

The City is Bergen

History • Nature • Industry • Culture • Street life • Services



CITY OF BERGEN



City of Water

One of the

FACTS ABOUT BERGEN

As the capital of Western Norway, Bergen has developed close ties with other municipalities in the region, such as joint ownership of the Port Authorities of Bergen, the regional waste management company BIR and the regionally owned power company BKK.

With a population of 240.000, Bergen is Norway's second largest city and the largest in the county of Hordaland. It is also the capital of Western Norway, which is the leading region for all significant Norwegian export industries.

Bergen is a charming blend of tradition and innovation. Throughout history Bergen has built a strong reputation as a centre for trade and shipping. This is due to its strategic location on the coast. Proximity to the sea has continued to provide benefits for the maritime and marine industries and for tourism. The Bergen region has the most complete maritime environment and is also an international centre of influence for fisheries, aquaculture and seafood.

Western Norway produces 80% of Norway's exports of crude oil, and the Bergen region is home to a leading expertise within oil and gas on a global scale. Bergen has a considerable shipping fleet, and the city is dominant in the global market of transporting chemicals and other goods.

The Bergen region is also home to strong and growing industries within information and communication technology (ICT), media, the arts and education. The municipality supports several network organisations, such as Maritime Bergen, Fiskeriforum Vest, Bergen Tourist Board, Hordaland Oil and Gas, Education in Bergen and Bergen Media City. The municipality also works hard to ensure that Bergen is an attractive location for new and existing companies.



one of the largest ports in Europe, Bergen is the capital of Western Norway and gateway to the Norwegian fjords

23''

Bergen is the gateway to the fjords of Western Norway, named by The National Geographic Magazine as the world's best unspoilt tourist destination. The port of Bergen welcomes more than 150,000 cruise ship passengers every summer and has one of the highest cruise passenger rates in northern Europe. The City of Bergen contributes to an increase in tourism by operating and supporting many attractions.

36''



Bergen is an international centre of trade for seafood, and the city has a large shipping fleet.



City of World Heritage

FACTS ABOUT BERGEN

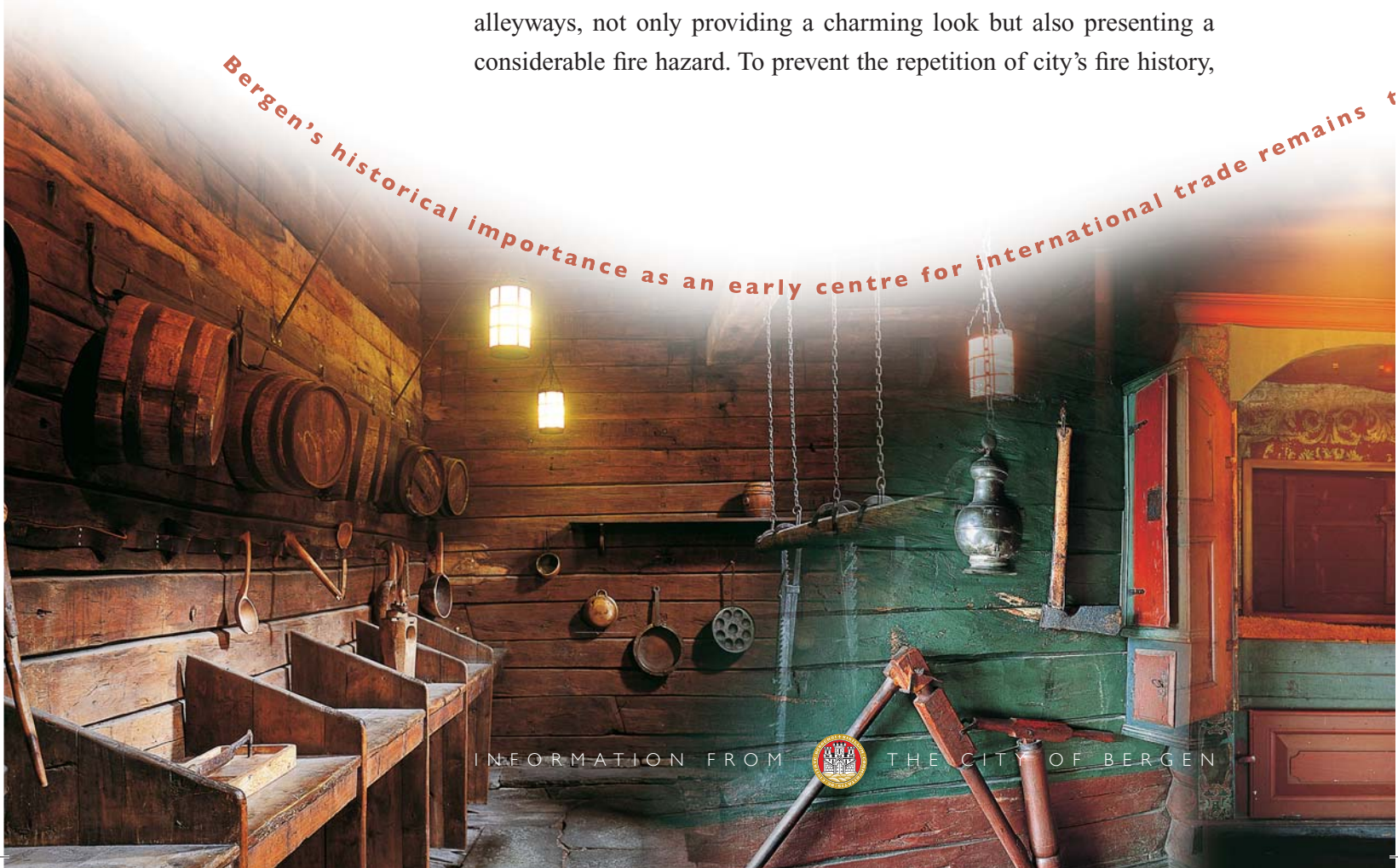
The City of Bergen maintains 605 km of roads, 262 km of pavement, 18 km of cobbled roads, 109 km of footpaths and cycle paths, 211 bridges, 23 quays, more than 9000 steps, more than 500 traffic signs and 270 000 sets of traffic lights.

