

Aalborg Commitments

Baseline Review

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6 March 2009

## **Introduction**

European cities assembled in Aalborg in Denmark in 1994 accepted a joint Aalborg Declaration in order to promote sustainable development. The Aalborg Commitments, which contained more concrete steps than the Declaration, were accepted in 2004. The City of Kotka has accepted both of these. The City of Kotka signed the Commitments in May 2008, adopting them as the tool for implementing the local strategy and promoting sustainable development. Upon signing the Commitments, the City of Kotka became committed to the process required by them: to drawing up a baseline review of the matters pertaining to the Commitments, launching target setting and action setting with schedules together with local stakeholders, monitoring the realisation of the objectives, and communicating progress.

In the first stage of the process, a baseline review has been drawn up of how the objectives of the Commitments are reflected and realised in the present operating policy and practical work of the City of Kotka.

The baseline review has been carried out within the Matruschka project co-ordinated by UBC (Union of the Baltic Cities), and it has been supervised by an internal control group of the City established for the project. The baseline review has been drawn up in three working seminars together with the various branches of administration of the City of Kotka and with stakeholders. Two of the seminars were internal meetings of the City, and one was an extensive stakeholder seminar. Target setting, development needs and co-operation opportunities have also been discussed in a shared work group with administration, businesses and civic organisations. The baseline review has been compiled from the feedback and ideas obtained from these events. This report focuses on action by the administration of the City of Kotka. For the continuation of the EkoKotka project, information has also been compiled of the stakeholders' action and best practices. This will be advanced and utilised in the further work of the process.

In the baseline review, the fulfilment of the Aalborg Commitments in the administration of the City of Kotka has been assessed using a three-step rating:

Yes = The objective has been achieved.

Distinct action has been carried out in order to implement the objective, and the action is taking the developments to the targeted direction.

Partly = The objective has been achieved partly.

Action has been carried out in order to implement the objective, but progress will call for conscious additional input.

No = The objective has not been achieved.

Action supporting the objective has not been carried out, progress will call for conscious input.

In addition to projects and procedures in use and ones which have already been carried out, the baseline review revealed development challenges for the subsequent stage of the process. The process will continue through the processing of the targets to be set and processing of a concrete action plan on the basis of the baseline review in co-operation with the stakeholders.

The baseline review drawn up within the administration of the City of Kotka indicates that Kotka has carried out many measures and implemented development projects in the spirit of the Aalborg Commitments and sustainable development. However, the work has not been systematic and uniform. The new local strategy places solid emphasis on sustainable development, especially climate policy and ecological planning. Inspired by the Mayor, the EkoKotka project launched in the spring of 2008 implements the local strategy, pursues comprehensive control of environmental matters in the efforts of the City of Kotka, and, through the solid stakeholder interface, expands the objective to the entire operating environment of the City. The objective has strong administrative and political support. The challenge is to develop the control impacts of the local strategy to consolidate the work launched and to create a shared direction for the entire operating environment of the City of Kotka.

## **6 MARCH 2009**

# AALBORG COMMITMENTS, KOTKA

## BASELINE REVIEW

1. GOVERNANCE	Yes	Partly	No
We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy. We will therefore work to:			
1. Further develop a commonly shared long-term vision for a sustainable city.	X		
2. Build participation and sustainable development capacity in the local community and municipal administration.		X	
3. Invite all sectors of local society to participate effectively in decision-making.		X	
4. Make our decisions open, accountable and transparent.		X	
5. Cooperate effectively and in partnership with adjoining municipalities, other cities and towns, and other spheres of government.		X	

Further information: Jarmo Koivisto, Eila Lailavuo, Hannu Tuittu, Kari Makkonen

A clean and safe environment has been specified as one of the five focal targets in the local strategy of Kotka, approved by the City Council of Kotka in 2008. Its main contents concern prevention of climate change, ecological urban planning, and promotion of sustainable development. The objective of the City of Kotka is to become known as an environmental town, where environmental matters are taken into account in all operations and decision-making. In order to achieve the objective, the EkoKotka process has been launched. The strength of the project is that it has the support of executive management. The agreement signed by the four major parties represented on the City Council for the Council period of 2009-2012 also covers the further development of EkoKotka.

