipalities and authorities in the Leningrad Region, are carrying out extensive co-operation in the field of Local Agenda 21. The co-operation project is divided into two parts: 1) a framework project of coastal protection and integrated coastal zone management and 2) demonstration projects to test the implementation of integrated coastal zone management and planning for a proposed nature reserve, as well as to build Local Agendas 21.

A successful pilot phase has been carried out in the areas of Kingisepp and Primorsky. Today, there are environmental forums with cross-sectoral participation of representatives from different departments of the administrations as well as educational institutes in both areas. Many local authorities and NGOs are familiarised with LA21 ideas and have agreed to participate in the process.

The Russian partners for this project are the Ministry for Environment of the Russian Federation (co-ordinator), the Ministry for the Environment of the region of Leningrad, the Department of Environmental Protection of the City of St. Petersburg, the Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology of St. Petersburg, two district administrations, St. Petersburg Naturalists' Society, the Centre for Advanced Professional Education and other research institutions.

The City of Lahti is assisting in co-ordination. Green Triangle Finland acts as a Local Agenda 21 consultant. Western financiers of the project are the city of Lahti, the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, European Union for Coastal Conservation (EUCC) and the City of Hamburg. Approximately 50% of the funding comes from the European Commission Life Programme.

Further Information

Päivi Saarnia
Green Triangle Finland
Niemenkatu 73
FIN- 15140 LAHTI



EIB Environmental Financing

By Tiina Haapamäki

The European Investment Bank has announced a loan of ECU 51 million to the municipality of Florence for improvements to the urban environment. The funds are to be used for cultural heritage, urban transport and urban renewal schemes.

A loan of ECU 226 million has been made available to the Banque Nationale de Paris. This loan is to be used for funding smaller scale industrial and service sector ventures plus environmental protection and energy schemes, both in France and other EU countries.

EIB has also announced further long-term finance amounting to ECU 123 million - to the Aquafin company, which is responsible for the managing of waste-water treatment facilities in Flanders. The regional water management programme, serving a population of 5.7 million, encompasses construction and modernisation of water facilities throughout Flanders. It is expected to have a positive effect on the water quality in the North Sea.

ECU 30 million will be used by on-lending via Czech banks for financing smaller scale infrastructure in the Czech Republic. The goals are to promote energy saving, environmental protection and tourism.

What is EIB?

The European Investment Bank was created in 1958 as an autonomous body set up to finance capital investment furthering European integration. As the European Union's financing institution, it is to contribute to integration, balanced development, and the economic and social cohesion of the member states. Outside the Union it implements the financial components of agreements concluded under European development aid and co-operation policies.

Further information can be obtained in the internet at: <http://www.eib.org>.

Promoting Biodiversity in Cities

By Dr. Timo Vuorisalo

Ever since the signing of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, biodiversity management has been in the spotlight of international environmental concern. Maybe the most profound change brought about by the Rio Convention is the idea that biological diversity should be protected everywhere, not only in conservation areas.

Urban environments are expanding rapidly, especially in the developing countries. For many local species of animals and plants, urban expansion is a matter of life or death. Protection of urban biodiversity is not only important for the species threatened by urban expansion, but also for the people living in cities. City parks and other areas supporting urban biodiversity are vitally important for recreational purposes.

Perhaps surprisingly, biodiversity seems to abound in many urban habitats. Under northern European conditions, the highest diversity of species is usually found in suburban gardens, cemeteries, old industrial and storage areas, as well as forest margins surrounded by built-up areas.

The successful management of biodiversity in cities requires both a good knowledge of local biodiversity 'hot spots' and well-planned management practices. City administrators can benefit a lot from the contribution of local bird-watchers or amateur naturalists in collecting information about the most valuable areas for conservation.

Many Baltic cities are well known for their efforts to promote biodiversity in urban areas. For example, the city of Kaunas in Lithuania has established three reserves to protect bats within its city limits.

The author would be very interested to receive detailed information of all currently on-going biodiversity projects in the Baltic cities. Prospects for cooperation in this field are good.