The medieval city of Bergen received its charter from king Olav Kyrre around the year 1070. From its foundation, Bergen has been a natural harbour for international and regional trade. During the mid-14th century, Bergen was one of four offices for the German Hanseatic League.

Despite devastating fires, Bergen has preserved many buildings and districts of historical value, including Håkonshallen, Rosenkrantzårnet, the wharf district of Bryggen and the medieval churches. The Bryggen wharf is one of five Norwegian sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The municipality maintains this heritage through ownership of museums such as the Hanseatic Museum, development of preservation expertise in the Bergen Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, and through the preservation of local historical records in the Bergen City Archives.

Densely built wooden houses in central Bergen line numerous narrow alleyways, not only providing a charming look but also presenting a considerable fire hazard. To prevent the repetition of city's fire history,

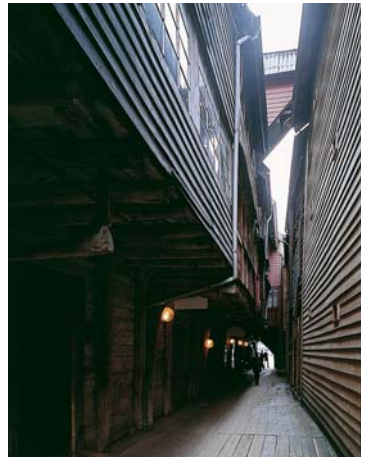
Bergen's historical importance as an early centre for international trade remains t





Bergen has formed a very effective fire brigade, which has the capacity to reach fires extremely quickly.

Bergen remains an international city and is an active member of the network of Hansa cities as well as of the network for major European cities, Eurocities. The City of Bergen initiated the establishment of the Office of Western Norway in Brussels in 2003.

