



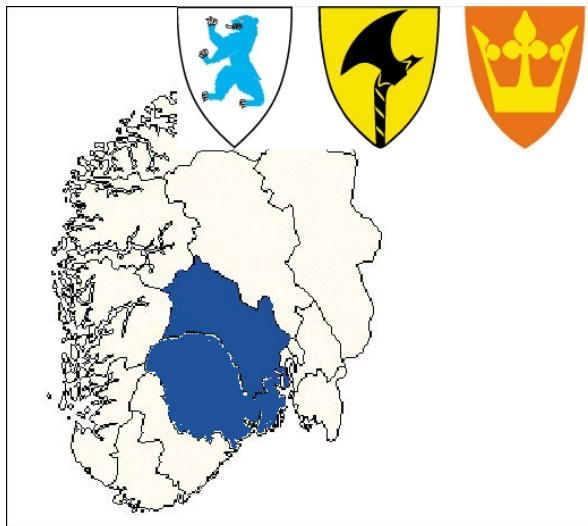
REGIONSAMARBEIDET
Buskerud Telemark Vestfold

BTV International News Bulletin

BTV is a Regional Cooperation between the County Municipalities
of Buskerud, Telemark and Vestfold Counties

Issue no. 01/06

www.btvregion.no/internasjonalt



[Action Plan](#)

The BTV Region:

The BTV region actively participates in the development of national and international regional policy, international development programs and international projects which contribute to a democratic and sustainable development.

By 2020, the BTV region aims to be recognized as an attractive and innovative region in Europe.

The BTV international team's main areas of focus for international cooperation are towards:

BTV Municipalities, Youth, Business Development and Participation in International Meeting Places.

BTV Municipalities

BTV seminar series on internationalization – INTERREG 2007-2013



From l. Kristiina Urpelainen, Euromontana; Gunn Marit Helgesen, Telemark's County Mayor/ NSC Pres.; Glenn Millar, British Waterways; Thron Kjellevoid, BTV



Interreg IIIB VISP project stand.



Seminar participants.

More than 100 participants attended this 2 day event which took place at Morgedal Hotel in Kviteseid municipality in Telemark. The participants represented were politicians and private and public sectors at local, regional, national and international levels. We especially want to thank Glenn Millar from British Waterways and Kristiina Urpelainen from Euromontana who participated at the seminar. Mr. Millar presented the Interreg IIIB Canal Link project and his experiences working together with Telemark county. Ms. Urpelainen presented Euromontana and her experiences working together with Buskerud and Telemark counties in the Interreg IIIC Euromountains.net project. There were a number of Interreg projects presented and the projects were displayed during the 2 day event. The main topics presented on the program were the next Interreg program period 2007-2013, existing BTV region Interreg projects focusing on business development, culture, identity and tourism, BTV youth perspective and youth participation in international projects, Oslo Region European Office and the North Sea Commission as international forums for network building and project development. We want to thank all of the participants who made this our most successful event held so far. Click [here](#) to see more photos from the event and the program presentations.



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BTV supports Centre for Multi-Cultural Entrepreneurship

Drammen municipality has Norway's second largest immigrant population and offers a wide range of services through its International Culture Centre. As a result of the positive effects of this centre, the council for the Drammen region wishes to establish a centre to help immigrants start up new businesses, provide financial support to entrepreneurs/ inventors as well as to take advantage of and further develop the resources non-western immigrants have to offer. The BTV Regional Council has granted NOK 557 000 towards the establishment of this centre.

Cow Parade 2006 is coming to Telemark



Telemark cow designed by local artists



As we celebrate our fabulous Telemark cow 150 years, we invite Cow Parade to spread joy and great fun in the region of Telemark – the heart of Norway. Cow Parade Telemark 2006 isn't like any other parade – this one is going back to nature, to green fields, vast forests and mystical lakes. CowParade is one of the largest and funniest art exhibitions, shown in big cities around the globe, free and open to everybody. We welcome the colourful herd to country-side Telemark for a very special Norwegian premiere. More info [here](#).

International Projects with BTV participation

We choose to participate in international projects which relate to the themes of Water, Sea and Mountains.