The local strategy of Kotka requires that local players are summoned to participate in decision-making. Openness, responsibility and transparent decision-making continue to be focal goals in the communications by the City of Kotka. In the EkoKotka process, the stakeholders have been involved in the preparatory work. Kotka has had a children's parliament since 2004 and a youth council since 2001.

Co-operation with the adjoining municipalities, other cities and towns and various spheres of government takes place for example through regional co-operation within the Paras project (municipal and service architecture reform), urban district plan, and subsidiaries of the Kotka Group. Shared projects, active exchange of information and networking are used for developing the preconditions of municipal co-operation. Kotka is involved in regional co-operation organisations (such as Kymenlaakso Rescue Centre, Kymenlaakso Hospital District, waste management company Kymenlaakson Jäte Oy). These organisations are in a key role in the intensification of measures aiming at sustainable development.

The challenge is to develop the control impact of the strategy so that it takes the operations and decisions genuinely towards a direction that supports sustainable development. The objectives of the local strategy must also be reflected in the sector-specific strategies. The participation threshold of local residents must be lowered even further by creating channels for influencing. The local residents' opportunities to participate in the discussion concerning the planning of residential areas at an as early phase as possible must be enhanced further. The functioning of the available channels for citizens to have influence must be evaluated critically and improved.



**2. LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

	Yes	Partly	No
We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation. We will therefore work to:			
1. Strengthen Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability processes and mainstream them into the heart of local government.		X	
2. Deliver integrated management towards sustainability, based on the precautionary principle and with regard to the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.			X
3. Set targets and time schemes in the framework of the Aalborg Commitments and create and follow the Aalborg Commitments monitoring review.		X	
4. Ensure that sustainability issues are central to urban decision-making processes and that resource allocation is based on strong and broad sustainability criteria.		X	
5. Cooperate with the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign and its networks to monitor and evaluate our progress towards meeting our sustainability targets.		X	

Further information: Jani Salenius, Eeva Linkola, Eija Vulkko, Tiina Lecklin

The City Council of Kotka signed the Aalborg document in 1995, and the City committed itself to drawing up a local sustainable development programme. The action plan and indicators for sustainable development were drawn up for 1998-2003. Since 2003, the environmental report based on the indicators has been part of the financial statements and annual report. In 2005, the City Executive Board accepted the Aalborg +10 Commitments, and they were joined to be part of the local strategy in 2006. In 2007, Kotka joined the Matruschka project for sustainable development by the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC). During the project, the City of Kotka signed the Aalborg +10 Commitments on 12 May 2008 and sent the document to the Secretariat for international registration. The development work continues within the EkoKotka process.

The importance of sustainable development education by day care centres and schools has been understood in Kotka (for example Nature Day Care Home Kotilo at Hirssaari, Langinkoski Environmental Senior Secondary School, and Nature School Haili). A sustainable development programme was drawn up for the day care home as early as 2000, and it was updated in 2003. The preschool and early education plans cover nature and environmental education. Schools will have specific action plans in 2009.

There is a good basis for the work and a shared will to promote sustainable development. However, a comprehensive “management plan for urban affairs” and systematic practical procedures which support this are still missing. There is a need to think what is important, to choose what issues will be implemented and how, and to take care of the permanence of the best practices achieved. The crucial thing is that everyone aims at the same important issues.

Target setting within the Aalborg Commitments is under way in accordance with the local strategy. The follow-up system has been put together through the action plan for sustainable development and environmental reporting. Systematic evaluation and an internal auditing system are still missing, so the work already carried out needs to be improved in this direction.

International co-operation primarily concerns the area of the Baltic Sea, for example through UBC and twin cities. Kotka Maritime Research Centre consolidates research in maritime transport, maritime safety and maritime environment in Finland. The City of Kotka supports the project work of the Research Centre, which



is based in Kotka. Kotka is part of the international organisation Energie Cites, which implements events and projects supporting the energy and climate policy.

Several projects supporting sustainable development are being prepared. The results and best practices achieved through the projects must be utilised and developed further once the present project is complete. The projects are not an end in themselves.

Integrated management system for Russian cities – Matruschka, stakeholder involvement: The objective is to consolidate the expertise of local government in the planning processes. The main issue is to develop co-operation with the stakeholders (2007-2009).

EkoKotka process: Leading town in Finland in sustainable development (2008-).

Ecosupport activity– working together for a better environment (2009-2011).

