

**European Dialogue on Local Agenda 21**

**Baltic  
Roundtable on  
Local  
Environmental  
Policy**

**18 -19 May 2000 Turku, Finland**

**Report**



Editor:  
Risto Veivo

Layout:  
Sari Bowie

Publisher:  
Union of the Baltic Cities  
Commission on Environment

Linnankatu 61  
FIN-20100 Turku  
Finland

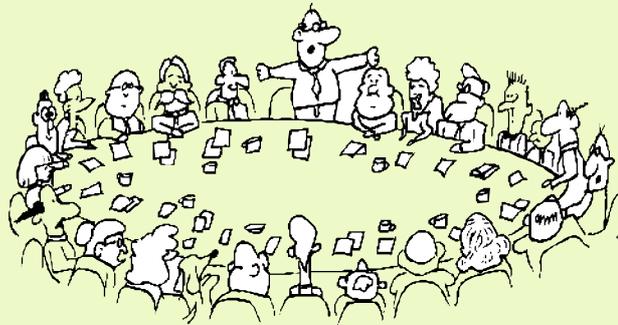
Tel: +358-2-230 2202  
Fax: +358-2-253 8613

E-mail: [ubcenv@netti.fi](mailto:ubcenv@netti.fi)  
[www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net)

Published in October 2000  
ISBN 951-97743-4-3

Printing house:  
Newprint Ltd.  
Turku, Finland

Reporters at the event:  
Risto Veivo  
Sanna Ahvenharju  
Sirpa Laine



The Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy was co-organised by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), in co-operation and liaison with International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), Åbo Akademi University, European Commission DG Environment, European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (The Campaign), Baltic 21 and Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum (BLA21F).

The roundtable is the first event of the Success Factors in Local Environmental Policy for Local Agenda 21 and EU Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region Project (SUFA Project, 2000-2001), which is a common project of the UBC, ICLEI and Åbo Akademi University. In addition to the project partners, the project is co-funded by the European Commission DG Environment, Finnish Ministry of the Environment, and the City of Turku. The organisers of the Roundtable wish to extend their warmest thanks to the European Commission for co-funding the event.

The report reflects the authors' views. The European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.



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Photo: Barbara Anton / ICLEI



Photo: Jori Liimatainen / Turku Cultural Centre

# Foredialogue: Networking for the Future

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*Sauli:* I was not really surprised for the active participation, but still the enthusiasm was stunning. It was good to see that the co-operation between the ministries and local authorities is increasing so much.

*Mikko:* Yes, that's right Sauli, and it is really not only about money. It is also the mental and political support that makes a lot of difference.

*Sauli:* I guess you are making a good point. If I think of our experiences in the national commission for sustainable development in Finland, I suppose most important has been the feeling of making policies together. But do you mean that money doesn't make a difference?

*Mikko:* Oh no, of course state financial support is important. But still it is the municipalities that make the biggest contributions through their own budgets.

*Sauli:* Somehow I am a little bit glad to hear that... No, to be serious I must say that I am afraid you are right.

*Mikko:* And I think that most important is to use the scarce resources in the right way. It should be money for the seeds rather than bread, I

mean that for example pilot activities and exchange should be supported.

*Sauli:* That sounds like EU policy. What did you actually think of Susann Pauli's presentation?

*Mikko:* I think the best news was the Community framework for co-operation on sustainable urban development. The legal basis for supporting our sustainability work is very important.

*Sauli:* Yes, it is necessary that the crucial role of Local Agenda 21 in implementing environmental policy goals and improving policy processes will be explicitly recognised by the European Union. On the national level we have supported LA 21 activities already for many years, and in Sweden the state has even almost forced the municipalities to work on it.

*Mikko:* Although most of Swedish municipalities probably need not have been forced...

*Sauli:* Oh no, of course they have been doing very much excellent work on their own initiative. But still I am sure that the state budget funds made available have played an essential role over there.

*Mikko:* I agree with that. But let's not focus too much on the Swedes and Finns - so much good work is currently being done in the Baltic States and Poland, and also in Russian cities.

*Sauli:* But that is obvious, and it was also reflected by most of the presentations. Isn't this nowadays also reflected in the activities of your network?

*Mikko:* Yes it is, most of the participants in UBC meetings nowadays tend to come from these countries, and they bring along lots of good examples.

*Sauli:* So there is nowadays an ongoing multiway co-operation and exchange going on in our region.

*Mikko:* That's right, and there are plenty of good networks enhancing this exchange and even co-operating quite effectively with each other.

*Sauli:* Sounds good.

## Thanks

It was our great pleasure to co-organise the Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy. We would like to Thank all the participants for their very active contributions, DG Environment for the financial support and participation at the event, the City of Turku for its hospitality, and all the partners for their support and co-operation.

In Helsinki and Turku, September 2000

*Sauli Rouhinen*

Finnish Ministry of the Environment  
(the left one in the photo)

*Mikko Jokinen*

Union of the Baltic Cities  
(the right one in the photo)

# 1. Introduction

18-19 May 2000 in Turku, Finland, the Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy gathered together forty representatives of environmental ministries, European Commission, and local authorities and their networks for dialogue on advancing local environmental policy and sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. As all the levels, i.e., local, national, regional and European, from all sides of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), were well represented, the two-day event provided a set of very seminal discussions.

The participants of the roundtable share the view that involvement of all the levels is important for achieving the goal of sustainability. One of the conclusions of the discussions was also that continuous dialogue between the levels - both nationally and internationally - is an excellent way to build basis for policy-making and increasing co-operation.

One of the basic approaches of the roundtable was also the view of Agenda 21 as a document with two main goals – environmental targets and policy procedural tools, to achieve environmental targets more easily. According to research results, Local Agenda 21 processes pave the way for a better understanding of legal environmental regulation, and for implementing targeted and cross-sector environmental actions. This fact is important for the EU accession process. Local Agenda 21 projects and processes enhance the capacity of the accession countries for environmental compliance.

In the three sessions of the roundtable, developing and supporting local environmental policies in the BSR were in focus from three main points of view:

- (1) organising national policies to support local sustainable development (e.g., national commissions on sustainable development),
- (2) EU accession and the new developments of EU Environmental Policy with regard to sustainable development in cities, and
- (3) activities and co-operation of national and international networks in the Baltic Sea Region.

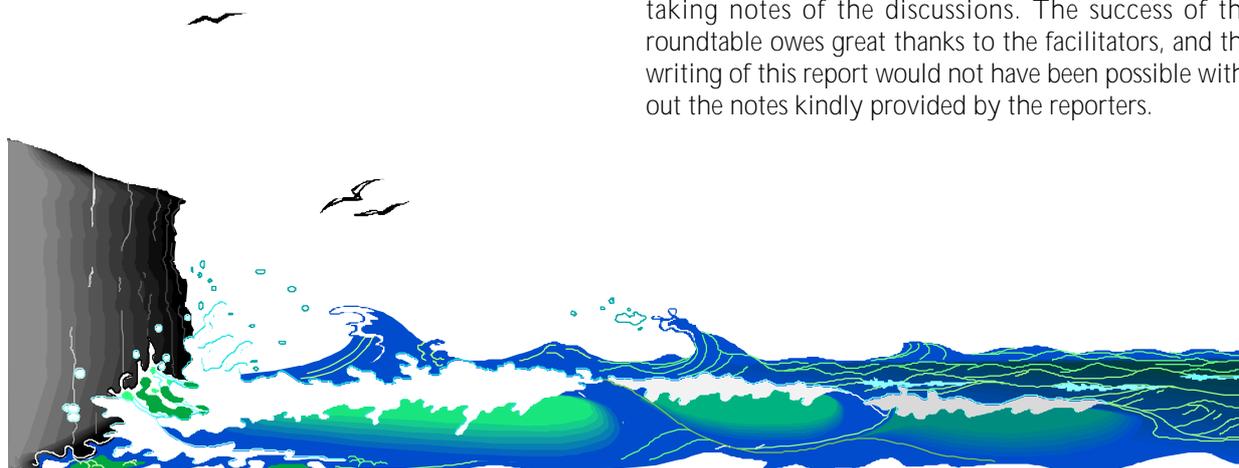
In session 1, Organising National Policies, representatives of ministries and other national level policy-making bodies from six BSR countries provided an overview of the situation and developments in each country. Specific focus was laid on the role and involvement of the local level in the national policy-making and implementation. The national level presentations were followed by commentaries from local level representatives.