Interreg IVA – new program area

Meetings have been underway between representatives from Norway, Sweden and Denmark to develop a new Interreg IVA program area which will include: 1. Two programs: 1 for Øresund (Malmø and Copenhagen) and 1 for Nord-

Jylland, Halland and Västra Götaland, and counties along eastern Norway. 2. One program with 2 sub-programs: 1) Øresund area 2) Nord-Jylland, Halland and Västra Götaland, and counties along eastern Norway. Counties involved in the preparations for developing the Norwegian part of the new program are Buskerud- Telemark- Vestfold (BTV), Hedmark, Oslo, Akershus, Østfold, Aust- and Vest- Agder.



Representatives from Eastern Norway counties and the national government.

Interreg IIIB North Sea Region Program

Canal Link

The Canal Link project held its last partner meeting in Karlstad, Sweden. Partners had the chance to see how Värmland has developed a number of small businesses linked to their inland waterways. Many of the new businesses were linked to outdoor recreational activities such as canoeing, bicycling, sailing, use of abandoned buildings for new businesses, restaurants, and etc. We also experienced how they use there waterways in the winter time for recreational activities / tourism such as nordic skating, snow scooter driving and ice fishing. In the evening, we had a tour of Alfred Nobel's home and learned about how the Nobel peace prize came into existence. It was an eery experience to actually meet the ghost of Mr. Nobel in person. The Canal Link project is soon coming to a close with a [final conference](#) to be held in Bremen on May 11-13. Through this conference, we will share some of the results of the project and show how our navigable canals, rivers and lakes can be used to improve the quality of life of Europe's inhabitants and can stimulate economic activities. Last but not least, the final conference is aiming to outline further project activities and to promote future co-operation development. www.canal-link.com



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Interreg IIC South Program Euromountains.net

A thematic seminar will be held in Flåm, Norway on May 10-11 covering the topic – Regional authorities' role in the development and promotion of quality products from mountain areas. The seminar will be held in English and French. More information about the seminar [here](#).

Interreg IIB Baltic Sea Region Program Innovation Circle

This project helps to stimulate innovation and long term development in rural districts and smaller and medium sized towns in the Baltic Sea Region. In many European countries, urban areas are magnets that attract people from villages, smaller towns and rural districts because cities offer more hope for jobs, education, cultural and leisure activities, health care and better living standards. At the same time, rural areas and small towns located far from the large cities or other growth centers face downsizing and ageing population; out-migration of young people; high unemployment because of loss of jobs in traditional sectors, lack of novel ideas for increasing new jobs, businesses and industries; limited access to education. The Innovation Circle project will address this challenge by training people from different sectors within the municipality/region about how to work together to change their communities into attractive places for living, working and visiting.

The project has three main groups of activities:

- *Innovation Academy* - a problem based training program to improve partners' competence for working with innovations and stimulation of entrepreneurship in their regions. The Innovation Academy will consist of 5 workshops for adults and 2 youth summer camps.
- *Local Actions* - each project partner forms a Community Generator Group which is responsible for the analyses of local needs and initiation and implementation of innovative ideas for their community development.
- *Innovation Forum* – experience exchange among project partners through annual conferences and circulation of information (newsletter, video materials, website, brochures, research reports).

www.innovationcircle.net

Financial contributions to projects from the international division

Færder Upper Secondary School received NOK 21 200 from BTV to participate at a Comenius program contact seminar in Italy in May.

Brekkeby Upper Secondary School received NOK 22 500 from Telemark county for a technical exchange of 5 students and 2 teachers to Karlstad, Sweden to discuss apprenticeship exchange possibilities. This school also received an additional NOK 10 000 for a language study trip for 9 students and 2 teachers to a school in Schwarzenberg, Germany.

Croftolmen Upper Secondary School received NOK 40 000 from Telemark county so that 14 culinary chef students could have the possibility to travel to London for one week in March to prepare culinary specialties and learn from top chefs at the exclusive London Ritz Hotel and the British Parliament.

