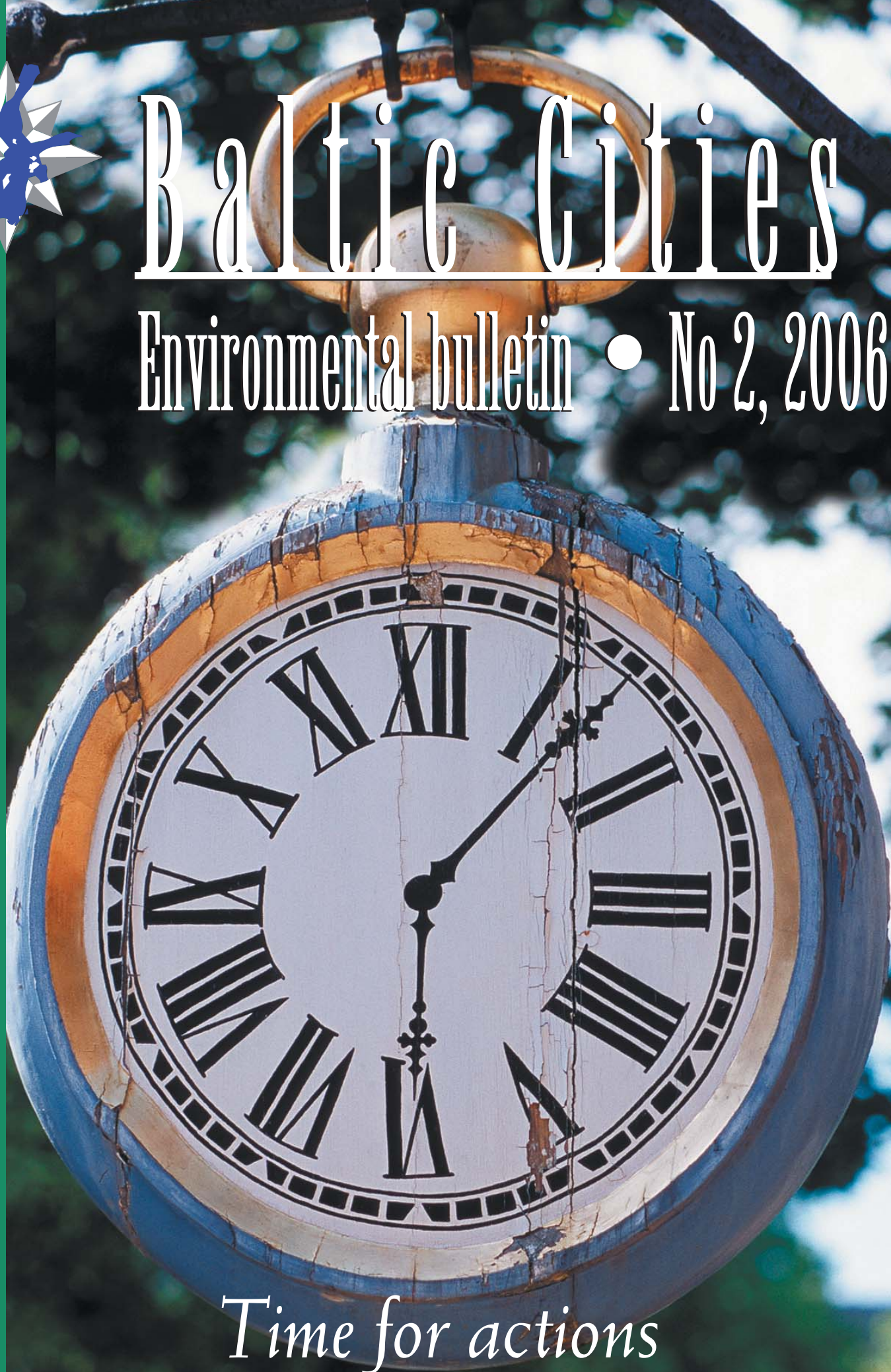




Baltic Cities

Environmental bulletin • No 2, 2006



Time for actions

Aalborg Commitments in cities



New page in actions

Local authorities, cities, towns and municipalities are key actors in the sustainable development process and have answered to the sustainability call throughout the years. The sustainable development process and the common agenda have to a large extent been built on needs and goals made by the local authorities themselves. This process has been a challenging and complex bottom up process. The need for visible results has been strong and still is. In the process the common agenda for the work taking place in cities can easily be found in the principles of the Aalborg Commitments. Since 2004, the Aalborg Commitments have reached several of hundreds of signatories throughout Europe.

Union of the Baltic Cities has a central role in formulating the Aalborg Commitments and strengthening the process round the Aalborg commitments. We stress the importance of working on a common process with common goals with possibilities to benchmark and further develop the work. The Aalborg Commitment does also strengthen the fulfillment of the Union of the Baltic Cities Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004 – 2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. This work is also closely connected to European Union Thematic Strategies on Urban Environment as well as

Sustainable Development. This is one of the reasons for us focusing on the Aalborg Commitment on this bulletin. We hope you find this bulletin useful and that it will support your work.

UBC will continue to support cities in their work with sustainable development and sustainability management. For the moment UBC and many member cities are involved in projects concerning these topics. Together we can proceed and strengthen this work. For all of us it is important to be open and share experiences and knowledge. One important step in this process will take place on Fifth European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in 21-24 March 2007 in Seville, Spain. This continues the process of urban sustainable development. We hope to see you all in Seville!

There have been many changes in the UBC Environment and Agenda21 Secretariat staff during this year. One of them is that Risto Veivo, the former Head of Secretariat is now working for Baltic 21 unit in Stockholm. I would like to thank Risto for his good and strong work and commitment to the UBC. We will take this work further and hope all the best for Risto in his new position.

Björn Grönholm

Head of Secretariat

UBC Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat

UBC member cities (as of September 2006)

Aarhus • Baltijsk • Bergen • Bützow • Cesis • Chojnice • Copenhagen • Elblag • Elva • Espoo • Fredericia • Gävle • Gdansk • Gdynia • Göteborg • Greifswald • Haapsalu • Helsinki • Horsens • Jekabpils • Jelgava • Jöhvi • Jurmala • Järvenpää • Kaliningrad • Kalmar • Karlskrona • Karlstad • Kaunas • Keila • Kemi • Kiel • Klaipeda • Køge • Kolding • Koszalin • Kotka • Kristiansand • Kristianstad • Kronstadt • Kuressaare • Krynica Morska • Kärđla • Lahti • Liepaja • Linköping • Lomonosov • Luleå • Lübeck • Leba • Maardu • Malbork • Malmö • Marehamn • Marijampole • Moletai • Nacka • Narva • Naestved • Norrtälje • NykøbingF. • Nyköping • Oskarshamn • Palanga • Paldiski • Panevezys • Pärnu • Peterhof • Pori • PruszczGdanski • Reda • Rezekne • Riga • Rostock • Robertsfors • Sestroretsk • Siauliai • Sillamäe • Sopot • Stockholm • St.Petersburg • Sundsvall • Szczecin • Tallinn • Tampere • Tartu • Tukums • Turku • Umeå • Vaasa • Viljandi • Vilnius • Visby • Vordingborg • Võru • Västervik • Växjö • Wismar • Örebro

Contents

- 2 NEW PAGE IN ACTIONS**
Editorial by Björn Grönholm

26 News in brief

Björn Grönholm is the new Head of Secretariat

UBC co-operates with the Nordic and Baltic Aalborg Commitments network

Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2006/2007 will be sent out in November

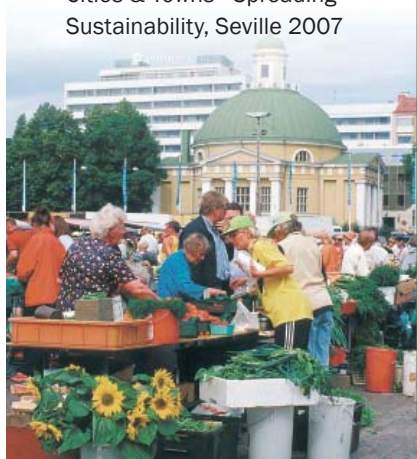
From Local Action to Sustainable Development - theme for The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2007

www.ubc-action21.net is the new UBC Environment & Agenda 21 Secretariat website

Project updates

- 27 Back cover (inside):**
Introduction to the UBC Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat

- 28 Back cover:** 5th European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns - Spreading Sustainability, Seville 2007