In session 2, EU Enlargement, the different aspects of EU Accession in the Baltic cities were explored through several case studies from different cities. A special point of interest were the links between local Agenda 21 processes and EU accession at city level. In addition to this local point of view, an European point of view was created by Expert Ms. Susann Pauli from the European Commission DG Environment. In her presentation, she informed the roundtable of the new developments of EU policy towards advancing sustainable urban development.

Session 3, Networks, provided an overview of the future plans and current activities of different BSR/European networks in advancing sustainable development and supporting the implementation of Local Agenda 21 and European Environmental Policy in Baltic cities. As ten networks - probably all the most active ones in the BSR - were presented, the session offered a good discussion about the challenges of their work. Common problems were analysed and brief wishes towards national governments formulated.

The intention with this report is to give the reader an overview of the discussions and results of the roundtable. As altogether more than 30 brief presentations and pre-prepared commentaries were given at the event, not to mention the amount of spontaneous comments and discussion, the report will not be able to give a full picture of the whole contents of the roundtable. A contact list of all the participants and their organisations is included in the end to help the reader to achieve more information on specific topics and actors.

In each theme session, two expert facilitators set the context for the session with their introductions and catalysed the discussions. In each session, there was also a reporter taking notes of the discussions. The success of the roundtable owes great thanks to the facilitators, and the writing of this report would not have been possible without the notes kindly provided by the reporters.



## 2. Organising National Policies (Session 1)

Facilitators: Ms. Ille Allsaar, Estonian Association of Local Authorities and  
Mr. Sauli Rouhinen, Finnish Ministry of the Environment

### 2.1. Introduction

The intention with Session 1 was to provide a comparative overview of the situation in different BSR countries with regard to the role and involvement of the local level in the national policy-making and implementation. Introductory presentations were given by representatives of the ministries and or other national level policy-making bodies, followed by comments from the representatives of the local level. Final conclusions and comments were provided by Researcher Marko Joas who provided the session with a comparative overview based on research findings.

In the presentations, commentaries and discussions, the following key points were to be addressed:

- The role of the local level
- Policies and strategies for supporting the work at the local level
- National commission or working group for sustainable development (How is the co-operation of different stakeholders organised on the national level?)
- Resources for supporting the local level
- Best achievements reached so far
- Specific problems
- Stage of the process
- Lessons learnt from experiences in different countries.

Each presentation did not fully cover all the key points as formulated above. However, most of the points were covered quite satisfactorily, and it may be that the key points in any case provided a beneficial basic structure for the discussions. In the following sections, the findings will be briefly introduced country by country following the order of presentations that were given. The "key points" will provide the basic structure for the text in the sections, but this structure will not always be strictly followed. Finally, a concluding overview based on Marko Joas' presentation will be presented.

Country presentations were given by representatives from Finland (Ms. Tuire Nikulainen, Ministry), Estonia (Ms. Ülle Vaht, Ministry), Latvia (Ms. Dace Dravniece, Ministry), Lithuania (Ms. Jurate Ruoliene, Ministry), Sweden (Ms. Sophie Ljungberg, National Committee), and Poland (Ms. Ewa Lasecka-Wesolowska, Ministry).

Main commentaries of the representatives of the local level were given by Ms. Piret Kuldna (Estonia, Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre), Mr. Janis Piesins (Latvia, Union of Local and Regional Governments), Ms. Audrone Alijosiute (Lithuania, ECAT), Ms. Monika Sxyrpyt-Piotrowska (Poland, City of Gdansk), and Dr. Stanislaw Babitch (Russia, State University of Economics and Finance).

### 2.2. Finland



Ms. Tuire Nikulainen, Finnish Ministry of Environment

#### Local vs. National Level

According to Ms. Tuire Nikulainen, there have been changes in the role of the central government in recent years. The process of administrative decentralisation since the late 1980's has resulted in a situation in which national government now gives less guidance to the local resource allocation and means of service provision.

The process of institutionalisation of environmental issues in terms of organisations and regulations during 1980's was followed by development of steering instruments during 1990's. From emphasising of legal instruments the government turned towards economic and voluntary measures.

#### National Commission

Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development (FNCSD) was established in 1993. Its first task was to formulate the concept of sustainable development (SD) so that it can be applied to the Finnish circumstances. The chair of FNCSD is Prime Minister, and Minister of Environment is the co-chair. Members of the Commission include representatives of ministries and government agencies, local government, academic sector, business and productive sector, interest groups, NGOs and the indigenous Sámi people. There is also an interministerial secretariat of ca 20 people. Finnish Action for Sustainable Development (Finnish Agenda 21) was completed in 1995.

According to Ms. Nikulainen, the role of the Commission is to be a promoter of SD and an advisory body to give political guidance, promote networking and information sharing, as well as awareness raising and public participation. The Commission is a forum for discussion and consultation.

#### Resources for Supporting the Local Level

Financial resources are placed in the budgets of different ministries. There are no new financial resources as such but the resources have to be found in the existing budget points.

#### Best Achievements Reached So Far

Ms. Nikulainen stated, that the main achievement of the national policy for SD is that sustainable development work has got political weight; Agenda 21 process is still on the political agenda. National policies and action plans, as well as sectoral policies and strategies have been prepared and various sectors and groups of Finnish society have committed to a national learning process.

Competence on SD has increased in Finland, and special attention has been given to the local aspects. National government has given financial support for pilot projects of the Association of Finnish Local Authorities to advance the planning and implementation of Local Agenda 21s, and also research has been supported.

### Specific Problems

Tuire Nikulainen explained, that there is still work to be done with the integration of ecological, economic and social dimensions of SD, and integration of sectoral interests and programmes with the corresponding elements

of the government's programmes. Monitoring of the implementation has to be developed and SD indicator development completed.

One problem area is the integration of SD aspects into standard decision-making processes. Provision of resources for development efforts has to be increased and knowledge base on SD improved. According to Ms. Nikulainen, Regional Environment Centres' role in SD is too weak at the moment. More attention should be drawn to the production of promotion material, information and experience exchange, and staff training of various sectors.



## 2.3. Estonia

Keskonnaministeerium

Ms. Ülle Vaht, Estonian Ministry of Environment

parliament, NGOs, governmental institutions, business and industry. The Act on Sustainable Development was approved in 1995.

### Supporting the Local Level

As an example of supporting the local level work, Ms. Ülle Vaht presented the project Capacity 21, which contributes to the whole Agenda 21 process in Estonia. This project is co-funded by UNDP and the Ministry of the Environment. The target of the project is to create basis for sustainable economic growth, for solutions of social problems and for proper use of natural resources. In the frame of the project the first stage of the Estonian Agenda 21 process has been finalised. "Estonia in the 21 Century. Development Strategies, Visions, Options" was published in September 1999. The aim of the publication is to start an overall discussion on the prior development issues in Estonia.

Seminars on different issues are organised for the local communities to support LA 21 development processes. The aim of the seminars is to share practical experiences gained from the local agenda development and implementation processes. According to Ms. Vaht, these meetings provide also a discussion forum on national development priorities and create linkages and co-operation between the local and national levels.

To support the initiation of local level processes, the second edition of Local Agenda 21 Handbook will be issued. The book consists of the general overview of SD processes on different levels and practical guidance for local initiators.