Telemark Women's Farmer Organization received NOK 35 000 from Telemark county for a study trip to Brussels in May which the Oslo Region European Office in Brussels is planning for 15 representatives of the Women's Farmer Organizations in BTV.

Skien Rotary West received NOK 10 000 from Telemark county to support a trip for 20 professionals from Skien working with handicapped children to a professional conference being held in Kaunas, Lithuania in September.

Youth

'Listen to us!' exclaim youth representatives in BTV.



'Listen to youth.' sing, Ingrid Jasmin Vogt Evensen (piano) and Marianne Bjerkeli to the seminar participants.

On March 14- 15 with over 100 persons participating at the BTV seminar on internationalization, two youth representatives from the BTV region had the opportunity to



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address this crowd and explain what the BTV youth initiative is all about. Marianne Bjerkeli and Ingrid Jasmin Vogt Evensen were invited to tell about their involvement in the AER Youth Team (Assembly of European Regions) and the working group for youth politics in the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation. Some of the initiatives they are working on are a 'Peace Youth Travel Pass' which is a cheap and flexible transportation offer for young people throughout Europe. They are also concerned with the health of young people and available health services/ programs. They also hope to stimulate youth exchange across Europe. There is also room for improvement in the BTV region. Ingrid and Marianne composed a song which they performed for the seminar participants with an appeal to the adults to listen and learn from the youth. The BTV youth want to have seats in the County and Regional Councils with a right to speak. The BTV youth want their issues to be heard and they want to be included in the political processes, where adoptions being made have an impact on young persons' lives.

AER – Assembly of European Regions

Maramures, Romania will be the host of this year's AER summer school.



Members of AER's organizing committee standing outside the Ethnographic museum in Baia Mare, Romania. The museum will be part of the program for AER's summer school 2006.

The main theme will be 'Youth: Future of Europe'. Youth from all over Europe will get the chance to meet, discuss and develop initiatives for their future. In order to participate you need to be between the ages of 18-25, a member of a regional youth organization and have an interest for international cooperation. More info [here](#).

Youth and Mental Health in Europe



Members of the AER Committee on Social Cohesion, Social Politics and Public Health.

Youth and Mental Health was a theme Marianne Bjerkeli (pictured), leader of Vestfold's student council and member of the AER Youth Team addressed during the AER Committee on Social Cohesion, Social Politics and Public Health meeting in Vojvodina, Serbia and Herzegovina on March 28-29. Marianne's presentation was based on a meta-analysis of 27 national and regional studies from 16 European countries (including Norway). The study shows that 27% of Europe's adult population (ages 18-65) have or have had at least one mental health disorders during 2004 (approx. 83 million people). More than a 1/3 of these had several mental health disorders simultaneously. 35% of young women (ages 18-34) have had one or more mental health disorders and more than 23% of men in the same age group. The analysis shows that there is a large number of mental health disorders amongst youth in Europe. Women suffer mostly from anxiety and depression, while a large number of men suffer from alcohol addiction. Only 26% have had contact with a professional health office. There are many who are not getting the help and treatment they need. Youth: The Future of Europe means to increase the quality of life of young people in Europe, and this is also a goal for the AER Youth Team. Improving better health conditions is a part of reaching this goal. The AER Youth Team and the AER Committee on Social Cohesion, Social Policy and Public Health realize there is much work to do when hearing these sombre statistics.



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BSSSC – Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Cooperation

Progress for BSSSC's youth initiatives



A working group meeting of 12 participants met in Tallinn, Estonia on March 9-10 to draft a joint working program for 2006-2007. This is a trial period for the youth initiative in BSSSC. The program is made up of 3 main areas: 1. To create a leaflet about the youth initiative at a national level in the 10 countries around the Baltic Sea. 2. Main themes for youth initiatives in the regions: mobility, unemployment, social dimension, democracy and youth participation, informal and formal learning/ education/ life-long learning, cultural diversity and identity. 3. Projects – events calendar. The Polish region of West Pommern is the secretariat for the working group on youth politics.