Time for actions

Aalborg Commitments in cities



- 4-5 Stop dreaming!**
Practical projects of UBC closely connected to Aalborg Commitments
- 6-7 A1. Governance**
Involving citizens & stakeholders in decision-making is needed, interview of Professor Marko Joas
Malmo aims at increased participation
- 8-9 A2. Local management towards sustainability**
All local government sectors are needed while rethinking management
MUE-25 supports Leeds's environmental management system
- 10-11 A3. Protecting and preserving natural common goods**
Turku ensures high quality standards for water
Improved cycling routes better air quality in Panevezys
- 12-13 A4. Responsible consumption and life style choices**
Finland has a waste problem - case Kouvola Region
St. Petersburg is willing to improve waste management
- 14-15 A5. Planning and design**
Sustainable planning and design make living easy in Hämeenlinna
China needs city networks in urban forestry
- 16-17 A6. Better mobility, less traffic**
Mobility matters in Baltic Sea Region
Bremen seeks cleaner vehicles
- 18-19 A7. Local action for health**
Rostock aims for active and healthy life for all
WHO supports cities on urban health problems
- 20-21 A8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy**
Flourishing trade with a focus on sustainability in Kristiansand
New ecological economy is in the hands of local actors
- 22-23 A9. Social equity and justice**
The work of UBC Gender Equality Network
Awareness rising on domestic violence in Tartu
Gender equality work in Umeå
- 24-25 A10. Local to global**
Stockholm aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
New era in LCRLAC and UBC co-operation

Editorial information

Baltic Cities Environmental bulletin 2/2006 is published by the Union of the Baltic Cities Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat. **Editor-in-Chief:** Stella Aaltonen (stella.aaltonen@ubc.net). Co-editor: Virpi Kaukavuori. Layout: Sari Bowie. Proof-reading: Heidi Tuhkanen. **Editorial board:** Guldbrand Skjönberg, Nacka, Ralf Giercke, Lübeck, Mikko Jokinen, Turku, Carl Nielsen, Aarhus, Zita Tverkute, Panevezys and Paweł Zaboklicki, UBC.

Address: Union of the Baltic Cities Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat, The Old Observatory, Vartiuvuori, FIN-20700 Turku, FINLAND, Tel: +358 2 262 3171, fax: +358 2 262 3425, e-mail: environment@ubc.net **More information:** www.ubc-action21.net, ISSN 1455-0903

Cover Picture: TurkuTouring, **Printing house:** Painoprisma Oy. Printed on 100 % recycled paper.



Practical projects of the UBC closely connect

Stop dreaming!

Global warming and effects of rapid urbanization. Sound familiar? Before it's too late, the noble promises made regarding sustainable development should be implemented.

An inspiring future, a dream built upon the 10 Aalborg commitments, is reachable.

UBC's projects bring colleagues and other stakeholders around the same table to digest the unsustainable trends.

Today, the UBC is the most important information channel of environmental and sustainability issues for the local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region. The five focus areas of the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 - Roadmap for Sustainable Cities are very well in line with the 10 Aalborg Commitments. Presently, the UBC Env-Com is carrying out three large scale projects focusing on sustainable development - in close relation to the Aalborg Commitments.

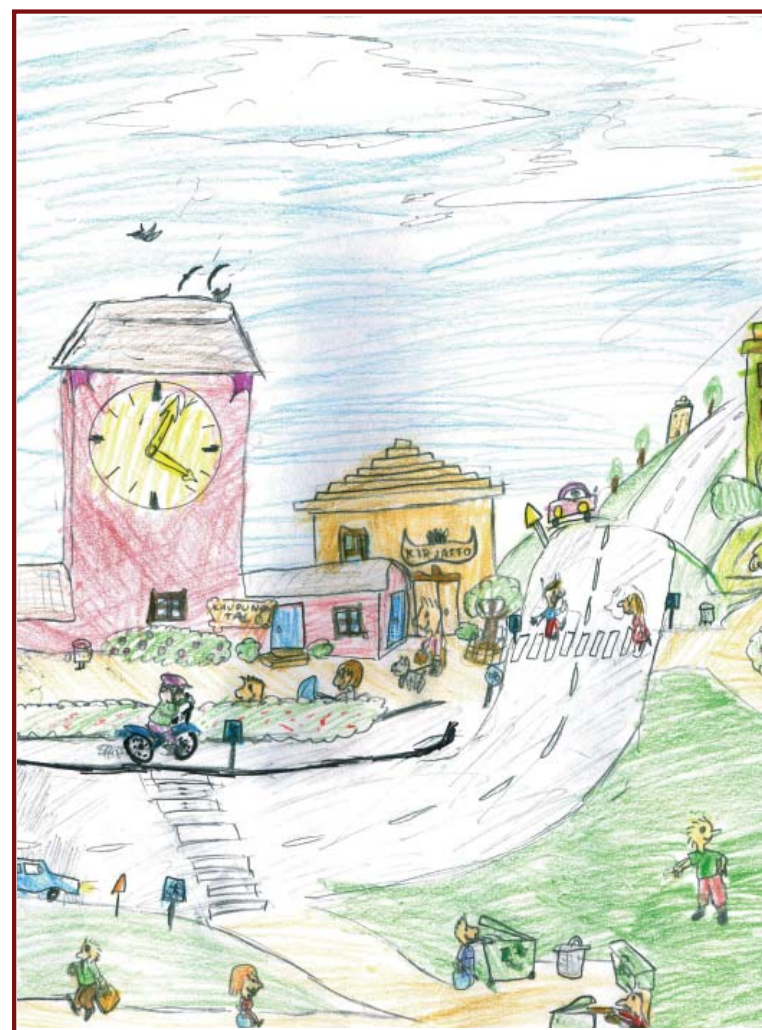
As a city network, the UBC primarily concentrates on to the first two Aalborg Commitments, **Governance** and **Local Management** towards sustainability. This is the case especially with the Managing Urban Europe-25 and SUSTAINMENT - projects. In SUSTAINMENT, the plan is to support the partner cities in creating sustainability management centers, resource units for sustainable development. "SUSTAINMENT focuses on organizational development, even on individual staff members, in arranging more expertise and time for the sustainability process, strengthening the sustainable development work", project coordinator Kyösti Lempa explains.

Instead of resources, *Managing Urban Europe-25* focuses on the sustainable development processes and strategies in the cities, and the respective action plans to be implemented, following 3-5 years cycles with annual revisions of the plans. The project will create a detailed model for the cities to help them fulfill the Aalborg Commitments. The aim is an integrated management system for urban areas, which means all sectors of the cities should be involved in dealing with sustainable development.

The importance of the Aalborg Commitments is acknowledged at the EU level in the renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy (June 2006). UBC is well on track in the European sustainable development process, as both MUE-25 and SUSTAINMENT will encourage UBC cities to sign the Aalborg Commitments. In fact, through MUE-25, new signatories have emerged from among project partner cities.

"For UBC and its member cities, the common focuses and actions make the work with sustainable development stronger and easier to benchmark", Lempa says.

A future city according to Vilma, 9 years. Only a dream?



ted to the Aalborg Commitments

Other areas of Aalborg Commitments also covered

The *BUSTRIP*-project relates directly to the commitment on **Better Mobility, Less Traffic** by preparing and implementing Sustainable Urban Transport Plans in the partner cities. By promoting public transport, walking and cycling, BUSTRIP encourages a reduction in the use of private cars in the cities.

The *Capacity* project currently in development focuses on environmental management in Russian cities by improving the data management for the use of decision makers. Besides management, this project also closely connects to other Aalborg Commitments, such as **Natural Common Goods** and **Responsible Consumption**, through topics dealt with in the training activities.

The **Local to Global** aspect has also been taken into account in the African *LVRLAC- UBC Co-operation project*, and *Asia Pro Eco* project where UBC is one of the partners with local actors.



THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS

1. Governance
2. Local management towards sustainability
3. Protecting and preserving natural common goods
4. Responsible consumption and life style choices
5. Planning and design
6. Better mobility, less traffic
7. Local action for health
8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy
9. Social equity and justice
10. Local to global

The work on sustainable development is supported by other UBC Commissions: Urban planning – **Planning and Design**, Transportation, Health – **Local Action for Health**, Social Affairs. A Gender equity network promotes **Social Equity and Justice** within UBC and its member cities.

The UBC Business Co-operation provides opportunities for networking that support the implementation of the **Vibrant Local Economy**, which emphasizes sustainable development at the local level through promoting environmental friendly technology, green procurement and fair trade.

Practical information and online tools available

The *STATUS*-project, *Sustainability Tools and Targets for the Urban Thematic Strategy* has been developing an online tool for cities to discover the current state of sustainability and target setting, including easily accessible indicator data. Participation in STATUS may also be considered as the first step in the Aalborg Commitments process.