### National Commission

The Estonian National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSD) was established in 1996. The Commission is an advisory body to the national government. NCSD is chaired by the Prime Minister. Deputy Chairmen are the Minister of Environment and Minister of Economic Affairs. The members of the Commission are nominated by academic institutions, Estonian government and

### Problems Faced

On Ms. Vaht's opinion, the obstacles to local level activities are the passiveness and lack of interest of people, the weakness of tradition to initiate and be involved in activities, the prioritisation of immediate problems over more general context, lack of leaders and insufficient motivation to act. However, the existing legal basis and historically developed sustainable attitude of the Estonian people to the surrounding environment do provide suitable grounds for the application of SD principles on all levels.

### COMMENTARIES

The main commentary from the local level point of view on the situation in Estonia was given by Ms. Piret Kuldna from Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre. In her commentary, Ms. Kuldna emphasised the following points:

- Specific budget lines in the municipalities budgets for supporting the sustainable development work at the local level would be beneficial
- Launching of sustainable development related actions and projects should be made an obligatory task for municipalities
- Local government should always be involved in the Local Agenda 21 process (mainly in a strong/leading role)
- There is a constant need of capacity-building among local governments
- Communication between the different levels of administration as well as between different stakeholders should be further improved
- Comparisons of the situations in different municipalities (both nationally and internationally) provide useful information
- The general development plans (and planning) of municipalities should be more closely connected with Local Agenda 21s, and there should be more co-operation and co-ordination between the planning in different municipal sectors.

## 2.4. Latvia

Ms. Dace Dravniece, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

### Environmental Policy Developments

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development was established in Latvia in 1993. According to Ms. Dace Dravniece, the work of the Ministry reflects a political commitment at the highest level for environment and development.

The National Environment Policy Plan for Latvia was accepted by the government in 1995. It sets out the environmental policy goals and lists policy instruments. The plan made foundation for the Action Programme, which defines priority short-term actions, investments, development of monitoring, environmental science, and public awareness. At the moment the national government is working on a new revised version of Environmental Protection Law and the second version of Environment Policy Plan for Latvia.

Latvia was also an active participant of the Baltic Agenda 21 drafting process and together with Germany undertook lead party role in the transport sector. Now implementation of the Baltic 21 has started. As a special task within Baltic 21 Latvia has undertaken the responsibility for implementing action on "Development of regional strategies to support sustainable sea transport".

### Supporting the Local Level Work

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development has developed, in accordance with National Environment Policy Plan for Latvia, sectoral environmental investment programmes in water supply and wastewater treatment, solid waste and hazardous waste management, and integrated regional development.

According to Ms. Dravniece, local municipalities were actively involved in the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project, which was financed by Phare programme and supported by the World Bank. The basic concept of the project was to promote sustainable development by active participation of local stakeholders in the development planning and decision-making. The project resulted in prioritised project initiatives, which will make a core of the investment strategy for the coastal zone area.

Ms. Dravniece explained that Local Agenda 21 activities are also under implementation in Latvia. The co-operation project between Association of Local Authorities in Latvia and Sweden on capacity building of local municipalities with regard to Local Agenda 21 is started in five cities. There is also a sub-regional approach of Local Agenda 21 undertaken in Latvia. The association of nine local Municipalities in Bartava region (West-South of Latvia) have developed Sustainable Development Action Plan and are now negotiating with Lithuanian local authorities situated by the boarder of Latvia to acquire Euro Region status.

### National Commission

Latvia is planning to set up the National Commission on Sustainable Development. It would unite representatives from the national and local governments, industry, NGOs, science and education. Legal base for this Commission requires amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection. Amendments are submitted for Parliament readings at the moment. The task of the Commission will be the development of the conception for sustainable development by involving stakeholders from various sectors of national economy, public and society groups.

### Public Participation

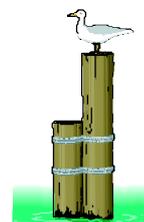
In the context of sustainable development public participation is very essential. Latvia is just starting to practice democratic instruments of public participation determined by the law on Environmental Impact Assessment, Spatial Planning and Building. For ensuring the main provisions defined by Aarhus Convention the amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection have been drafted and they are now in the Parliament. They define the duties of state institutions and local governments for ensuring public access to environmental information and participation in the decisionmaking process.

### COMMENTARIES

The main commentary of the situation in Latvia was provided by Mr. Janis Piesins from the Latvian Union of Local Governments. Mr. Piesins started his commentary by reminding the roundtable that the re-independence of Latvia has now existed for 10 years. When evaluating the situation and the developments, this time perspective should be kept in mind.

In his commentary, Mr. Piesins underlined the following points:

- Further development of the legislation concerning the duties and work of local governments is needed
- Environmental Protection should be prioritised stronger in the future
- Democratic processes should be further developed
- Many funding sources, for example ISPA, are almost solely funding big projects with no or little local level involvement, which is not the most efficient way to reach Sustainable Development.





## 2.5. Lithuania

Ms. Jurate Ruoliene, Lithuanian Ministry of Environment Policy Developments

Despite the current absence of National Commission for Sustainable Development, the concept of sustainable development (SD) has been included in the Environmental Policy: national legal acts, strategies and programmes. It has been defined in the Lithuanian National Environmental Strategy (LNES), approved by the Parliament of Lithuania in 1996.

Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the Baltic 21 process in Lithuania and is a leading party for the Forestry sector together with Finland. With the establishment of the eighth sector - Education - in the Baltic 21, Lithuania took the responsibility, together with Sweden, of being a lead party for this sector as well.

### National Commission To Be Established

Lithuania is establishing the National Commission for Sustainable Development during the year 2000. The Minister of Environment will be the Chairman of the Commission and it will consist of 26 members: representatives from the corresponding Ministries, Presidency and Government, scientific institutions, Local Authorities Association, business sector and NGOs .

### Role of the Local Level

According to Ms. Ruoliene, in the case of Lithuania, participation at the local level is considered to be a very important precondition for the successful implementation of SD. She stated that Subsidiarity must be used in managing environmental protection. Only the problems which cannot be locally solved should be addressed at a higher level.

### Supporting the Local Level

According to Ms. Ruoliene, the Ministry helps the local level in many ways. First, by making laws that meet the national and EU requirements and include the concept of sustainability. These laws assist the Local Authorities in their work to manage the environmental protection. Regional Environmental Departments of the Ministry cooperate closely with the Environmental Protection Units of the municipalities.

Secondly, the Ministry helps the local authorities by supporting their projects for the financial assistance. The Ministry of the Environment approves and co-ordinates foreign financial assistance (PHARE, donor countries and IFI's) allocated for the environmental protection. According to the LNES, the water pollution was the first priority. Therefore, the main part of all assistance has gone for the construction of WWTP.

High priority is given also to the waste management sector, supporting projects on creation of the regional waste management systems. One of the requirements to the projects is to maintain sustainability criteria in them. The

Ministry also promotes public awareness by organising seminars, training on environmental protection and management issues for the representatives of municipalities. The Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology (ECAT) has been established to assist municipalities. First it helped the five biggest city municipalities. Now more and more of ECAT's activities are addressed to assist the small municipalities.

### COMMENTARIES

The main local level commentary of the situation in Lithuania was provided by Ms. Audrone Alijosiute from ECAT-Lithuania. Ms. Alijosiute emphasised the following points:

#### Positive in the current situation:

- The National Environmental Education Strategy supports LA 21 work
- There are regulations of public participation in territorial planning
- Public Administration Law (1999) stresses the importance of public participation in decision-making (consultations)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Law defines public participation as an important part of the whole process
- A strategy for the involvement of local authorities in the process of approximation to EC Environmental Legislation has been formulated
- ALAL Environmental Committee enforces the solving of important local environmental issues, e.g., waste, water and LA 21
- The Ministry has funded projects on LA 21 (although there are no explicit budget allocations for this purpose)
- Several municipalities have carried out successful LA 21 projects with external funding (EU)
- ECAT's activities have been successful in supporting municipalities
- 12 municipalities have started in the project "LA 21 for small- and medium-sized municipalities" elaboration of local sustainable development strategies (since December 1999)

#### Specific problems:

- Lack of finances
- Lack of human resources
- Huge need of training
- Need for quick tangible results
- There is no real clear "picture" yet how sustainable development should be implemented.