Eastern Norway County Network Youth Seminar on International Cooperation

38 youth of which 17 represented the BTV region attended a youth seminar on international cooperation on March 23-24 in Hamar, Norway. In 2005, two youth seminars had been arranged to contribute to youth influence in the work of AER and BSSSC. The youth attending these seminars provided valuable input and views from youth in Eastern Norway to the activity program and organization which were voiced at the General Assemblies of AER and BSSSC.



The topics for the seminar in Hamar were youth, substance abuse and mental health, school health services in upper secondary schools, a youth travel pass, and youth involvement in the county councils. As these issues are part of the work programmes of AER and BSSSC, an implementation process is now underway and therefore the feedback received from the seminar participants will be used in influencing these issue in AER and BSSSC.



BTV Youth are Missing Out on Project Millions

The EU program 'Young in Europe' distributes over 16 million NOK to youth projects in Norway each year. In 2005, there was only one application from Telemark, while other counties in Norway were much more active. The program wants more applications to increase the competition between applicants. Participants need to be between the ages of 15-25 and can get funding for a large portion of a project's expenses depending on the type of project. The program provides funding based on three different areas: 1. group exchange 2. voluntary work for individual persons 3. local youth projects. Disabled persons are a prioritized group. For more information about this program go to www.ungieuropa.no.

High Season for Apprenticeship Exchanges to Europe
Vestfold County Council has received NOK 500 000 in EU funding from the Leonardo da Vinci program to place apprentices with business partners in Europe. The apprentices have the opportunity for placements from 4



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weeks to 3 months in another country. The funding covers travel costs, living expenses, insurance and preparatory costs. 19 apprentices will participate in this exchange program in England, Malta, Spain and Ireland. The exchange provides valuable professional experience as well as memories to last a lifetime.

Croftolmen Upper Secondary School Gets Inspiration Through an EU Project



14 culinary chef students from Croftolmen Upper Secondary School in Bamble travelled to London for one week in March to prepare culinary specialties at the exclusive London Ritz Hotel and the British Parliament. Before departing for their cooking adventure in London, the students practiced various British specialties back home in Telemark and also worked on strengthening their English language skills by learning new expressions and vocabulary. The students had a fantastic experience and learned from top chefs in these exclusive restaurants. They have brought back with them to Telemark invaluable professional experience and knowledge. Several students said they would like to perhaps work again in London as a culinary chef when they complete their studies. Inspiration to participate in this study excursion was a result of participation in a Leonardo da Vinci project called GEBP which deals with developing cooperation between the school, businesses and other organizations in the local community. The project also contributes towards the students development of entrepreneurial skills and international understanding and perspectives. [GEBP website](#)

International Business Development



Bio-energy seminar hosted by Telemark fylkeskommune with experience from Sweden

Telemark fylkeskommune will be hosting a seminar on Bio-energy on April 26th at Ibsenhuset in Skien. The objective of the seminar is to create a forum for Bio-energy in Telemark. The forum will be a motor for development of this type of energy in the county. A delegation from Telemark had travelled to Västermannland and Västerbotten counties in Sweden to see their Bio-energy power plants. Both of these counties have a goal to replace fossil fuels with bio-energy production. They have developed several large and small power plants based on wood chip burning. An interesting pilot project they have underway is dealing with the extraction of ethanol from timber. Lena Nordgren from BioAlcohol Fuel Foundation will speak at the seminar on this topic.

Cooperating Regions



Murmansk learns from eastern Norway counties about participation in EU projects

A project seminar was held in Murmansk on March 23rd. Several eastern Norway county administrations shared their experiences on international project work with representatives from local and regional authorities in Murmansk. The eastern Norway counties gained more knowledge about cooperation with Russia. There were 50 participants who attended the seminar. Thrond Kjellevold from the BTV region spoke about participation in EU projects by using waterways as an instrument for regional development, for example through the Interreg IIIB [Canal Link](#) project.