STATUS reflects all areas of the Aalborg Commitments, which makes it a convenient benchmarking tool. Each city can feed information in and compare its own targets to other cities' targets in addition to the current legislation.

The *STATUS* tool will be available for local authorities through the *ACTOR* project, which will create a portal with tools and guidance especially useful for the cities who have signed or are planning to sign the Aalborg Commitments. UBC has been involved in the projects since 2005.

Encouraging cities to begin their Aalborg Commitments processes and to use the tools available is the main task of the UBC. "It is important that the motivation to work on sustainable development will not be destroyed by utopist target setting", project coordinator Kyösti Lempa reminds.

More information:

www.ubc-action21.net
www.sustainment-project.net
www.mue25.net
www.bustrip-project.net
www.localsustainability.eu
www.aalborgplus10.dk
www.localsustainability.sustainable-cities.org.uk

Researcher Marko Joas encourages the cities:

Involve citizens and stakeholders in decision-making

Text and photos: Virpi Kaukavuori

“A decision which is made against the general opinion or against the solid opinion of major interest group, is not a good decision”, political scientist and a research fellow Marko Joas at Åbo Akademi University in Turku starts.

“The need for information has increased, the options have increased and citizens are more aware of these options. This is even a growing trend in decision-making processes.”

Marko Joas thinks citizens and other stakeholders should be involved in sustainable development processes. Voting in local governmental elections is simply not enough. There is relatively long period of time between the elections. Representative system doesn't work efficiently enough in politically sensitive issues such as sustainable development.

Through consultations of citizens, working groups and stakeholder groups around sustainability issues, transparency of the decisions will be increased. “Participation increases the legitimacy and the approval of these decisions. Discussion raises the understanding of complex issues”, Joas says.

In many cases, international and national legislation promote the use of participatory elements. However, the political responsibility of the decisions will in the end remain in the city council. This is an aspect that may worry.

“For the politicians, it is sometimes difficult to accept the fact that decisions actually need support from wider groups of stakeholders. It can be difficult to see whether the

intensive groups behind these issues and own supporters of the politician will be conflicting. But if transparency is already included in the routines and built inside the system, it will work well”, Joas promises.

Problems caused and solved by large groups

Global warming and eutrophication of the sea, for example, are issues caused by a wide group of actors. Therefore, a wide group of stakeholders and citizens should also be involved in solving the problems.



Marko Joas

World is more complex place to live in than a couple of decades ago when primarily the industrial actors were involved in environmental issues and controlled with emission limits. It is in the consideration of the municipalities and cities how to include participatory elements in the decision making. It can be considered case by case. The most important thing is that participation is not forgotten.

“Participatory elements deal with the deficiencies of representative democracy. But this doesn't mean that participatory element would replace traditional system”, Marko Joas says.

WEB

Marko Joas says next step in Baltic Sea region is involving smaller cities in sustainability process? Read more from www.ubc-action21.net



Information flow from decision makers to the public – and other way around – is crucial and a value of good decision-making process as such. Student unions discussing about public transport during BUSTRIP peer review in Turku in August 2006.



Citizens at the "Meeting place Seved" in Malmö may get guidance on contacting authorities and looking for jobs.

Malmö aims at increased participation

Text: Trevor Graham, **Photo:** Daniel Nielson

The City of Malmö has signed the Aalborg Commitments and within the field of "Increased participatory democracy" several interesting ideas are being developed.

In order to bring the decisions closer to the citizens and make it easier to influence the local politicians, in 1996, ten local city district departments were established in the City of Malmö. Their responsibility was primarily education, social welfare and elderly care.

An inquiry into the city's organisation is currently on-going, where one of the main issues is whether the city district departments will be kept on or not. The overall goal is to strengthen the democratic processes in Malmö.

- First, I hope the Aalborg Commitments in Malmö will make us more efficient in finding synergies between different parts of the City's organisation and also make it easier to work outside of our silos. Another important part is to open up even more for increased dialogue and participation with citizens and other stakeholders, says **Trevor Graham**, who coordinates the Aalborg Commitments in the City of Malmö.

Local information office open for citizens

In an area of Malmö called Seved, the city has an open office which is called "The Meeting place Seved". The citizens of Seved can always go there to get information on how to, for example, contact authorities or get guidance on looking for jobs. The meeting place has been very successful and attracts a lot of visitors.

The Environmental Department has run a project where they educated the local project leaders in Seved in democratic methods for involving the rest of the community. It is about increasing participation in the contact with citizens but also letting the weaker voices speak up. Awareness on housing rights issues have also been raised through this process.

- There has been a win-win situation. We from the Environmental Department have reached out with information to the inhabitants and landlords, and on the other hand the inhabitants have increased their knowledge on what standards they have a right to expect, says **Rebecka Eriksson-Russel** at the Environmental Department in Malmö.

More information:

Trevor Graham
Environmental Department, City of Malmö
Tel: +46 40 34 58 96
trevor.graham@malmo.se

Text and photo: Virpi Kaukavuori

Rethinking management

All sectors of local government need to work for sustainability

What do Lahti, Siena, Balatonfüred and Leeds have in common? They are cities from Finland, Italy, Hungary and United Kingdom - all interested in improving their management in the name of sustainability.

Sustainability doesn't fit in to the responsibilities of the environmental sector alone. This is an old fashioned way of thinking and one of the key messages the Managing Urban Europe - 25 project is trying to promote. Instead, sustainability management is a demanding task and involves all sectors of the local government.

"Integration of the sustainability issues into the general management processes of a city is the main target in developing more sustainable European cities", says **Annika Claesson**, the project coordinator for MUE-25 from UBC Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat.

MUE-25 has been running since 2005. It includes 25 partner cities from all over Europe. The city of Lahti is also part of the project and just recently arranged a third training session for the project partners of ten different countries to meet the challenges of sustainability management.

Although the organizational structures of the cities are quite different, the city partners can support each other because the problems of sustainable development are similar.

Pollution of the lake started the process in Lahti

Head of Lahti region Environmental service, **Kari Porra**, reminds that environmental and sustainability management are also key issues in new urban policies of the European Commission. "MUE-25 gives Lahti new ideas and more resources to continue the sustainability management which started here already ten years ago".

In Lahti, the environmental issues were raised because of the pollution of the lake Vesijärvi. "Now that the lake is remarkably in better condition because of actions taken to improve it, we are willing to improve the environment and management even more", Porra says.

"Lahti has worked for sustainability issues since the year 1993 and we are still in the beginning. Although we already have a good system, we need to make it operate even better", says **Timo Permanto**, environmental coordinator and project manager in the City of Lahti.



Timo Permanto, Environmental coordinator and project manager in the city of Lahti, is happy that Lahti has succeeded in promoting environmental thinking. The MUE-25 training was held at the same time as the 10th environmental theme week in Lahti region.

MUE-25 supports Leeds's environmental management

Text and photo: Tom Knowland

Leeds City Council is one of the largest public sector organisations in Europe to be accredited to the Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), a position it has occupied since 2002. The purpose of EMAS is to drive environmental improvement in the organisation.

However following accreditation, there was a concern that EMAS was becoming too focussed on relatively minor environmental issues. There was a concern that the external verifier's limited understanding of Local Authority processes and services meant that they did not identify gaps in indirect aspects relating to Council services and policies. Their experience and competencies tended to be based

on industrial premises so they tended to concentrate on relatively minor direct aspects such as office paper recycling rather than strategic environmental improvement like climate change.

EMAS verifiers rarely audited senior managers and elected councillors to test their understanding or commitment to EMAS. With these concerns in mind, Leeds commissioned a review of its EMAS system which concluded that EMAS needed to be made more strategic by shifting the emphasis from detailed operational issues and legal compliance to strategic improvement of environmental performance on the Council's main priorities set out in the annual Council plan.

At the moment Leeds is participating in the project Managing Urban Europe 25 which tries to develop models and recommendations on how existing management systems can be adapted to the reality of local authorities. The work of Leeds will now concentrate on three key areas. Firstly, departmental legal compliance issues will continue to be addressed through routine internal audits. These will concentrate on departmental housekeeping issues such as waste management in depots, oil storage etc. Secondly, corporate housekeeping issues will be managed in a more coherent manner. This will pick up issues such as office waste management, energy and water management in Council buildings and staff travel.

Finally, the focusing EMAS improvement programmes on the delivery of the environmental component of other corporately managed strategic priorities will add value to the existing corporate performance arrangements by providing assurance that an appropriately wide range of services are providing practical environmental outcomes for the community. This approach will also give practical expression to the Council Core Value of 'Looking After Leeds' by demonstrating that we are actively managing key strategic priorities in a cross departmental manner to improve environmental performance and so leave a legacy for future generations in line with the principles of sustainable development.