#### Suggestions for further improvements:

- Bottom-up approaches should be used more often in policy-planning on all levels
- The Ministry should pay more attention to supporting integrated (cross-sectoral) activities (now most of the support goes to sectoral work)
- The political support from the Ministry towards LA 21 work could be more clearly declared in official policy documents
- Local Agenda 21 strategy for Lithuania should be prepared and adopted, and a national campaign should be launched
- The National Commission on Sustainable Development should be founded.

## 2.6. Sweden

Ms. Sophie Ljungberg, Secretary to the Swedish National Committee on Local Agenda 21 and Habitat



### Role of the Local Level

The Swedish Government has stated that the municipality is the most important level for action concerning Agenda 21. The municipalities' responsibility for the urban environment and physical planning, the possibility at the municipal level to stimulate a broad participation and collaboration can support the LA21 process. This can, in turn, facilitate new solutions and the anchorage process. Work at the municipal level is also fruitful in adjusting the action plans to the local conditions.

### Strategies for Supporting the Work at the Local Level

According to Ms. Ljungberg, the Government of Sweden has stated as overall objectives (1) to solve today's environmental problems before the years 2020-2025, and that (2) Sweden shall be a forerunner for ecologically sustainable development.

Three objectives are framed for reaching these objectives:

- Protection of the environment - to reduce environmental impact
- Sustainable supply - to conserve the long-term productive capacity of forests, soils and water resources, and to use a higher proportion of renewable raw materials
- Efficient resource utilisation - to use energy and natural resources more efficiently.

15 environmental quality objectives have also been formulated. The Committee on Agenda 21 and Habitat supports the work at the local level, for instance by arranging national and regional seminars and forums for dialogues and by forwarding best practises and experiences between all stakeholders.

### National Strategy Missing - So Far

Sweden does not have a national strategy on sustainable development yet. The work on creating such a strategy is going to start soon.

The National Committee on Agenda 21 and Habitat will have four main areas to focus on:

1. The integration of the Habitat-agenda and Agenda 21
2. How the commercial and industrial sector can get more involved in the development and planning of the local community
3. The new attempts to improve the local democracy - to improve the transparency and the participation among the public in the planning of the local community etc.
4. The coupling between the aspects of public health and the LA21.

### Resources for supporting the local level

The Parliament has allocated approximately 6.5 billion SEK to local investment programmes (LIP), during 1998-2002. Two purposes have been defined for these investments: to create jobs and to accelerate the pace of Sweden's conversion into an ecologically sustainable society. LIP is also expected to stimulate the collaboration between municipalities and the local enterprises and organisations.

### Achievements Reached

In Ms. Ljungberg's opinion, the improved dialogue between the local public, enterprises, organisations and the municipality is an outstanding achievement. She also claimed that the attitudes and lifestyle in Sweden are slowly changing, though there is still a long way to go. Many pilot projects have been started to improve the communication between the municipalities and the youth.

### Specific Problems

According to Sophie Ljungberg, it is also in Sweden difficult to integrate the social and economic aspects within the LA21-work. This also means difficulties in involving groups of people who are not interested in environmental issues.

Conflicts of interests and goals can also be obstacles in the work. For example the tax values of a villa (and hence the property tax that the house-owner has to pay), increases if you make energy savings measures.

It is not that common that the municipality has created a long-term position for any LA21 co-ordinator. This can be an obstacle for powerful work, because the long-term planning of the LA21 work and the signals of the importance of the work towards the public are deteriorated. There is also a growing gap between "pioneering" municipalities and those who have cut down on staff and resources for LA21.

### Stage of the Process

Most Swedish municipalities have adopted LA21 plans. In some of them efforts are made to gain a more holistic perspective, in which the social, economic and environmental aspects are integrated.



## 2.7. Poland

Ministerstwo Ochrony Środowiska

Ms. Ewa Lasecka-Wesolowska, Polish Ministry of the Environment

### Role of the Local Level

In Poland, an administrative reform has started in the beginning of 1999. In the reform municipalities have got new roles. Polish LA 21 Forum has been established, it has representatives from different groups such as science, business, industry, residents and NGOs.

### Policies and strategies for supporting the work at the local level

Making provisions for the EU membership is a costly process for Poland but it also helps in carrying out the concept of sustainable development in the policies and strategies of the national government. The aim is to include the principle of sustainable development in all activities at the national and local level. At the local level there have been environmental pilot projects for this purpose.

### Policy Developments

At the national level the key institutions have started to adopt environmental strategies. The principal actor is the Council of Ministers' Committee on Regional and Sustainable Development.

The legal framework for sustainable development has been done; there is a strategy for SD until 2025. It covers regulatory mechanisms, monitoring and compliance control as well as environmental protection plans and programmes, spatial policy and development plans. Regional strategies are made to implement SD.

### COMMENTARIES:

The local level commentary on the situation of Poland was given by Ms. Monika Szyrpyt-Piotrowska from the city of Gdansk. The commentary mainly focused on the situation and the activities of Gdansk. The city has made outstanding overall environmental protection work, and the work on LA 21 has been very successful as well. In the city, the city districts have been involved in many public participation and involvement activities.



## 2.8. Russia

Gosudarstvennyy Universitet Ekonomiki i Finansov

### Cancellations due to re-organisation

The representatives of the state level environmental administration of Russia unfortunately cancelled their participation at the roundtable with short notice - most likely due to the problematic situation with regard to the re-organising of the national environmental administration at the time of the roundtable. However, the roundtable was attended by several excellent experts from the universities in St. Petersburg.

### Insights from St. Petersburg

Professor Stanislaw Babitch, Russian State University of Economics and Finance

Professor Stanislaw Babitch from the Russian State University of Economics and Finance provided the roundtable with some insights of the LA 21 work in St Petersburg. Generally, professor Babitch considered Local Agenda 21 activities to play an important part in building the new democracy in Russia.

Furthermore, he emphasised some co-operation projects and activities, which have helped the local actors to undertake some critical steps:

- The LA 21 activities in St. Petersburg were started in 1997 in several projects in co-operation with the City of Lahti (Finland)
- 21 municipalities have been involved in the educational project in co-operation with the City of Nacka (Sweden)
- In the SAIL Project within the framework of Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum, the work was facilitated, e.g., by producing basic set of information materials on LA 21 in Russian.



*A good example of practical sustainability work in St. Petersburg is the Nature Trail in Tauria Park.*

## 2.9. Conclusions and Comparisons

### Comparisons from Research

In his presentation "Organising National Support for Local Agenda 21 in the Different Countries of the Baltic Sea Region - Comparisons", researcher Mr. Marko Joas from Åbo Akademi University brought up findings and observations based on research and literature of the success factors of the national level policy-making and findings from the UBC Local Agenda 21 Survey (1998). According to Mr. Joas, several success features can be defined both on the national and local level.

### Success Features on the National Level

According to Mr. Joas' presentation, (1) financial support, (2) political support, and (3) endurance of the policy-making all play a critical role on the national level. The existence of a national committee for LA21 has been used as an indicator of political support.

In countries where there is an active committee for LA 21 and budget allocations in the state budget for local sustainable development work, the results are usually best, i.e., more municipalities are involved and advancing in the LA 21 work. In countries where there are either budget allocations or the committee, results are in most cases intermediate, and in countries where there is neither the committee nor budget funds for LA 21, the situation is often worst. However, even in such countries there are good examples of successful work in some cities and examples of good projects run by different organisations and funding sources.

The findings concerning the endurance of policy-making imply that even political support and budget funds do not bring immediate results. Capacity-building takes time and Local Agenda 21 itself is a process that cannot be run very quickly.

### Success Features at the Local Level

According to Marko Joas, the following organisational success features can most clearly be found at the local level: (1) type of the community, (2) administrative and economic resources, and (3) political or administrative activists.

