

Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Estonia – activity report 2013

The year 2013 elapsed under the Swedish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). The NCM Office in Estonia in cooperation with the offices in Latvia and Lithuania started a vast migration project in spring with the aim to get an overview of the migration waves in the Nordic-Baltic countries and to map mutual challenges to be dealt with in the future.

Spring brought the conclusion of the Nordic, Baltic and north-west Russian cooperation project comprising of combat against human trafficking and identification of victims that lasted over a year. During the project, police and border officials, judges, etc. took part in study-trips where they were introduced to various success stories and bottleneck situations. The two-day conference in Tallinn, which concluded the project, made way for new cooperation against human trafficking that began in the November of 2013 and will last until 2015. The joint project is coordinated by the NCMs' office in Estonia.

The key event of autumn turned out to be the climate conference that was the first high-level climate event in Estonia. The future of climate policy and action was discussed by Swedish, Estonian and Finnish environmental ministers, among others.

The labour migration project and climate conference were the events that captured the most media attention. In September, journalists from the daily newspaper Postimees, weekly Eesti Ekspress and Estonian National Broadcasting participated in a study visit to Stockholm and Copenhagen in order to meet politicians and experts about women in politics and gender equality.

Overview of events in 2013:

1. Sustainable development, energy and environment
 - a. [International conference 'Climate from the Nordic-Baltic Perspective: Policy, Science, Economy'](#) (23-24.10, Tallinn). The environment, the climate and energy are key areas of co-operation among the Nordic countries, which have set an ambitious goal by 2050 – they aim to bring the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere to zero. To enhance regional collaboration between Northern European countries, a high-level conference was organised to look at the future of our region and our options in the global context from the standpoint of policy, science and economy. A discussion took place between the Estonian, Finnish and Swedish ministers of environmental affairs **Keit-Pentus Rosimannus**, **Ville Niinistö**, **Lena Ek** on the topic of climate policies and activities. Headliners: **Jens Hesselbjerg Christensen** (UN IPCC Lead Author), **Simon Upton** (Director of Environment Directorate, OECD), **Artur Runge-Metzger** (European Commission), **Erika A. Jorgensen** (The World Bank) et al. Discussions were led by **Tom Heap**, BBC environment correspondent. Nordic Energy Research, an institution under the

Nordic Council of Ministers was involved in the process of organising the conference. In addition, planning and discussions regarding the conference were held with the Committee of Senior Officials for the Environment (ÄK-M) and The Nordic Working Group for Global Climate Negotiations (NOAK). With the aid of speakers we managed to ground the need for co-operation in climate goals, to show that these goals are achievable and the activities reasonable, because economic growth is possible without waste products. High-level meetings are planned to continue in the lead of Estonia and Sweden.

The conference was covered by media channels such as ERR, Postimees, Kanal 2, EPL, Sirp, Radio Kuku.

- b. [Green Growth Forum 'Rohevik 2013'](#) (26-27.09, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Tartu and Viljandi). The aim of Rohevik is to contribute to the advancement of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region by bringing together Nordic and Baltic experts, entrepreneurs and politicians. For the third time Rohevik acted as a forum to discuss environmental planning, at a conference in Tartu, and long-distance district heating at an expert seminar in Viljandi. This year's event consisted of a conference in Tartu and a seminar in Viljandi and offered new insight into practical city planning, its future and the cost-effectiveness of district heating. More than 200 officials, experts and entrepreneurs attended the events. Notable attendees from the Nordic countries were **Trine Pertou Mach**, the project leader of Nordic Built; **Charlotta Faith-Ell** from the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology and **Hans Gulliksson** from the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden.
2. Culture and creative industries
 - a. [Nordic Look 2013 – film industry](#) (3-09.06, Tallinn and Ida-Viru County). In 2013 the creative industries series focused on the film industry – more specifically on the production, promotion and showcasing of films and drama series in Estonia and the Nordic countries. Nordic Look 2013 consisted of two parts: the Nordic Film Days and an expert seminar and study trip to Ida-Viru County. An expert seminar 'New beginnings – production and promotion of films and drama series in Estonia' held in Tallinn on the 7th of July brought together around 60 Nordic and Estonian producers, support services and film enthusiasts. About a hundred people came together to watch Nordic movies on the screens of Katusekino and Kino Sõprus in Tallinn.
 - b. [Nordic-Baltic literature forum 'National literature in the 21st century: insights and perspectives'](#) (5.04, Tallinn). The topic focus of this forum was the fact that fewer people are reading, the quality of literature is inconsistent and this all affects people's ability to understand and analyse text. A lack of governmental support is becoming a problem in some



countries. Discussions were held on the topic of e-books and raising children's interest in reading. Around 180 authors, critics, librarians and officials attended, including Icelandic poet **Hrafn Andrés Harðarson**, Danish literature expert **Søren Vinterberg**, Swedish author and illustrator **Johan Unenge** and a secretariat member of the Nordic literature prize, **Sigurður Ólafsson**. The forum was held in Tallinn as part of the Tallinn Book Fair. Sirp, Postimees and Õpetajate Leht covered the event in the media.

