

# ENVIRONMENTAL

*bulletin* No 2, 2010

**Actions towards sustainable development are more and more everyday life in the UBC cities** shows the UBC Sustainable Development Survey 2009

**QUALITY OF LIFE  
IN BALTIC CITIES**

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## Sustainable development – let's translate political commitments into practical solutions!

It was 18 years ago, in 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, when the idea of sustainable development was first time recognized at a high political level. The governments of the world committed to promote sustainable development in their national activities and international co-operation. As a result of the Rio Conference, the world began to understand that uncontrolled economic growth, poverty and population growth have significant adverse effects on the global environment. It also gave rise to a common understanding that matters relating to environmental protection, economic growth and social welfare are essentially linked to each other.

**Now the Governments are preparing** for the follow-up conference of Rio, the so called Rio+20 Conference, to be organized in 2012. The challenges we face today cannot be characterized as new, but they are more often happening simultaneously in various policy fields multiplied by increasing global interdependence. Manyfold challenges call for political leadership, cooperation at all levels and smart down-to-earth solutions.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in an approach which calls for a transition to a sustainable society by boosting new innovative solutions at the same time as presuming changes in production, consumption and lifestyles. Mutually reinforcing, parallel changes in technology, the economy, institutions, ecology, culture, education, lifestyle and religions, for example, can give rise to a positive ring of activity.

**We have recognized** that regional and local actors can often go further than national governments in shaking up the business as usual. We want to learn from local initiatives and translate them into joint solutions. That's

why we are inviting the local, regional and national experts, enthusiasts and entrepreneurs all around the Nordic and Baltic regions, and beyond, to participate in the SOLUTIONS local, together –Conference in Turku, Finland on 31 January – 2 February 2011. The objective of the Conference is to bring sustainable solutions available for all and inspire various actors to change their practices, working methods, services and products also in the long term. Sharing good practices and multiplying new solutions contribute to cooperation and entrepreneurship, create new partnerships and socio-cultural models and strengthen the state of sustainable development in the region.

**There is a need to revitalize** the concept of sustainable development by linking it to practical solutions which can bring about simultaneous environmental, social and economic benefits to all.

Welcome to Turku to learn more about our common solutions: [www.solutions2011.fi](http://www.solutions2011.fi).



*Annika Lindblom*

Chair of the Conference Steering Group  
Ministry of the Environment, Finland

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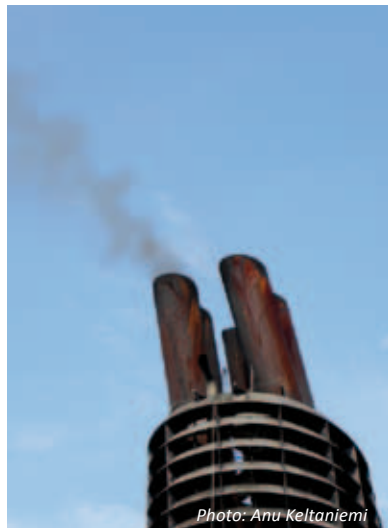


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### Editorial information

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# Quality of life!?

Text: **Petri Kahila & Stefanie Lange**, Nordregio

Photo: **Nordregio**

Enhancing quality of life (QOL) has long been a major explicit or implicit life-style and policy goal for individuals and communities. It has also become a significant dimension in various policy fields. In order to understand aspects of QOL, we have to consider twofold meaning of QOL: Firstly, QOL relates to the opportunities that are provided to meet human needs in the forms of built, human, social and natural capital. Secondly, improvement of QOL in this meaning is the proper goal of public policy. Therefore, QOL is a multi-scale and multi-dimensional concept that comprises interacting objective and subjective elements.

Life is lived individually and publicly that reflects the choices we make in shaping our lifestyle. These choices do not solely refer to the living conditions but also focus on enabling people to achieve their goals and choose their ideal lifestyle. This emphasises the importance of interaction between individuals and their everyday living environment. Generally it is also argued that QOL is in close connection to income and consumption styles.

## Integrated measures are needed

However, QOL is not solely a question of individual health or material wealth. Rather, QOL refers to both overall well-being of individuals and the goal of enhancing QOL across multiple temporal and spatial scales. QOL does not represent a snapshot in time. To identify and define patterns of QOL at the individual level or at particular time is not adequate. The attention has to be focused on larger regions or long-term assessment.

If the individual aspects and preferences can be addressed in an integrated manner, policy makers and planners can initiate new measures and processes to advance QOL. An integrated method, paying attention to individual and public sphere, will assist in distinguishing between those lifestyle choices that actually enhance QOL. This procedure cannot only create crucial opportunities, but also reduce possible constraints.

### More information:

[petri.kahila@nordregio.se](mailto:petri.kahila@nordregio.se)

[stefanie.lange@nordregio.se](mailto:stefanie.lange@nordregio.se)

“The desire to improve quality of life (QOL) in a particular place or for a particular person or group is an important focus of attention for planners.” (B.H. Massam)





Life is lived individually and publicly that reflects the choices we make in shaping our lifestyle.



# Applying Quality of Life to regional planning through participatory planning methods

Text: **Lauri Hooli** Photo: **city of Turku**

Applying quality of life to regional planning offers good opportunities to increase citizens' participation in decision-making and make city-regions more attractive. However, this may require remarkable changes to conventional traditions of planning. The entire planning process needs to be opened, to be made more transparent and participatory. NEW BRIDGES project has been developing novel innovative models for strengthening the quality of life and increasing participation in regional planning around the Baltic Sea Region.

different stakeholders to take part into the city-regional planning and to adapt participatory methods at all levels of the process; from the identification of the challenge and the planning phase all the way to the implementation and evaluation of it.

In the planning phase participation in the partner city-regions of the project has been carried out mainly in two ways. Firstly, around 20 000 resident were approached through surveys and interviews considering city-regions urban-rural interaction and the quality of life. These answers provided a lot of useful information about local opportunities and challenges. Secondly, inhabitants and local stakeholders, representatives from interest

Quality of life has become a popular concept used increasingly in regional strategies and policies. In theory the benefits of applying this concept to regional planning should serve both individuals and policy makers. For individuals it provides an opportunity to achieve better living environment and for policy makers it is an appropriate tool for enabling societies to become more sustainable, and for increasing the attractiveness of the city-regions.

The concept of quality of life focuses on individual's life situation and perceptions comprising relationships between them. Thus it assets entirely new challenges for regional planning and makes the process much more complex. That is why the quality of life in regional planning can only be adapted when residents, civil organisations, entrepreneurs and other interest groups who it may concern have a genuine opportunity to be heard and are able to contribute to the planning through the participation in the planning process.

In the Baltic Sea Region there are an increasing number of examples how participatory methods have been adopted to planning systems and in some countries (i.e. Finland) this has been even obligated by law.

## Towards participatory planning in NEW BRIDGES partner city-regions

The NEW BRIDGES project (2009-2011) led by UBC EnvCom aims to strengthen the quality of life through improved management of urban-rural interaction in its seven partner city-regions and more extensively around the Baltic Sea Region. By doing this the project endeavours to involve large number of local residents and



Baltic Sea Region



# The Kokemäenjoki river: A success story in water conservation

Text: & photo: **Kai Aulio**

A few decades ago Kokemäenjoki river was called as the biggest sewer in Finland. But now the situation has changed completely. Due to the strict legislation and efficient waste water treatment the quality of the river water has remarkably improved. The algal production with the availability of nutrients and especially the amounts of toxic or otherwise dangerous chemicals has dropped to a fraction of the old values. Now all the activities, including swimming, are possible along the entire river course. The changes have sustained also the rich aquatic biota. Thus, the Kokemäenjoki river is approaching the state required by the European water framework directive.

Kokemäenjoki is the fourth-largest river in Finland as measured by the drainage area and water flow. Along the river, there are 4 cities and a wide variety of industries. Anthropogenic discharges of waste waters from these point sources polluted the Kokemäenjoki heavily.

The discharges, which were the most disturbing, were massive amounts of oxygen-consuming fibre from the forest industry and municipal waste waters. Decades ago, the river water was turbid and in the worst cases stinky. During those years, the water in whole 120 km stretch was not suitable for swimming. Nowadays there is no need in any official regulations for bathing or any other use in any parts of Kokemäenjoki because the water purification has succeeded excellently. At present, the river water is good enough to be used even as the most important raw water source - after artificial ground water management - for the city of Turku (160 000 inhabitants) 70–80 km away.

## The final recovery needs many years

However, the most important although invisible threat was high concentrations of toxic chemicals. The worst pollutants were – and still are – a lot of heavy metals such as mercury, zinc, nickel and copper.