The municipalities with higher rate of urban population have so far been more active in Local Agenda 21. Local Agenda 21 activity correlates to the degree of urban population in municipalities. Good capacities and human resources in the administration build basis for success as well as the availability of financial resources. Political activists, e.g., green council members, or active persons within the administration often can make a positive contribution towards launching and keeping the Local Agenda 21 process going.

### Facilitators' Conclusions

The facilitators of session 1, Ms. Ille Allsaar from the Estonian Association of Local Authorities, and Mr. Sauli Rouhinen from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, both gave some concluding remarks.

Ms. Ille Allsaar underlined the essentiality of national political support in advancing local sustainable development. She also emphasised that the understanding of the necessity of the local level work in reaching sustainable development still needs to grow on all levels of administration. Furthermore, she stated that the availability of funding does play quite a critical role.

Mr. Sauli Rouhinen said that the roundtable with the presentations given so far had been a good example of dialogue between national and local levels, and that such a dialogue is definitely very useful and necessary. This dialogue is a way to build understanding and also step-by-step to find solutions together.

Mr. Rouhinen also took up the question of defining explicit criteria for the national funding to support local sustainable development. According to him, implementation of such criteria might also function as one political basis for deciding on larger allocations in the future. However, concerning the situation in Finland, Mr. Rouhinen reminded that there will not be any "new" money available in the state budget, but new allocations might be possible through re-defining the purposes of some of the existing budget lines.

		National Committee for LA21?	
		Yes	No
National financial support for LA21?	Yes	<b>Sweden 95 ***</b> a) 100 % b) ---	<b>Norway **</b> a) 100 % b) ---
	No	<b>Finland 93/96 **</b> a) 100 % b) --- --> <b>Estonia 96 *</b> a) 20 % b) 60 % --> <b>Poland 94 *</b> a) 57 % b) 14 % --> <b>Lithuania 97 ? *</b> a) 50 % b) 0 % --> <b>Russia 97 ? *</b> a) 50 % b) 0 %	<-- <b>Denmark **</b> a) 88 % b) ---  <b>Germany *</b> a) 100 % b) ---  <b>Latvia *</b> a) 0 % b) 100 %

**Table: Political and Financial Support and LA21 Activities among UBC Cities (NB ! Low n for some countries)**

Legend:  
 Year of Sustainable Development Commission and the Degree of 'Success': \* = late-comer, \*\* = adaptor, \*\*\* = pioneer  
 --> = Performed less than expected; <-- = Performed better than expected  
 a) = % LA21 among UBC member cities, b) = % planning to start LA21 (1998)

Sources and terminology: Eckerberg and Lafferty 1998; Grönholm and Joas 1999; UBC Inquiry 1998; Rio +5 Summary Reports

## 3. EU Enlargement (Session 2)

Facilitators: Ms. Erika Lagzdina, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) Riga Office, and Mr. Anthony Payne, European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign Office

### 3.1. Introduction

#### Topics

The intention of session 2 was to discuss the different aspects of EU Accession in the Baltic cities. The links between Local Agenda 21 and EU accession at city level were explored in several presentations from research and practise points of view. The central question of these presentations were the demands that EU accessions sets for local environmental administration and practice - and how can Local Agenda 21 work support fulfilling these demands?

In addition to this "local" point of view, an European point of view was created by the main commentary presentation from National Expert Ms. Susann Pauli from the European Commission DG Environment. In her presentation, she informed the roundtable of the new developments of EU policy towards advancing sustainable urban development. The possibilities created for city level work by the new initiatives of the European Commission - such as the planned 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Plan and the proposal on EC Legal Basis for supporting activities on sustainable urban policy were discussed on the basis of the information provided by Ms. Pauli.

#### Facilitators' Introductions

The facilitators Mr. Anthony Payne and Ms. Erika Lagzdina both provided the session with some introductory comments. Mr. Payne emphasised the possibilities of Local Agenda 21 to contribute in many ways towards creating integrated approaches, building partnerships and co-operation, and creating shared understanding of sustainable development. He also shortly introduced the basic components of Local Agenda 21. On Mr. Payne's opinion, LA 21 obviously supports the implementation of EC Environmental Legislation for example in case of urban air quality.

According to Ms. Erika Lagzdina, the needs of support for the accession process are money, information and participation, and the critical factor is how to encourage ownership. The countries, cities and people about to join the European Union should feel part of it. The challenge is how to plan and implement different accession measures so that they create these feelings.

Both Ms. Lagzdina and Mr. Payne underlined that the accession means, among other things, implementation of considerable amounts of legislation. If Local Agenda 21 work can support these countries and cities in this large

task, this would be from the point of the European Union one good reason to support their LA 21 activities stronger in the future.

### 3.2. LA 21 and Accession - Research Perspective

Researcher Marko Joas from Åbo Akademi University brought up in his presentation some research findings and perspectives about the role of different aspects of environmental policy. According to Mr. Joas, reaching a more sustainable society is a common goal for all EU member states, but especially important in areas with an environmental record clearly below EU standards, i.e. accession countries. However, there are several obstacles that both delay and even prevent these societies from reaching the goals of sustainable development.

On Mr. Joas' viewpoint, two categories of such environ-



At the roundtable Risto Veivo (UBC), Erika Lagzdina (REC-Latvia), Anthony Payne (Campaign), Marek Maciejowski (Baltic 21), Birgitta Naumburg (NUTEK), and Sauli Rouhinen (Finnish Ministry of Environment), at the back.

mental policy problems can be identified: first "technical", i.e., insufficient technical processes or lacking funding, and secondly "procedural", i.e., environmental policy procedural imperfections in general. Technical problems can to some extent be resolved by national and foreign investments and learning. These problems are on the EU level usually solved by traditional environmental legislation. Policy procedural changes on the other hand, can only be achieved by developing the decision-making process and involving instruments such as education and other awareness rising activities. According to Mr. Joas, Local Agenda 21 programmes are useful tools to distribute knowledge and understanding, not only technical but also procedural, to local communities.

As Mr. Joas put it, Agenda 21 is a document with two main goals – **environmental targets** and **policy procedural** tools, to achieve environmental targets more easily. The latter democratic element enhances the integration of environmental goals into all local government areas and

a bottom-up feature of these projects enhances the legitimacy of environmental decisions in the eyes of the broad public and also local government's sectoral interests. Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 programmes also broaden the scope of environmental policy instruments towards a more participatory form of government besides the traditional command-and-control form.

On Mr. Joas' opinion, at the local and regional levels, integrated approaches and work on Local Agenda 21 (and local sustainability) *paves the way for a better understanding of legal environmental regulation, and for implementing targeted and cross-sector environmental actions, etc.* This fact is important also from the perspective of the current accession processes taking place between the European Union and the accession countries. Activities such as Local Agenda 21 projects and processes should be stepped up in order to optimise the capacity of the accession countries for environmental compliance. Simple transposition of environmental legislation will not achieve the understanding. Through activities (such as LA21) that include information, participation and education the support for implementation of environmental initiatives such as environmental laws will be more positive and have a better possibility to be well known, understood and accepted.

According to Mr. Joas, there are some empirical studies about the contents and effects of Local Agenda 21 processes. These tend to stress the good results received in both procedural targets and also environmental goals (Eckerberg and Forsberg 1998, Selman 1998). In a crosstime quantitative study, signs can be found that municipalities, which have adopted and properly implemented LA21 processes, are achieving procedural and environmental goals to a higher extent than municipalities that have not yet started a LA21 programme or that just are in the beginning of such a process. These municipalities are also more positive to national norms and legislation in general (Joas 2000). Also other empirical evidence can be found indicating a higher level of understanding between international and national goals and local level implementation (Smith et al. 1999, Blake 1999).