More information:

Tom Knowland
Head of Sustainable Development
Leeds City Council
thomas.knowland@leeds.gov.uk



Text: Jamie McGavin, **Photos:** Stock.XCHNG and Minna Nummelin

Water water everywhere but is there a drop to drink

Water is a precious natural resource that has developed into a key focus in the Baltic Sea Region. The city of Turku has taken a number of steps to ensure that water quality will remain at a high standard both for drinking and ecologically.

Water has developed into a key focus in and around the Baltic Region as institutions and governments are becoming more aware of how precious this natural resource is and will be in the future. In Turku, the Aalborg commitments were signed in 2004. Reducing the consumption of water is one of the objectives mentioned in the Sustainable Development Programme of the City of Turku (as approved by the City Council in 29 August 2005). In regards to the 3rd Aalborg commitment and in particular water quality, saving water and water use, the city has engaged and invested in a number of schemes which have helped progress.

Schemes relating to water saving include the installation of water saving taps and toilets in selected day care centers and public buildings. The constant investment in new water pipes by Turku Water Works has ensured a minimal water loss.

Regional co-operation for cleaner water

The city of Turku has also worked towards water protection through regional city co-operation by heavily investing in an artificial groundwater project to replace the current supply. This is located around the esker aquifer which will hold pre-treated river water from the River Kokemäki and supply the city with cleaner fresher water. The previous source was the river Aura which runs through the centre of Turku but as **Minna Nummelin** from the Environmental Protection Office states "it has become an inadequate solution both in quality and quantity".



Minna Nummelin

Other regional co-operations include the construction of the new Kakolanmäki waste water treatment plant, which will be up and running in 2008. It's designed for effective denitrification and will reduce the regions total wastewater entering the sea; this will reduce the occurrences of eutrophication in the Archipelago.



Water expertise within the city

The Environmental Protection Office of Turku holds particular expertise in waste water management in remote regions as well as lake restoration, sludge recycling, ground water analysis and civic activities for water protection.

These areas of expertise will aid the restoration of future problems such as the renewal and rationalization of the wastewater treatment of old real-estates located outside the sewer system, the extension of the sewer system to densely populated remote areas, and finally, the removal and relocation of the contaminated sediments from the bottom of the River Aura and the harbour area. These future tasks will ensure a safe and clean future for the city of Turku and promote good practices within the Baltic region.

For further information on some of the topics covered please visit:

<http://www.turunseudunpuhdistamo.fi/en/index.html>

More information:

Mrs Minna Nummelin

Substitute Environmental Protection Planner, City of Turku
minna.nummelin@turku.fi

Mr Pekka Salminen, Project Planner, City of Turku
pekka.salminen@turku.fi



Text: Zita Tverkute, **Photos:** City of Panevezys

Panevezys improves cycling routes for better air quality

The city of Panevezys in Lithuania is suitable for cycling and walking. The city is compact, distances are quite short and there are wide space for cycling. Altogether 98 km of cycle and pedestrians routes connect residential areas with the city center, schools and recreational areas.

Panevezys is now aiming to renovate and further develop the infrastructure of its cycling and pedestrian routes to inspire citizens to use safe, non-polluting, non-motor modes of transport. This will also serve as one way in solving the problem of traffic jams and air quality in the city.

The development of infrastructure of cycle routes simultaneously will satisfy the standards of European Union and will help to involve Panevezys bicycle routes into the European cycle route network, Euro-Velo.

The present Panevezys cycling and pedestrian routes development and renovation are under implementation and work to identify routes sections that must be repaired are continuing. The second project stage of a cycle and pedestrians routes renovation and building, will be accomplished at the end of 2007.

Panevezys was the first city in Lithuania where the traffic-lights for cyclists were introduced. The lights protect cyclists in traffic and help to avoid accidents at busy crosswalks. Under better circumstances, people are more likely to cycle and walk.

"A Day without a car" has become already a tradition in Panevezys. During this annually organised event, the citizens are encouraged to leave their motor vehicles at home and use either public or non-motor mode of transport. Special events are also organised at schools to make cycling more popular.

More information:

Ms Zita Tverkute

Head of Environmental Department Office in Panevezys
aplinka@panevezys.lt



Text: Risto Hamari, **Photo:** City of Turku

A Waste problem

There is a waste problem at the moment in Finland. The national waste strategy is under preparation with the aim to find new solutions for the waste treatment. The EU norms are setting demands that cannot be handled the old fashion way. Neither are they sustainable. In the Kouvola Region, some of these new demands are being faced in new a project called SYTYKE.

SYTYKE comes out of the Kouvola Region's participation in the SUSTAINMENT project. In SUSTAINMENT, every participating city has to prepare a presentation of a "Best Practice" or an important sustainable management activity of a cross - sectoral nature. In the Kouvola Region, the activity will be a case study of a new waste treatment plant which has been planned to be built in the city of Kotka. The case study will start with an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and will include public participation and transparency in the decision-making process. The final results will be disseminated to a wider UBC audience.

This case study is currently very relevant for Finland because there is a lot of interest to build incineration plants to incinerate municipal and selected other waste for energy generation all around Finland. As such plants require large amounts of waste, the Kotka plant would collect waste for fuel from the whole south-eastern region of Finland. However, according to the waste hierarchy in Finnish law, it is preferable to first reduce the amount of waste, then to recycle all the possible fractions, and only as a last resort can the remaining suitable fractions be incinerated.

Lacking national strategies cause confusion

The lack of a national waste management strategy is also reflected in the activities at the regional and local level. The county of Kymenlaakso, which includes the two major regions of Kouvola and Kotka, also lacks a regional strategy for waste treatment. The civil servants within the waste sector argue that it is important to wait for the national decisions. However, the lack of decision making on the regional level has led to an undesired situation. For example, at the moment, there are four or five enterprises with permission to handle harmful and hazardous waste, which is too many for a small county like Kymenlaakso.

Without a well defined waste strategy, decisions do not have a solid base. Two years ago the households were urged to separate the combustible waste. These were collected and gathered at a centralised waste treatment enterprise and optically separated for burning. A year ago, it was decided to stop collecting combustible waste and instead start to collect biowaste. For customers this meant an obligation to build new infrastructure for separate biowaste collection.

The swift changes have also had a negative psychological effect on people. Compared to the previous years, they are

no longer so eager to separate their waste: "The instructions will be changed anyway" is a common argument.

An incinerator to reduce waste

The latest problem, at least for those who are fighting for a sustainable future in Kymenlaakso, is the plan to build a new incinerator. The Finnish law describes the waste hierarchy as follows: 1) to reduce the amount of waste, 2) to recycle as much as possibly, 3) to reuse the waste for energy and 4) to take the rest to well-managed landfills.

Reduction of waste is on top of the waste hierarchy. However, building an incinerator works against this goal because the only economical way to drive the plant is to receive enough waste fuel from the vicinity of the plant for the coming decades. Also, it is not commonly understood that incineration does result in a significant amount of ash which is usually landfilled. The NGO's have especially fought against this "easy" solution of solving the waste problem.

Beacause of the lack of national or regional waste strategies, there is at the moment a distinct interest in these combustion plants in Finland. By now about 20 plants have been suggested to be built all over the country. The Finnish Association for Nature Protection has petitioned against the permissions for building the combustion plants. Some of these complaints are under consideration. So far, only one decision has been made and it was for the combustion plant in Kymenlaakso, which came out only after an appeal against the permission to build. The Vaasa Court of Appeal made some restrictions and decided that only source selected waste can be used as fuel for this plant.

Currently, all the other decisions are still under careful consideration. The nature protection associations as well as some of the researchers still argue that we should put more efforts into reducing the amount of waste. Otherwise, there will not be a sustainable future for us.

In order to get the work for the Kymenlaakso regional waste strategy started, the committee for the environmental politics has asked for renewal of the old strategy. All of those interested are asked to join to discuss the problems related to waste treatment.

More information:

Risto Hamari
risto.hamari@pp1.inet.fi

Improvement of the system of collection, transportation and utilization of solid domestic waste in St. Petersburg

Will to make a progress in waste management

Text: George Enkelinen

Photo: Bernt Matthes

In 2005, new legislation has increased the communal tariff taken from the population by 2.5 times for garbage removal. However, the situation with collection and waste recycling has not improved.

However, some actions have been taken. For the first time a computer program containing an automated calculation for the transmission of data from the district computer to the Committee on Improvements computer has been developed for waste management. A pipe line for sorting solid household wastes has been installed in one of the rubbish stations, which makes it possible to substantially reduce the volume of withdrawals, which are then directed to recycling. There have also been a number of places where waste collection is conducted into attractive and convenient containers, however at present there are only a few installed. An improvement in the control of the automobile carriers has been carried out, by the installation of a navigation System.