Development project for learning environments: Practical implementation of criteria and programmes for sustainable development within schools and other educational establishments (2008-2010).

Awareness rising for citizens in St Petersburg through a new tool (2009). Drawing up of website for the EkoKotka project.

SPICES – Supporting Ports and Cities Enhancing Sustainability. (In the application process).

In the ongoing SPORT project (St Petersburg Oil Recovery Training Centre) by the City of Kotka, an oil recovery expertise and training centre is being planned in St Petersburg in co-operation between Finnish and Russian experts (2008-2009).

The purpose of the project SAFGOF for the evaluation of the traffic increase on the Gulf of Finland in 2007-2015 and the effect of the increase on the environment and traffic chain activities, conducted by the Kotka Maritime Research Centre, is to study the growth prospects of maritime traffic on the Gulf of Finland, improve maritime safety, and reduce environmental impacts (2008-2010).

The METKU project for the development of maritime safety culture will study the attitudes relating to maritime safety and the need to develop co-operation with authorities and the safety culture (2009-2010).

The OILRISK project focuses on minimising the ecological and biological disadvantages of oil spillages. (In the application process).

In the GOFMEC II project, which has already finished, a simulator network for shipping was created between St Petersburg in Russia, Tallinn in Estonia, and Kotka in Finland (2006-2008).

### 3. NATURAL COMMON GOODS

	Yes	Partly	No
We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods. We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:			
1. Reduce primary energy consumption, and increase the share of renewable energies.	X		
2. Improve water quality, save water, and use water more efficiently.		X	
3. Promote and increase biodiversity, and extend and care for designated nature areas and green spaces.		X	
4. Improve soil quality, preserve ecologically productive land and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry.		X	
5. Improve air quality.	X		

Further information: Heli Ojala, Eeva Linkola, Osmo Pehkonen, Heikki Laaksonen

In 2001, the City of Kotka signed an energy conservation agreement with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, on the basis of which energy reviews have been carried out in buildings owned by the City in conjunction with basic renovations. The energy agreements can be used to consolidate the climate and environmental policy input of the City. Kotka Energy Ltd has shifted extensively to the use of renewable energy sources (4,000 MWh/a of wind power, 40,000 MWh/a of wood-based electricity generated by the Hovinsaari biomass power plant, new power plant using waste fuel). Kotka Energy Ltd takes care of district heating in Kotka. District heating is based on renewable energy sources and on highly efficient combined heat and power production (CHP). Energy efficiency is gaining even more focus in the development of the urban structure and in the quality of construction.

There has been focus on the quality of household water and on waste water treatment. Kymen Vesi Oy, the local water supplier, has invested in an artificial ground water plant, as a result of which the quality of household water is good at present. The new waste water treatment plant will start in 2010. The plant will treat waste water from several municipalities, as a result of which the number of load points will reduce. The City of Kotka has responded to the Baltic Sea challenge of Turku and Helsinki. Kotka Maritime Research Association will draw up the action plan required by the challenge.

Maintaining biodiversity will call for the consideration of nature values in the development of Kotka and in land use planning. Nature and green areas have a great role as a factor promoting the health and welfare of local residents. This is why green areas have been cherished and their number has been increased. Nature and cultural values have been taken into account in the drawing up of the component master plan for the river Kymijoki. The City of Kotka is planning a National Urban Park in the centre of Kotka and along the river Kymijoki. The goal is to submit a related application to the Ministry of the Environment in 2010. Alongside existing nature paths and hiking routes, new ones will be devised for example as part of the National Urban Park.

Southeast Finland Regional Environment Centre has protected some sites included in the national protection programmes, located within Kotka. The City of Kotka was involved in the reconditioning of the Salminlahti bird wetland/"Lintulahdet Life" project (in 2003-2007). Together with the Town of Hamina and the National Board of Antiquities, Kotka has been improving the management of fortress areas so as to increase biodiversity ("Luonto linnoituksessa" project 2005-2007).

Contaminated land areas have been reconditioned. One significant project has been the reconditioning of the old Katariinanniemi oil harbour and establishment of a park in the area.

To meet the high demand for single-family house plots and the expansion needs of the Port of Kotka, the City has drawn up zoning plans for unbuilt seaside and forest areas. An overall view of the state and development of biodiversity of the natural environment in Kotka has not been prepared, and there is not yet a systematic programme for protecting or increasing biodiversity.