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- Selman, P. (1998), *Local Agenda 21: Substance or Spin?, Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, nr.41(5).*

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- Smith, J. et. al. (1999), *Social Learning and Sustainable Communities: An Interim Assessment of Research into Sustainable Communities Project in the UK, Local Environment, Vol. 4, Issue 2, Jun99.*

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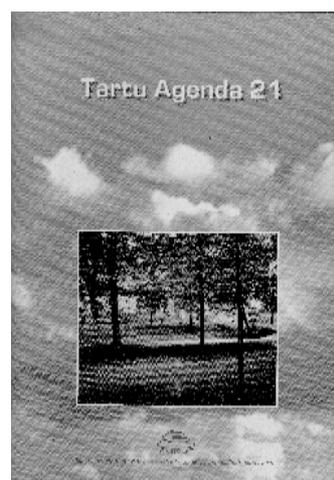
### 3.3. Perspectives from Accession Countries

How is the accession process perceived from the point of view of the environmental administrations in the Accession Countries? What kind of specific tools have been used in some cities? As an important part of session 2, practical experiences from Estonia, Poland and Lithuania were presented by three speakers: Ms. Ille Allsaar from the Estonian Association of Local Authorities, Ms. Dagmara Nagorka from the City of Gdansk, and Ms. Zita Tverkute from the City of Panevezys.

#### Successful Agenda 21 Work in Estonia

In her presentation, Ms Allsaar described the general administrative reforms that Estonia has been going through recently. The challenges caused by the change of the political system have been great at all levels of administration as well as those caused by the European Integration. As an example of Local Agenda 21 work paving the way towards integration, Ms. Allsaar mentioned the efforts of the City of Tartu.

Tartu Agenda 21 is an excellent example of successful Local Agenda 21 work. The initiating and driving forces of the work were local, but international co-operation and connections were very well utilised as well. The work mobilised local stakeholders efficiently and strong efforts were made for publicity, awareness raising and participation. The political culmination point of



of the work - so far - was the approval of the Tartu Agenda 21 Action Program by the City Council (in Dec-1998). The work of Tartu has also gained international appreciation: the city won the UBC's Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 1999, and it has been presented as a good practise case in many international conferences and workshops.

#### Gdansk towards EU Compliance

Ms. Dagmara Nagorka from the City of Gdansk provided the roundtable with information on the accession process-related matters within the environmental field in her city. Local Agenda 21 process has also in Gdansk mobilised the citizens quite widely. The work has been carried out in the different districts of the city, e.g., by organising citizens' meetings. Such activities efficiently pave the way for public support of environmental protection measures.

According to Ms. Nagorka, there is a constant need of information on the side of the administration as well as

the Polish citizens on the accession-related matters. From her point of view, information would be needed, e.g., on the European Union in general, on EC legislation, and on the state of the accession process and the level of harmonisation reached in the country and its cities so far.

### Panevezys MEA

The City of Panevezys has implemented - as the first city in Lithuania - the Municipal Environmental Audit (MEA) according to the UBC MEA Model. Ms. Zita Tverkute from the city presented the process and findings, and her points of view of the usefulness of the process with regard to the accession process.

MEA is an auditing tool developed especially for cities in the Accession Countries of the Baltic Sea Region. It is more feasible and economical for these cities to start with than the more complicated ISO and EMAS systems. The basic output of the MEA process is comprehensive infor-

mation of the state of the environment and of the environmental performance of the implementing city. These results can then be used for creating strategies, prioritising undertakings and investments, and creating awareness of the environment.

In Panevezys, the MEA was started by Council decision in December 1999 and the process was completed about a year later. According to Ms. Tverkute, the results were useful with regard to EU accession especially in that sense that the environmental performance of the city and its municipal companies were compared to the EC requirements. These findings provide useful information of the state of the process, i.e., indicate how long way there is to go in each field. In planning new projects and searching for funding, these results provide solid basis for argumentation, e.g., why it is important from the accession point of view to allocate funding for a specific improvement.

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## 3.4. European Union Perspective



The European level was represented in the Roundtable by National Expert Ms. Susann Pauli from the European Commission DG Environment. Ms. Pauli was asked to provide the session with commentaries from EU point of view and with information of the developments of EU policies towards sustainable urban development. She started her presentation by saying that she had come to the event to learn and to inform, and that it had been very interesting also from the DG's point of view to hear about the aspects and experiences of the experts from the Accession countries. She also stated that the SUFA Project is interesting also from the DG's point of view, as it might provide new empirical evidence of the effects of Local Agenda 21 work on EU accession, e.g., on the implementation of EC environmental legislation.

### LA 21 and EU Enlargement

According to Ms. Pauli, the hypothesis of the positive effects of Local Agenda 21 work on paving the way for the enlargement could be summarised to the following points, i.e., Local Agenda 21 activities create basis for EU accession by:

- creating greater awareness of the environment,
- improving the capacities and the preparedness of the local community to implement EC environmental legislation,
- facilitating compliance, and
- increasing the sense of responsibility for sustainable development among all stakeholders.

### EU Actions So Far

The Activities of the European Union in supporting sustainable urban development are based on policy documents and treaties on sustainable and urban developments, such as the Amsterdam Treaty, the 5<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action

Plan (5<sup>th</sup> EAP), and the Green Paper on Urban Environment. In Practise, the European Commission has supported the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign within the Sustainable Cities Project, supported conferences, and produced policy and discussion papers. Many projects supported by the DG Environment also contribute in various ways to sustainable urban development.

### From 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Program

According to Ms. Pauli, the results of the evaluation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Program showed that the implementation of the program had been successful in increasing awareness of the environment. However, according to the evaluation, the implementation had not brought about sufficient commitment and the urban environments in Europe had generally not improved during the implementation.

Ms. Pauli informed the roundtable that the shortcomings of the 5<sup>th</sup> EAP are being used as "lessons learnt" during the preparations of the 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Program. The draft of this program is available for comments on the internet page of DG Environment, and Ms. Pauli warmly welcomed all the participants to visit the page and comment the draft. The 6<sup>th</sup> EAP is, according to Ms. Pauli, likely to be shorter and more strategic in its contents as compared to its predecessor. The program is expected to adapt implementation of integrated approaches. It is to contain objectives, targets and timetables for the implementation, and, furthermore, economic instruments for supporting the work in the Accession Countries.

### New Legal Basis

One problem widely felt among the international city networks working for sustainable urban development in

co-operation with the European Commission in this field has been the insufficient legal basis of the European Union to support their activities. So far, there has not been a proper legal basis for financial support on the side of the Commission towards activities aiming at sustainable urban development as such, e.g., Local Agenda 21 work. However, there has been a legal basis, e.g., for activities concentrating on urban air quality (based on EU directive).

According to Ms. Pauli, this lack of legal basis is currently in the process of being corrected by the initiative of the Commission on the Framework of Co-operation in the Field of Sustainable Urban Development. The Commission's proposal is currently being processed by the Council and Parliament, and it is likely to come into force in 2001. The proposal includes an allocation of MEURO 12.4 for a period of four years for supporting networks of cities on the European level in their activities for sustainable urban development. According to Ms. Pauli, the idea is that this fund would be used as grants for projects chosen through annual calls for tenders. The activities to be funded could also include Accession countries, and BSR organisations such as Union of the Baltic Cities would be feasible for this funding.

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## 4. Networks (Session 3)

Facilitators: Ms. Audrone Alijosiute, Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology of Lithuania and Mr. Marek Maciejowski, Baltic 21 Secretariat

### 4.1. Introduction

The intention of session 3 was to provide an overview of the future plans and current activities of different BSR/ European networks in advancing sustainable development and supporting the implementation of Local Agenda 21 and European Environmental Policy in Baltic cities. What are the common interests and issues - is there any common political message that the networks would like to address towards national administrations and other stakeholders?

Each presentation was expected to offer answers, e.g., to the following questions:

- What are the goals of the network (briefly)?
- What are the resources available?
- What are the target groups for activities, and what is the coverage reached among these groups?
- What are the concrete activities of the network in 2000-2001?
- What does the network wish from national governments and other BSR stakeholders?
- How does the network relate to the implementation of Baltic 21 in cities (JO4)?

The presentations were followed by discussions on synergy and co-operation.

