



National Board of Antiquities, Finland  
margaretha.ehrstrom@nba.fi  
marianne.lehtimaki@nba.fi  
010730

## Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States Working group "Sustainable Historic Towns" Progress report

### Executive summary

The Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States met in Gdansk in 1999 with the agreement that cultural heritage should be included in cultural co-operation. The Working Group on Heritage Co-operation, set up by Ministries, has identified the topic "Sustainable Small Towns" as one of its key issues out of four for the action plan.

The governmental authorities in Finland and Estonia are responsible for implementation the theme on "Sustainable Small Towns", later "Sustainable Historic Towns". Other members are state authorities from Denmark, Latvia, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Poland. The tasks of the working group are to develop strategies dealing with protection and sustainability in historic towns and create projects promoting the theme.

The working group has agreed upon aims and goals as to promote preservation and sustainable development of the diversity of historic towns of the Baltic Sea by recognising their local identity.

The aims will be gained:

- by developing a common strategy, management and good practices for sustainable development in historic towns,
- by encouraging research activities and promote innovative projects in participation with national, regional and local authorities, NGOs and other sectors, e.g. cultural tourism. The project will extend during a period of 2000-2002.

National Board of Antiquities in Finland has financed a project-manager for year 2001. The initial meeting of the working-group was held in Oulu (August 2000), the next took place in Stockholm (January 2001) and the third will be in September 2001 in Copenhagen. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden have been actively involved in project. Poland has recently nominated its member. Latvia, Lithuania and Germany are still preparing the nomination. The first workshop took place in Tallinn May 2001 with members of working group, representatives from pilot towns in Estonia (Kuressaare), Finland (Forssa) and Sweden (Hjo) and three lecturers and four observers (17 participant altogether) (enclosure 1: workshop programme with a list of participants).

The foreseen activities are arranging a seminar and co-operation with pilot-towns in order to examine case studies. A multidisciplinary seminar is planned for year 2002. The results of co-operation will be disseminated in English by an electronic publication and in series of reports of Nordic Council of Ministers (Tema Nord). The working group is preparing an Interreg III b-project as a continuation to the project for years 2002-2005.

### Introduction

The Nordic countries have a long tradition in co-operative work for preservation of historic wooden towns. The knowledge and experience in individual historic towns carried out by town-planners and researches can be transferred for the development of models for sustainable urban conservation policy. There are current research programmes on urban conservation e.g. in Norway (SINTEF), Sweden (Lund University) and Finland (Oulu university). NordRegio has organised research-activities concerning sustainability and urban heritage, too.

The Nordic World Heritage Office in Oslo has carried out a pilot project on "Sustainable Historic Cities", within the framework of World Heritage Towns in Estonia, Latvia and Sweden.

Implementations of these theoretical and analytical approaches with empirical case studies advances the work on common strategy, management and good practices that are needed for sustainable development in historic towns. There is a need of co-ordination of current efforts and experiences in the field of developing methods for urban conservation.

Knowledge of Nordic practices and the European Union programmes will be used in the Baltic States to increase their readiness for EU-partnership. Encouraging Baltic States to adopt models for sustainable urban conservation will carry this out by capacity building and development of democratic administrative processes.

### Mandate

The Working Group on Sustainable Historic Towns finds its mandate in following documents:

- Declaration and Framework Statements, agreed by the Ministers of Culture on their fourth Conference in 1999 in Gdańsk.

The Working Group on Heritage Co-operation has identified the topic "Sustainable Small Towns" as one of its key issues out of four for the action plan ("Safeguarding and Developing the Common Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea Region", Gdańsk in 1999).

### Definition of the task

The Working Group has identified the task by formulated aims and goals for its activities. That is to promote preservation and sustainable development of the diversity of historic towns of the Baltic Sea by recognising their local identity.

The meetings, seminars and workshop arranged will;

- Recognise the specific characteristics of the towns around the Baltic Sea, including both the tangible and intangible. Urban conservation involves actions to identify the physical and non-physical characteristics of an individual town and to manage the changes in a sustainable manner. The identity of every individual town has to be examined for further planning actions. This action is undertaken in the co-operation with local inhabitants, professionals and politicians. The role of the national level is to act as an initial motor.

- analyse the tolerance of change, without losing the identity (sustainability)

- examine, present and disseminate various strategies to incorporate historical stratification into the process of change (infill architecture, new use of both historic buildings and city space),

- Find models for interaction/participation in the planning process of urban development.