Further Information

Dr. Timo Vuorisalo
Department of Biology
University of Turku
FIN-20014 Turku, Finland
email: timovu@utu.fi



Fossil-free Väjö

The City of Väjö in Sweden has a long tradition of environmental work and projects, such as lake restoration and landscape protection. In 1993, the city introduced an environmental policy which has acted as a good base for Local Agenda 21 work.

Between October 1995 and October 1997, the municipality of Väjö and the largest Swedish environmental NGO, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, have undertaken a partnership based on Agenda 21. The aims are to develop strategies and carry out pilot projects which lead to a better environment and long-term sustainable development. The partnership was a success.

During this partnership around 30 projects were implemented in municipal departments and companies and the target of a fossil-fuel-free Väjö was approved. The experiences have shown that information, knowledge and dialogue are the best tools for change. The commitment of leaders is vital for success.

Now the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation has initiated new partnerships with five municipalities - Väjö being one of these. The goal is to decrease the use of fossil fuels by challenging decision-makers and opinion formers.

Further Information:

Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinator
Ms. Sarah Nilsson
sarah.nilsson@kommun.vaxjo.se

Local Agenda 21 in the Municipality of Norrtälje

By Magnus Bergström

The Municipality of Norrtälje is situated about 70 km northeast of Stockholm and it covers about 5 000 sq km. About 75 % of the area consists of the archipelago including open sea and over 10 000 islands and rocky islets. There are 300 lakes and five main streams. Other characteristics of the nature in the municipality are coniferous and deciduous forest on calcareous ground rich in plant species.

The Local Agenda 21-project of Norrtälje was started in 1992. An existing organisation consisting of politicians and municipality administrators was used for the co-ordination of the project. The political parties agreed on the details of the Agenda 21-project during the whole process! A separate budget (about 2 million SEK) was dedicated to the work.

The biggest task was to involve the citizens in the local Agenda 21-process and to channel their opinions so that they would be reflected in the final report. A network of 800 persons representing NGOs, companies and authorities - or just themselves - was created. Most of the people in the network were engaged with their own environmental projects of various kinds.

Furthermore, a special environmental information project was started. 15 persons were educated during a period of 15 weeks in order to prepare them to work with environmental information for one and half years. They visited schools, companies, and other organisations providing information on how to recycle and compost household wastes, why to buy eco-labelled products, etc. Eleven evening lectures were organised with different environmental themes.

In the end, facilitated by about 1000 written commentaries gathered from the citizens, the municipal council made a united decision that the Local Agenda 21 should be the basis for tomorrow's environmental work in the municipality.

The writer, Mr. Magnus Bergström, works as the Project Leader of Local Agenda.21 in the City of Norrtälje.



Sustainable Development cannot be learned only at the desk. Practical training is an essential part of studies.

New Degrees in Sustainable Development

By Ms. Sirpa Halonen

In August 1997 a new Degree Programme in Sustainable Development was introduced at Turku Polytechnic. The programme has become very popular - there have been almost a thousand applicants a year!

The students of sustainable development are educated, e.g., for tasks in education, planning, consultancy & development, industry, local government and different organizations. The studies consisting of several relevant fields last about four years. The intention is to combine knowledge from the natural and human sciences in active learning.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with local, regional and international environmental programmes. In order to facilitate this both national and international co-operation partners are sought. The students can carry out professional practice (on-the-job training) abroad and take part in sustainable development programmes, e.g., in the Baltic Cities. The final work project also offers interesting possibilities of international experience.

Further Information:

Head of the Degree Programme
Ms. Sirpa Halonen
Fax +358 10 5535 423
Email: sirpa.halonen@turkuamk.fi

Conclusions from Archipelago Sea Harbour Environment Project

During the Archipelago Sea Harbour project - involving the cities and harbours of Turku, Mariehamn and Stockholm - there was wide-spread agreement on the need to develop a long-term environmental policy for the different actors in the Archipelago Sea passenger car ferry traffic. "The action programme to reduce environmental effects concerning regular passenger car ferry traffic in Archipelago Sea" tries to fulfill this request. The action programme represents the common view of the participants of the project. It was presented to the public and the press in the final seminar of the project in Mariehamn, Finland, 2 June.

