

Northwest Russia: Facts and Events

Newsletter by the Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg

Issue 53, 2006, week 21

Cooperation Agreement: Implementation Started



The delegation of Stockholm-Mälardalen Region visited St. Petersburg on 22-24 May 2006 to take part in the work-group meeting for planning the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement signed between Stockholm-Mälardalen Region and St. Petersburg on February 2, 2006. Representatives of the three sectors prioritized within the Agreement, namely, environmental protection, healthcare and higher education, took part in the event. The group united the representatives of Stockholm County Council, Stockholm County Administrative Board, Stockholm Sustainable Region, the Council of the Mälardalen Region, Stockholm County Association of Local Authorities, Stockholm Academic Forum, as well as Uppsala Municipality and Uppsala University Hospital.

During the work-group meeting hosted by the St. Petersburg Committee on External Affairs, the Stockholm-Mälardalen Region's cooperation potential within the priority sectors was presented. The plenary session was followed by discussions in thematic groups, where the specific plans for cooperation were outlined. As the next practical step, it is planned to arrange a series of thematic workshops in autumn 2006. In particular, the workshop for promoting Stockholm region healthcare providers and opening up the local market opportunities to them will be held in St. Petersburg on November 21-24, 2006.



Apart from the participation in the work-group meeting, the delegation paid a visit to the Southwest Waste Water Treatment Plant launched in September 2005, as well as St. Petersburg City Cancer Clinic and the St. Petersburg Association of vice-rectors on international relations. The programme of the visit was arranged with a support from the Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg.

Source: Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg, e-mail: stockholm.office@stockholm.spb.ru

Cooperation in the Academic Sector



The workshop on the international mobility of academic resources was held on 4 May 2006 within the frames of the Baltic Metropoles Labour Market conference arranged as a part of the Urban Futures 2.0 conference in Stockholm.

Hosted by the Stockholm Academic Forum, the workshop was devoted to the activities of inter-university bodies coordinating the participation of universities in international cooperation programmes. The seminar also provided a platform for deepening the existing contacts and establishing the new ones. In particular, the possibilities for developing cooperation between the Stockholm Academic Forum and the Association uniting the Vice-rectors responsible for international contacts of the St. Petersburg universities were discussed.

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Organization of Help Facilities for Children and Children Rehabilitation



On 22-23 May 2006 two seminars on Modern Approaches to Rehabilitation of Children with Cerebral Palsy and Development of Alternative Communication with Children with Disabilities took place at the Department of Correction Pedagogy, Herzen State Pedagogical University. The seminars were arranged within the frames of the joint Russian-Swedish project *Organization of Help Facilities for Children and Children Rehabilitation* at the Early Intervention Institute in St. Petersburg, 2006-2008. Specialists from polyclinics, rehabilitation centres, specialized kindergartens for children with disabilities, schools in St. Petersburg, Arkhangelsk, Minsk, Novgorod, Harkov, Kaliningrad and Moscow, as well as students from the Herzen University took part in the seminars.

An exhibition of technical aids for children with motor problems, specialized equipment for alternative and argumentative communication, as well as computer programs for children with different kinds of disabilities was organized in connection to the seminars. At the official opening of the seminars the performance prepared by the actors with Down syndrome from the Miniature Theater was presented to the public.

The joint Russian-Swedish project *Organization of Help Facilities for Children and Children Rehabilitation* at the Early Intervention Institute in St. Petersburg, 2006-2008, aimed to develop rehabilitation programs for children from 0 to 7 years old, was launched in January 2006. This project, financed by SIDA, has been carried out by the Swedish Handicap Institute and *Habilitation Services in Stockholm County Council* together with the Early Intervention Institutel, which after the reconstruction of its building will become a model center of rehabilitation for young children with disabilities.

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Smolny College HIV/AIDS & Human Rights Awareness Campaign



The *HIV/AIDS & Human Rights Awareness Campaign*, dated for the AIDS pandemic's 25th anniversary was held on 10-12 May. The campaign, aimed at overcoming the widespread lack of information and knowledge, was arranged by Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (St. Petersburg State University), its Gagarin Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action Foundation.