## 4.2. European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign

The European Campaign was presented by the coordinator Mr. Anthony Payne from the Campaign Office. In addition to providing the basic information of the Campaign, i.e., the founding in Aalborg 1994 etc., he underlined the Campaign's character as a joint effort of several networks. In the Campaign, five different European and/or Global networks co-operate continuously, and new ways for including more networks in the co-operation are currently being evolved. Parallel with the networks activity, the Campaign has some 800 local authorities as members and some single cities as important contributors and sponsors. The Campaign membership is open, and local authorities become members by signing the Aalborg Charter.

The activities of the Campaign include, e.g., conferences, awards, policy-making, contact data-bases, newsletters, and extensive communication by different means. More information on the Campaign can be obtained in the internet at <http://www.sustainable-cities.org>. Mr. Payne warmly welcomed everyone to visit the website and also to contact the Campaign Office (e-mail: [Campaign.office@skynet.fi](mailto:Campaign.office@skynet.fi)) for more information or for exchange of ideas. As Mr. Payne put it: "from networking you get what you ask from it!"

## 4.3 International Council for Local Environmental Activities

ICLEI was presented by Ms. Barbara Anton. According to her, the overall goal of ICLEI, which is a global organisation, is to improve the global environment by contributing to environmental conditions and sustainable development at the local level. The great resource in this work, according to Ms. Anton, are the great amounts of good ideas and committed partners. And the big problem is - money. One of the great successes of ICLEI so far is the recognised role of local action in the global Agenda 21 (Chapter 28, Local Agenda 21), which was achieved through effective lobbying.

The target groups of ICLEI are cities, municipalities, practitioners, associations, networks and organisations as associate members. ICLEI's practical activities include, e.g., campaigns, policy-making, training and projects. ICLEI has also been very active in developing eco-procurement and eco-budgeting. In the Baltic Sea Region ICLEI is involved in several projects and also in the Baltic 21 process.

## 4.4. Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

REC was presented by Ms. Erika Lagzdina from the organisations' Latvian office. According to her, the mission of REC is to assist different stakeholders in solving envi-

ronmental problems, primarily on local and national levels, by encouraging their co-operation, ensuring free exchange of information and strengthening public participation in decision-making process. In Latvia, REC is actively promoting the Local Agenda 21 process, and the Latvian office is also actively participating in BSR co-operation. REC has excellent contacts on all levels from local NGOs to the European/international level.

The activity of REC is based on a charter signed by 25 governments in 1990 and the organisation currently comprises 15 country offices in Eastern Europe. The activities are funded by several governments, international funds and the European Union. More information can be obtained through the internet at: <http://www.parks.lv/home/RECLatvija>, or by email: [reclat@parks.lv](mailto:reclat@parks.lv).

## 4.5. Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010

VASAB was presented by Dr. Ewa Toczyska from the University of Gdansk. VASAB is an international co-operation program, promoted at the level of ministers of spatial planning, and aiming at increased co-operation between universities, municipalities and other stakeholders in the field of spatial planning. The recommendations produced by the program have been used as qualification criteria in evaluating projects for INTERREG funding. The program, currently referred to as VASAB 2010 Plus, is putting a growing emphasis on sustainable development and implementation of Agenda 21.

According to Dr. Toczyska, the program is to promote Baltic University Network type of co-operation in the field of LA21, combining the forces of universities and municipalities in education. The challenge is how to combine the expertise and experience of both cities and universities in a fruitful way to produce synergy for the benefit of sustainable development.

## 4.6. Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum

The BLA21F was presented by assisting co-ordinator Ms. Sirpa Laine. According to Ms. Laine, the goal of BLA21F is to strengthen and support Local Agenda 21 processes in all the Baltic Sea countries, but a special emphasis is given to the countries in the Eastern part of the region. The actors in the network are local authorities and other stakeholders involved in the LA 21 processes, such as NGOs, business and local people.

The main activity of BLA21F in 2000-2001 is organising seminars and workshops for LA 21 stakeholders in the different BSR countries. The forum is also actively involved in the implementation of Baltic 21. According to Ms. Laine, BLA21F is a continuous process to encourage local level to carry out sustainable development by creating an active co-operation network and thus putting the Rio process into practice.

## 4.7. Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology

ECAT-LT was presented by expert Ms. Sanna Ahvenharju. ECAT-LT is an organisation (NGO) working with Lithuanian municipalities of all sizes on project basis. ECAT-LT offers to municipalities expertise and aid in concrete development projects. Currently, the main activities concentrate on Local Agenda 21, Waste Management, Municipal Environmental Auditing (MEA), and noise issues. According to Ms. Ahvenharju, current challenges also include increasing contacts and co-operation between Lithuanian and other European municipalities, as well as developing more co-operation with Latvian and Estonian partners.

The resources are provided (until end of 2000) by the European Union, several European governments, and Lithuanian municipalities. Presently, ECAT-LT is undergoing organisational changes due to new financing structures. ECAT-Lithuania is a member of the network of five ECAT-offices situated in different Eastern European countries.

## 4.8. Healthy Cities

The Healthy Cities activities in the Baltic Sea Region were presented by expert Ms. Mari Hakkala from the Healthy Cities Baltic Region Project Office. According to Ms. Hakkala, the most important goal of Healthy Cities is to get the health issues and the health and social dimensions of sustainable into the "agendas" of municipal and national decision-makers - the most important target group being the decision-makers of cities.

However, according to Ms. Hakkala, having the issues on the agendas is still not enough. On her opinion, the governments are much too often far more interested in policy-making than implementation, and this can hinder real changes from taking place. Furthermore, Ms. Hakkala emphasised the necessity to co-operate between the activities for healthy cities and Local Agenda 21.

## 4.9. Union of the Baltic Cities

The Union of the Baltic Cities was represented by environmental co-ordinator Mr. Risto Veivo. The UBC consists of nearly 100 municipalities from all BSR countries. The Union has its general secretariat in Gdansk and several working commissions placed in different member cities. According to Mr. Veivo, making Baltic Cities more sustainable is one of the most important goals of the UBC.

The Union has its own Local Agenda 21 Action Program, which consists of several respective projects. In each of these projects different UBC bodies and/or member cities are acting as co-ordinators and partners. The overall goal is to have every single member city engaged in its own Local Agenda 21 process. Surprisingly, this ambitious goal is not that far any more, as app. 75% of the members are already engaged in LA 21 or planning to get started in near future.

The UBC functions as a network serving its members. The activities are planned to utilise the added value that a network can offer to its members. Exchange and dissemination of information have an important place, as well as meetings, workshops and co-operation projects. The resources are provided by membership fees, direct contributions of members, and as project funding from several sources, e.g., EU, NMR, and national ministries.

## 4.10. Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Center

Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Center has developed and maintains the Estonian Sustainable Development database and web site in the frame of 'Capacity 21' project (<http://agenda21.ee/>). The web site provides quality information and international experiences, guidelines for local communities for creating Local Agenda 21, training materials and reports on regional experiences, calendar of sustainable society related events in Estonia, links etc. The site is in Estonian and English and the target audience is mainly local governments, community planners, non-governmental organizations, and anyone interested in sustainable development.

Activities in the year 2000 include publishing the updated, second edition of Local Agenda guidebook, making a training video on Local Agenda 21 process in Estonia, compiling and publishing of the 'Mini-lexicon of Sustainable Society', and distributing information material on sustainable development and LA21 to all seaside schools, public libraries, e.g. in co-operation with the Gulf of Finland Environment Society.

## 4.11. Conclusions

In the discussion, the following obstacles were concluded to be the most severe ones that the networks are currently facing:

- limited human and financial resources,
- different languages,
- different environments and cultures, and
- bureaucracy.

In their conclusions, the facilitators also underlined the networks' will to co-operate to streamline their efforts, both within the networks and between them. In addition to this message from the networks to themselves, the facilitators also concluded a message towards the national governments of the Baltic Sea Region countries:

- increase funding possibilities for good activities,
- promote, support and encourage local level activities in all possible ways,
- recognise and treat local level networks as important partners to co-operate with,
- take advantage of the networks capacity to carryout dialogue with different actors, and
- follow the networks' advice and recommendations.

