

Northwest Russia: Facts and Events

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Valentina Matvienko Met May Andersson

Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St. Petersburg, and May Andersson, Consul General of Sweden in St. Petersburg had a meeting at Smolny on 10 March 2004. The possibilities to extend cooperation between Sweden and St. Petersburg in the fields of environment, energy and IT were discussed. May Andersson handed over to Valentina Matvienko a written notification about Sweden's 120 million SEK investments into the construction of Southwest wastewater treatment plant. The Consul General of Sweden invited the Governor of St. Petersburg to visit Sweden.

Source: Vladimir Polushko, Press center of the Governor of St. Petersburg, e-mail:
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Mats Hellström to Visit Kaliningrad

Mats Hellström, Governor of the County of Stockholm, is preliminary planning to visit Kaliningrad in the middle of May 2004 with the purpose of getting to know the region and explore and discuss possible areas of cooperation. The administration of Kaliningrad Oblast has positively reacted to the planned visit.

In 2004 Kaliningrad is celebrating its 750th anniversary. The preparatory work has already started and the organizing committee has been appointed.

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International Environmental Film Festival *Green Vision*

The 9th International Environmental Film Festival *Green Vision* arranged by the St. Petersburg Committee on Environmental Protection and Safety will take place in St. Petersburg on 21-24 September 2004.

The main goals of the Festival are to inform the audience about the movies devoted to actual environmental problems; to enlarge the knowledge of Russian newsmakers on most important environmental problems in the Baltic region; to extend the cooperation between countries in the Baltic region in the field of environment.

The program of the Festival is composed of environmental movies and TV films not older than four years. In 2003 more than 270 movies from 29 countries were submitted to the contest. The international jury of the Festival consisting of representatives from France, Belgium, Lithuania, Germany, Finland and Sweden will give awards in several categories, such as Grand-Prix and Best movie about the Baltic Sea region.

Film studios and associations of filmmakers are invited to take part in the Festival and submit VHS video copies of environmental movies and TV films of the last four years to the jury.

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Reconstruction of Marine Passenger Terminal in St. Petersburg

The joint-stock company *Morskoy Vokzal* has started a \$3 million reconstruction project of the Marine Passenger Terminal property stock. Ferry operators *Tallink Grupp AS* (Estonia) and *Silja Line* (Finland) will invest \$1 million in the project. According to Igor Glukhov, Director General of *Inflot Worldwide St. Petersburg*, which is acting as an agent of both Tallink Grupp and Silja Line, the investments are worth it, because in 2004 the terminal is expecting about 200 thousand passengers coming with 5 regular ferry lines.

In 2003 the St. Petersburg department of *Fondservice Bank* invested \$5 million in the reconstruction of the terminal building. *Morskoy Vokzal* is planning to attract \$10 million more to continue the reconstruction. A possibility for the terminal to expand the territory for 1 km more is being considered.

Source: *Delovoy Peterburg*, 11 March 2004

Europe Embankment Project

The press conference on the implementation of the *Europe Embankment* investment project was held in St. Petersburg on 12 March 2004. The goal of the starting project is to re-build the industrial zone, located on the banks of the Little Neva between the Birzhevoy and Tuchkov bridges, into a modern embankment. The territory opposite the Spit of the Vasily Island is now occupied by the former *Scientific Center of Applied Chemistry*. During the press conference, the City of St. Petersburg was represented by Oleg Kharchenko, the Chairman of the St. Petersburg Committee on Civil Engineering, City Planning and Architecture; and Igor Metelsky, the Chairman of the Committee on City Property Management. One of the ideas of the project is to provide the *Ballet Theater of Boris Eifman* with the building on the future embankment.

Source: *Newsletter of the City of St. Petersburg*, 8 March 2004

Employment Support Programme for 2004

The Employment Support Programme for the year 2004 was approved of by the City of St. Petersburg on 24 February 2004. Within the frames of the programme it is planned to provide job placement assistance to more than 80 000 people and to carry out various staff training and retraining programmes. In 2004 the job placement service will pay attention to the organization of alternative military service and problems connected with the employment of guest workers.

In the end of 2003, there were 19 000 officially registered unemployed in St. Petersburg, which comprises 0.76 % of economically active population.