The problems in water quality are concentrated in the river delta in Pihlavanlahti, near the city of Pori. During the worst years,



there were wide restrictions for the professional fishing due to the high content of mercury. The levels of Hg are still high, but the final disappearance of the metals from the water, sediments and the food webs still requires many years.

The efficient water purification in the most important point sources has decreased the content of, for example, lead to the levels of the Finnish inland waters prevailing in the natural state. And as a consequence, the levels of heavy metals in the bottom fauna have dropped to a fraction of previous values.

## The nature is one of the biggest winners

The water management programmes classified the Kokemäenjoki in the 1970's as very polluted or polluted. The condition of Pihlavanlahti is still, however, only tolerable, and the delta area has got some extra years to reach the standards presented in the European water framework directive. But the success gained during a couple of decades gives us a promise that Kokemäenjoki will be healthy in the near future.

### More information:

Kai Aulio  
University of Turku  
kai.aulio@ts.fi

groups and NGOs, scientists, decision-makers, and entrepreneurs & employees in each partner-city region were invited to three Local Stakeholder Meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to identify the priority challenges emerged from the surveys and to decide actual pilot actions in order to improve current policies and planning practices.

The NEW BRIDGES project faced its mid-term in early autumn 2010 and the focus of the project is now to turn the established plans into actions. The partner city-regions will between autumn 2010 and summer 2011 implement pilot actions to introduce new sustainable solutions to their regional planning policies in order to increase residents' quality of life and to create new urban rural partnerships. Due to the participatory methods in the planning phase of the project, partners gained a lot of new information how the quality of life is seen in their city-regions. Therefore the planned pilot actions will be well responding to the

changing societies and varying residential references. Even the concept of quality of life is widespread and offers a suitable tool for regional planning the actual meaning and usefulness of the concept should always be defined locally using the best possible experts - the local residents.

### More information:

Lauri Hooli, Communication Coordinator  
firstname.surname@ubc.net  
www.urbanrural.net



Strengthening of **Quality of Life**  
through Improved Management of  
**Urban Rural** Interaction



Part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).



# “Scrap – Bike – Arts” in Rostock

Text: **Ilona Hartmann** Photo: **Office for Environment Protection of Rostock**

Every year, the Office for Environment Protection of Rostock collects forgotten and broken bicycles from the streets and public places. The bikes are interstored and decontaminated or handed over to associations for use. As, however, not all bicycles find use, the Rostock working group “Climate protection and mobility” has brought to life a special competition *Scrap-Bike-Arts*.

In early summer 2010, the call went out to all Rostock schools to reshape creatively a scrap bicycle during the realisation of project days or extracurricular activities. No limits were set on the imagination. However, certain criteria still had to be kept, for example, the bike had to be weather resistance and no sharp, breakable and dangerous parts on it were allowed.

Altogether 8 Rostock schools took part in the competition. The pupils of different age groups used the summer to reshape the scrap bicycles in the most different ways. The results included, for example, a bike riding octopus, a carriage, a sunflower wheel, planted bicycles and also a maritime beach whispering. Besides, the pupils demonstrated creativity and craft talent in the highest measure.

## Winner bikes awarded

During the “European Mobility Week 2010”, an action day with a “Mobility Mile” was organized. During this day, all bicycles were presented to the public in the city centre causing a lively interest in the audience and the press. An independent jury evaluated the bikes and named three winners: the *windmill*, the *cow* and the *flower meadow*.

The creators of the *windmill*, pupils of a professional school won train tickets of the Deutsche Bahn AG for a free journey through Mecklenburg-West Pomerania on any chosen day. The designer team of the *cow*, the class 4b of the elementary school “John Brinckman” won a visit to the usually closed archives and an opportunity to take part in a creative course of their choice at the Arts Centre of Rostock. The *flower meadow* made by pupils of the class 8a of the special school “Schule am Schwanenteich” received a prize from the Rostocker Strassenbahn AG, the local tram and bus company. They may try the role of a tram driver.

Next year a similar action will take place again thanks to a big success and huge general public effectiveness. The Rostock working group “Climate protection and mobility” has been working since 2008 and consists of representatives of the Deutsche Bahn AG, the Rostocker Strassenbahn AG, the General German Bicycle Club of Rostock inc. (ADFC Rostock e. V.), the New Consumer’s Advice Center inc. (Neue Verbraucherzentrale e.V.) and the Administration of the Hanseatic City of Rostock.

## More information:

Amt für Umweltschutz  
Klimaschutzleitstelle  
Ms Ilona Hartmann  
Tel: +49 381 381 7310  
ilona.hartmann@rostock.de





Tartu has joined a project called Active Access, which advocates sustainable means of transport. Several events, workshops and surveys have been carried out within the framework of the project. "We are planning to carry out surveys of people's preferred means of transport both at the beginning and at the end of the project, so that we can compare the results", says **Toomas Põld**, the coordinator of this 3-year-project. The regular survey carried out by Tartu City Government in 2008 showed that 39 % of the population travelled on foot, about one fourth used public transport and 5 % used bicycles. About 30 % of the people in Tartu use a car for their everyday trips. According to Mr. Põld, the number of cyclists is likely to increase up to 10 % in the following years, considering the recent positive trends.

- When the weather permits, every tenth citizen of Tartu could use a bike for commuting instead of a car, he says.

Tartu is also a partner in the Estonian-Latvian joint project *VisoEst by bike*, which advocates cycling. The project aims to develop a 1000-kilometre bicycle route through Latvia and Estonia by year 2013. Tartu is one of the stopovers on this route. As part of this project, Tartu received cycling equipment in the value of about one million kroons, e.g. bicycle stands for about 200 bikes and five bike shelters. Maps and information boards were set up in the city.

### Grateful citizens

It has become much more convenient to travel by bike because new light traffic roads have been constructed every year. This year, 6 kilometres of cycle lanes have been constructed. In the autumn, the last section of the 3.7-kilometre light traffic road was opened. Tartu has received money from the EU support funds for the construction of light traffic roads. The Mayor of Tartu, **Urmas Kruuse** is also keen on cycling. He stresses the importance of developing inter-connected bicycle routes.

- When it is safe and comfortable to travel by bike, more people will start doing it. City government has received lots of letters from grateful citizens. This indicates that we are moving in the right direction, says Mr. Kruuse happily.

The city has always considered the interests of cyclists. A work group specialising in the development of the network of bicycle routes was set up in Tartu City Government.

- Cyclists in Tartu are very enthusiastic and well-organised. Traveling by bike every day, they can spot the details that a planning official or a city government official may not notice, says Mr. Kruuse.

*Car-free week: The Mayor **Urmas Kruuse** (cyclist on far right) together with the members of Tartu City Government made a bike trip on the new bicycle lanes in Tartu and opened a new road for medium and light traffic.*

# Tartu is becoming more bicycle-friendly

Text: **Helle Tolmoff** Photo: **Lilian Lukka**

Tartu is a compact city with the area of around 40 square kilometres, which makes it a perfect place for advocating healthy and environment-friendly means of transport. Besides, the citizens of Tartu are aware of the environmental issues – with one fifth of the population being students who like walking or cycling.

Bicycle Advocacy Groups also participated in the process of drafting the development plan for the bicycle routes network in Tartu. According to this plan, there will be 137 kilometres of bicycle lanes in a couple of years' time, and the network will cover the whole city. This plan has been taken into consideration when planning new roads and reconstructing the streets. Several bicycle lanes have been constructed already.

### More information:

Helle Tolmoff, Specialist of Information Service  
Department of Public Relations  
[helle.tolmoff@raad.tartu.ee](mailto:helle.tolmoff@raad.tartu.ee)





# Klaipeda invests millions for the body and soul

Text: **Ina Sidlauskienė** Photo: **city of Klaipeda**

**E**nergy related projects are among topical ones. The average age of heating networks in Klaipeda is 25 years. It is a critical age for heating routes that may threaten the citizens with unpleasant emergencies. Therefore, every year large sums are invested into the renovation of networks. Over three years, 64,5 mil. Litas, including 19,5 mil. Litas from the EU Structural Funds will be spent. From the existing 270 km of heating networks in Klaipeda, 100 km are still to be renovated. In some parts of them, up to 65 % of the heat losses will be saved. Another 14,7 mil. Litas will be invested to modernize related facilities, i.e. boilers. These actions do not only save fuel and reduce energy consumption, but also diminish environmental pollution.

## Focus on water bodies

For the improvement of Lithuanian water bodies, over 109 mil. Litas have been allocated from the EU. With these resources 80 water bodies will be cleaned over the country – two of them in Klaipeda. Cleaning the lake Mumlaukis in Klaipeda city territory has already started: the silt from the bottom has been lifted, the islets and shores arranged, trees and bushes pruned. The newly arranged territory will add much joy to the citizens from adjacent residential areas.