The roundtable participants - representing both national and local levels - agreed on the necessity of active dialogue in order to proceed on implementing any of the proposals.

## 5. Overall Conclusions from the Roundtable

On the basis of the Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy, there seem to be good reasons for slight optimism concerning the developments in the Baltic Sea Region with regard to sustainable development at the local level. Of course there are many serious problems, e.g., environmental ones as such and problems with policy-making and funding. Still the presentations and discussions at the roundtable reflected many strengths and opportunities.

At the national level, effective policies for supporting the work at the local level - even if not implemented yet - are at least under construction and discussion in all of the countries on both sides of the Baltic Sea. There also seems to be a relatively wide consciousness that dialogue and co-operation between the different levels of administration and the different stakeholders of society is the key method in order to proceed from discussions to concrete policy plans and implementation. National commissions and support groups for sustainable development play a key role, as well as funding for pilot activities.

At the European level, the new policy developments, e.g., with regard to the 6th Environmental Action Program and the Framework proposal for Sustainable Urban Development, will most likely provide good chances for progress. As some of the roundtable presentations clearly reflected, work on sustainable development at the local level, e.g., on Local Agenda 21, contributes positively to the accession process by improving the policy processes and preparing ground for implementation of EC Environmental Legislation.

At the local level, many municipalities are actively implementing good pilot projects and developing the policy processes. There are also a great number of national and international networks that successfully support the municipalities by providing possibilities for exchange, co-operation and political support.

At least during the Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy, the spirit of co-operation between different BSR stakeholders was very good. It is this spirit, feeling and practice of partnership that we need to keep up in order to proceed in tackling all those difficult problems.



# European Dialogue on Local Agenda 21-Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy 18 -19 May 2000

## List of participants:

### Ministries and EU:

Ms Ülle Vaht, Estonian Ministry of the Environment, Tallinn,

e-mail:yllev@rvl.envir.ee, <http://www.envir.ee>

Ms Dace Dravniece, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Riga,

e-mail:rasa@varam.gov.lv, <http://www.varam.gov.lv>

Ms Tuire Nikulainen, Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Helsinki,

e-mail:tuire.nikulainen@vyh.fi, <http://www.vyh.fi>

Mr Sauli Rouhinen, Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Helsinki,

e-mail:sauli.rouhinen@vyh.fi, <http://www.vyh.fi>

Ms Jurate Ruoliene, Lithuanian Ministry of the Environment, Vilnius,

e-mail:j.ruoliene@aplunkuma.lt, <http://www.gamta.lt>

Ms Ewa Lasecka-Wesolowska, Polish Ministry of the Environment, Warsaw,

e-mail:ewesolowl@mos.gov.pl,

<http://www.mos.gov.pl>

Ms Sophie Ljungberg, The Swedish National Committee on Agenda 21 and Habitat, Stockholm,

e-mail:sophie.ljungberg@environment.ministry.se,

<http://www.miljo.regeringen.se>

Ms Susann Pauli, European Commission, Brussels,

e-mail:susann.pauli@cec.eu.int,

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment>

### Associations of Local Authorities:

Ms Ille Allsaar, Association of Estonian Cities, Tallinn,

e-mail:ille@ell.ee, <http://www.ell.ee>

Mr Janis Piesins, Union of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia, Riga,

e-mail:janis@lps.lv, <http://www.lps.lv>

### Universities and Institutes:

Mr Stanislav Babitch, Russian State University of Economics and Finance,

e-mail:babitch@ap2901.spb.edu, <http://www.uef.ru>

Mr Marko Joas, Åbo Akademi University,

e-mail:marko.joas@abo.fi, <http://www.abo.fi>

Ms Piret Kuldna, Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Center,

e-mail:piret@seit.ee, <http://www.seit.ee>

Ms Galina M. Voropaeva, St.Petersburg State University,

e-mail:galina@GV4431.ppb.edu,

<http://www.runnet.dux.ru>

Ms Liudmila Romaniouk, St.Petersburg State University,

e-mail:roman@actor.ru, [http://www.runnet.dux.ru/eco/cp-org/ran\\_a.htm](http://www.runnet.dux.ru/eco/cp-org/ran_a.htm)

### Networks:

Ms Barbara Anton, ICLEI, Freiburg,

e-mail:barbara.anton@iclei-europe.org,

<http://www.iclei.org/rope>

Ms Audrone Alijosiute, ECAT-Lithuania,

e-mail:audtone@ecat.lt, <http://www.ecat.lt>

Ms Sanna Ahvenharju, ECAT-Lithuania,

e-mail:sanna.ahvenharju@iki.fi, <http://www.ecat.lt>

Ms Mari Hakkala, Baltic Region Healthy Cities,

e-mail:mari.hakkala@turku.inet.fi,

<http://www.healthy-cities-baltic.org>

Ms Anne Kivinukk, REC Estonia,

e-mail:anne.kivinukk@recestonia.ee,

<http://www.recestonia.ee>

Mr Mikko Jokinen, UBC,

e-mail:mikko.jokinen@turku.fi, <http://www.ubc.net>

Ms Jaana Itälä, Southwest Finland Agenda 21,

e-mail:jaana.itala@vsagendatoimisto.fi,

<http://www.vsagendatoimisto.fi>

Ms Nina Myllykoski, Southwest Finland Agenda 21,

e-mail:nina.myllykoski@vsagendatoimisto.fi,

<http://www.vsagendatoimisto.fi>

Mr Marek Maciejowski, Baltic 21 Secretariat,

e-mail:marek.maciejowski@baltinfo.org,

<http://www.ee./baltic21/>

Ms Erika Lagzdina, REC Latvia, Riga

e-mail:reclat@parks.lv,

<http://www.parks.lv/home/RECLatvija>

Ms Diana Meijere, REC Latvia, Riga

e-mail:reclat@parks.lv,

<http://www.parks.lv/home/RECLatvija>

Ms Sirpa Laine, BLA21F

e-mail:sirpa.laine@lahti.fi,

<http://www.BLA21F.net>

Ms Birgitta Naumburg, NUTEK, Baltic 21,

e-mail:birgitta.naumburg@nutek.se,

<http://www.nutek.se>

Ms Ewa Toczyska, VASAB 2010,

e-mail:aoes@panda.bg.univ.gda.pl,

<http://www.vasab.org.pl>

Mr Risto Veivo, UBC,

e-mail:risto.veivo@netti.fi, <http://www.ubc.net>

Mr Anthony Payne, European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign,

e-mail:campaign.anthony@skynet.be,

<http://www.sustainable-cities.org>

### Cities:

Ms Daiva Berankiene, Klaipeda Municipality,

e-mail:gamta@klaipeda.lt, <http://www.klaipeda.lt>

Ms Dagmara Nagorka-Kmieciak, Municipality of Gdansk,

e-mail:rwpe@gdansk.gda.pl,

<http://www.gdansk.gda.pl>

Ms Monika Szypryt-Piotrowska, Municipality of Gdansk,

e-mail:wosr@gdansk.gda.pl,

<http://www.gdansk.gda.pl>

Mr Guldbrand Skjönberg, City of Nacka,

e-mail:guldbrand.skjonberg@nacka.se,

<http://www.nacka.se>

Ms Zita Tverkute, City of Panevezys,

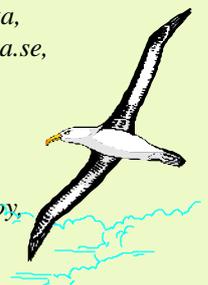
e-mail:ekologija@panevezys.sav.lt,

<http://www.panevezys.lt>

Mr Lars Wahlberg, Municipality of Visby,

e-mail:lars.wahlberg@gotland.se,

<http://www.gotland.se>



## Organising of the Baltic Roundtable on Local Environmental Policy was made possible by:



- project co-funding - co-host



- co-host, - co-funding, - project partner



- project partner



- project partner



- co-host



- project co-funding



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