

Northwest Russia: Facts and Events

Newsletter by the Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg

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VI International Environmental Forum



Photo: www.interpress.ru

On 22-23 March St. Petersburg hosted the *VI International Environmental Forum*. It was timed to the International Baltic Sea Day that is celebrated on 22 March together with the day of signing of The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, also known as Helsinki Convention.

The Forum united representatives of authorities, business circles and public organizations from not only countries around the Baltic Sea, but also other European states. Representatives of the European Commission participated in the event in order to discuss the European Marine Strategy and the Water Frame Directive.

The programme of the Forum consisted of a plenary session and six workshops. During the workshops, the most relevant issues of environmental safety were discussed.

The opening ceremony of the Forum was attended by Dmitry Golubev, Chairman of the St. Petersburg Committee on Environmental Protection and Safety. In his speech held during the plenary session Dmitry Golubev pointed out St. Petersburg's priority tasks in rational use of water resources: completion of the Southwest water treatment plant construction; construction of local water treatment plants at St. Petersburg enterprises; completion of the construction of the main collector in the western part of the city etc. The Southwest plant will account for the purification of 90% of St. Petersburg sewage. The launch of the plant in 2005 will allow reducing the damage from the pollution making it a half of the 2004 level or 1/6 of the level of 1990.

The priority tasks of the City authorities within the water resources protection go in the line with the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme until 2012 (JCP), as well as the statement of the mayors of Stockholm, Helsinki and St. Petersburg on cooperation within water resources protection and reduction of the Baltic Sea pollution made in 1998.

Source: Newsletter of the City of St. Petersburg, 28 March 2005

Scania-Peter Received ISO 14001:2004 Certificate

In March 2005 *Scania-Peter* enterprise received the Environmental Management System Certificate. An ISO 14001:2004 certificate proves that the Environmental Management System of the company has been measured against the best practice standard and found compliant. The certificate lets customers know they can trust that the company is actively minimizing the environmental impacts of the company's processes, products, and services.

Det Norske Veritas company, the independent certification body, pointed out that *Scania Peter* is the first company manufacturing buses in Russia that obtained the Environmental Management System Certificate.

According to branch specialists, a *Scania* bus is a good environmental choice. The buses are being produced of recyclable materials. The technologies used in bus production do not affect the environment. The engines on *Scania* buses demonstrating low emission level are compliant with the Euro 3 standard.

Contact person: Natalia Solovyeva, Development Manager, LLC Scania-Peter, e-mail: natalya.soloveva@scaniapeter.ru



Vodokanal SPb Received Grant for Swedish and Finnish Consulting Services



St. Petersburg waste water treatment company *Vodokanal* (see the photo) signed an agreement on receiving a 2 mln Euro grant for Finnish and Swedish companies' consulting services. The project is financed by the Finnish Ministry of Environment and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The agreement was signed within the frames of the Neva Direct Discharges Closure programme aiming at

Photo: www.interpress.ru

eliminating of untreated waste water flows into the Neva river and the Gulf of Finland. The programme is one of the activities of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP).

According to Felix Karmazinov, General Director of *Vodokanal*, the project is focused on the reconstruction of the main collector in the northern part of the city, downpour sewerage and housing and communal services. *Vodokanal* is planning to reach a complete purification of sewage by 2011. At the moment, 75% of city drains is purified at the enterprise. This figure will significantly increase with the launch of the Southwest plant in September 2005.

Source: Delovoy Petersburg, 24 March 2005

Tariff on Exceeded Limit of Untreated Water Flows



Photo: www.interpress.ru

The tariff on exceeding the limit of untreated wastewater flows will increase twice. Revision of the tax collect order is an economic instrument of environmental situation control in St. Petersburg. In 1996 the fee for waste discharge in St. Petersburg was reduced due to the fact that private companies were going through the tariffs and prices growth, as well as non-payment problem. According to the City authorities, it is time to pay attention to the environmental issues. As soon as it becomes unprofitable to pay for waste discharge, companies take conservancy measures.

In 2005 two new snowmelting mines will be constructed in St. Petersburg to prevent snow overflows to the city sewers. According to the figures 90% of the waste discharges in St. Petersburg do not meet the required standards.

Source: Metro newspaper, 20 October 2004

Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg Join for Garbage Utilization



Photo: www.interpress.ru

garbage, it is mainly stored in the Leningrad region. In the last 5 years more than 50% of the garbage utilized in the Leningrad region has come from the city. Basically, the garbage producers in the city refer to the norms that differ from those in the region. It has therefore been suggested that the two existing different normative systems should be harmonized into one. A working group consisting of representatives from the city and the region will discuss the volume of garbage removal and possibilities of construction of new waste treatment plants in the region.

Source: Delovoy Petersburg, 17 January and 28 March 2005.

In the end of March 2005 Valery Serdukov, Governor of the Leningrad Region, invited Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St. Petersburg, to discuss cooperation in preservation of the environment, ecological safety and, in particular, the problem of waste treatment. The Leningrad Region administration is planning to continue arranging auctions for the companies interested in waste treatment business. These are being offered land lots for waste storage and treatment.