For many years, a part of Curonian Bay in the outskirts of the city had been polluted by the so called cemetery of ships. Cleaning the water and shores from debris vessels and other junk is the main objective of the planned project. A well organized waterfront will become a new outing place for the dwellers of the Southern part of Klaipeda. Clean water, tidy shores, people fishing and rowing pleasure boats will completely change the scenery.

## Active recreation and social wellbeing

Klaipeda has a natural pine forest – an old Giruliai Amusement Park, just ten minutes walk from the city center and stretching right to the seaside. An ongoing project will renovate its entire

Municipalities take practical steps to create physical and spiritual comfort in order to make citizens happy. Many projects towards this goal are implemented in Klaipeda.

engineering, lighting and facilities infrastructure. A great attention will be paid to active recreation: equipping quality fitness and other sports grounds for children and adults, circular pedestrian and cycling tracks, cognitive paths, plots for dog training, etc. The project will be completed in year 2011.

Among social projects, the construction of a Franciscan Oncology Support Center is one of the most interesting. Next to Klaipeda Oncologic Hospital, a complex of buildings – the Center premises with courtyards, a Chapel, an accommodation wing for Franciscan monks is under construction. There information, services and spiritual guidance for people with cancer and their relatives will be provided. This project will highly improve the quality of life of the citizens in dramatic periods of their lives.

Recently the US magazine *Newsweek* has rated Lithuania the 34<sup>th</sup> in the global list of countries the best to live in. So, there is still much work to be done to climb up *the quality of life for all -ladder*.

### More information:

Ina Sidlauskienė, Chief Expert  
International Relations, Business Development and Tourism Division  
Department of Investment and Economics  
Mob. + 370 687 40026  
ina.sidlauskienė@klaipeda.lt  
www.klaipeda.lt



It has appeared to be difficult to reach out with information about how to sort out waste in a correct way to the tenants in some housing areas. Waste that has not been sorted out must be taken away for combustion, which is not a good solution from an environmental point of view. Any plastic bag that ends up at the biogas power plant, Karpalund, will plug the machines, causing a waste of time, money and resources. It also leads to costs for the housing firm, who has to pay for the unsorted waste. In order to come to terms with this situation, the municipal housing firm in Kristianstad decided to launch a project aiming to raise awareness among its tenants about the sorting out of household waste, particularly food waste. The tenants were to be informed by means of individual meetings and practical exercises.

### Breaking the negative trend

Agenda 21 in the municipality of Kristianstad was assigned to train seven persons and one group leader to become environment hosts. For the purpose of being able to answer questions and create a dialogue with the tenants, Agenda 21 tailored a four-week training course on sustainable development and environmental issues on a local, national and international level. It was essential to let both the environment hosts and the tenants know that the work that the environment hosts do, and the purpose of it, is of utmost importance.

The group consisted of men and women from different countries. The thought was to be able to reach out to the tenants in their mother tongue and with an understanding of their culture. The group drew up a schedule for visiting all households and for guarding the waste bins in the area, thus being able to watch over people disposing bags of household food waste.

The environment hosts themselves found the project beneficial and well-needed. The tenants encountered them in a positive way, displaying a clear will to cooperate. For many of the tenants the information was completely or partially new, despite previous efforts by the housing firm. During the information meetings entire families were usually present and since the meetings took place in their homes, any mistakes concerning the sorting

# Environment hosts in Kristianstad



Text: **Beata Svensson** Photo: **City of Kristianstad**

Kristianstad has a long tradition of using household food waste for the production of district heating and fuel. Biogas is used as fuel for both municipal and private vehicles. All local buses, for example, run on biogas and thereby contribute to a better air quality in the city. The underlying idea is that the town inhabitants sort out their household food waste, excluding all plastic, glass and metal items.

of waste could be instantly corrected. The environment hosts always worked in pairs and there was always at least one woman in each group.

The number of correctly sorted waste bins increased significantly, which shows that knowledge and understanding are crucial factors for implementing changes. The project went on in 2009 and has now been finalized. It was important that the project was successful and that the negative trend in the city was broken. It also showed the importance of presenting information on the conditions of the tenants.

#### More information:

Beata Svensson  
Environment and Health Department  
[beata.svensson@kristianstad.se](mailto:beata.svensson@kristianstad.se)



# Youth Ombudsmen make Linköping a vibrant place for young people

Text: **Sara Hugosson** Photos: **City of Linköping**

As the former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: *We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.* Through Linköping municipality, the ethos of Roosevelt's words are being transposed into the youth policy of the city with the aim of making Linköping a vibrant place for young people, providing opportunities to help to build positive future for all of them.

One way to achieve it is through the role of the Youth Ombudsman; a position which only exists in a small number of cities across Sweden. Linköping city employs two young people, for a period of one year each, their role is to highlight issues that are important to young people and establish a platform for their voices to be heard.

## Ombudsmen as intermediaries

The work of the ombudsmen is to provide young people with the means to access local authorities,



acting as an informal link with the politicians. By creating a comfortable and approachable environment these ombudsmen are able to show young people of Linköping that the city hall is not out of touch with the issues of the youth. Every year the ombudsmen receive a large number of applications for various activities from different working groups. These activities are open to all. At present there are also a number of youth interest groups, which encourage young people to arrange concerts, exhibitions and workshops all financed by the participants themselves.

Examples of activities in progress in Linköping include special interest groups working with environmental issues as well as a permanent working group, which provides an easier access to school transport services. Recently a further group has been involved in providing social activities for young people living outside the city centre in the rural areas. The aim of the group is to inform about the opportunities which are available through the local authority. Also a network of the Youth Ombudsman, comprising of politicians, officials and young people, aims at providing foundations for cooperation and development of the democratic processes focusing on encouraging the participation of young people.

### More information:

Sara Hugosson, Youth Department  
[ungdomsombud@linkoping.se](mailto:ungdomsombud@linkoping.se)

## Aims to improve Quality of life in Kaliningrad

Text: **Vladimir Abramov**

Kaliningrad pays much attention to quality of life. City authority aims to reach the European settings of this indicator. Therefore, serious efforts are undertaken by developing transport infrastructure, environmental improvement, and by creating favorable conditions for business and leisure of people who live in Kaliningrad, and its guests.

In order to improve air quality the city is carrying out successive closures of small boilers using coal and fuel oil. They are replaced by large thermal power plants using natural gas. In the near future, further 80 small boilers will be closed. Considerable funds are also allocated to conservation and renovation of green attire of Kaliningrad. In recent years, a program by revitalization of the city lakes, rivers and streams has been implemented. Currently the project "Sea Gate in Kaliningrad" is under development, providing more active use the river banks of Pregol crossing the whole town and area seaports for tourists' purposes.

Considerable efforts have also been undertaken by developing a network of free school and preschool education. Level of nursery schools has reached 72 % of the total number of children in pre-

schools. Elsewhere in the city, the city authority and local community are actively restoring the monuments of architecture and history. Now there is a broad public discussion about the possibility of restoring the Royal Castle in the center of Kaliningrad.

Today, more than 18 % of Kaliningradians go in for sports. Over the past five years, the region has put into operation more than 50 opened and covered areas for playing hockey, and built a multi-sports complex with an auditorium with 7000 seats. High hopes for the promotion of healthy lifestyles are associated with the project carrying out the games of the World Football Cup 2018 - 2022 years in Kaliningrad. In particular, a new football stadium for 30 000 spectators is being planned. Undertaken efforts by the city authorities are the guarantee that the quality of Kaliningrad life will constantly improve and become a model for other regional centers of Russia.

### More information:

Vladimir Abramov, Kaliningrad City Council  
International and Intermunicipal department  
[ums@gorsovet.kaliningrad.org](mailto:ums@gorsovet.kaliningrad.org)





# Energy saving and public space in Rakvere

Text: Raul Järg Photo: City of Rakvere

Rakvere faces similar challenges as many other cities. Residents prefer to leave the apartment buildings in the city centre for detached houses in the outskirts. This brings along many environmental issues, but more importantly, increases energy consumption, e.g. for heating and transportation.

- As a result of the longterm systematic activities, Rakvere is planning energy efficient alterations in urban environment in order to provide the citizens with the better living environment, says the Mayor of city of Rakvere, **Andres Jaadla**.

After analyzing the urban space of Rakvere, it turned out that Seminari Street in the centre is the most densely populated area in the city. The energy consumption and appearance of the apartment buildings do not meet the present-day requirements or expectations, and therefore increasingly more attention is paid to the reconstruction of their façades. These buildings are an important part of the urban space and therefore it is in the public interest that these buildings and their surroundings become attractive and enjoyable. Through these actions also the competitiveness of the city should increase and help to oppose the urban sprawl. In addition to the energy savings of the insulated buildings, it would help the whole area to be more energy efficient.