Project on united waste policy

Within the framework of the International Project TACIS SYNERGY "The United Waste Policy in Saint Petersburg and Leningrad Region" was carried out during from 2001 up to 2006. Unfortunately, in the sphere of control of solid household waste there are no essential results. There is still a lack of coordination of actions between some separate committees. Preparatory actions for the estimation of building a Modular Waste Recycling Plant are now being conducted. It has been decided that the reconstruction of existing waste recycling plants to increase their power output will not be carried out.

In order to change the situation for even better, a number of tasks are proposed for future: 1) conduct the reconstruction of plants for present dumps; 2) build up new plants for complex waste recycling; 3) introduce new equipment for the selective collection of waste disposal; 4) change the structure of waste management in the Administration of Saint Petersburg; and 5) organize work with the population in order to increase literacy and conscious attitude towards solving the problems of preservation of the environment pollution through waste management.



In St. Petersburg, a pipe line for sorting solid household wastes has been installed in one of the rubbish stations, which makes it possible to substantially reduce the volume of withdrawals, which are then directed to recycling.

Russia is a big part of the Baltic Region. The population only in Saint Petersburg and Leningrad Region is 6 million persons. Unfortunately, the lack of information about international events and projects in the Baltic Sea Region prevents Russian cities joining in the international projects as much as they would like to. At the moment, none of the Russian cities have signed the Aalborg Commitments.

- Of course we are very interested in participation in the international projects. It is not a secret that still we do not have such good experience as European countries have and we would like to learn something and take advantage from the best practices. Unfortunately sometimes we are not informed to participate in this or that event. For instance up to this day I absolutely have no information about Aalborg Commitments and it is a pity that Russian cities have not yet signed in, told **Sergey Naumenko** - the chief of the Department for contacts with the Union of Independent States (SNG).



Easy living in Hämeenlinna

Text: Anna-Mari Ahonen & Marja Kokko

Photo: Elina & Anssi Ahonen

Hämeenlinna signed the Aalborg Commitments in June 2004 at the 4th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns. After signing, the City of Hämeenlinna started to work on the baseline review required by the Commitments. The baseline review was finished in September 2006 as part of the City's Sustainability Report and contains a description of the present situation, the existing Commitments and the current challenges in implementing them.

Hämeenlinna's sustainable development is based on the strategy approved by the city council in 2003. The city understands sustainable development as enduring vitality, which consists of environmental protection, a balanced economy and especially active, participating citizens.

Hämeenlinna's values also play a big role in the city's land-use strategy, in which new tools and ways of operating have been developed to support land-use planning. The work has been dynamic, and its goal is the comprehensive development of the City of Hämeenlinna. As one result of the work on the land-use strategy, a strategy document was completed in 2005. This document, approved by the city council, is a new kind of flexible planning tool for general planning level extending until 2030.

The starting point of work on the strategy was the city's need to maintain the sustainability of land-use as the population continues to grow steadily. The current large-scale construction projects were also taken into consideration in the work on the strategy. The strategy continues through the Living City project, which aims to create a high-quality residential and living environment which will boost the city's competitiveness due to sustainable development.

Managed and planned sustainable development

The work on the strategy for the structure of the City includes all the planning goals mentioned in the Aalborg

Commitments: improvement of brownfield sites, prevention of the fragmentation of the town structure, improvement of residential areas in planning urban centres, and maintaining an advanced construction culture.

During the development of the land-use strategy, Hämeenlinna's new urban model was designed to be compact, and in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The benefits of a compact urban structure include a reduced need for car traffic, which leads to decreased emissions and energy use, as well as improved possibilities for public transportation and access to services. The use of extensive brownfield sites forms a key sub-area of the strategy.

WEB

Ahonen and Kokko tell what are the practical measure to promote sustainability and what are there new tools for sustainable development?

Read more from www.ubc-action21.net

More information:

Anna-Mari Ahonen, Project Architect
anna-mari.ahonen@hameenlinna.fi

Marja Kokko, Project Manager
marja.kokko@hameenlinna.fi

China needs city networks in urban forestry

Text: Virpi Kaukavuori

Photos: Sulev Nömmann

China urgently needs forests and green areas in cities and suburbs. This was one of the key messages when Chinese Urban forestry experts were on a study tour in the Baltic Sea region countries. The visit was part of the Asia Eco Pro Programme.

In China, the urbanization is rapid. It has been estimated that by the year 2020 almost half of the population of China will live in urban areas. It's a challenge to the local authorities, especially in the smaller cities which have the potential to grow.

- In big cities like Beijing or Shanghai the green areas are relatively high compared to smaller cities where the urban forestry hasn't been successfully incorporated in urban master planning yet. We need city networks and major ideas. One of our aims is to build a network around urban forestry, says **Jiang Jisheng**, Deputy Director General of State Forestry Administration P.R. China, Department of Policy and Legislation.



Jiang Jisheng

UBC involved in the Asia Eco Pro Programme

- We will try to assist our Chinese partners with the capacity building in urban management by means of sharing with them experiences of UBC member cities. This is also an opportunity for the UBC to learn about China, and find future opportunities for co-operation, said Sulev Nömmann who accompanied the Chinese delegation during the study tour in Finland, Estonia and Denmark in June 2006.

The Asia Eco Pro Programme aims to improve the sustainability of policy formulation and implementation in Chinese forest management. In addition to the UBC Environmental Commission, the partners of the project are University of Turku, Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), Institute on Forestry Policy and Information (CAF-RIFBI), Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, Estonian School Forest Society (ESFS), Division of Policy and Legislation of the State Forestry Administration (SFA-DLP) and Hangzhou Forestry and Water Resources Bureau (HZFWRB).

More information:

Sulev Nömmann
sulev.nommann@ubc.net



The versatile scenery in Hangzhou shows some of the challenges of urban forestation in China.

Text: Marcin Wołek

Mobility matters in the Baltic Sea Region cities

The Baltic Sea Region is one of the most competitive metaregions in the world and its cities are engines of the global economy. The cities constitute nodes of a business network that is dependant on external and internal accessibility. Increased accessibility results in higher economic attractiveness, but also poses serious challenges to the urban society and the environment.

Mobility matters should thus be discussed with respect to two groups of BSR cities: new EU members together with the Kaliningrad zone, and highly developed Nordic countries together with Germany.

New EU members face the problem of increased usage of private cars which creates high pressure on the transport infrastructure. However, in many cities public transport still holds a major share in the modal split of urban mobility. Vast investments in rolling stock, infrastructure improvements and promotion are needed to sustain it. Parallel to hard measures, a qualitative shift towards the Intelligent Transport Systems, a soft method for building competitive advantage of public transport in the Baltic cities, can be

observed. For example, the pilot project of Gdynia in the BUSTRIP project is proof of that.

The Nordic countries and Germany have cities with well developed transport infrastructure but that are facing complex problems that cannot be solved only by investments. Some of them have achieved great success in introducing alternative transport for example Copenhagen, where the share of bikes in the modal split exceeds 35%.

Other cities, for example Stockholm are introducing innovative and brave solutions like congestion charges. A referendum on the permanent implementation of congestion charges was held in conjunction with the general election in September 2006.

To find out what the main areas of transport activities are in the Baltic cities, the UBC Commission on Transportation has conducted a survey among the UBC member cities in summer 2006. The main purpose was to get information on the transport projects currently being realized in the region. The answers from 16 cities give a positive picture of different projects from reconstruction of transport infrastructure (i.e. Chojnice – Poland, Palanga – Lithuania) to innovative telematic solutions like Teleplay (Turku, Finland), E-ticket system (Klaipeda, Lithuania) or SMILE (Tallin, Estonia).

More information:

Marcin Wołek

Chairman of UBC Commission on Transportation
ubctransport@gdynia.pl



Bremen seeks cleaner vehicles



The mobility patterns in Bremen are comparatively good with a modal-split of about 60 per cent of all trips done by walking, cycling or public transport and only 40 per cent done by car. However, the demographic changes and the dispersion of workplaces are challenging sustainable development in the transport sector.

The increasing freight transport is a further challenge for a harbour city like Bremen. Clean vehicles and improved logistics can ease the impacts. Bremen is promoting clean vehicles and actively cooperating with logistics operators in that field.

Clean modes of transport

DHL / Deutsche Post chose Bremen as one of the pilot cities for operating clean delivery vehicles with the most ambitious European emission standard - EEV. At the same time, the city has been waiting for years to get cleaner trucks of the 12-16 ton class. There is simply no offer by the manufacturers which is undermining local clean air strategies.