There is comprehensive air monitoring in Kotka. Air quality data is part of the permit policy, and it has a preventing impact in an industrial town. Removal of street dust has been intensified. The health impacts of air quality were studied in Kotka within the national "Hippu" research project in 2005-2006, with the City of Kotka participating in it actively.

**4 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES**

	Yes	Partly	No
We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production. We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:			
1. Avoid and reduce waste, and increase re-use and recycling.		X	
2. Manage and treat waste in accordance with best practice standards.	X		
3. Avoid unnecessary energy consumption, and improve end-use energy efficiency.		X	
4. Undertake sustainable procurement.		X	
5. Actively promote sustainable production and consumption, in particular of eco-labelled, organic, ethical and fair trade products.		X	

Further information: Hannele Tolonen, Timo Leppälähti, Osmo Pehkonen, Kalle Patomeri

In 2006-2008, the City of Kotka, together with Kotka Energy Ltd, waste management company Kymenlaakson Jäte Oy and regional nature protection organisation Kymenlaakson luonnonsuojelupiiri ry, carried out the SYTYKE campaign, which aimed at reducing the generation of waste and promoting the sorting of waste at the place of origin as well as re-use and recycling of waste. Kotka will reach the nationwide objectives for the utilisation of waste once the waste power plant is completed at Korkeakoski. The plant has been constructed using best available techniques, both in terms of handling of waste and emissions. The challenge is to also find means for the prevention of waste generation and for the further intensification of recycling of waste.

The Municipal Engineering department of the City of Kotka has purchased a hybrid car, which is used for accumulating experiences of this technology. Based on experiences gained, the procurement of hybrid cars and gas cars will be deliberated. New traffic lights employ LED lights, and other energy-saving lamps are also favoured. Energy savings achieved in street lighting will be in focus in the future by making investments in an adjustment system.

Environmental considerations have been taken into account in procurement; for example CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of vehicles, Nordic Ecolabel criteria for copying paper, A-class energy efficiency of household appliances etc. Leasing contracts are applied to electronic office machinery, such as computers. The recycling fee included in purchases is used for ensuring that old, decommissioned machines and equipment are not taken to landfill but are re-used or dismantled. The regional procurement organisation Seutuhankinta advances the environmental considerations of public procurement and will provide its personnel with environmental training in 2009. By highlighting the method and location of production instead of price comparisons in competitive bidding, it is possible to support the objectives of sustainable development and a local aspect. The procurement process must also be developed so that the knowledge of clients is enhanced.

The City of Kotka has not promoted actively the use of organic, ethical and fair trade products in its own operations. The availability of fair trade products is being examined. The use of local products, such as local food, has been restricted by factors such as insufficient availability. Being a predominant player, the City of Kotka can use its own purchases to support local production and entrepreneurship based on sustainability principles. This will call for the surveying of obstacles and opportunities, and finding of solutions.

The City of Kotka is committed to the project of the international network ACR+ (Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management) aiming at a reduced volume of waste. The main principles of ACR+ are sustainable development, prevention of generation of waste, re-use of waste, and co-operation with authorities, the private sector and local inhabitants. This network needs to be utilised more actively than now.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union (European Region Development Fund) within the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme, TACIS, and the partner cities. The content of this document are the sole responsibility of the UBC Commission on Environment and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union





# MATRUSCHKA

## Stakeholder involvement



At the moment, the City of Kotka does not have shared guidelines and procedures for controlling responsible consumption. In the ecosupport person activities to be launched in 2009, guidance and instruction will be implemented on the workplace level into practical environmental efforts. It will be a challenge to change old procedures and to influence attitudes. Successful efforts will call for intensified action also vis-à-vis local residents.



**5. PLANNING AND DESIGN**

We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all.