Although Seminari Street area is the most densely populated in the city, it is hardly adequately utilised. The fourlane street was planned as an avenue in the 1920s, the times of active growth of the city, and is oversized compared to the actual need as there is not much vehicle traffic. However, there is much pedestrian traffic. It would be reasonable to exchange the proportions of vehicle and pedestrian traffic areas. The quality of the residential space would increase significantly by bringing the hardly utilised urban space into active usage.

## Competition for integrated design

Rakvere City organized an architectural competition to get integrated design ideas for reconstruction of the apartment buildings and transforming of the Seminari Street into a linear park, that would also link the heart of the city to the greenery areas in the outskirts of the city. The competition was international and 14 entries were presented by the teams of architects and landscape

How can we save energy? This is the question that today's cities, even small cities like Rakvere in Estonia with 17 000 residents, are searching answers to. In addition to the largely practiced energy saving measures, like improving insulation of the buildings and promoting public transportation, it is important also to oppose urban sprawl, resulting in an increase in energy consumption. To save energy and work against urban sprawl means to enhance the competitiveness of urban space by creating attractive open spaces that meet the needs and expectations of the residents.

architects. The entries took into consideration both the aesthetical values as well as the technical requirements for insulation purposes.

Rakvere will now proceed with the two winning entries and step into a negotiation period in order to elaborate construction drawings for both the future linear park as well as the multistoried houses surrounding the area. In co-operation with housing associations the best solutions will be worked out on the basis of the winning entries. The housing associations willing to implement the actual reconstructions can receive the construction project free of charge because the costs will be born by the City of Rakvere. This helps the housing associations both to achieve energy efficiency in their buildings and to get an attractive living space. The integrated approach helps to save energy and create an environment that can tackle the challenges of today's cities more successfully.

## More information:

Raul Järg, City architect of Rakvere  
raul.jarg@rakvere.ee www.rakvere.ee

The City of Rakvere is elaborating comprehensive solutions to combine the upgrading of neighbourhoods energy efficiency within the frames of the project *Energy Efficiency and Integrated Urban Development Action* or *UrbEnergy*, partly financed by EU through the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. Rakvere is working towards the green goals in the framework of Covenant of Mayors that Rakvere signed among the first cities in Europe, being the first one in Estonia. Rakvere has been nominated the pan-European award - Sustainable Energy Europe Awards 2010 (March 2010) as one of the 6 nominees in the category of "Sustainable Energy Communities".

# Adapting to a changing climate in Helsinki Metropolitan Area

Text and photo: **Kirsi-Marja Lonkila**

Cities and regions have a double challenge when it comes to climate change as they are obliged to do their part in the climate change mitigation but they also have to adapt to the local changes caused by a warming climate. In Helsinki Metropolitan Area, a background study of the impacts of climate change has just been published and the first climate adaptation strategy is being drafted. **Susanna Kankaanpää** from the Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (HSY) gives an update on the adaptation work being done in the area covering four cities and one fourth of the Finnish population.

In Finland, remarkable changes in temperature and snow conditions are to be expected. According to climate scenarios, the mean temperature in the area is expected to rise by 3-6 degrees and annual rainfall by 12-24 % during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, depending on the scenario.

The Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (HSY) is now drafting the first regional climate change adaptation strategy for the four cities of the area – Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen. Supporting this work, a background report on climate change impacts studies has recently been published. Climate expert Susanna Kankaanpää from HSY explains that the report offers necessary background information for planning and includes climate scenarios and new information on the risks of river floods in climate change conditions.

## Burdens and benefits not equally distributed

Susanna Kankaanpää points out that in the urban area, there are groups that are more vulnerable to climate change impacts than others and that this aspect has to be taken into account also in developed countries. However, there are differences when compared with developing countries.

- If we take for example flooding, in Finland it is the wealthier people that live in the coastal area. In this sense, you can't really call them vulnerable because they have resources to repair and prevent the damages, says Kankaanpää.

- Still, heat waves that the Finns are not very accustomed to are harder for groups like the elderly, children, homeless people and people living in hospitals or prisons, she adds.

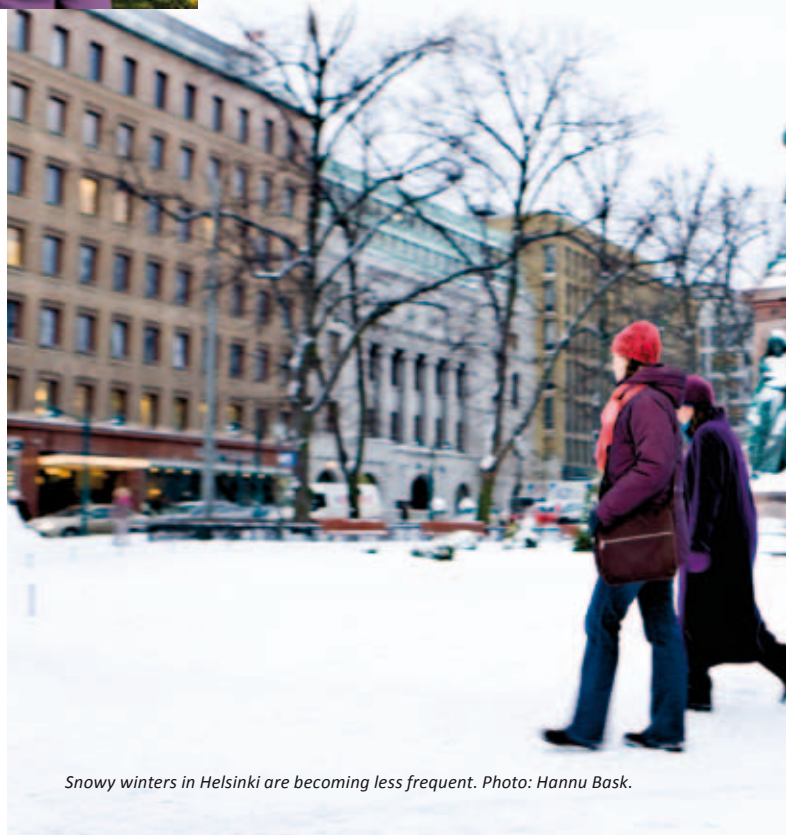
Besides the negative impacts, Finland is also said to benefit from a warmer climate, e.g. by having a longer growing season and increasing tourism. Susanna Kankaanpää admits that there will be some new employment possibilities for example in the field of green technology, but she is doubtful of the beneficial impacts of climate change in general.

- The climate will be more unpredictable and it seems to be changing too fast, for example for the nature to adapt, she says.

Kankaanpää stresses that as the winters are getting darker, rainier and gloomier in the area, it may have implications on mental health and that this also needs to be considered in planning. Since the weather conditions are less favourable for winter sports and for children to play outside, having more indoor sport facilities should be thought over.



*HSY Climate expert Susanna Kankaanpää.*



*Snowy winters in Helsinki are becoming less frequent. Photo: Hannu Bask.*



## New adaptation options being developed

Helsinki Metropolitan Area is taking part in the BaltCICA project under the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. As part of the project, new climate change adaptation options will be developed and assessed in a participatory process with stakeholders. Kankaanpää says that more information especially on the socio-economic impacts is still needed.

- Taking social and health issues into account has been a bit difficult, because so far civil servants in social sector see climate change as a distant threat. However, this is changing as climate change is also a health risk, Kankaanpää explains. In the process also health and social sector authorities are working together for identifying measures for climate change adaptation.

### More information:

[www.baltcica.org](http://www.baltcica.org) and [www.hsy.fi](http://www.hsy.fi)

Kirsi-Marja Lonkila, Project officer

UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat

[firstname.surname@turku.fi](mailto:firstname.surname@turku.fi)



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Integrated urban sustainability management is an issue strongly stressed by EU policies. Unfortunately, integrated sustainability approach is often seen as too abstract concept. Therefore EU has funded several projects and campaigns aiming to concretise the approach and make it visible at local and regional level.

## Concretising sustainability management

Text: **Pekka Salminen**

**P**roblems with the sustainability work are well known: many good strategies and programmes are developed but poorly implemented, many campaigns and projects are without continuity, a lack of practical support for implementation and a lack of incentives for cities to start the systematic sustainability management.

The Managing Urban Europe Initiative was launched in 2006 through the MUE-25 project resulting in Integrated Management System (IMS) guidelines published in 2008. Now the work is further carried on by the CHAMP project aiming to create a full capacity development package with practical tools and methods for cities to start implementing IMS. But the vision goes even further with the idea of having National Training Hubs for continuous support to cities on their sustainability work. This would include an EU wide network of National Training Hubs and other supporting organisations.