The key to attracting more passengers in the public transport system is the extension of the tram system. The opening of new tram lines has brought about a 40 per cent

increase in the amount of passengers compared to the previously used bus service. Another important issue for the passenger traffic is the integration on the regional level. This need has been met through cooperation of the 34 operators providing one ticket and one information system, coordinated schedules and interchanges.

Car-Sharing has replaced 900 private cars

For Bremen, the bike is the ultimate clean vehicle. 23 per cent of all journeys are done by bicycle. If cycling and public transport are not offering a sufficient connection, you can use the "car-on-call" of the Bremen Car-Sharing system. During the summer of 2006, already more than 3.800 users were registered. The most important impact is that about 900 private cars have been replaced by the service of Car-Sharing. This is a way of regaining street-space for the usage of better purposes than parking.

One further reason to support the environmentally modes in passenger and freight transport is the fact that the more a city is independent of the car, the less vulnerable the local economy is concerning the increasing prices of oil.

Bremen, as a harbour city, has always been involved in exchanges with other cities regarding new ideas for freight transport. Following this path, Bremen is actively involved in European projects. The CIVITAS project Vivaldi, the European Car-Sharing project Moses (mobility services for urban sustainability) and the Interreg project MoCuBa ("mobility culture in the Baltic Sea Area") should be explicitly mentioned as examples of a successful European cooperation and exchange in the mobility sector. Bremen is also a partner of the UBC lead project BUSTRIP.



More information:

Michael Glotz-Richter
Free Hanseatic City of Bremen/Ministry for Construction,
Environment and Transport
Senior Project Manager 'Sustainable Mobility'
Tel: +49 421 361 6703
michael.glotz-richter@umwelt.bremen.de

www.mocuba.net
www.moses-europe.org
www.vivaldiproject.org
www.bustrip-project.net

Text: Angelika Baumann, **Photo:** city of Rostock

The 11th Rostock Days on Health and Environment

Active and healthy life for all

In June 2006, more than 150 educational workers, children and seniors gathered in the local leisure centre in order to enjoy the activities planned for them at the 11th Rostock Days on Health and Environment. The Days enabled people to take part in numerous workshops and informative events on physical exercise, healthy alimentation and relaxation as well as project presentations from several kindergartens.

One of the events was the Kindergarten's Health Day which was organised for the first time. The event helped the educational workers to implement the local "Rostock Children's Health Aims". The aim is that not only the health of the children, but also of the educational workers should be strengthened in order to guarantee the development of a healthy environment for everybody. Especially young children should be encouraged to start physical activity and healthy eating already from a young age. Additionally, children should also become acquainted with techniques of relaxation and stress management.

Information showed that a lot has been done by the nurseries and their partners to support the health fostering activities of the educational workers. Also nursery caterers are equally important. Five of them were actually present at the event supplying everyone with a delicious lunch.

Active seniors

This year's motto of the Rostock Days on Health and Environment was "Young and Old Together - For Sustainable Development". Therefore, also seniors received special attention. Many were attracted to the marble hall of the 'Neptun' indoor swimming pool where experts talked about topics concerning food as well as physical and mental fitness. The ladies especially enjoyed the dance that was also organised.

The 11th Rostock Days on Health and Environment, organised by Public Health Department together with the local Youth Office, aimed at contributing to the campaign "Healthy Mecklenburg-Vorpommern". The remarkable public interest showed the high acceptance and appreciation of



the event. Needless to say that none of it would have been possible without the efforts of all involved participants. The event is planned to be organised next in two-years time.

As it is said in the UBC Social Charter, adopted at the VI UBC General Conference in Rostock in 2001 '... the cities confirm to do all they can ... to ensure that all persons ... are free of any fear of the life's great risks such as sickness, ... and to become homeless.' To achieve this goal, one important step for health preservation and healthy living is to create awareness and to inform the citizens in each city by mean of such well accepted activities.

More information:

Dr. Angelika Baumann
Gesundheitsamt der Hansestadt Rostock
Angelika.Baumann@rostock.de



Support for cities on urban health problems

Healthy Cities support Aalborg process World Health Organization (WHO) - Healthy Cities programme, among many other local level networks in Europe support cities working on the Aalborg commitments and -process. The role of Healthy Cities principles is visible especially in "Local Action for Health" -commitment.

WHO Healthy Cities program promotes comprehensive and systematic policy and planning solutions on urban health problems. It engages local governments in health and wellbeing development through a process of political commitment, institutional changes, capacity building, partnership-based plans and concrete actions.

Healthy Cities programme is coordinated by the WHO Regional Office in Europe. The activities have been implemented since 1987. The years 2003-2008 mark the fourth Phase of the movement. The core themes for this phase are: Healthy Urban Planning, Health Impact Assessment, Healthy Ageing and Active Living/ Physical Activity. More information: www.euro.who.int/healthy-cities.

There are 22 WHO Healthy Cities and over 200 cities belong to the National Healthy Cities Networks in the countries around the Baltic Sea. In Europe, over 1200 cities and towns are Healthy Cities. The cities are linked through national, regional and thematic networks, as well as the WHO Healthy Cities network for more advanced cities.

Healthy Cities in Baltic Region

The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association was founded in Turku 1998. Since 2002, the Association has acted as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region. The foundation of the activities is based on the knowledge of Association's member organizations: City of Turku, University of Turku, Turku School of Economics, Åbo Akademi University and Social Insurance Institution of Finland.

The overall goal of the Healthy Cities movement is to promote health and wellbeing in urban areas. The objectives of the Association to gain the goal are:

- Strengthening the knowledge, skills and willingness of the local governments to take health as a central part in their decision making in the cities belonging to the Healthy Cities Networks.
- Widening the networking of the Association by collaborating with other networks, projects and programmes in the Healthy Cities related issues in the Baltic Sea Region.

In practice, the Association works on many projects which strive cities towards better health. One tool for this is "Baltic Profile", which describes health and well-being of the cities www.marebalticum.org/balticprofile. It can also help the network cities in producing the Aalborg baseline review.

More information:

Mari Siimar, Office Manager
WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region
Tel: +358 2 2514 909
mari.siimar@marebalticum.org



Kristiansand takes further steps towards sustainability

Flourishing trade, focus on sustainability

Text: Hans Otto Lund

Photos: Municipality of Kristiansand

For the last two decades the Municipality of Kristiansand has used sustainability as one of its key focus areas. The results so far are, among a lot of positive experiences, a flourishing trade situation, happy and content citizens, controlled and strong development and expansion.

During the last years, Kristiansand has been elected as "The Sustainability City in Norway", "Most colourful and flourishing City in Norway", "Bicycle City in Norway" and "City of Accessibility in both Norway and Nordic countries". A strong, lasting and planned use of both economical and human resources in addition to both political and administrative willingness, is the basis of these good results.

However, there is more to come. As a signatory of the Aalborg Commitments in 2004, the City Council decided in autumn 2005 to come forward with new proposals and actions during 2006. Likewise sustainability was decided to be one of the main themes in the Municipality's Plan of Action for the period 2005 – 2016.

Ad hoc-committee follows the Aalborg commitments

Kristiansand has established a political Ad Hoc committee which will bring forward concrete recommendations to a working group with members of the executive board and head of administration this September. Elements of this work will then be presented towards the City Council as an Aalborg Follow Up Case for decision which is expected to be made in December this year or in January 2007.

So far the Ad Hoc Committee has come forward with four recommendations:

1. To establish a Sustainability Management Centre – cross-sectoral in the Municipality administration (based on model from the SUSTAINMENT project).
2. Make new and better guidelines to establish more and better meeting points for all the citizens in the Municipality. Both focused on the great variety in age, gender and nationality.
3. Sustainable purchasing. Arranging meetings with focused education in "green purchasing" for the administration in both the Municipality and in the County. Including elements from ethical trade knowledge.



4. More focus and initiative to propose an updated case in City Council, both political and administrative, on the challenges regarding "drop-outs" and poverty in the community.

It is worth mentioning that all these recommendations cover many of the 10 chapters in the Aalborg Commitments. Chapter 8 regarding "Vibrant and Sustainable local economy" is of course a main focus area which in many ways is covered by these recommendations. We are happy to say that many think that Aalborg Commitments must have a key role in the further development of our municipality - towards a still healthy, expanding, sustainable and responsible future.



More information:

Hans Otto Lund, Member of City Council
Chairman Ad Hoc Committee Aalborg Commitments 2006
Municipality of Kristiansand
lundconsulting@chello.no
hans.otto.lund@kristiansand.kommune.no



Text: Kalle Euro, **Photo:** City of Turku

New ecological economy in the hands of local actors

A strong local economy is a very big part of the idea of Aalborg Commitments. Local actors shall be active in create new, ecological, and economic activity to all regions and cities. Important is to create innovative acting models in co-operation with the local companies as local products, ecological tourism and responsible industries are parts of a vibrant and sustainable economy.