The action programme includes the following goals: improvement of grey and black water management, reduction of Sulphur, Nitrogen and Soot emissions, intensification of waste management, and co-operation between stakeholders. The most important outcome of the project was the consensus of the need for regular co-operation in regard to strengthening environmental management as well as maintaining reliable environmental statistics in respect to the ferry traffic. This co-operation also includes an effort for better communication between the shipping companies, cities and harbours.

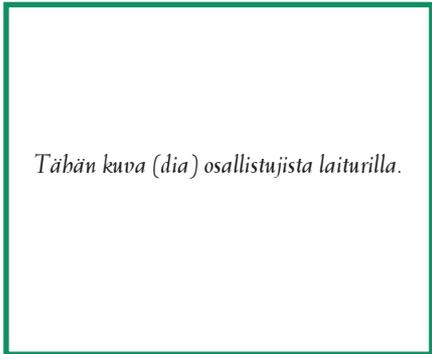
In the Mariehamn seminar, some shipping companies took up the discussion of how the environmental work load should be evenly shared between the harbours and the companies. The tendency of the environmental authorities to force private companies to comply to new environmental regulations was not seen as constructive if it did not also include investments to the harbour infrastructure. The shipping companies want to follow the regulations without losing competitive edge. The dialog is to be continued in follow-up meetings.

The methods and conclusions of the project were considered satisfactory, and there was a feeling that the lessons learnt should be expanded to broader use in the Baltic Sea Region. Those longing for more information can order the leaflet "Archipelago Sea and Sustainable Harbour Policy" from the Secretariat of the UBC Commission on Environment.



More MEAs to be Started

The Commission on Environment has received a positive decision from the Nordic Minister Council towards funding further MEAs. The finance to be obtained is about ECU 45.000 for the first year, with an option of obtaining the same sum for the following year. The overall goal is to carry out at least one MEA in each of the Baltic countries, Russia and Poland. In order to reach this goal, further funding will have to be applied.



The PITF meeting was organised at the Archipelago Sea Research Center on Seili island. Participants also enjoyed an excursion to the National Park of the Archipelago Sea. (Photo: J. Kääriä)

HELCOM PITF in Turku

The Secretariat of the Commission on Environment took part in the arrangements of the twelfth meeting of the HELCOM Programme Implementation Task Force in Turku, 25-26 May. The UBC has the status of an observer organisation in the Task Force.

The meeting took note of the UBC environmental activities, namely MEA and the work on Agenda 21, and many participants were interested in possibilities of co-operation between different organisations. The UBC was represented at the meeting by marine biologist Mr. Juha Kääriä from the Environmental Office of the City of Turku.

Local Agenda 21 within the UBC

A Local Agenda 21 programme for the UBC was discussed for the first time in a meeting in Nacka in the end of February. According to the meeting, it should be strongly pointed out that Local Agenda 21 work must be done in co-operation with all sectors. The on-going strategy process of the UBC might offer some possibilities to promote this holistic point of view.

Four general criteria for Local Agenda 21 work were agreed on at the meeting. The work should (1) include the participation of citizens and (2) deal with their lifestyles. Furthermore, it should (3) involve all sectors of the city and (4) be a democratic process. Agenda 21 is necessarily an ongoing process - the time dimension is not just one or two years but rather generations. Still, it is of course a process to be started right away!

The Commission on Environment Secretariat in Turku is to continue the efforts. The goal was to have an Agenda 21 programme for the UBC ready before the Baltic Local Agenda 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference in Turku on 3 - 5 September. However, due to the demanding role of the secretariate of the commission in the conference arrangements, it has not been possible to reach this goal, and no further meetings have been organised so far. The work is still - of course - to be continued, and the Turku conference will hopefully further promote it. Among other things, the first results of the Local Agenda Survey will be presented at the Conference. Thanks to all persons (and cities) that have contributed to this important survey so far!