The participating countries will present their experience and focus on finding new approaches to identify the character of individual historic towns and to present good models for conservation practices.

### Results / Milestones

The project manager is employed for year 2001, financed by the National Board of Antiquities in Finland.

**The first workshop** called "Identity as a Cultural Resource - Small Historic Towns Facing Development and Change" took place in Tallinn on the 5th and 6th of May in year 2001. The workshop was financed by Nordic Council of Ministers. The participants were the working-group members (6) with representatives from pilot towns (3) and two central researchers from the Nordic World Heritage Office and NordRegio. Observers from Monitoring Group (director Anneli Randla from National Heritage Board in Estonia and keeper Maire Mattinen from NBA in Finland), the Ministry of Environment in Finland (senior adviser Minna Perähuhta), the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies in Finland (Dr., research fellow Harsha Munashinge) and the co-ordinator in Estonia, Ms Helle Solnask, were also present (see enclosure 1).

The written material produced for and by the workshop is:

- Summaries: the situation on national level concerning urban heritage protection and how the main problems are described.
- Presentations of case-studies in pilot-towns (photos included), different approaches to the theme
- Teamwork-conclusions; the common theme is Sustainable Historic Towns. The theme is discussed in tree teams with following point of views:
  - 1) From Substance towards Processes
  - 2) Components of a Strategy
  - 3) Developing a Strategy as a Project

**The second phase** for the project is planned to be a multidisciplinary seminar in the beginning of year 2002. The working group has applied for financial aid from NCM. This multidisciplinary seminar with specialists of town planning, research and building conservation management and specialists on new media technology will focus on the results of the pilot projects initiated in the first workshop. The aim of the seminar is to collect good models for urban sustainable development including case studies and to promote networking between authorities, researchers, professionals and NGOs. The seminar will even focus on innovative ways for participating in urban conservation and disseminating good practices. The seminar will take place in Estonia or Latvia.

An electronic publication and the homepage of the working group, linked with pilot towns and the homepage of monitoring group, are made. The report of the workshop and seminar will be published in English in a series of reports of Nordic Council of Ministers (Tema Nord) during 2002 as well as presentation using IT-technology.

**As a future project**, the working group is preparing an Interreg III b - project in order to have better resources to work more profound with sustainable development strategies for historic towns with concrete case studies and integrating NGO's in conservation processes, too. The results will serve as models for implementation of conservation practices in local administration and town planning.

### Problems in fulfilling the tasks

As there is no financial allocation to the Working Group and the project, a lot of work has been done for seeking funding to the activities. The financing of a single workshop gives results on short term, but to fulfil the aims and goals set up on long term bases, financial funding has to be guaranteed.

There has also been problems in activating all the members (Russia and Germany) of the Working Group.

### Conclusions

The network of state authorities is established in order to define the common ground for discussions and definitions of tasks. The network of municipality, mainly town planners in pilot towns, is under construction, as well as the network of researchers, using the national contacts as well as NordRegio-networks. The main activities in 2001 were meeting in Stockholm and the workshop in Tallinn, including the preparatory and reporting work, meeting in Copenhagen in September, preparing the multidisciplinary seminar in 2002 and Interreg IIIB-project. Year 2002 will focus on this multidisciplinary seminar and the processing of the results of the activities and the reporting (Tema Nord).

The Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage Co-operation will evaluate the results.

### Meetings

Three meetings of the Working Group have already taken place; the first in Oulu, Finland in August 2000, the second in Stockholm in January 2001 and in Tallinn in the form of workshop in May 2001. This workshop was arranged in connection with the seminar "Evaluating Cultural Heritage and Landscapes" co-ordinated by Finnish Ministry of Environment. Next meeting will be in Copenhagen, September 2001.

### Participants

**Finland:** Margaretha Ehrström, National Board of Antiquities; [margaretha.chrstrom@nba.fi](mailto:margaretha.chrstrom@nba.fi) 1)

**project manager:** Marianne Lehtimäki, National Board of Antiquities, tel. +358-9-4050 9417,

fax +358-9-40509420 [marianne.lehtimaki@nba.fi](mailto:marianne.lehtimaki@nba.fi)

**Estonia:** Hain Toss, National Heritage Board; [info@muinas.ee](mailto:info@muinas.ee); [hain@muinas.ee](mailto:hain@muinas.ee) 1)