We will therefore work to:

	Yes	Partly	No
1. Re-use and regenerate derelict or disadvantaged areas.		X	
2. Avoid urban sprawl by achieving appropriate urban densities and prioritising brownfield site over greenfield site development.		X	
3. Ensure the mixed use of buildings and developments with a good balance of jobs, housing and services, giving priority to residential use in city centres.		X	
4. Ensure appropriate conservation, renovation and use/re-use of our urban cultural heritage.		X	
5. Apply requirements for sustainable design and construction and promote high quality architecture and building technologies.		X	

Further information: Vesa Yrjönen, Lars Olsson, Markku Hannonen

The centre of Kotka, called Kotkansaari, has been developed by constructing a shopping centre in an old building with shops. There is also an underground car park. The housing density in the centre has been increased, while at the same time reserving space for parks and consolidating the services. Housing for senior citizens and students has been built in the centre, and also other high-quality rented and owner-occupied housing.

The City Port located in the centre is evolving into a Cultural Harbour. This area houses for example Maritime Centre Vellamo, Wooden Boat Centre, marina for visiting boats, museum vessels, passenger harbour, and residential houses. The area used to host industries such as engineering works.

Kotka has high-quality architecture from various eras. Buildings such as Maritime Centre Vellamo, Maretarium, Hovinsaari combined cycle power plant and Datariina represent contemporary architecture.

The old fire station and brewery Kotkan Höyrypanimo have been taken into new uses. The premises of the old fire station are used for training purposes, and Höyrypanimo houses a summer university and Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education of the University of Helsinki. Before the renovation, Höyrypanimo was badly ruined. Restoration of old buildings has been complicated by the lack of natural new uses which support preservation. This is why many old buildings have been demolished from the townscape even in recent years. By placing the City's own facilities in old buildings, the City of Kotka can contribute to the maintaining of building culture.

It is a challenge to use new solutions conforming to the principles of sustainable development, from planning to decision-making and construction. The City of Kotka applies ecological planning and planning principles for example in the zoning of the Räsäki area. Urban planning has a focal role in the efficient use of control means. Consistent development of urban planning so that it supports sustainable development is crucial for the attainment of the objective. In line with the amendment of the Finnish Land Use and Building Act, it is possible for example to guide construction towards ecological energy solutions. Providing various forms of housing which support "social mixing" in different areas is important in order to ensure the balanced development of the areas. Unobstructed access is important as early as in the planning stage – both in building planning and land use planning (for example unobstructed access to green areas).



# MATRUSCHKA

## Stakeholder involvement



The zoning of new residential areas for single-family houses at a distance from working areas is a challenge for the planning of traffic solutions and services. Availability of public transport must be ensured sufficiently early in the building of new areas.



**6. BETTER MOBILITY, LESS TRAFFIC**

We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices. We will therefore work to:

	Yes	Partly	No
1. Reduce the necessity for private motorised transport and promote attractive alternatives accessible to all.		X	
2. Increase the share of journeys made by public transport, on foot and by bicycle.		X	
3. Encourage transition to low-emission vehicles.			X
4. Develop an integrated and sustainable urban mobility plan.		X	
5. Reduce the impact of transport on the environment and public health.		X	

Further information: Hannele Tolonen, Rauno Savela, Lars Olsson

The City of Kotka supports public transport and hence aims to keep the prices of public transport services in Kotka at a reasonable level. The forms of support include ticket subsidies for monthly tickets, youth tickets, children's seasonal tickets, and regional tickets; free carriage of prams on buses, and veterans' tickets. Purchased transport services and specific service lines ensure the service level of public transport in sparsely-populated areas and during quiet seasons. The City of Kotka participates in the KETJU project by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, concerning the reform of public transport in medium-sized urban regions. One part of the Unobstructed Kotka project is unobstructed transport and its availability.

Improving the pedestrian and bicycle ways has been taken into account in the investment programme of the City. These ways are maintained properly. The plan for the road and street network in Kotka (updated in 2008-2009) will promote traffic and traffic network solutions which support sustainable development. The investment programme highlights traffic safety projects. Noise barriers have not been built as specified in the noise prevention programme. In conjunction with the improvement of the arterial road E18 (Highway 7), Finnish Road Administration will improve noise protection.

The challenge is the small proportion of public transport and pedestrian and bicycle traffic with respect to private motorised transport.

The development of public transport will require that sufficient funds are reserved for ticket subsidies and purchased traffic in the budget of the City. Planning solutions can support public transport and pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Traffic lights together with lane and junction arrangements can give flexibility to traffic. Taking pedestrian and bicycle ways to attractive routes other than ones used by motor traffic can enhance the comfort of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. By synchronising the internal transport of the City of Kotka, it is possible to influence the emissions. This can also be achieved by procuring bicycles for the various work units to be used by personnel during their work.