Source: *Newsletter of the City of St. Petersburg*, 1 March 2004

Baltic Conference on SMEs Development

The Baltic Conference dedicated to development of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Baltic Region of the Russian Federation was held in St. Petersburg on 12 March 2004. The Conference was arranged within the framework of the Tacis-project *Promotion of Innovative SMEs in the Baltic Region, Russian Federation*.

The main issues discussed at the Conference were the current situation in small innovative business development and support in the Baltic Region, innovation systems applied in the European countries, financial schemes for and legal regulation of innovative companies' activities in Russia.

Among the participants of the Conference were Andrey Fursenko, Minister of Science and Education of the Russian Federation, Mikhail Oseevsky, Vice-Governor of St. Petersburg responsible for financial and economic affairs, Hendrik Cornelis Johannes Everaars, Consul General of the Netherlands in St. Petersburg, representatives of Consulates of Germany, Finland and Poland.

EU Delegation and EU-Russia Cooperation Programme (Tacis) were presented in particular by Stéphane Chardon, Second Secretary of the EU Delegation of the European Commission in Russia and Vladimir Skorokhodov, Head of the Tacis Liaison Office in St. Petersburg.

The project is implemented by the European Consortium led by ECORYS NEI from the Netherlands. The main Russian partner in the project is the St. Petersburg Regional Foundation for Scientific and Technological Development.

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Baltic Palette II Open Conference and Baltic Palette Political Conference

The Baltic Palette II Open Conference and the Baltic Palette Political Conference are taking place at Hasselbacken Conference Centre in Stockholm on 27-28 April 2004.

The event organized by the Baltic Palette Cooperation network will be focused on developments in the region in recent years and the opportunities for the future as regards economic growth, size of market and communications.

The first day of the conference includes the Baltic Palette Task Force Meeting and four open seminars: Infrastructure and Polycentric Urban Structures in the Baltic Palette Region, The Cross Border Information Society, Future Aspects of Tourism in the Baltic Palette Region and Water Management in the Baltic Palette Region.

The programme of the second day encompasses in particular discussions on economic integration in the Baltic Palette Region and the presentation of the action programme The future Baltic Palette Region building.

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IX International Fair “Garden and Park Design. City and Flowers”

The IX international fair “Garden and Park Design. City and Flowers” arranged by the St. Petersburg Committee on Accomplishment and Lenexpo company is taking place at Lenexpo exhibition center on 1-4 April 2004.

The fair has two main directions, “Flower and Floristic” and “Landscape Design”. Within the frames of the event several professional competitions, e.g. *Best garden and park art project*, will be held. For the first time in the history of the fair a master class “Flower fantasies in the house” will be arranged.

In 2003 more than 120 exhibitors from Russia and various European countries took part in the event.

Source: Newsletter of the City of St. Petersburg, 1 March 2004; website: www.flowers.lenexpo.ru

IV International Mariinsky Ballet Festival

The IV International Ballet Festival was arranged at the Mariinsky Theater on 5-14 March 2004. This festival of classic dance art usually sees on its scene most leading dancers from all over the world. This year the soloists of the Mariinsky performed together with the guests from *The Bolshoy Theatre*, *New York City Ballet*, *Opera De Paris*, *La Scala Ballet* etc. Traditionally the Festival programme includes one or more new performances. In 2004 the Festival was opened by a series of ballets by William Forsythe, *Steptext*, *In the Middle*, *Somewhat Elevated* and *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude*. Such well established in the repertoire pieces as *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote* and *Bayadere* were also on the programme.

Source: Official website of the Mariinsky Theatre, www.mariinsky.ru

Ireland Days in St. Petersburg – St. Patrick's Day

On 16-18 March St. Petersburg is seeing a number of activities devoted to the St. Patrick's Day celebration. Books on Ireland from the Russian National Library and photos from Ireland were exhibited in the Friendship Palace (*Dom Druzhby*). The street performance *Ascension of St. Patrick's Spirit* and the festival of folklore music will be held on 17 March. 10 days later, on 26 March 2004, Irish Cultural Center will be opened at St. Petersburg State University, Faculty of Arts.

Source: Newsletter of the City of St. Petersburg, 15 March 2004; website: www.st-patrick.ru

The archive of the newsletters can be found at <http://www.stockholmregion.org/tpl/topic.asp?ID=457>

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