Different organisations working on integrated sustainability management (Covenant of Mayors Office, REC, Aalborg Commitments Secretariat, ICLEI, UBC, DG Regio, DG Environment, Ambiente Italia, and Lake Constance Foundation) gathered in a meeting organised by CHAMP during the Open Days in Brussels in October 2010. The meeting resulted in a recognition and common agreement on the existing problems mentioned above and in the need for cooperation to be able to create long-term support structures for mainstreaming and concretising integrated sustainability management in cities.

A good spirit of cooperation created strong trust in possibilities to build up the necessary structures. It was decided that a wider roundtable will be organised in early 2011 to find support for institutionalisation of and organise long-term support structures for integrated sustainability management.

The stage is open for all interested organisations.

You may contact **Pekka Salminen** ([firstname.surname@ubc.net](mailto:firstname.surname@ubc.net)) for more information. See also: [www.localmanagement.eu](http://www.localmanagement.eu).

A Managing Urban Europe Initiative  
**CHAMP**  
Local Response to Climate Change



# Improving quality of life in four Healthy Cities

Text: **Agnieszka Ilola**

Photos: **city of Klaipeda** and **city of Pärnu**

## The Central Park of Culture and Exercise in Turku

Turku is the European Capital of Culture in year 2011. The Central Park of Culture and Exercise is one of the cultural projects for the well-being and community enhancement aiming to make the city attractive and liveable. Project includes creation of functional works of art, exercise routes with a cultural theme, paddling and rowing, outdoor events and a Dream Park. According to the plan, the project will build three new quays for paddling and rowing to the banks of River Aura by summer 2011. In addition, the river banks will feature a mapped out route that combines cultural content with exercise pathways. A Dream Park, especially targeted at children, young people and senior citizens, will be built within the Sports Park area and the first stage of the Dream Park will be ready during 2011.

You can familiarize with the project also during Solutions local, together -Conference 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2011 in Turku Finland, as it is one of the praxis options of the conference.

The underlying spirit of WHO Healthy Cities Network is continuous improvement of health and quality of life of the citizens. Furthermore, it seeks to enhance the holistic well-being of city inhabitants and strives to promote effectively the health among all society groups. Following four examples from the Healthy Cities Network in Baltic Sea Region present how the diverse dimensions of quality of life can be addressed.

## Promoting health in Klaipeda

One of the main goals of approved Strategic Plan of the city of Klaipeda for the years 2013-2020 is the improvement of life conditions, social safety and quality of the natural environment in the city. In line with this strategy, the city has undertaken many innovative actions towards the improvement of quality of life of its citizens. In 2008, the Public Health Bureau (PHB) was established to monitor and develop the health conditions of the city and to actively promote healthy lifestyle among the citizens. For the past two years, the Health Bureau has organised various events and projects to activate citizens and form responsible attitude towards health. Recently, the Health Department of the Klaipeda University started a programme "Exercises for citizens" which offers sport facilities free of charge for all citizens in different districts of the city. In line with this, a video contest "Healthy Cities - a healthy person" was launched and open for all citizens.

## Good health can design better world in Jurmala

Project "Good health can design better world" is one of the most recent undertakings of the Social Care Centre of the city of Jurmala, Latvia. It aims to improve health and recovery conditions for citizens by offering them individual and free of charge consultations on physical activities. Project target group consists of elderly people and people with special needs (rehabilitation patients, disable people, patients with serious injuries and chronic diseases etc.). Altogether, 5974 lessons were performed by medical specialists and 1188 patients received consultation on healthy lifestyle and physical activities that were tailored to their needs.

All of the patients involved in the project wish to continue the health recovery physical activities in the future and more than the half of participants acknowledged great positive impact of the project in their everyday life.



## Pärnu invites citizens to outdoor activities

Pärnu has been Estonia's Summer Capital since 1996. It is well-known for its hospitality and tourist attractions. In order to achieve this status, Pärnu has been systematically improving the quality of the natural environment and investing in the modern and healthy urban planning.

The Beach promenade and Pärnu Rannapark (Beachpark) are among the most attractive places where citizens can spend time and build up their social networks. Long coastline provides many opportunities to enjoy hobbies – nordic walking, jogging, walking and bicycling. One of the most important recent undertakings is the reconstruction of Pärnu Vallikäär (renovated 2010-2011) – a part of the fortifications of the medieval town.



### More information:

Jurmala: [Saulstari.org@inbox.lv](mailto:Saulstari.org@inbox.lv)

Klaipeda: [vytautas@sveikatosbiuras.lt](mailto:vytautas@sveikatosbiuras.lt)

Pärnu: [piret.sai@lv.parnu.ee](mailto:piret.sai@lv.parnu.ee)

Turku: [katja.tattalainen@turku.fi](mailto:katja.tattalainen@turku.fi)



# Great opportunities for cycling in Karlstad

Text: **Per-Olof Haster** Photo: **city of Karlstad**

When it comes to short work trips, it is known that there is a sufficient potential to replace the car by cycling or walking. In Karlstad the cycle is used for 15 % of the journeys, but only for 2 % of the total journey distance. People who want to start cycling can look forward to the improvements. A separate overview has recently been made of the general cycle networks. Over 30 millions Swedish crowns during three years are invested for remedying dangerous crossing points and improving road direction signs among other things.

Karlstad is a beautiful city to explore by bike. Many cycle tracks stretch along the great river, the lakes and the parks. It's easy to find picnic places or places adaptable for fishing. For that reason some guides for bicycle trips have been produced. These are:

- Nature bike; four different bicycle tours/rides in the Karlstad countryside.
- Culture bike; three different bicycle tours/rides which include stories about the history, art and the architecture
- Klarälvbanan, an old railway which nowadays is asphalted. The tour is a nature, culture and adventure along 90 kilometres with out any car traffic. It is ideal for cycling and inline skating.

## Renting bike for free and planning trips on the web

During summertime bikes can be borrowed for free in the centre of Karlstad. These bicycles called "The sun bike" have become a popular and easy way to get to know Karlstad and its surround-

Karlstad already has a relatively well-developed cycle network that incorporates 250 kilometres of separated cycle tracks. One of the visions of the Karlstad Municipality is to create a sustainable transport system where, of course, cycling has a central part. The goal is to enable more people to choose cycling instead of driving a car.



ings. Every year about 10 000 citizens and tourist borrow these bikes. If you are unsure of how to go from one point to another by bike in Karlstad you nowadays can use the Bicycle Trip Planner on the web. With this web application it is possible to calculate the route and approximate travel time for the cycle tour. Also the needed map can be selected between various points.

## Public bicycle pump and cycle counter

Thanks to a high-quality statistic, it is known how many cars move on the streets. How many bikes there are, on the other hand, was not known, that is why two public cycle counters were settled up along the most frequent cycle tracks in the centre of Karlstad. The latest measures are two public bicycle tyre pumps

available in the centre of the city. This means that all cyclists in Karlstad have the possibility to pump their tyres for free.

Finally, following measures are ongoing or planned for developing new concepts aiming to motivate people to go by bike instead of choosing the car:

- Preparation of a new cycle plan.
- Increase co-operation with public transport companies and encourage them to finance support for cycle measures such as cycle parking at bus stops.
- Campaign for better and safer cycling behaviour.
- Develop Park&Ride systems with cycle shelters.

### More information:

Per-Olof Haster, Transport advisor  
per-olof.haster@karlstad.se  
Tel: +46 54 297303



# UBC and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Text: Björn Grönholm

UBC has been actively involved in both the planning and now in the implementation of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Both the new UBC Strategy and the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010 – 2015 identify the EU's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as one of the most important policy processes to follow during the upcoming years.

The first Annual Forum for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was held on 14-15 October 2010 in Tallinn, Estonia. After a years' implementation of this strategy, the Annual Forum gathered stakeholders for an evaluation of the progress and to have a constructive dialogue on the results and successes, as well as areas that need improvement.

The overall conclusion of the Forum was that the Strategy is actively addressing the relevant problems but also the potentials of the region as the Strategy is seen as an important process for further development of the Baltic Sea Region. For the moment, the implementation of the Strategy is ongoing. Implementing the Strategy is a challenging task in a region with broad diversity during a period of financial problems.

In many discussions during the Forum, concerns were raised in relation to problematic alignment of funding, which is still too much distance to the involvement of the grassroots level and the need for more involvement of the private sector. The importance of a sustained political momentum was also stressed in the discussions.

The discussions will be reflected in the work plan of the Strategy for 2011 where especially the problematic areas will be given even more attention to.

Several of the issues/problems are relevant for UBC and in particularly for our member cities. The UBC is following the progress and discussion connected to the strategy and several of the flagship activities. These flagships concern, for example, cleaner wastewater, clean shipping, climate change adaptation and energy related issues - all with the focus to further develop a more sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

The Annual Forum gathered 560 stakeholders, including representation from the EU Commission, national governments, local and regional authorities, private sector representatives, NGOs and various experts.