**7. LOCAL ACTION FOR HEALTH**

	Yes	Partly	No
We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens. We will therefore work to:			
1. Raise awareness and take action on the wider determinants of health, most of which lie outside the health sector.	X		
2. Promote city health development planning, which provides our cities with a means to build and maintain strategic partnerships for health.		X	
3. Reduce inequalities in health and address poverty, which will require regular reporting on progress towards reducing the gaps.		X	
4. Promote health impact assessment as a means for all sectors to focus their work on health and the quality of life.	X		
5. Mobilise urban planners to integrate health considerations in their planning strategies and initiatives.		X	

Further information: Kari Korhonen, Taito Palo, Antti Mattila

The Committee for Social Services and Health of the City of Kotka accepted a Health Promotion Strategy on 23 January 2008. At the same time, the Committee obliged that a related programme be launched in the autumn of 2008. The focal areas of the strategy include issues such as health-promoting living environment, expertise in health promotion, basic services, and evaluation and follow-up of action taken. Health-promoting physical exercise and its enhancement have a great role in the strategy. The welfare report relating to the strategy contains a review concerning health-promoting physical exercise.

As part of a development project for health-promoting physical exercise (TerLi, 2009-2012), an education campaign for promoting health and for preventing immobility is being planned. The TerLi project is also drawing up assessment methods for health-promoting physical exercise. The results obtained of the project will facilitate health planning by the City of Kotka. The control group for health promotion serves as the link with urban planning, the goal being urban planning which encourages physical exercise and independent health promotion.

The opportunities of those with mobility impairment are taken into account in the building of physical exercise facilities, as early as in the planning stage. The Karhula indoor swimming pool will have a gym for those with mobility impairment. Mobility impairment has been taken into account in the fees and prices of physical exercise services arranged by the City of Kotka.

Comprehensive supervision by authorities in environmental health care, for example by virtue of food, product safety and chemicals legislation, supports the objective of a health-promoting living environment. In 2003-2007, municipalities in the region of Kymenlaakso carried out an environmental health programme (KYTO) concerning the entire region. On this basis, a report was drawn up by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies of the Helsinki University of Technology ("Ympäristöterveys yhdyskuntasuunnittelussa Kymenlaaksossa", 2004).

The City of Kotka supports physical exercise by its personnel and monitors the workplace welfare of the work units by means of regular inquiries. A cross-administrational indoor air group has been established for issues relating to the quality of indoor air in the facilities of the City.

Kotka has conducted active and good work to promote health. Forwarding information to the planning process and introducing a health and welfare aspect to zoning at an early stage is a vital development challenge.

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**8. VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY**

We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment. We will therefore work to:

	Yes	Partly	No
1. Adopt measures that stimulate and support local employment and business start-ups.	X		
2. Cooperate with local businesses to promote and implement good corporate practice.	X		
3. Develop and implement sustainability principles for the location of businesses.		X	
4. Encourage markets for high quality local and regional produce.		X	
5. Promote sustainable local tourism.	X		

Further information: Eila Lailavuo, Arja Kokkonen, Harri A. Holopainen

The ongoing structural change in industries is a significant challenge for economy. The regional development unit Cursor Oy, which was established as early as 1988, supports the establishment, development and international expansion of business enterprises. Cursor maintains close contacts with local business organisations and other stakeholders, and participates in the development projects of enterprises. Development projects are funded from the development fund administered by Cursor. Kotka Maritime Research Centre has projects whose results can be utilised by local players. Such projects include SAFGOF (evaluation of the traffic increase on the Gulf of Finland during the years 2007-2015 and the effect of the increase on the environment and traffic chain activities), TRALIA (value-added services in transit traffic), and TUKKE (product monitoring in port-related transport chain). As members of the business group of the Kotka Maritime Research Centre, regional stakeholders and enterprises can follow and guide the ongoing projects and influence projects to be launched in the future.

The crucial objectives and challenges include the promotion of new and replacing businesses especially in conjunction with structural changes, improving the conditions of service and industrial enterprises to establish themselves in the region while taking into account sustainability principles, and maintaining sufficient resources for business services, business development, and for the promotion of entrepreneurship and business. Co-operation with enterprises and zoning is in a key role when seeking optimum location solutions. The access of local innovative environmental and energy solutions and products and the access of high-quality enterprises to the market must be promoted and encouraged.