- c. [Nordic library week 'Winter in the Nordic countries'](#) (11-17.11, Estonia). Nordic library week was arranged for the 16th time. This year's theme was the Nordic winter, which was celebrated by hundreds of schools, kindergartens and cultural centres all around Estonia. The key event was the meeting with the renown Finland Swedish author **Ulla-Lena Lundberg** in the County Library of Harju, where more than 70 literature enthusiasts were introduced to the biography and books of Lundberg. Lundberg is the laureate of the Finlandia Prize and has been nominated five times for the Nordic Council's Literature Prize, last nomination for the novel "Ice" published in Estonian language in 2014.
3. Welfare society
 - a. [Conference 'Identification of victims and criminals – why do we not notice them?'](#) (30-31.05, Tallinn). The conference "Identification of victims and criminals – why do we not notice them?" held in Tallinn formed the conclusion of a project between the Baltic States, Nordic countries and north-west Russia, "The fight against human trafficking and supporting its victims", that lasted for more than a year. Over 80 people attended the two-day conference. The conference revealed the emergence of new forms of criminal activity, their discovery, absence of international cooperation and forced labour are among the main issues in human trafficking. The difficulties lie in identifying victims – they do not approach the police on their own. Among the numerous speakers were the Deputy Director General for the Criminal Police Department of Estonian Police, **Raigo Haabu**; State Prosecutor from the Office of the Prosecutor General, **Kati Miitra**; a judge from the Court of Appeal of Lithuania, **Laima Garneliene**; Former Head of Human Trafficking Unit of State Police, **Arturs Vaišja** and other experts-professors from Russia and the Baltic countries. Study-trips and the conference were a good opportunity for the attendees to create an informal network that will aid them in their daily work. The expert seminar was covered in the media by ERR and Postimees.
 - b. **Children's book presentation 'The day Frederik was Frida and Riina was Rasmus'** (6.03, Tallinn). The Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) presented the Danish to Estonian translated version of the

children's book and the methodology guidebook for primary education teachers accompanying it. The aim of using these books is to support activities and discussions in kindergarten that should help children to be more considerate to one another and the teachers to recognise common stereotypes. The author, **Louise Windfeldt**, and the artist, **Katrine Clante**, were present and shared their experiences regarding the book's publication and inspiration sources. A thorough interview with the author can be found in Postimees.

4. Regional cooperation

- a. [Conference 'Migration and Demographic Challenges in the Nordic-Baltic Region'](#) (7-08.03, Tallinn). This conference was the opening event of a cooperation project in the Nordic-Baltic region. The aim of the conference was to gather the experiences and present the key findings of studies conducted in the Baltic States and Nordic countries. Topics such as data and information exchange between countries, migration policies and the role of labour movement in the emerging segregation in societies were discussed. Competition for skilled workers is growing in the global labour market. Around 240 people attended the two-day conference in Tallinn. The event also marked the start of the Swedish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers for 2013. The Minister of Social Affairs of Estonia, **Taavi Rõivas** opened the conference with a speech, among others. Second Deputy Speaker of the Swedish Parliament Key, **Ulf Holm** and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Of Estonia, **Lauri Bambus** had a chance to speak in addition to scientists. Nordregio, an institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers was also included.

The conference was widely covered in the media by ERR, Postimees, Eesti Päevaleht, Delfi, The Baltic Course, Kuku Raadio, Vikerraadio and Raadio 4.

- b. **Expert seminar 'Smart migration policy'** (31.10, Tallinn). The seminar was the continuation of a conference held in spring, "Migration and Demographic Challenges in the Nordic-Baltic Region". It focused on migration policies regarding highly qualified workers. Around 60 experts and politicians attended the conference, including **Siim Raie**, Director of the Office of the President of the Republic of Estonia. A debate on the topic of smart migration between members of Riigikogu, the Parliament of Estonia, **Andres Herkel**, **Kadri Simson**, **Kaja Kallas** and **Sven Mikser** concluded the seminar.

5. Science and innovation

- a. [Creativity forum vol. II: 'Creativity Stimulates the Senses'](#) (22-23.08, Käsmu). The second international creativity forum saw experts from Estonia, the UK and all of the Nordic countries come together, in addition to about a hundred teachers, school directors and education officials. This year's aim

was to introduce creative new ways of teaching through theory and workshops. Many teachers promised to use their new knowledge in the classroom. It was suggested that teachers should focus on their creative skills – art exhibitions and performances between teachers could make this easier. The main speakers were **Paul Collard** from the UK, the founder and chief executive of Creativity, Culture and Education; **Ulla Wiklund** from Sweden, creator of the “listening creativity” method and recognised development consultant; reading-inspirer **Agneta Möller-Salmela** et al.

- b. [Youth festival C.A.M.P.](#) (20-23.10, Pärnu). The three-day project “C.A.M.P. Creative Action – Meaningful Performance!” arose from the international creativity forum and *Kulturkarnevalen* that takes place in Finland. It brought together more than 60 students between the ages of 15 and 17 from Estonia and the Nordic countries, who were given the chance to experience unconventional learning methods in six workshops with Estonian and Nordic supervisors. Subjects such as biology and music, that aren’t compatible from the first glance, were combined. The aim of the youth festival was to encourage students to think both differently and independently. The youth festival ended with a performance by the participants – “Day at school”. The event was covered in the media by Pärnu Postimees.