The highlight of the campaign was the Russian premiere of the documentary "Pills, Profits, Protest: Chronicle of the Global AIDS Movement" (by Anne-Christine d'Adesky, Shanti Avirgan and Ann. T. Rossetti, USA, 2005), held at the cinema-centre *Rodina* thanks to the Cinema Museum. A series of seminars on HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, and the role of media was held within the frames of the campaign. *Smolny College Human Rights Project* encourages awareness, networking through an active outreach program of workshops, lectures, conferences, film showings, as well as a website and internship program.

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Arena för Tillväxt



The Board of *The Arena for the Economic Growth*, cooperation project between FöreningsSparbanken, ICA and the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, visited St. Petersburg on 15-17 May 2006. The aim of the visit was to get an insight into the conditions for foreign business in St. Petersburg. The programme included, in particular, visits to local Swedish and Russian enterprises. The visit was arranged with a support from the Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg.

Source: Stockholm Region Office in St. Petersburg, e-mail: stockholm.office@stockholm.spb.ru

Photo: *Kvadrat* SG

St. Petersburg and Moscow are among Top 10 Tourist Destinations of the World



Microsoft News portal, MSN, the recognized leader by the number of visits on European and American markets, registered by comScore, published a list of top 10 places that are recommended as destinations for summer holidays. St. Petersburg and Moscow are on the 8th position following Capri, New-York sea shore, Greece, London, Montreal, American national parks and Boston, and ranking higher than the Scandinavian countries.

ComScore analytics think that St. Petersburg is able to attract tourists during White Nights season (middle May – middle July) by Mariinsky theatre, Nevsky prospect, House of Peter the Great and boat trips along rivers and channels. This demonstrates that the city is rather well-known and offers attractive possibilities for summer tourism.

During the last three years the City of St. Petersburg, major hotels and Russian Union of Travel Industry have been implementing the *White Days* city promotion program. The main goal of the program is to reduce the difference in tourist flows during the low and high seasons and to increase the number of tourists.

Among the visitors of MSN 25% are aged 18-34, 49% - 25-54 and 26% - older than 55. Most of the tourists who come to St. Petersburg as the members of tourists groups are people over 50. The main reason for this is a high price of a travel package. Promotion of St. Petersburg in winter gives an opportunity to attract also youth by comparatively low prices for trips to the city in low season.

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6th Annual Goose Festival



On 7 May, 2006, the 6th Annual Goose Festival was held in Olonets, Republic of Karelia. The festival coincides with the annual migration of geese from Europe to the Arctic. At the height of the migration, you

can see 50,000 to 70,000 birds (primarily white-fronted goose and bean goose) in a single day on the fields of Olonets. The festival was initiated within the framework of the joint WWF Sweden - Baltic Fund for Nature project on sustainable rural development in Southern Karelia. The project, primarily financed by Sida and Forum Syd, aims to put into place structures for the long-term management of biologically-valuable grasslands, reduce agricultural runoff via improved manure handling and storage on several demonstration farms, start the local production, environmentally-friendly "natural pasture beef", and create jobs and job opportunities in the area. The agricultural base for the local economy is complemented by developing small-scale nature-based tourism, handicrafts, and environmental education for local schoolchildren.

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NORDIC MUSIC 2006



The 3rd International festival NORDIC MUSIC 2006 took place in St. Petersburg on 15 – 28 May. The event was opened by Gunnar Klinga, Consul General of Sweden in St.

Petersburg. 11 concerts of classical music of Nordic Countries were presented at The Grand and The Small Halls of St. Petersburg Academic Philharmonic, Academic Chapel, The Great Peterhof Palace and the Hermitage Theatre. Among the participants of the festival are the foremost musicians and composers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The aim of the festival is not only to introduce the achievements of Scandinavian and Finnish music, but also to give a chance to the young musicians of Scandinavia, Finland and Russia to make their contribution to the classical music and to demonstrate their creative possibilities.

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

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