In terms of tourism, the welfare of the Baltic Sea and the area of the river Kymijoki are in a key role. One focal area in tourism is the utilisation of the opportunities of maritime and island travel (including the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park) and of the river Kymijoki. The Maretarium, which presents indigenous waterlife, and Maritime Centre Vellamo (which includes the Maritime Museum of Finland, Museum of Kymenlaakso, and an Information Centre with research and library services) support this focus. Nature School Haili has prepared camp school and trip packages for children, such as "Varis seikkailee Varissaareessa".

The challenge is to consider sustainable development in tourism projects and operational development. Regular meetings and theme evenings with tourism entrepreneurs will continue so as to maintain interaction. There will be quality training for tourism enterprises, and attention will be paid to elevated quality within the entire service sector. There is some need for theme-specific environmental/ecological training for tourism operators.



## Stakeholder involvement

The tourist services of the City of Kotka contribute to the development of tourism enterprises in co-operation with parties such as Cursor Oy. One shared development challenge is to adopt sustainability principles as the starting point in urban marketing and planning and to use them as a significant attraction factor in the marketing of Kotka. The tourist service accumulations in the heart of Kotka (service harbours) must be brought closer by means of traffic and content solutions, and the various centres of Kotka must be brought closer to each other by means of progressive traffic solutions.

The link between the Aalborg Commitments and the business and tourism strategy must be considered in the next update of the regional business strategy. The regional strategy will be updated in 2008-2009. The strategy work for the Kotka-Hamina region was launched in 2008.

The cultural strategy accepted by the Committee for Cultural Services supports the objectives of sustainable and local economy.

**9. SOCIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE**

We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities.  
We will therefore work to:

	Yes	Partly	No
1. Develop and implement programmes to prevent and alleviate poverty.	X		
2. Ensure equitable access to public services, education, employment opportunities, training, information, and cultural activities.	X		
3. Foster social inclusion and gender equality.	X		
4. Improve community safety and security.		X	
5. Secure good quality and socially integrated housing and living conditions.	X		

Further information: Marja-Liisa Grönvall, Eija Vulkko, Laura Päiviö-Häkämies, Heleena Lönnroth

Several projects (such as Pro fenix) carried out within Kotka contribute to the prevention of social exclusion. These projects have focused on issues such as prevention of social exclusion of the young and breaking the progress of social exclusion.

The service system in social welfare services has been assessed in many respects for several years. The goal has been to develop the service system to support issues such as service network for families with children (e.g. Children’s House model). The objective is to consolidate the basic services in particular so that they could respond better and in a customer-focused manner to the needs of various types of customers and families.

Well-functioning basic services with a low availability threshold are thought to facilitate the opportunities of customers to receive help and support. The service system communicates to the local residents that it intends to provide help in various situations and hence increase the trust of the local residents to obtain appropriate assistance and expert service in problems and crises. Most of the social services strive for this (welfare services for intoxicant abusers are relatively extensive, youth crimes are intervened immediately, safety and security for women and children is provided by Villa Jensen 24 hours a day etc.).

Immigrants are supported by the Immigration Programme for 2005 to 2010, with a racism monitoring group and an immigration committee working under it. There is annual racism monitoring through follow-up surveys. The population policy programme accepted by the City Council for 2008-2030 mainly focuses on immigrants and on their adaptation to the society, considering for example environmental matters. There are several projects which enhance immigration efforts in Kotka, such as a family work project (ERF) 2007-2010, and Multicultural Centre Mylly, which is administered by Kaakonkulman Kulttuurimyly ry, supports the integration of immigrants. The City of Kotka sponsors the work of Mylly.

The local home society established in 1997 maintains four local homes available to all, provides support services for senior citizens of limited means, and employs unemployed persons. The City of Kotka sponsors the work of the society.

The challenge in this sector is to improve community spirit, especially in areas inhabited by immigrants. In addition to the development projects, urban planning has a focal role in the development of versatile areas which support community spirit. Co-operation with municipal housing authorities and Y-säätiö, statements concerning construction, social community work, and regional work of Children’s House are important factors. Social welfare services forward information to urban planning concerning solutions which may increase the problems or make the resident structure more one-sided (for example percentage of foreigners of all residents).