High technology creates new innovations which more or less often are more effective and cheaper than earlier technologies. It is important that the innovations are also more ecological technologies. For example, new energy solutions and remote meetings are good environmentally friendly innovations, too.

Local production is a way to cut down traffic. In the modern industrial times it has been typical to produce semi-manufactured articles in one place, send them to be completed in another place and finally sell them all over the world. It would be better for the environment to favour local production.

Tourism is growing rapidly in Europe and especially in the Baltic Sea Region. Ecology is a wonderful theme for marketing: people are aware of the ecological issues and they ask for responsible products. Nature, the beautiful sea and good services are opportunities for the travel business – but also for the Baltic region as a place of residence.

It is very important that whenever ecological factors are brought up in marketing, there is something sincere and concrete behind the marketing speeches. The customers – business people and consumers alike – who are ecologically aware, do see through empty promises and giving false promises on sustainability or ecological factors does not do good for the corporate image of a company, region or society.

In the Scandinavian countries there is a long tradition of good corporate citizenship of companies. In many surveys and on many lists, Scandinavian companies have been ranked highly when it comes to issues of responsibility. Benchmarking in this field could be beneficial for our industries around the Baltic Sea.

More information:

Kalle Euro
UBC Commission on Business Co-operation
Director, Turku Area Development Centre
kalle.euro@turku.fi

Text and photo: Karin Palo

Awareness rising on domestic violence

In 2002, Tartu was the first city in Estonia to open a shelter for women who have suffered from home violence. Since then, the house has been serving as a place for women to calm down after the initial shock and get counseling on how to start a new life.

During its four years of activity, the shelter has helped more than 350 women. It is possible to stay there as long as necessary; some women have used this possibility for several months. But Sirje Otstavel, the founder and manager of the shelter stresses that it is by no means meant as a place to stay – the counselors are helping women to actively seek for a job and their own housing.

Women are welcome to take their children to the shelter as well; however, there is a separate shelter for women with kids younger than 3 years of age, since their needs are more specific.

Providing a place to stay is only a small part of the work of NGO Women's Shelter of Tartu. Its aim is to promote the acknowledgement of domestic violence as a problem in a wider sense. With the help of Tartu, two similar shelters have been set up in other towns in Estonia and the third one is about to be opened.

In addition, the NGO has set up several campaigns to raise awareness of home violence, the most recent of them, "When love hurts", set up posters with shocking images all over Estonia. Otstavel assures that the number of calls on the help-line and women who turned to the shelters shows that the campaign helped several women realize that there is an alternative to a violent relationship.



In 2003, a support group was set up for people who have had contact with domestic violence. It is meant for women who have suffered from violence as well as the people whose friends or family has had problems with violence. Today, the support groups are working in 10 cities around Estonia. In 2005, the first support group was set up in Tallinn for men who want to deal with managing their anger.

Today, the NGO Women's Shelter of Tartu is networking with 1500 similar centers around Europe and its more recent trend is moving towards helping the victims of human trafficking and prostitution.

More information:

Karin Palo
Press representative
Tartu City Government
Karin.palo@raad.tartu.ee

UBC Gender Equality Network promotes women's participation

The Gender Equality Network focuses on supporting democratic development where women's experience, expertise and knowledge are equally represented in all levels and groups within the UBC. The Network is open for new members. Women politicians as well as women officials, managers and other interested women from the member cities are welcome to join the Network.

When the Network started in 1993, the initial strategy was to focus on activities that could bring women in the UBC together and facilitate the sharing of experiences. This has shown to be fruitful and will continue to be an important

part of the work. The work is mainly done through conferences and seminars, both in the Baltic Sea Region and other parts of Europe. The UBC Social Charter adopted in 2001 is an initiative of the Gender Equality Network (formerly known as UBC Women's Network).

In line with international developments, the UBC Strategy and the UBC Action Plan 2006-2007 also encompasses the promotion of gender mainstreaming.

On this opening we introduce some of the work that is done in Umeå, in Sweden and in Tartu, Estonia.

Umeå works for gender equality

The municipality of Umeå in Sweden works energetically with gender mainstreaming. The Gender Equality Committee works closely with the municipal council and arranges many activities focusing on gender equality questions. For example, every year the Committee organises together with Crime Victim Compensation Support Authority a day filled with lectures about gender equality and crime victims.

Last time, this day gathered about 650 interested participants! An Equal Opportunity Development Coordinator works mainly with gender equality questions but also with ethnicity and sexuality. Both the committee and the coordinator work also with knowledge transfer regarding gender questions.

Umeå's Gender Policy is currently being revised. The Policy's challenge is to show how important it is that both politicians and employees work with gender perspective in their everyday work. The Gender perspective is included for example in the education of new municipal directors and politicians. In schools, about 40 teachers act as a gender representative for their school as it is important to start introducing gender equality already in pre-school when it becomes a natural way of thinking and living.

The Gender Equality Committee has decided to focus especially on urban planning and develop processes as it is important to bring the gender perspective in the planning process right from the beginning. For example, a gender perspective is represented when a new housing areas or bicycle paths are built. Another important issue is the security of public rooms - both women and men shall be secure in public space.



Helena Österlind

The Committee also tries to find best practises within the municipality and transfer knowledge in the municipality. The committee also has a big role in bringing up gender equality questions and issues among the inhabitants in Umeå. One year, the committee had a campaign on the local busses about how we create gender stereotypes when buying Christmas presents to the children. The busses had photos on their side with Barbie dolls and guns on it and a text that said "How do we make women out of girls and men out of boys?" The committee also cooperate with different administrations and with NGOs.

Goals for Swedish Gender Equality National Policy

In Sweden, the new national goal for Gender Equality National Policy states that women and men will have the same power to form society and their own life. This means that women and men will have same rights and possibilities to have an active citizenship and to form conditions for decision-making. They have also same rights to do paid work and attain economical independence for all through their life. Sharing the unpaid work at home and the care work, and to give and have care under equal conditions should also be equal right for both. Everybody has the same right to personal integrity. Men's violence against women will stop.

Gender mainstreaming means integrating a gender perspective into all areas and at all levels of decision-making and management of the societies. It means to systematically work for an equal distribution of power, resources and opportunities between women and men.

More information:

Helena Österlind
Equal Opportunity Development Coordinator
helena.osterlind@umea.se

Text: Jon Möller, Photo: Oliver French

Stockholm is committed to global responsibility

The City of Stockholm began working with the Aalborg Commitments in 2005, but has a long tradition working with the issues addressed in 10th commitment "Local to Global". Already 30 years ago in 1976 the City Council decided upon Stockholm's first environmental programme. Based upon this work Stockholm adopted its first action programme against greenhouse gas emissions in 1998

The current "Action Programme Against Greenhouse Gas Emissions" adopted in 2003 includes a short-term goal to reduce CO₂-emissions from 4.5 tonnes per capita in 2000 to 4.0 tonnes by 2005. It also states a long-term goal to undertake measures enabling the city to abandon the use of fossil fuels by 2050, meaning that petrol, oil, coal, gas and other fossil fuels will no longer be used.

In order to reach these goals several activities and local stakeholders, for example:

- Klimatjakten (Climate Hunt), a championship challenge for the employees in the City of Stockholm. Participants compete with their knowledge of ways to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases.
- KlimatAkuten (Climate Emergency) brings climate issues to schools through talks about climate problems, teacher guidance, tips on climate change themes into schools, and presentation of an exhibition.
- Education of property owners in energy issues and selfregulation.
- Introduction of bio-based oils at the Årsta heating plant and the Hammarbyverket power station. The oils are derived from forest products and cereals and from animals fats not used by the foodstuffs industry.
- The "Smarter Consumer 2005-2007" project involves 60 volunteer families from various places in Stockholm studying how the consumption patterns, lifestyle and greenhouse gas emissions of individual citizens can be changed.

- The "Stockholm Mobility 2005-2007" project focuses on the use of infrastructure. Support available to citizens includes car pooling and bicycling information. Also City administrations are encouraged to use travel policies, manage car pools and using bicycles.

- In co-operation with Respect, a European consultancy with sustainability in focus, an action program is used to involve 15 businesses in Stockholm which want to become climate neutral.

To implement some of the activities Stockholm has received SEK 43 million from the national Climate Investment Programme (KLIMP) for the period between 2005 and 2007.