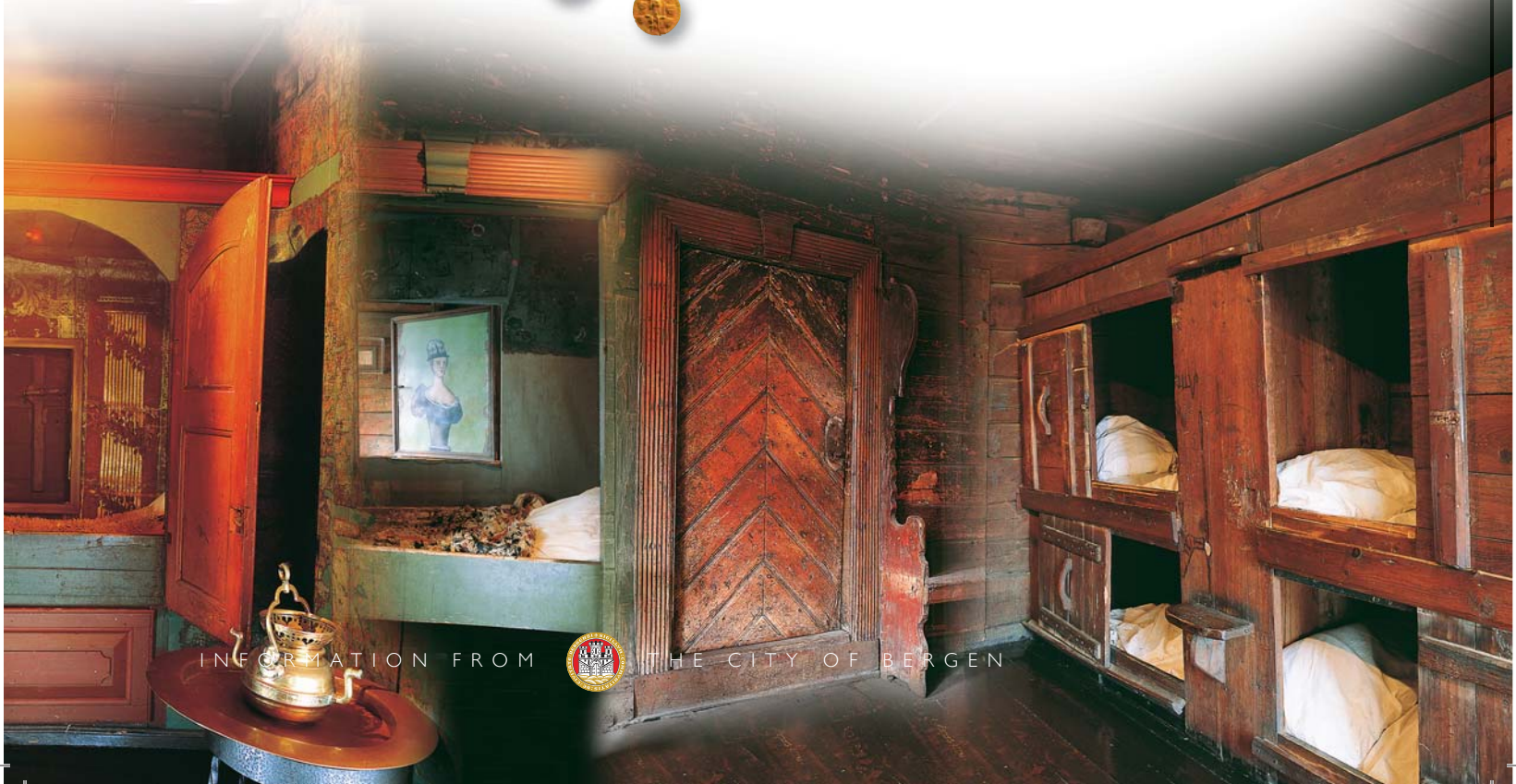


△
Bergen has developed many charming and vital sites of cultural interest around the city, and the historic importance of the Bryggen wharf lives on, long after the heyday of stockfish trade.

Photographs from the Hanseatic Museum.



s to this day



INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF BERGEN





City of Culture

FACTS ABOUT BERGEN

The Municipality of Bergen provides financial support to many art projects in the city every year. These funds have formed a springboard for many musicians who are now a part of the Bergen wave, and the municipality is an important source of funding for the umbrella organisation Bergens Rockaktører (BRAK).

Bergen is a vital centre for art and culture, represented by images from Edvard Grieg's home Trolldaugen, Den Nationale Scene theatre, musicians Sondre Lerche and Spetakkel, Bergen Art Museum, film photographer Johan-Fredrik Bødtker, musician Sissy Wish and the Carte Blanche dance company.

We pride ourselves upon the name City of Culture, which was recognized internationally when the European Union honoured Bergen with the status of European City of Culture in the year 2000.

The City of Bergen has Norway's highest municipal allocation of funds to cultural affairs and actively supports both traditional and innovative arts. A number of Bergen's cultural institutions are located along what is known as the cultural axis – from the city's public library, via the Grieghallen concert hall and the Bergen Art Museum to a number of museums, two theatres, a collection of moviehouses and all the way to the USF Culture Centre for concerts, art displays, film clubs and the like.