## Stakeholder Involvement

Visible persons and individual physical exercise and cultural efforts have been raised as a critical success factor in the local strategy of Kotka. The Committee for Cultural Services has recorded the focal areas in cultural development in its strategy "Kulttuurista Kotkan vetovoimatekijä" (Culture to become the prime attraction of Kotka). The strategy was updated in 2009. Children's culture has a specific programme concerning the availability of cultural services. The Children's Cultural Centre arranges events in children's culture (Children's Cultural Weeks, LAKU camps, Children's Maritime Festival), and the regional network for children's and adolescents' culture (KaLaVerkko) works in conjunction with it. Sports and music can be turned into new opportunities for socially excluded adolescents.

Living conditions and a versatile resident structure are supported through means such as retaining of the library network and an availability programme for culture. The main objective of the library is to retain the present library network. A new mobile library has been taken into use. The philosophy of the library aims at equal distribution of information. There is a home library service for senior citizens and disabled persons.

The primary objective of equality is to give facilities for participation in training. Training provides an opportunity for further studies and employment. Basic education provides the basis of educational equality and a foundation for further studies.

In 2006 the City of Kotka drew up versatility, equality and non-discrimination plans.

An equality plan was drawn up as an appendix to the curricula of senior secondary schools in the autumn of 2007. This is based on the Finnish act on equality between women and men and on the non-discrimination act.

A work group focusing on unobstructed Kotka serves under the Disabled Committee, aiming to create an unobstructed environment for all people of Kotka. The relevant project surveys obstacles of services and seeks improvements. Improving the employment rate of disabled persons also calls for special attention.

Safety plans have been drawn up for the buildings and cultural events. The safety folders of schools have also been updated. The City of Kotka has arranged safety training for its personnel. Safety training will be arranged for the personnel of schools during 2009.

The City of Kotka has worked actively for a long time to improve social equality. Readiness to participate in development projects is a specific strength.

### 10. LOCAL TO GLOBAL

We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equity, sustainable development and climate protection.  
We will therefore work to:

	Yes	Partly	No
1. Develop and follow a strategic and integrated approach to mitigate climate change, and work towards a sustainable level of greenhouse gas emissions.		X	
2. Mainstream climate protection policy into our policies in the areas of energy, transport, procurement, waste, agriculture, and forestry.		X	
3. Raise awareness of the causes and probable impacts of climate change, and integrate preventive actions into our climate change policy.		X	
4. Reduce our impact on the global environment and promote the principle of environmental justice.		X	
5. Strengthen the international cooperation of towns and cities and develop local responses to global problems in partnership with local governments, communities and relevant stakeholders.		X	

Further information: Eeva Linkola, Heli Ojala, Pekka Sihvonen, Kari Makkonen

The creation and consolidation of a climate protection policy has been raised to the top of the agenda in the local strategy of the City of Kotka. In accordance with the local strategy, action has been taken to raise awareness of the causes and probable impacts of climate change. An emission balance concerning the City of Kotka was drawn up in 2005, containing a forecast for 2010. There is not yet a plan for reducing the emissions and consumption or for the saving of natural resources. Preventive action and the climate policy will be evaluated within the EkoKotka process.

The carbon balance is taken into account in the use of renewable energy sources at the power plants of Kotka Energy Ltd. Energy use of waste will reduce the need for landfill disposal. Kymenlaakson Jäte Oy takes care of composting biomass waste for utilisation.

The main forums of international co-operation of the City of Kotka are UBC and Kotka's 11 twin cities. Local co-operation works through many productive projects such as EkoKotka, environmental health programme in Kymenlaakso (KYTO), Nature in Fortress, Nature School Haili, Multicultural Centre Mylly, and local homes. On a regional level, a welfare strategy for Kymenlaakso has been prepared, emphasising the right of local residents to a good environment and life. The immigration programme for 2005-2010 consolidates the international aspect and builds a multicultural Kotka.

Reducing the environmental burden on a global scale conforms to the local strategy, and direct and indirect means of influence can be found for it. The objective of a pioneering role in environmental matters requires participation and visibility in national and international networks and the utilisation co-operation projects in order to adopt best practices. Local and regional projects provide tools for international co-operation and global action. One natural approach is to develop twin city activities to support the objective of sustainable development.