#### More information:

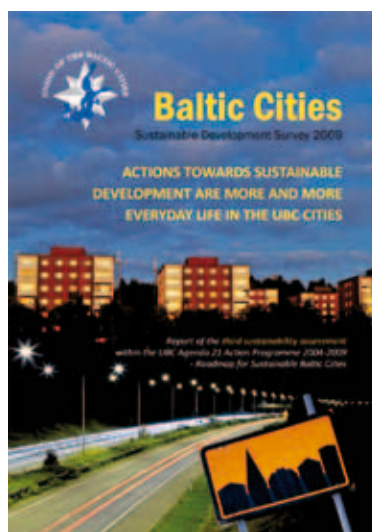
Björn Grönholm, Head of Secretariat  
UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat  
[firstname.surname@ubc.net](mailto:firstname.surname@ubc.net)

## Towards more sustainable local authorities

### Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2009

Text: Björn Grönholm Photo: Tero Wester

The Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2009 has finally been published. The findings of the survey show that development towards a more sustainable local authorities can be found more or less in all of the UBC cities. Sustainable development is today one of the main principles for cities striving towards becoming efficient, successful and attractive. Among the UBC cities, we have clear forerunner cities that are also internationally well-known. Motivating though is that sustainability strategies and programmes can be found more and more not only in strategies, but also in actions in a majority of our UBC cities. The survey can be found on the UBC Commission on Environment homepage: [www.ubc-environment.net](http://www.ubc-environment.net).







*Creative Metropolises project - the Rotermann quarter in Tallinn.*

# INTERREG IVC – better policies for innovation and the environment

Text: **Marit Lani** Photo: **Lauri Laan**

**W**hen cities or regions face a problem they cannot solve with local know-how, they often turn to other countries for solutions. Either in the field of innovation and the knowledge economy or environment and risk prevention, the INTERREG IVC interregional cooperation programme helps cities and regions to improve their policies and instruments.

Several UBC member cities are involved in interregional cooperation projects to exchange experience with partners from all over Europe. In the field of innovation, City of Jyväskylä (Finland) and Municipality of Gävle (Sweden) share their experience of supporting innovation in medium-sized cities in the **CLIQ** project. A quadruple helix concept involving the civil society is used to support innovation in medium-sized cities by using the creative potential of ordinary citizens. In the **INNOHUBS** project, the City of Nacka (Sweden) brings together cities on the edge of European major capitals to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

Several cities are sharing their experience of supporting creative industries. The City of Klaipėda is leading the project **CITIES**, which has its main focus on revitalising abandoned, regressive and traditional city zones. Klaipėda is sharing their good practice of the Art Dock cultural space with partners from five other European countries. The **Creative Metropolises** project is about raising awareness about creative industries and supporting the creative sector. This partnership, led by the City of Riga, also includes the capital cities of Helsinki, Tallinn, and Vilnius.

In the field of information society, the City of Tampere (Finland) is leading the **eCitizen II** project, with also the City of Tartu (Estonia) involved in the partnership. This project improves interaction between citizens and public authorities. The partnership shares over 20 good practices to accelerate the development of e-government, including Tampere's experience in designing, developing and implementing e-participation tools.

Working with environment and risk prevention, the City of Vilnius (Lithuania) is learning from other **B-TEAM** project partners

about the use of brownfields. The City of Malmö (Sweden) is a partner in the **GRaBS** project, which is integrating climate change adaptation into urban planning. Malmö shares its experience of the multi-functional integration of green infrastructure (e.g. gardens, parks, green roofs) and blue infrastructure (water bodies, streams, sustainable drainage systems).

## New call in 2011

INTERREG IVC provides funding for interregional cooperation across Europe. It is implemented under the European Community's territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund. The overall objective of the programme is to **improve the effectiveness of regional and local policies**. Each project builds on the exchange of experience among partners responsible for the development of local and regional policies.

The areas of support are innovation and the knowledge economy as well as environment and risk prevention. Depending on their country, partners from the EU can receive 75 %-85 % of ERDF co-financing. Norwegian partners can receive up to 50 % Norwegian national co-funding. So far 122 projects have been approved involving more than 1300 partners. The fourth call for proposals is open from 1 December 2010 until 1 April 2011.

## More information:

INTERREG IVC Information Point North  
Marit Lani and Ilze Ciganska  
Tel. +49 381 45484 5292 / 5210  
IP-North@interreg4c.eu  
www.interreg4c.eu

# SNOOP produces important information for the decision-makers about Baltic Sea shipping and its emissions



Text and photos: **Anu Keltaniemi**

Air quality in the cities is one of the major concerns for many European citizens. It is also an area in which the European Union has paid attention and been most active. For over 30 years, the Commission has been working to improve air quality by controlling emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere, by improving fuel quality and by integrating environmental protection requirements into the transport and energy sectors. According to Clean Air for Europe impact assessment, shipping is fast becoming the biggest source of air pollution in the EU, unless more action is taken.

International Maritime Organization has been working to reduce air emissions from shipping, and after the revised MARPOL 73/78 Annex VI (see next page) came into force on 1st of July 2010, shipping-induced SOx and NOx emissions are regulated stricter.

Ports are often situated near the cities and for this reason their emissions may have influence on air quality of the cities and thus also on human health. The Shipping-induced NOx and SOx emissions - OPERational monitoring network (SNOOP) project focuses on shipping-induced emissions of NOx, SOx, CO, CO2 and particular matters. The project studies emissions of ships in the port areas of Helsinki, Turku and Tallinn, and onboard. One task of the SNOOP project is to produce policy-relevant, scientifically based information on emissions and about their effects on marine environment and human health. The cause-effect chains are studied by monitoring ambient air quality and estimating its human health effects in harbour areas, by modelling the nitrogen input from ships exhaust emissions to marine environment and the impact of nitrogen emissions on marine environment.

During the previous months the project has developed a totally new scenario for NOx, SOx, and CO2 emissions that make it possible to estimate emissions until 2040. The first future scenarios were published already in 2007 within the ShipNODEff project and now those scenarios have been updated to include also SOx and CO2 emissions. The scenario shows that the NOx emissions of shipping continue to increase if Baltic NECA will not come true.



CENTRAL BALTIC  
INTERREG IV A  
PROGRAMME  
2007-2013



EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND  
**INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE**

*This story reflects the authors views and the Managing Authority of Central Baltic INTERREG IV A programme 2007-2013 cannot be held liable for the information published by the project partners.*



# Revitalization of the Prince's route in Słupsk

Text: **Justyna Pluta** Photo: **City of Słupsk**

The project, part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, includes many different infrastructure operations. These include, for example, rebuilding roads, construction of the alley and walking- bicycle routes, construction of a rainwater collector, renovation of 15 buildings located in the downtown streets, construction and development of cultural facilities (expansion of the theater, construction of the ceramic studio), construction of a social -economy building, construction of sport and recreation infrastructure etc. The project involves 15 housing communities where 15 historical buildings will be renovated. These buildings belong to the housing associations who are the partners of the City.

In addition to the typical infrastructure activities, the project also provides realization of social actions, which are to counteract negative occurrences observed in the area covered by the project. Modern dance courses and classes, circus, stilts and ceramics activities, art therapy, photographic, theatrical and dance classes are to be organized in the area. In order to facilitate the return of the unemployed residents into the labor market, foreign language classes as well as psychological support will be provided. To improve the citizen's health and fitness, sport and martial arts classes will also be provided.

'Revitalization of the Prince's route in Słupsk' – project is a good example of increasing quality of life. It is the first problem area of the local revitalization programme of the City of Słupsk for the years 2009-2015', through which the attractiveness of the region is significantly increased.



*Słupsk NGO Center and the Social Economy and the expansion of the Rondo Theatre.*

#### More information:

Justyna Pluta  
Department of City Development, Słupsk Municipality  
[j.pluta@um.slupsk.pl](mailto:j.pluta@um.slupsk.pl)

The new Annex VI contains provisions allowing for special "SOx Emission Control Areas" to be established with more stringent control on sulphur emissions. The Baltic Sea is designated as a SOx Emission Control area in the Protocol. The Annex VI contains as well limits on emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from diesel engine. These so called Tier standards (Tier I, Tier II and Tier III) define emission levels for marine diesel engines installed on ships after certain construction year. Tier III is the strictest one: ships constructed on or after 1.1.2016 will have abatement of 80 % from the level of Tier I emissions. However, Tier III will be applied only in the special sea areas which are designated by the IMO. The Baltic Sea is not a NOx emission control area (NECA) but the application of Baltic NECA is under consideration by the HELCOM countries. Baltic Sea NECA is included in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP).