The Legislative Assembly of the Leningrad region also invited the colleagues from the St. Petersburg to jointly work out a united normative base for the utilization of solid waste on the territory of St. Petersburg and Leningrad Region. Today, in spite of the fact that St. Petersburg is the main producer of

City of St. Petersburg Sold Stakes in St. Petersburg Hotels



Photo: www.interpress.ru

The sale of the City stakes in hotels this year has given the City budget about 4 billion RUR (approximately 142.8 mln USD).

Source: Metro newspaper, 30 March 2005

The City of St. Petersburg sold its 60% stake in the three-star Oktyabrskaya hotel at auction on 29 March 2005. Oktyabrskaya was the last one among those 11 hotels that the City of St. Petersburg had shares in. Oktyabrskaya hotel was sold for 1.383 bn RUR (about 49.6 mln USD) with the start price 321 mln RUR (about 11.5 mln USD).

Oktyabrskaya is one of the oldest hotels in St. Petersburg. Now the hotel consists of two buildings located in the center of the city. The larger one with 558 rooms faces the Moscow railway station. The other building situated on Ligovsky prospect has 111 rooms and 700 square meters of office space.

The St. Petersburg authorities announced their intentions to put up for auction the hotels belonging to the City in summer 2004.

St. Petersburg Plans to Develop Cooperation with Norway in Tourism Sector



On 6 April 2005 Valentina Matvienko, Governor of St. Petersburg, met Jan Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway. The Norwegian delegation visited St. Petersburg within the frames of 100-years anniversary of diplomatic contacts between Norway and Russia. The Governor of St. Petersburg

marked the dynamic development of cooperation between the countries. In 2004 the turnover growth between St. Petersburg and Norway constituted 67%. Valentina Matvienko also mentioned tourism, shipbuilding, oil-and-gas fields' development on the continental shelves in the northern seas among the most successful fields of cooperation. Joint project *Tourist and Cultural Road St. Petersburg – Finnmark* was cited as one of the positive examples.

At present Norway is not included in the list of St. Petersburg core investors. "But it means that we haven't revealed our mutual investment potential yet", said Valentina Matvienko.

St. Petersburg information and business center is planned to be opened in Oslo. The center is considered to stimulate the development of business and cultural contacts between St. Petersburg and Norway. Valentina Matvienko has also suggested that St. Petersburg – Norway business forum should be held in autumn 2005

Source: www.gov.spb.ru

10th International Environmental Film Festival Green Vision

The 10th International Environmental Film Festival Green Vision arranged by the St. Petersburg Committee on Environmental Protection and Safety will take place in St. Petersburg on 19-23 September 2005. The Festival presents movies, TV and video programmes that will enlarge the knowledge of the Russian audience on environmental problems in Europe and, in particular, in the Baltic Sea Region.

For this year's contest, films and videos produced not earlier than 1st January 2002 are eligible. The deadline for applications is 15 July 2005. The International Jury will give awards in several categories, such as 'Grand Prix', 'Most original approach to environmental problems', 'Best movie about the Baltic Sea Region'.

The official languages of the Festival are English and Russian. Film producers and other interested parties are invited to submit their productions to the organizers of the Festival.

Additional information is available at the Committee on Environmental Protection and Safety or at the Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg.

Contact person: Elena Malysheva, press secretary of the Committee on Environmental Protection and Safety, the City of St. Petersburg, e-mail: malysh@ecodata.spb.ru

New Social Project in St. Petersburg

On 1 April the new social project supported by the World Childhood Foundation was launched in Admiralteysky district in St. Petersburg. The project is being implemented by the state social and rehabilitation center *Vera* and the Society for Support to Children *Red Sails*. The target group of the project is street children and children whose parents were deprived of their parental rights. A flat for teenagers at risk that was bought and renovated with the means of the Childhood Foundation founded by H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden will host 5-8 youngsters between 12 and 16 years. They will be taken care of foster parents who have already been selected especially for this project. Prior to the placement in the family, the children will take a rehabilitation course at *Vera* center.



The opening of the flat was attended by Gunilla von Arbin, Secretary General of the World Childhood Foundation, May Andersson, Consul General of Sweden in St. Petersburg, Alexander Rzhanev, Chairman of the St. Petersburg Committee for Labour and Social Security, and Konstantin Shmelev, Head of Admiralteysky District Administration.

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Source: Interpress, www.interpress.ru

Spring in St. Petersburg



Photo: www.interperss.ru

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

STOCKHOLM REGION OFFICE in ST PETERSBURG
Visiting address: Nevsky 1, St. Petersburg
Postal address: BOX 1005, 190000, St. Petersburg
tel.: +7-812-314 68 18, fax: +7-812-314 68 53
e-mail: stockholm.office@stockholm.spb.ru
www.stockholmregion.org