EU Funding Decisions Awaited

The Commission on Environment Secretariat has submitted a funding application for Air Info in Baltic Cities project to DG XI in the framework of general measures to inform and increase awareness in regard to the environment. The project would consist of several instances of informing the inhabitants of the Baltic cities in regard to air quality and the factors affecting it. According to the latest information from the DG, the decisions are to be taken in September.

Event Calendar

This calendar is compiled with help from the Regional Calendar published at the BALLERINA homepage:

<http://www.baltic-region.net/meetpoint/calendar.htm>

Listed below are some environmental as well as other seminars, conferences, fairs, etc. that you might find interesting and useful. For more information, please contact the organizers. You are welcome to announce your event in this calendar as well: for this purpose, please contact the UBC Commission on Environment.

September

Baltic Local Agenda 21

Health and Sustainable Cities Conference, Turku 3-5 August



7-11 September, 1998 European Marine Biology Symposium

Wilhelmshaven, Germany
Contact: Gerd Liebezeit, Sabine Dittmann, Ingrid Kröncke, Sibet Riexinger or Heike Scheele
Forschungszentrum TERRAMARE.
Tel: +49- 4421- 9440
Fax: +49- 4421- 944199

7-11 September, 1998
GIS PlaNet '98: International Conference and Exhibition on Geographic Information
Lisbon, Portugal
E-mail: planet@gisplanet.org

8-12 September, 1998
International Conference on Coastal Oceans and Semi-Enclosed Seas: Circulation and Ecology Modelling and Monitoring
Moscow, Russia
Contact: Professor Vladimir Zmuhir
Shirshov Institute of Oceanology
Tel: +7- 095 129 1963
Fax: +7- 095 124 5983

15-17 September, 1998
Fourth International Symposium and Exhibition on Environmental Contamination in Central and Eastern Europe
Warsaw, Poland

Contact: Warsaw'98, Florida State University
Tel: +1- 850 644-7211
Fax: +1- 850 574 6704.
E-mail: warsaw98@mailier.fsu.edu

16-19 September, 1998
Co-operation and Conflict in the Baltic Sea Region. Third Pan-European International Relations Conference
Vienna, Austria

21-24 September, 1998
Second International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference on Conditions and Mechanisms for Sustainable Development
Bialowieza, Poland
Contact: Bialystok Technical University
Department of Environmental and Tourism Management.

23-25 September, 1998
Second BASYS Annual Science Conference
Stockholm, Sweden

October

1-4 October, 1998
Global-Local Interplay in the Baltic Sea Region (Fifth Nordic-Baltic Conference in Regional Science)
Pärnu, Estonia
Contact: Dr. Erik Terk, National organizing committee, Estonian Institute for Future Studies
Tel: +372- 6- 41 17 49
Fax: +372- 6- 41 11 65/ 760
E-mail: eti@eti.online.ee

5-9 October, 1998
International Symposium on Marine Pollution (Monaco)

7-10 October, 1998
Taiga Rescue Network Fourth Conference on Boreal Forests: Integrating Cultural Values in Local and Global Forest Protection
Tartu, Estonia
Contact: Taime Puura, Estonian Green Movement
Tel: +372- 7 422 598
Fax: +372- 7 422 084
E-mail: for-est@erl.tartu.ee

9-10 October, 1998
UBC Board Meeting
Szczecin

10-17 October, 1998
Real Girls and Typical Boys... (The 1998 Baltic Youth Conference)
Borgwedel, Germany (Schleswig-Holstein)
The conference deals with youth gender relationships in the Baltic Sea States, and common basic principles for future practical youth work.
Contact: Regional Youth Council of Schleswig-Holstein (Landesjugendring Schleswig-Holstein e.V., Osteseer-Jugendbüro)
Tel: +49- 431- 82 715 or 87 827
Fax: +49- 431- 85 820
E-mail: youth.sh@t-online.de

November

EU Urban Forum
Vienna

23-28 November, 1998
The Changing Coastal Oceans: From Assessment to Prediction
Rostock, Germany
Contact: Barbara Hentzsch, IOW
Tel: +49- 381 51 97 102
E-mail: barbara.hentzsch@iowarnemuende.de

