



BALTINFO

News from the Region

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The Visby Scholarships

A seminar on the Visby scholarships was held in Stockholm on November 13. In his opening statement, Mr Göran Persson, Prime Minister of Sweden, unveiled the vision behind the program of Visby scholarships: to reach future leaders of the Baltic Sea region, bring them closer together, promote excellence in important professions and give them some happy memories to last their life-time. Among other prominent speakers were: Professor Boel Flodgren, Rector of Lund University, Sweden,

Professor Zbigniew Krupa of Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Poland, Vice Rector Yuri Fedotov, St Petersburg University, Russia, Professor Jaak Aaviksoo, Tartu university, Latvia, Director General Per Sörbom, Swedish Institute and Doctor Gad Rausing, Tetra Laval, Sweden. More information from:

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"The Baltic Sea Billion"

Mr Anders Sahlén, Director General of the Baltic Sea Fund in charge of SEK 1 billion earmarked by the Swedish government for development projects in Russia, the Baltic States and Poland has during 1997 allocated all funds available. Most of the projects supported are now about to

get off the ground. The largest of them are District Heating in Russia and Latvia, Smoke Gas Cleaning in Narva, Estonia, Energy program in Lithuania and a Waste water treatment project in Kaliningrad. Other sectors are infrastructure and education.

Facts about The Baltic Sea Fund

In order to emphasise the importance of the Baltic Sea region for growth and employment in Sweden, the Swedish Parliament has granted an appropriation of SEK 1 billion. This financial facility is to be used to strengthen cooperation and development in the Baltic Sea region in five priority sectors: food-stuffs, energy, education, infrastructure and environment. Some other sectors may be included. Further information: **Ms Filippa Hultner, Prime Ministers Office, Sweden • Tel +46 8 405 48 07 Fax +46 8 405 48 17**

Poles use own salmon quota

As a result of the fishing negotiations in Warsaw the Polish Transport and Shipping Ministry has informed Sweden that Poland will make use of its own quota of salmon next year. The Swedish fishermen are only allowed to fish herring, cod and flat fish in Polish waters.

Conference on Information Technology in the Baltic Sea Region December 16 1997

On the initiative of Mr Göran Persson, the Swedish prime Minister, an international conference will take place in Tallinn, Estonia on December 16 with the aim of highlighting the potential of IT for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The conference will be opened by the Estonian Prime Minister, Mr Mart Siimann.

13 million ECU in PHARE-aid to Poland

The first phase of the EU reconstruction programme in Poland, launched after last summer's flood, is about to finish. The funds have now been distributed to 133 local communities according to the Foundation for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, which has the responsibility for the disbursement of funds.

Childrens rights in focus

The Nordic Council unanimously decided at its 49th session in Helsinki in November to organise a seminar

Baltic Sea Business Summit Meeting

As the Heads of Government of CBSS member states meet in Riga January 22-23 1998 for their second summit meeting, the most prominent business operators in the Baltic Sea countries will gather in Stockholm on January 18-19 1998. The aim of this second Baltic Sea Business Summit is to focus on ways of creating more favourable conditions for the business community so that it can become a generator of economic growth and prosperity.

The Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, Mr Hans Jeppson, vice president,

in Kaliningrad during the spring 1998 focusing on the conditions for children in Northwest Russia and the three Baltic States.

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Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Barents Euro-Arctic co-operation is an important part of the process to enhance stability and prosperity both in the region and in Europe as a whole.

Sweden holds the Chair of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) during 1997 and will be succeeded by Norway. The Fifth Ministerial Session will take place on January 19-20, 1998, in Luleå, Sweden, located in the heart of the Barents Region. Several important regional issues, including economic co-operation, nuclear safety and an energy action program, will be on the ministerial agenda.

Facts about the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was founded at the initiative of Norway in January 1993. Foreign Ministers of the five Nordic countries and of the Russian Federation are members of the BEAC. The European Commission also participates while Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States enjoy observer status.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council is assisted in its work by a committee of senior officials and has two permanent working groups: one for economic co-operation, the other for the Northern Sea Route. There is also a task force for the environment. A long-term goal in the Barents Euro-Arctic area is to promote regional and cross-border co-operation in order to ensure peaceful progress along with sustainable economic, social and ecological development of the region. The co-operation is guided by the "Kirkenes Declaration" of January 1993.

Baltic 21

Baltic 21 is an initiative for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region taken by the regions Prime Ministers at their summit in Visby in May 1996. The project was officially launched by the Ministers of Environment of CBSS member states held in October 1996 in Saltsjöbaden.

The emphasis in Baltic 21 is placed on regional cooperation in the field of environment protection. Governmental institutions as well as environmental movements, business/industry operators, universities, intergovernmental organisations and international financial institutions take part in the Baltic 21 process and are represented in the Baltic 21 steering body, the Senior Officials Group (SOG).

Baltic 21 focuses on seven sectors, agriculture, energy, fishery, forestry, industry, tourism and transport, where goals and scenarios for sustainable development shall be elaborated, as well as an action plan, including time frames, actors and financing.

Professor Lars Kristofersson, Secretary General of the Baltic 21 Secretariat: Whats the ongoing sector work in Baltic 21?

"The work is now focusing on scenarios, showing paths for sustainable development within the sectors and on action plans."

How do you implement the work?

"Via a number of workshops and seminars that have been and will be held. For instance a one-day workshop was arranged in Stockholm in October in order to facilitate and harmonise the sector work, to discuss action plans, improve our networks and agree on how to avoid gaps and inconsistencies. We have over 300 people engaged in Baltic 21 all over the region, so there is a lot of momentum right now.

What about the future?

"According to our current time table the Fourth Senior Officials Group (SOG) meeting will be held in Copenhagen in December when the sectors will report on progress and a creative discussion will start on the proposed actions as well as the financing of the action plan. The Final Sector Reports should be ready by February 1, 1998. The Final Baltic Agenda 21, including a consolidated action plan, should be ready for negotiation in March and adopted later in the Summer. After follows the implementation phase."

New Chair in BSSSC

Knud Andersen, Mayor in Bornholm, Denmark, is the new chair for the Baltic Sea States subregional Co-operation BSSSC. The Secretariat for BSSSC is under the Danish chairmanship situated in Copenhagen.

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