To enhance the city's contributions to international challenges the City of Stockholm has a specific "International strategy" decided by the City Council which provides a platform to structure and manage the city's international activities. Stockholm is actively exchanging knowledge and experience through several international organisations, for example Eurocities Local Governments for Sustainability, (ICLEI), and Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC). Stockholm is also participating in the Nordic and Baltic Aalborg Commitments Network founded in 2005 to enhance local work with the Aalborg Commitments through exchange of knowledge between cities.

More information:

www.stockholm.se/climatechange

A new era in LVRLAC and UBC co-operation

Dr. Julius Ayo-Odongo, Secretary General of the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Network (LVRLAC), visited the UBC Environment and Agenda 21 secretariat in June 2006. His aim was to prepare the two network organizations to enter a new era of partnership where the role of the UBC will be changed.

- We are still looking at what areas in our cooperation are cost-effective and relevant to LVRLAC's strategic plan. The role of UBC will be a source of information and sharing experiences, but not project management as it has been, Julius Ayo-Odongo says.

Since year 2000, the UBC has been the project holder with an active role in supporting the development of LVRLAC. The project has been funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation, SIDA.

- We are hoping to further raise the awareness of LVRLAC, which is very important to us in broadening our financial base, Ayo-Odongo says.

Preserving Lake Victoria and combating poverty

The formation of LVRLAC as a network of local authorities originated from the fact that Lake Victoria is a shared resource not only providing drinking water, but a resource for industrial use and fishing. There are a lot of conflicting interests related to the lake use.

- With the increasing population, the role of LVRLAC as a coordinator is even more important. One of the main concerns is the dropping of the lake water level. Any actions taken around the lake affect others. Our challenge is to make the local authorities understand this, Ayo-Odongo says.

- Poor urban planning has health and sanitation impacts. The disposal of waste into the lake causes diseases, such as cholera and bilharzia, which could be dealt with by changing human behavior, Dr. Ayo-Odongo says.

One of the most important focus areas will still be poverty reduction, which is the focus area of the current financier, SIDA.



Secretary General, Dr. Julius Ayo-Odongo says LVRLAC has reached a stage where it can help the local authorities better cooperate on crucial issues in Lake Victoria region.



The Source of Nile in Uganda.

Björn Grönholm new Head of Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat

Björn Grönholm, 39, has been nominated as the new head of Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat from the beginning of October 2006. He starts the challenging task knowing the work of the UBC well; before nomination Grönholm was working as a coordinator for SUSTAINMENT -project. He also has a co-operation history of 10 years with the UBC.



"There is still a need for clear and focused continuation for the work on sustainable development. Another challenge is to encourage more not so active cities to join our activities", Björn Grönholm says.

New head of secretariat also sees the role of UBC in the European context increasing. "UBC has already successfully been participating in important policy making forums and will continue to do so in the future. Our role is to be a strong city network and provide the European Commission as well as national governments with relevant information and expertise".

Many tasks on the agenda

"Our region has gone through a huge change during the last 15 years. A lot has been accomplished but there are still a lot of issues we need to address in our work within our cities and in our countries. The agenda of interest and needs differs between and within cities. We need to identify these challenges and take them to the agenda of actions. A common concern for all of us is the severe threat that the Baltic Sea is collapsing. More sustainable solutions in energy consumption, traffic planning and logistics are also hot issues. In addition to these, focus on administration and the organization in the cities needs to be focused on."

Grönholm graduated from Åbo Akademi University with a Masters degree in Political Science in 1999. He has worked as a researcher for several years in the field of international relations, political and administrative structures with focus on environmental policies.

The Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2006/2007

A call for the Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2006/2007 will be sent out in November to all UBC member cities. This will be the 2nd assessment to monitor the state of sustainable development in the UBC cities.

In the first survey round we did well with the response rate of 72 % and this time the intention is to do even better so cities - be prepared!

UBC co-operates with the Nordic and Baltic AC network

The Nordic and Baltic Aalborg Commitments (AC) network was initiated by the currently twenty local authorities who have signed or are about to sign the Commitments in the Nordic and Baltic region. It is open for all interested authorities in the Nordic and Baltic countries who would like to sign or make a non-binding declaration of intention through the Aalborg commitments website. The network will have its next meeting in conjunction with the Nordic Conference on Sustainable Social Development in Oslo on 26-27 October 2006.

A fruitful meeting between UBC EnvCom and the Nordic and Baltic Network was held September in Turku. As a result of this meeting, the UBC is looking into possibilities of supporting the Nordic and Baltic AC network further together with other Finnish municipalities through Association of Municipalities in Finland and the Finnish Ministry of Environment. It is important to find continuation and a good forum for informal discussions and development needed to make it easier to adopt Aalborg Commitments and support the work with the Commitments and sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region.

The UBC EnvCom sees the activity in the Nordic and Baltic AC network as an important support for local authorities and also for the strengthening of the process around the Aalborg Commitments on the European level.

More information: www.framtid-kom.no

The Best Environmental Practise in the Baltic Cities Award 2007 concentrates on **From Local Action to Sustainable Development** - Call out soon.

New website for UBC Agenda 21 work

The www.ubc-agenda21.net is the new website of the UBC Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat. There you can find information on the work UBC does on for example, regarding exchange on experience (Learn from others!), the current state of sustainability in UBC cities (How sustainable are Baltic cities?) and our services to the cities (Join our activities).

WEB

Updates on UBC projects

The updates of our current biggest projects can be read at internet: www.ubc-agenda21.net.



UBC

Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat

The UBC Agenda 21 work is a joint initiative of 100 cities and other partners. The forum for joint work of these cities, their representatives and other partners, are the UBC Commission on Environment and the Agenda 21 Working Group. They are open to participation of all member cities, and also many partner organisations are regularly present at the meetings.

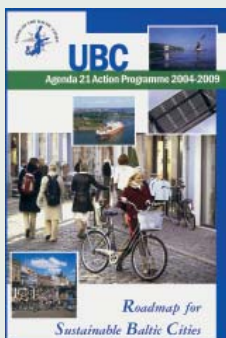
You are most welcome to join! In addition to the Commission on Environment meetings, we organise several

Environment and Agenda 21 workshops and seminars every year, as well as publish the Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin and website. The bulletin offers you an excellent forum to publicise your activities and initiatives on environment and sustainable development. If you have an idea for a story, just contact us!

The staff of Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat currently consist of 15 professionals working fulltime for the UBC.



Front row (left) New Head of Secretariat Björn Grönholm, project officer Katarzyna Bogucka (MUE-25), project officer Sakari Saarinen (BUSTRIP). **Back row (left)** Editor Virpi Kaukavuori, publications officer Sari Bowie, project officer Heidi Tuukkanen, project coordinator Anna Granberg (BUSTRIP), project coordinator Annika Claesson (MUE-25), project officer Sanna Erkko (SUSTAINMENT), management assistant Agnieszka Ilola, project officer George Enkelinen, the substitute director of the Environmental Protection Office in City of Turku Olli-Pekka Mäki, project coordinator Kyösti Lempi (SUSTAINMENT), financial manager Jussi Välimäki, Network Manager Stella Aaltonen. Project coordinator Sulev Nömmann was on a work trip when the photo was taken.



Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 - Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities

The UBC Environment and Agenda 21 Secretariat acts as the Programme Management Agency for the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 - Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. The Programme includes several big and excellent projects that concretely implement sustainable development actions in the cities. The overall budget goal of 10 MEUR has been reached and is now being mobilised for the different projects and activities of the programme.

More information about the project and staff members at www.ubc-action21.net.



SEVILLA 2007

Fifth European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns

Taking the Commitments to the Streets

21-24 March 2007, Seville, Spain

V Conferencia Europea de Ciudades y Pueblos Sostenibles

Llevando los compromisos a la calle

Cinquième Conférence Européenne des Villes Durables

Répandre les engagements dans la rue

Quinta Conferenza Europea delle Città Sostenibili

Portare gli impegni di Aalborg nelle strade

Accelerating local sustainability in Europe -

Learning from the more than 350 **Aalborg Commitments** signatories and other leading local governments in Europe and beyond, this event offers broad and vital demonstration of experiences and a critical evaluation of local government activities since the launch of the **Aalborg Commitments** at the Fourth European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns in Aalborg in 2004.

To contribute, register and learn more:
www.sevilla2007.org

Conference Secretariat

ICLEI's International Training Centre (ITC)

ICLEI European Secretariat

Phone: +49 -761/368 92-20

Fax: +49 -761/368 92-29

Email: sevilla2007@iclei.org

Organised by:

NOSDO
AYUNTAMIENTO DE SEVILLA
Medio Ambiente

ICLEI
Local
Governments
for Sustainability

Co-organised by:

 **Sustainable Cities
and Towns Campaign**