

The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office

The Year 1998 – 1999

The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office was launched in July 1998 to work in partnership with the WHO/EURO Centre for Urban Health. The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office is a sub-regional structure designed to expand and reinforce the work of the WHO networks in Europe by co-ordinating and supporting healthy cities and networks, by promoting and strengthening bilateral and multilateral co-operation and by developing technical capacity and expertise in selected areas.

The greater Baltic Region in this wider sense is used for the Nordic states of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Sankt Peterburg region and Kaliningrad representing Russia, Poland, and Germany.

Progression of the main deliverables agreed:

1. ***Baltic Health Profile***
Under way. The more detailed plan to be presented in Vienna. To be carried out as a project together with the University of Turku and in collaboration with the CUH.
2. ***Development of a Baltic database***
Gathered on the web-site <http://www.healthy-cities-baltic.org>
3. ***Materials***
The Solid Facts in Finnish. Documents on the web-page. Papers of the seminars in Kuressaare, Jekabpils and Vilnius, and in Turku for the St.Petersburg PrePic project group and the planners of the St.Petersburg Public Health School
4. ***Internet site***
In operation
5. ***Business Meeting for Baltic partners***
Plans for 2000. There was a Conference on Sustainability and Health in Sep. 1998. Conferences and seminars in Turku, Kuressaare, Jekabpils, Vilnius, Stockholm, where the Healthy Cities partners from the Region have had an opportunity to meet.
6. ***Resource Development***
Support projects running, (Interreg 2C: Planning System for Decision-Makers; Tacis PrePic finished in Dec. 1998, Interreg 2A: Life-control Project, a Leonardo application in collaboration with the University of Turku Center for Extended Studies pending, collaboration with the Finnish National Network)
7. ***Partnership with International Organisations in the Region***
Collaboration with the Union of Baltic Cities Commission on Health and Social Affairs. Contribution in the 5th Annual Conference
8. ***Possible new MCAPs***
Plans for a MCAP on Tourism – not active. Seems there is no demand due to many existing links through other networks, e.g. the Baltic Local Agenda and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Enlargement of the EU and the economic and social turbulence in the Baltic region in the 1990's make it all the more important to build links between partners for health. The cities and regions in the countries look for continued support from the WHO and the support centres of the WHO. The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office is prepared to work as an extended hand of the Healthy Cities Program in the way depicted in the first jointly designed action plan. The longer term vision is to generate the resources and the commitment to create a fully fledged WHO collaboration centre in Turku.