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BTV Cooperation with Galicia, Spain

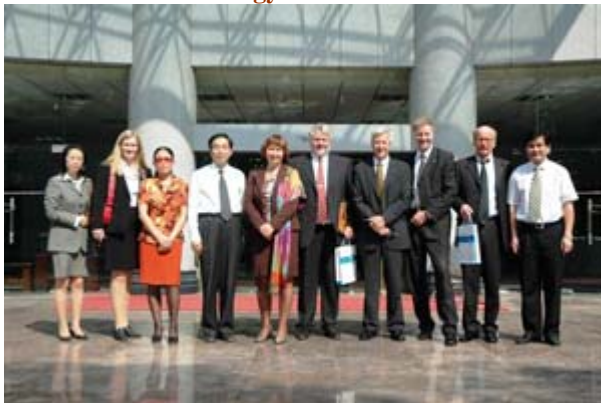
Vinje municipality has had contact with regional and national authorities in Galicia and are now planning a pilot project together with other actors in the BTV region which cover the following areas: exchange of tourist groups, cooperation on pilgrim paths, food traditions, farm tourism and business development in rural areas. Project contact: hans.kristian.lehmann@vinje.kommune.no



**Estonian recognition to Buskerud's
County Mayor Tor Ottar Karlsen**

Buskerud's County Mayor Tor Ottar Karlsen received Pärnu county's highest recognition 'Pärnumaa Vapimärk' in a ceremony on February 23rd for his contributions to develop the county. Karlsen was especially recognized for his efforts after the damaging storm which hit the area last winter. Karlsen was the first to support the Estonian's after the storm hit said Pärnu's governor Toomas Kivimä. The County Mayor started an emergency fund raiser at once and travelled to Estonia immediately when he heard of the destruction to the area. Tor Ottar's comments were "When our friends are having difficulties, we need to be there to help them." The Estonian governor also explained that the recognition was given on account of the over 10 year cooperation between Pärnu and Buskerud county administrations where Karlsen has had a significant role.

50 million Chinese were informed about environment technology from Telemark



Just before the new year, Chinese television reported on Norwegian environment and energy technology solutions

such as the electric car 'Smart Car' from Telemark. The 30 minute program had 50 million viewers. The TV reportage was a result of a BTV funded conference on energy held in Telemark in October last year where a Chinese news team attended. China has environmental challenges and hopes to learn from businesses in Telemark and Norway which produce environmental technology solutions. The electric car 'Smart Car' which is launched by Environment Cars (Miljøbil) Grenland of Telemark received large interest at the Energy conference. A battery which gives the car twice as much driving capacity has been developed in cooperation with a Canadian company. The car will be produced in China and may be possibly used during the Olympic games in Beijing in 2008.

International Meeting Places



The BTV Regional Council participated on a study trip to ORE on January 8-11. They received an orientation about current political cases within the EU system. They also were given a presentation of how ORE can contribute to the BTV region with its services such as towards issues regarding mountain regions, rural areas, EU programs and the European Economic Agreement.



From l. Anita Trosdahl, European Advisor
and Vera Selnes, Director (ORE)

The delegation also met with the General Secretary for the European Council and had meetings and an exchange of experience with representatives from the Yorkshire, UK region.

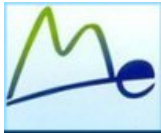


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Euromontana

The 5th European Mountain Convention, marking also the 10-year anniversary of Euromontana, will take place in Chavez, North of Portugal on September 14-16. The conference will be combined to a Euromontana General Assembly and study visits in the area. The theme of the event will emphasize the positive contribution of territorial cohesion, especially to mountain areas, and to the overall growth objective of Europe. The Commissioner for Regional Development Danuta Hübner has confirmed her participation. Details on the [website](#).



The North Sea Commission – NSC

The NSC secretariat is busy making preparations for the next NSC conference and general assembly to be held at Aviemore in Highland, Scotland from June 13th - 16th. More info to be available [here](#).

Misc. International Events

Go to our calendar of events for a listing of various miscellaneous international conferences and other events [here](#).

Website tip

Welcome to Geilo - the no. 1 Norwegian mountain village!
<http://www.geilo.no/eindex.asp>



Please send your comments and contributions to the editor: Dawn.syvertsen@t-fk.no

With regards,
from the
BTV International Team

Here are some photos from our snow filled winter here in south eastern Norway.



Telemark fylkeskommune Administration Offices



Stange Guest Farm in Vestfold.