*SNOOP is financed by Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013 and Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) of Southwest Finland. The total budget of the project is approximately 1.3 MEUR.*

*During the three-year (2009–2012) project nine Finnish and Estonian SNOOP partners: City of Turku (Lead Partner), Finnish Meteorological Institute, HSY Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority, Centre for Maritime Studies of University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Estonian Environmental Research Centre and Tallinn University of Technology / Marine Systems Institute work together to produce policy-relevant, scientifically based information on emissions from shipping and their effects.*

#### More information:

Anu Keltaniemi, Project manager, city of Turku  
[anu.keltaniemi@turku.fi](mailto:anu.keltaniemi@turku.fi) <http://snoop.fmi.fi>



2010 is the year of international biodiversity. Biological diversity namely abundance of animals and plants disappears due to two reasons: our planet and its natural evolution, and the activities of human beings. There is still much to do in this sphere.

## Learning biodiversity in Panevėžys

Text & photo: **Zita Tverkute**

Having in mind the importance of this issue, the decision-makers of the Panevėžys City Council allocated 260 sq.m. land to pupils of the Nature School in 2009. The environmental educational project *Let us grow together* will be implemented there. The aim of the project is to develop general and environmental knowledge of children about growing and observing plants in natural environment - in the garden of the Nature School. There are perfect conditions for agriculture: a big land plot with natural water reservoirs near by, natural fertilisers - compost made at the school. Ten pre-school groups from kindergartens took part in this project implemented by the teachers of Nature School and also the EU volunteers. The teachers provided children with seeds, while the parents as project partners, dressed the children in a proper way, and gave working equipment and snacks.



In June 2010, the children came to school to see how the vegetables and herbs they had planted were growing. For many children it is a wonderful experience and fun, just proving that growing for themselves is useful and gives a lot of joy.

### More information:

Zita Tverkute, Head of Ecology Department  
City Municipality Panevėžys  
z.tverkute@panevezys.lt  
Tel: +370 45 501 316

## Communities with the Power to change

Text: **Carsten Rothballer**, ICLEI and **Esther Kreutz-Hassinen**, UBC

Local authorities play a key role in decreasing emissions as well as making their citizens aware of the climate change. They are the actors that face huge challenges but also have a great power to make a change happen. On European level several processes have been initiated for local governments, to get involved with the topic practically. As UBC we represent over 100 cities in the Baltic Sea Region and for all of our members climate change issues have a high priority as it includes urgent matters like energy, traffic, urban planning and resource management. As a city network we follow the European processes and want to inform our cities about what is going on, as well as, we want to encourage them to become active and express their ideas and needs so that the voice of local authorities will be heard on the higher policy levels. This article introduces two initiatives, where UBC is taking part as a network and into which all member cities are encouraged to actively involve themselves.

The European Union is leading the global fight against climate change, and has made it a top priority. Its targets are expressed in the EU Climate Action and Energy Package, which commits Member States to decrease their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 20% by 2020. Current discussions within DG Climate and the Committee of the Regions even envisage a more ambitious reduction target of 30% by 2020.



# What exactly is the Covenant of Mayors?

Text: **Stella Aaltonen** Photo: **Tero Wester**



**The Covenant of Mayors is the first and most ambitious European Commission initiative directly targeting the local level and their citizens to take the lead in the fight against climate change. All signatories make a voluntary commitment to go beyond EU objectives in terms of reduction in CO2 emissions. Since**

**its launch in 2008, the initiative has grown to include more than 2 000 towns and cities. Why should cities join?**

The signatories make a clear public statement that they are committed to CO2 reduction and working with climate change issues. They can share their own expertise and benefit from other examples, as well as, publicise their achievements to a broader public and on the EU level.

The European Commission has committed itself to support local authorities involved in the Covenant of Mayors with offering assistance through the Covenant of Mayors Office. They provide clear technical guidelines and templates for implementation, as well as, support with media work. Not least, the European Commission has committed to mobilize financial facilities and political support at EU level.



*Answers provided by **Esther Kreutz-Hassinen**, Project coordinator for CHAMP project, UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat.*

## What is a supporting structure?

There are currently over 100 supporting structures for the Covenant of Mayors. They are public administrations that can provide strategic guidance, financial and technical support to municipalities that join the Covenant of Mayors, but are lacking the skills and /or resources to fulfil its requirements. These Supporting Structures can be national and regional public bodies, counties, provinces, networks, etc. UBC became a supporting structure in June 2010. This means, UBC is promoting the initiative among its members, is a contact for the Covenant of Mayors Office and is part of several project applications to get additional resources for practically supporting our member cities. More information about this will be received by end of year 2010.

A good opportunity to join the Covenant of Mayors is offered at the Solutions local, together Conference in Turku, Finland 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2011 where a signatory ceremony will be held!

*In this Questions & Answers' Corner we bring interesting issues into discussion.*



## The Covenant of Mayors – 31 UBC member cities have already joined

The Covenant of Mayors is an ambitious initiative of the European Commission directly targeting the local level to take the lead in the fight against climate change. UBC is a supporting structure for the Covenant of Mayors, more information about the initiative you find in Q's corner above. Information about the Covenant of Mayors: [www.eumayors.eu](http://www.eumayors.eu).

## LG Action project – climate change advocacy for the local level

What would your community like to tell decision-makers in Brussels? In a unique short-term networking action involving cities, towns and local government associations from 30 European countries, the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme co-funded the project called LG Action. It explores challenges and needs that the local governments are facing in the current climate and energy context. Input collected thus far points to a daunting range of challenges confronting municipalities, and points, among others, to the need for improved enabling framework conditions – beyond their mandate to create. Among these some key issues that were repeatedly highlighted include: a better flow

of concise and useful (policy and technical) information to help local decision-making and implementation, improved legislation and national standards that support or allow action (vis-à-vis blocking or passively hampering action), easier access to financing for sustainable energy projects (also for smaller communities) with reduced bureaucracy in application procedures, and a fairer sharing of national tax income to provide capacity for local action (e.g. adequate staff numbers with relevant expertise).

Further to the above the project consortium, led by the European climate team of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, is busy identifying potential benchmarks relevant to dialogues of the local-national governments that can be recommended for replication in Europe. A number of local government associations and networks, including UBC are supporting this project, helping to mobilise their members to become engaged in international and European climate and energy debate. UBC encourages its members to submit input into the final call for "local government positioning". Tools for input are available at: [www.lg-action.eu](http://www.lg-action.eu). The paper will be published and presented to the European Commission in spring next year.

# The Dark and the Street Lights Challenge

Text: **Eva Hjalmered** Photo: **Pixel Factory**

In public space, the city inhabitants have different expectations and demands over their own environment. Architectural Lighting Design does interfere with people's perception of the urban set and a positive relation is expected to be made when it comes to the use of LED lighting. This task, apparently easy at first glance, very rapidly turns out revealing its sensitiveness and complexity: the public and others interests on the development of the city, different cultures, many social priorities and urban politics.

- Lighting is a huge part of the energy costs of the municipalities. It is important to find new and energy saving alternatives for our big lighting costs. A significant factor is to take safety and wellbeing in consideration. Can we make these changes user friendly and attractive, the impact is even greater, says **Eva Hjalmered** from the UBC Energy Commission.

The LED project organizes an international design development competition to create a series of Outdoor LED Lighting Products (also known as "Luminaires") and a site specific Lighting Design that add value to a specific public space. The competition is held among designers of universities. The main targeted universities are in the academic fields of: Lighting design,

Industrial and Product Design as well as Urban Design, Architecture and Arts. The goal is to rethink the lighting in public space in general, and the LED lighting technology in particular, its design potential and its contribution to the future sustainability of the cities.





- Technology, design and users' needs are important aspects of LED. Cluster building between researchers, light fitting producers, civil servants and decision-makers for know-how exchange is one of the targets of the project. In this cross-border cooperation, we aim at defining and help responding to the users' needs considering the combination of LED technology and design potential. This work is led by the Linnaeus University in Kalmar/Växjö., says **José Nuno Sampaio** from the Linnaeus University.

The winning product and designer will be announced in Kalmar in April 2011. Besides the award, the winners will be presented at EUROLUCE 2011 – Salon Atelite, in Milan, Italy, 12-17th of April 2011.

For more information about the project, please visit [www.ledlightproject.eu](http://www.ledlightproject.eu).

**LED – Light in Public Space** is an EU-project running from 2009 to 2012 and involves 15 partners in the South Baltic Region. The aim is to provide facts for a conversion of public space lighting to versatile LED technology, based on a pedestrian perspective and other quality criteria. Technology, design and user's needs are important aspects of LED. One component of the project targets at cluster building between researchers, light fitting producers, civil servants and decision-makers for know-how exchange. The UBC Energy Commission is Component Leader for the information and dissemination of the LED-project.