**Denmark:** Kurt Boye Jensen, National Forest and Nature Agency

**Latvia:** xx

**Lithuania:** xx

**Norway:** Gisle Erlien, Directorate for Cultural Heritage

**Poland:** Artur Kostarczyk, Regional Centre for Studies and Preservation of Built Environment in Gdańsk

**Russian Federation:** xx

**Sweden:** Kersti Berggren, National Heritage Board

1) leading partners

### Pilot towns

**Estonia:** Kuressaare / town architect Lilian Hansar

**Finland:** Forssa / town architect Juhani Hallasmaa

**Sweden:** Hjo / town architect P. G. Ylander

### Researchers

prof. Dr Christer Bengs, NordRegio, Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

senior adviser Hans Jacob Roald, The Nordic World Heritage Office

Enclosure 1:

**PROGRAMME**  
**Identity as a Cultural Resource -  
Small Historic Towns  
Facing Development and Change**  
Workshop in Tallinn on the 5th and 6th of May 2001

**Organiser:** The National Board of Antiquities of Finland and the National Heritage Board of Estonia, co-operating with the Sustainable Historic Towns- group  
**Place:** National Heritage Board, Tallinn, Pikk-street 2 (Old Tallinn Area)  
**Participants:** Invitation, governmental authorities, municipalities and experts

**Saturday, the 5th of May 2001**

13.30	Opening of the Workshop  Introduction	<b>Anneli Randla</b> , National Heritage Board, Estonia, and <b>Maire Mattinen</b> , National Board of Antiquities, Finland <b>Margaretha Ehrström</b> , <b>Hain Toss</b>
14.00	<b>Sustainable Historic Towns in the Baltic Sea States; a Survey Concerning Substance and Methods</b> -discussion	<b>Hans Jacob Roald</b> , senior adviser, Nordic World Heritage Office, Oslo
15.00	<b>Forssa - Defining Identity and Tolerance of Change</b> -discussion	<b>Jussi Hallasmaa</b> , town architect in Forssa and <b>Margaretha Ehrström</b> National Board of Antiquities, Finland
15.45	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
16.00	<b>Kuressaare - Research Methods for Describing Identity</b> -discussion	<b>Lilian Hansar</b> , town architect in Kuressaare and <b>Hain Toss</b> , National Heritage Board, Estonia
17.00	<b>Evaluating Urban Identity - and Evaluating the Evaluation</b> -discussion	<b>Gisle Erlien</b> , Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norway
17.45	<b>Refreshments</b>	
18.00	<b>Hjo - Promoting Cultural Tourism</b> -discussion	Town architect <b>P. G. Ylander</b> and <b>Kersti Berggren</b> , National Heritage Board, Sweden
19.00	<b>Excursion by bus to two wooden areas in Tallinn, Kalamaja and Kassisaba</b>	<b>Guided by Hein Toss</b>
20.30	<b>Dinner at restaurant Tänav</b> , address Tatari 6 <a href="http://www.hot.ee/tanav/">www.hot.ee/tanav/</a>	

## Sunday, the 6th of May 2001

9.30	Ribe - Preservation of the Built Heritage in Europe's Historic Centres -discussion	Kurt Boye Jensen, National Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark
10.15	Conclusions	Chairman Margaretha Ehrström
10.30	Coffee Break	
11.00	Presentation of the themes and tasks of three working teams: 1) From Substance to Processes - Defining Case Studies / advisor Hans Jacob Roald 2) Components of a Strategy / advisor Christer Bengs 3) Developing a Strategy as a Project: Interreg III B / advisor Matti Lipsanen	Margaretha Ehrström, Hans Jacob Roald, Hein Toss
11.40	Interreg III B - a Framework for Co-operation Projects - discussion	Matti Lipsanen, Advisor / Interreg III B Finnish Sub-committee
12.00	Lunch at restaurant Von Krahl, address Rataskaevu 10/12	
13.15	Identity and Sustainability - Issues for a Strategy	Christer Bengs, prof. Dr., NordRegio, Stockholm
14.00	Teamwork in three groups -coffee and refreshment will be available	Every team is asked to produce notes that sum up matters under consideration
16.30	Presenting Workshop-Conclusions  Decisions and future planning	Working-teams,  Margaretha Ehrström, Hein Toss
20.00	Farewell-Dinner at restaurant Balthazar address Town Hall Square 11, Old Tallinn	

### Presentations of case studies:

There is approximately 30-45 minutes time for each country (state authority together with the pilot-town representative) to present a specific approach to issues, with focus on defining problems and presenting components of solutions, methods etc. We kindly ask you to bring your written presentation (if possible with some photos, pictures etc). This presentation will be copied to all participants and used as material for our report(s)

### Other material:

We have asked you for **a summary** (max 2 pages in A4-format) concerning the situation on national level **to be disseminated in the workshop**. This summary deals with **guidelines, emphasis and particular projects describing how the identities of small historic towns are protected and promoted in planning and regeneration processes**. Interesting literature concerning the theme can be displayed.

