

Press notice - for immediate release

15/09/2006

Kouvola Region - a compact region with excellent biking possibilities!

"Best practice of regional cooperation paves the way for sustainable transport" was the headline verdict of a team of European transport experts as they completed their week long assessment of the progress Kouvola Region is making towards a Sustainable Transport system. They presented their headline findings in the Kouvola Region Expertise Centre on the 15th of September.

The Kouvola Region is one of twelve pioneering partners in the BUSTRIP project coordinated by the Union of the Baltic Cities, Commission on Environment secretariat in Turku, Finland. The Kouvola Region together with the other partners has taken up the challenge from the European Commission to test the idea and practice of using *"Sustainable Urban Transport Plans"* (SUTP's) to manage urban transport and investments for urban transport problems.

The team found an administration that:

- Shows best practice for regional cooperation
- Is successfully implementing the idea of a compact city
- Has created brilliant cycling conditions

However the team feel that

- The region has not used the full potential of the public transportation
- Faces great challenges due to transport related developments in the area

By early October the team will have completed their report of the review of the region administration to use as it starts to prepare a new sustainable urban transport plan.

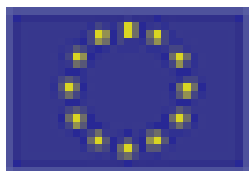
The expert team:

- Mrs. Anna Granberg - Union of Baltic Cities - Environment Commission
- Mr. Sönke Behrends - Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden
- Mr. Imre Antso - City of Pärnu, Estonia
- Ms. Kristiina Karu - City of Tartu, Estonia
- Mr. Olle Bertilsson - City of Sundsvall, Sweden

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Background information

BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation and Planning - www.bustrip-project.net)

Bustrip will provide practical solutions and tools for European cities and municipalities to deliver Sustainable Urban Transport. The 12 partner cities in the BUSTRIP project are the first in Europe to start preparing and implementing Sustainable Urban Transport Plans. - SUTP's are advocated in the European Commissions' Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (6th Environmental Action Plan). BUSTRIP is uniquely positioned to show European cities how to deliver sustainable transport whilst generating economic growth.

Each of the 12 partner cities will receive a peer review that will assist them in understanding their current progress towards Sustainable Urban Transport. They will use this to prepare their SUTP and revise existing plans; from this they will implement pilot actions that will make tangible progress.

BUSTRIP will produce a SUTP toolbox of techniques, collecting all the learning experiences and best practices from the cities. The toolbox will assist European cities to understand SUTP and the opportunities available to move towards sustainable urban transport.

The project is coordinated by UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat located in Turku Finland. Two other core partners are UBC Commission on Transportation and Chalmers University of Technology (in Gothenburg). These three main partners form the Project Steering Group (PSG). Twelve local and regional authorities from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden will be receiving the peer reviews and preparing the sustainable urban transport plans

The project is co-funded by European Union (ERDF- European Regional Development Fund) within the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme, Finnish Ministry of the Environment and the partner cities. The total project budget is 3,1 MEUR. The project duration is July 2005 - December 2007.

Partnership: UBC Commissions on Environment and Transportation, Chalmers University of Technology, local and regional authorities from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

Approximate total project budget: 3,1 MEUR ERDF: 1,73 MEUR

Duration: July 2005 - December 2007

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www.bustrip-project.net