Part-financed by the European Union  
(European Regional Development Fund).

### Upcoming Commission meeting

The Energy Commission and the Commission on Environment will hold a joint web meeting via Adobe Connect, the 16th of November. All members are invited to this meeting. To participate you need a web-camera and a headset. If you wish to participate, please contact Eva Hjalmered, [eva.hjalmered@ubcenergy.org](mailto:eva.hjalmered@ubcenergy.org) and we will send you more information. Hope to "see" you soon!

The UBC Energy Commission is part of the Union of Baltic Cities, for more information please visit [www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net).

## EPID - Internet web communication system increases environmental awareness and decreases energy bill in Mariehamn

Text: **Jan Westerberg**

Since 2001, environmental performance of Mariehamn has been monitored, and information has been stored in an online database. The web solution has been used for reporting and presenting information accumulated in the database.

A couple of years ago, the reporting tool was adapted to the Energy Declaration of Buildings Act. Today, the yearly "Energy Declarations" for every public building of Mariehamn can be found on the city's website. The personnel responsible for the maintenance of the buildings have found the tool useful as they insert information to the Environmental Performance Information Database (EPID).

One of the targets when creating the EPID was to make personnel aware of the environmental priorities, as well as to increase their involvement in environmental work

within the city organization. With raising energy costs, it has been easy to increase motivation. However, the tool has also been very useful in the budget planning process when investments in energy saving measures have been discussed.

The EPID of Mariehamn is used for environmental management and reporting of the different kinds of environmental procedures. The examples are ship engine emissions from the Port of Mariehamn, road traffic, waste management, waste water treatment and sea recipient control etc. Graphs produced by EPID have continuously been studied by decision-makers. Consequently, the EPID has shown to be important for increasing environmental awareness in real life.

**More information (in Swedish):**

[http://mhmiljo.justit.ax/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=MHS\\_Miljodatabas&-loadframes](http://mhmiljo.justit.ax/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=MHS_Miljodatabas&-loadframes)

One of the main environmental impacts caused by activities mainly controlled by the City of Mariehamn is emissions caused by the energy consumption of public buildings.



## Short News

### ELTIS+ provides sustainable urban mobility information and trainings

The three-year ELTIS+ project on promoting and enhancing sustainable urban mobility across Europe started in summer 2010. UBC Commission on Environment is one of the project partners. The project develops and offers a range of new services to the European Local Transport Information Service (ELTIS) web portal ([www.eltis.org](http://www.eltis.org)). The ELTIS portal provides information and supports the exchange of experience in the field of urban and regional transport in Europe. ELTIS gives the user the opportunity to explore best practices from European cities and regions and to search for specific transport solutions. ELTIS is aimed at everyone involved in improving mobility, transport efficiency and safety as well as reducing the environmental impacts of transport.

The promotion of the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) and the acceleration of the development and uptake of SUMPs by local and regional authorities across Europe is the other part of the project. Series of SUMP training workshops, study tours and road show events will be organized across Europe in 2011-2012. The events are targeted to politicians, decision makers and local and regional actors on transport, energy, health and environmental sectors.

**More information:** Sakari Saarinen, UBC EnvCom, [firstname.surname@ubc.net](mailto:firstname.surname@ubc.net)

### Environmental cooperation between Finnish cities and St Petersburg

The 4<sup>th</sup> two year programme period 2010-2011 of the environmental cooperation between Finnish cities and the Committee for Nature Use, Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety of the City of St Petersburg has started with new and old cooperation themes funded by the Finnish Ministry of Environment

The cooperation programme with the City of St Petersburg was launched already in 2003. The programme is based on city level peer to peer support and cooperation. This has proven to be very effective mode of cooperation as the level of bureaucracy and politics is minimal while all efforts are put on concrete actions, learning and results.

The overall objective of the cooperation programme is to support the capacity building of the environmental administration of the partner cities in order to improve the level of environmental planning, management and monitoring.

During the years 2010-2011, the cooperation projects will concentrate mainly on hazardous waste management, air quality monitoring, awareness raising and remediation of contaminated soils. Finnish partner cities are Turku, Helsinki, Lahti, Tampere and Kotka. Also some companies together with the Baltic Sea Institute and Finnish Meteorological Institute are giving their expertise to some of the projects while UBC Environmental and Sustainable Development Secretariat is coordinating the programme.

**More information:** [www.stp-fi-envco.net](http://www.stp-fi-envco.net)

### PURE partners work for a clean Baltic Sea in progress

PURE – Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication has been running already for over a year. During the summer and autumn 2010, Riga Water Ltd. has continued to invest in the phosphorus removal and sludge management at the Daugavgriva waste water treatment plant. At the same time the project consultant, Pöyry Finland Oy, has been auditing the waste water treatment plants of the project partners in Brest, Gdansk, Szczecin, Kohtla-Järve and Jurmala. These technical audit reports, suggesting the most feasible way for improving the phosphorous removal, will be ready during the autumn. Based on the results, Brest and Jurmala will invest with the project funding during years 2011-2012. Altogether the project partners aim at annual reduction of 300-500 tons of eutrophying phosphorus from the treated waste waters.

With the help of the environmental department of Mariehamn the project has started to develop a database that will be used to collect and update information about municipal waste water treatment performance in the Baltic Sea catchment area. In order to further encourage the municipalities to improve their waste water treatment, also a new concept of *HELCOM Green list* has been launched. The list will present municipalities and water utilities that voluntarily are reaching the HELCOM recommendations in waste water treatment.

For more information about the project and its upcoming events visit [www.purebalticsea.eu](http://www.purebalticsea.eu) or contact project coordinator Eija Eloranta ([firstname.surname@ubc.net](mailto:firstname.surname@ubc.net))



Part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument)

### BSR InnoShip project – Baltic Sea cooperation for reducing ship and port emissions

The Baltic Sea Region programme project BSR InnoShip will start in October 2010. The project will promote a new and innovative transnational approach to meet different needs and interests of the maritime sector and to ensure a more viable management of the Baltic Sea resources. The project will provide necessary knowledge and best practices for the policy- and decision-makers in development and joint implementation of national and transnational policies, strategies and practical measures to implement the international low emission requirements. The project is a part of a flagship project under the Priority Area four in the EU Strategy and Action Plan for the Baltic Sea Region. UBC EnvCom will be responsible for Work Package 5 which aims at facilitating and promoting awareness raising and exchange of experience and knowledge.

**More information:** Mia Hytti, [firstname.surname@ubc.net](mailto:firstname.surname@ubc.net)



Part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument)



# UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat

Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is a network of 106 cities from all ten Baltic Sea countries, with an overriding goal of contributing to the democratic, social, cultural and environmentally sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. UBC Commission on Environment (UBC EnvCom) is one of the 13 commissions of the UBC.

Practical work of the Commission is carried out by UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat. Its services for the cities include for example organising meetings and policy work, preparing documents and publications, initiating and running projects, and consulting and training. The Secretariat carries out Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Surveys biannually, publishes Baltic Cities Environmental bulletin, and offers Good Practice Database for local authorities at [www.ubcwheel.eu](http://www.ubcwheel.eu).

The current staff of Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat consists of 16 professionals working fulltime for the UBC.



EnvCom,  
Turku

Our  
aims

Baltic  
Sea



Photo: Tero Wester

Projects



InnoShip - ELTISplus - PURE - CHAMP - NEW BRIDGES  
- MATRUSCHKA - SUSTAINMENT - BUSTRIP - MUE-25 -  
NewHansa ... just to mention a few.

Contact  
us

Our address is:  
UBC Environment and Sustainable  
Development Secretariat  
Baltic Sea House  
Vanha Suurtori 7  
FIN -20500 Turku, Finland

[environment@ubc.net](mailto:environment@ubc.net)  
Tel: +358 2 262 3172  
Fax: 358 2 262 3425

[www.ubc-environment.net](http://www.ubc-environment.net)

# RATKAISUJA

lähellä, yhdessä

# LÖSNINGAR

nära, tillsammans

# SOLUTIONS

local, together

## **Earth - Urban planning for citizens and nature**

Sustainable Urban Transport

Creative Urban Planning

Diversity of Nature

## **Water - Water for life**

Water and recreation

State of the Baltic Sea

Water and climate change

## **Air - Climate and energy**

Processes to tackle climate change

Eco- and energy - efficient technology

Renewable energy

## **Fire - Inner inspiration - knowledge, new skills and partnership**

Education and learning for sustainable development

Rethinking working methods

Sustainable consumption and lifestyles



**Nordic Conference on Sustainable Development in the  
Baltic Sea Region, 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2011 in Turku, Finland**

**[www.solutions2011.fi](http://www.solutions2011.fi)**