



## Turku Baltic Sea Days 2014

**Time:** 1-5 June 2014

**Place:** Turku, Finland

During the Turku Baltic Sea Days (TBSD) major discussion forums and a number of seminars and conferences were held. Among the large scale conferences were the 16th Baltic Development Forum Summit and 5th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The joint 16th Baltic Development Forum Summit and 5th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR, themed “Growing together”, explored how cooperation can help strengthen economic growth, contribute to sustainable development, and create a strong and integrated Baltic Sea Region. Bringing together politics, business, international organizations, cities and municipalities as well as scientists from across the Baltic Sea Region, the event provided a platform for exchange of opinions and experiences; discussing key issues and charting the way forward.

During the Turku Baltic Sea Days, on 2 June, CITYWATER organized a side event at the Baltic Sea Forum a workshop entitled “Save the Sea – communication as a tool for water protection”. Also, a seminar entitled “Save the Sea – is it worth it” was organized; CITYWATER was a co-organizer. In 2014, the Baltic Sea Forum was being held for the seventh time, and it focused on regional strategies: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the Arctic and the North West Russian strategies. The aim of the forum was to promote effective dialogue between neighboring regions and to strengthen the influence and voice of the regions in Europe. Below is a summary of the workshop and the seminar.



*In the picture from the left: Salla-Maria Lauttamäki, BSC coordinator; Olli-Pekka Mäki, Director of environmental protection at the City of Turku; Kaja Tampere, University of Tallinn; Tatiana Shauro, Friends of the Baltic; Lotta Ruokanen, BSC coordinator; Kajsa Rosqvist, CITYWATER.*

### ***“Save the Sea – communication as a tool for water protection”***

During the Turku Baltic Sea Days, CITYWATER presented for the first time internationally the results of the communication survey conducted by the project in the Baltic States. During the communication workshop, first, the survey results were presented by **Arko Olesk** from Tallinn University. He addressed

questions such as what are people's attitudes towards the Baltic Sea; who do they think is responsible for saving our common sea – local municipalities, EU, the citizens; and what are the keys of success in water protection work according to civil servants.

Then followed comment speeches by project manager **Hannamaria Yliruusi** from the Union of the Baltic Cities Environmental Commission and by project manager **Martti Komulainen** from the Turku University of Applied Sciences and the BalticSeaNow.info project. The comment speeches emphasized the value of the survey results for understanding the current knowledge and attitudes and for planning future activities.



After that the participants divided into small groups and discussed what citizens can do to contribute to the protection of the Baltic Sea and how to empower them to act. The discussions pointed out that people can do a lot for the Baltic Sea by making wise consumer choices. The workshop also concluded that visualized facts and localized information can help a lot to bring information to people and encourage them to act. Many good example already exist, the participants found, but there is little sharing between projects and activities. The input from the workshop will be used by Tallinn University when writing a communication strategy for water protection activities on local level. The workshop was chaired by Professor **Kaja Tampere** from Tallinn University.



### ***“Save the Sea – is it worth it?”***

Professor Kaja Tampere, representing the CITYWATER project, also took part in a panel during the seminar “Save the Sea – is it worth it” that was held before the workshop. The seminar was organized by the Baltic Sea Challenge, CITYWATER and other cooperation partners. The panel consisted of experts representing fields of ecology, economy, communication and law. The seminar discussed among other things how we can overcome the challenge of getting our message through, and the topic of Tampere's presentation was “Speaking to deaf ears? Critical aspects of Baltic Sea Communication”. During the seminar brief presentations were held by a new Baltic Sea Challenge partner, Friends of the Baltic from S:t Petersburg, Russia; and by Tallinn University that is about to join the network.

Text and pictures: Tina Nyfors