# Identity as a Cultural Resource - Small Historic Towns Facing Development and Change

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Workshop in Tallinn on the 5th and 6th of May 2001

## Lecturers:

- Christer Bengs**, prof. Dr., [Christer.Bengs@hut.fi](mailto:Christer.Bengs@hut.fi)  
NordRegio, Nordic Centre for  
Spatial Development, Box 1658  
S-111 86 Stockholm  
Tel. +358-9-451 4098 and +46-8-463 5411
- Matti Lipsanen**, advisor, [Matti.Lipsanen@hameenliitto.fi](mailto:Matti.Lipsanen@hameenliitto.fi)  
Interreg III B Finnish Sub-committee  
Regional Council of Häme  
Niittykatu 5  
FIN-13100 Hämeenlinna
- Hans-Jacob Roald**, senior adviser, [hroald@online.no](mailto:hroald@online.no)  
The Nordic World Heritage Office  
Postboks 8196 Dep  
0034 Oslo

## Participants:

- Denmark: **Kurt Boye Jensen**, [kbj@sns.dk](mailto:kbj@sns.dk)  
National Forest and Nature Agency  
Haraldsgade 53, 2100 Copenhagen Ø  
Tel. +45 39 47 24 58
- Estonia: **Lilian Hansar**, town architect of Kuressaare  
Tallinna 10, 93813 Kuressaare  
Saaremaa  
Tel. +372 45 33674
- Hain Toss**, [Hain@muinas.ee](mailto:Hain@muinas.ee)  
National Heritage Board,  
Uus 18, Tallinn 10111  
Tel. +372-640 30 65, Fax: +372-640 30 60
- Finland: **Margaretha Ehrström**, [Margaretha.Ehrstrom@nba.fi](mailto:Margaretha.Ehrstrom@nba.fi)  
National Board of Antiquities  
Tel. direct +358-9-4050 9418
- Jussi Hallasmaa**, town architect in Forssa, [Juhani.Hallasmaa@forssa.fi](mailto:Juhani.Hallasmaa@forssa.fi)  
The Municipality of Forssa  
Tel. direct +358-3-4141 342
- Marianne Lehtimäki**, [Marianne.Lehtimaki@nba.fi](mailto:Marianne.Lehtimaki@nba.fi)  
National Board of Antiquities,  
Direct tel. +358-9-4050 9417, Fax: +358-9-4050 9420
- Maire Mattinen**, [Maire.Mattinen@nba.fi](mailto:Maire.Mattinen@nba.fi)  
National Board of Antiquities  
Department of Monuments and Sites  
PB 169, 00511 Helsinki  
Direct tel. +358-9-4050 9463
- Norway: **Gisle Erlie**, [Gisle.Erlie@ra.no](mailto:Gisle.Erlie@ra.no)  
Section for Urban and Local Development Plans  
Directorate for Cultural Heritage  
PoBox 8196 Dep., 0034 Oslo  
T. +47-22-94 04 49, Fax +47-22-94 04 04
- Sweden: **Kersti Berggren**, [kersti.berggren@raa.se](mailto:kersti.berggren@raa.se)  
National Heritage Board  
PoBox 5405, 11484 Stockholm  
T. +46-8-51 91 80 00, direct +46-8-51 91 80 48  
Fax: +46-8-51 91 85 85
- P. G. Ylander**, town architect in Hjo, [pg.ylander@hjo.se](mailto:pg.ylander@hjo.se)

**Observers:** **Harsha Munashinge**, Dr., research fellow,  
[Harsha.Munashinge@hut.fi](mailto:Harsha.Munashinge@hut.fi)  
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies,  
P.O. Box 9300, Fin-02015 HUT

**Minna Perähuhta**, senior adviser  
[Minna.Perahuhta@vyh.fi](mailto:Minna.Perahuhta@vyh.fi)  
the Ministry of Environment, Finland

**Anneli Randla**, [Anneli@muinas.ee](mailto:Anneli@muinas.ee)  
National Heritage Board, Estonia

**Helle Solnask**, [Helle@muinas.ee](mailto:Helle@muinas.ee)  
National Heritage Board, Estonia