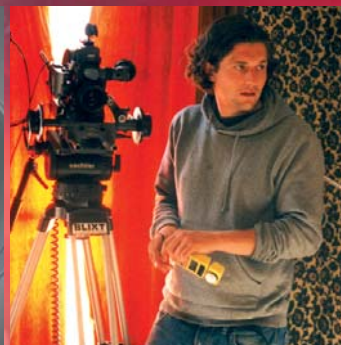
Prominent in Bergen's varied and innovative cultural environment are music, film, contemporary theatre and dance and various fine arts. New elements on this scene include the Bergen Centre of Electronic Art, the national Carte Blanche dance ensemble and the Bergen Wave of pop and rock music. Among the latter are rock groups such as Röyksopp, Kings of Convenience and Sondre Lerche, all of whom have substantial international sales. The Municipality of Bergen is the first in Norway to compile a separate plan of action for rhythmic music.

The city is also home to the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, among the world's oldest and one of Norway's two national orchestras. The municipality owns and operates museums out of the homes of Bergen's best-known composers, Edvard Grieg and Harald Sæverud.



Bergen is also a city of festivals. The Bergen International Festival takes place in May every year and gathers many of the most talented artists from around the world. Other festivals include the Nordic Media Festival, the Bergen International Film Festival (BIFF), contemporary music festivals such as Bergenfest, Nattjazz and Borealis, and international showcases like Oktoberdans (dance) and Meteor (contemporary stage).

Bergen is a creative and innovative city and is recognized as home to one of Scandinavia's leading musical scenes





City of Weather

Bergen is German for mountains. Surrounded by seven or so, Bergen is particularly susceptible to rain. The people of Bergen are more than accustomed to this fact, and many appreciate the dramatic climate in and around the city. But Bergen is also a vivacious and vital summer city on warm, sunny days.

Located on the banks of Store Lungegårds Lake, the Regnhytten sculpture is homage to rain. Rainfall brings colour to the landscape, which is intensely green and beautiful in the spring. The blossoming Bergen has a climate designed for the evergreen rhododendrons. The Arboretum and Botanic Gardens at Milde displays more than 5000 plants, including Scandinavia's largest collection of rhododendrons and Norway's largest collection of roses.

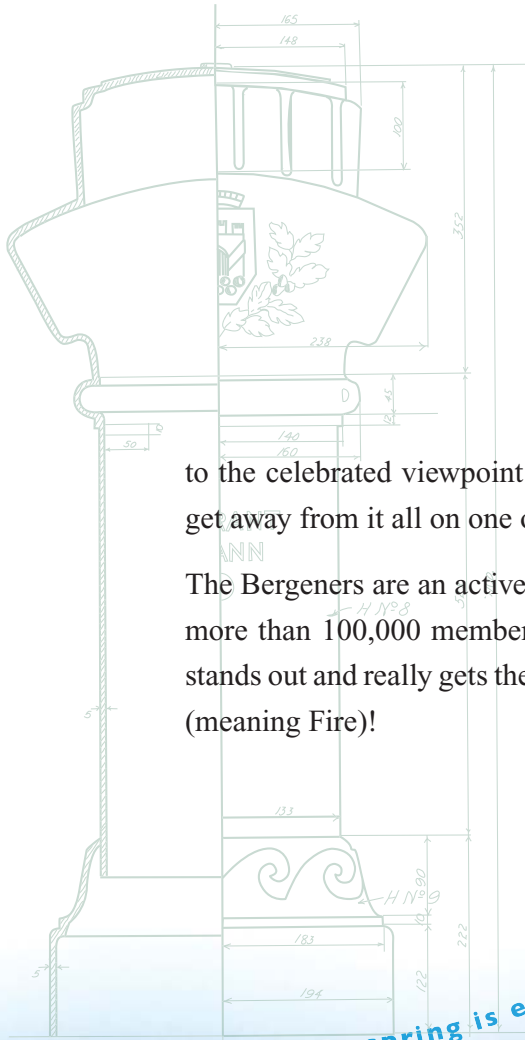
The abundant rain poses challenges that have caused the building of high-level expertise for our city's water and sewage authorities. The water works in Bergen are the oldest in Norway, and Bergen has a total of 1900 kilometers of water and sewage pipes.

The natural landscape has produced a population of hillwalkers, and the municipality has appointed an administrator for the mountain areas surrounding the city. The Fløibanen funicular takes you quickly up from the city centre

Bergen is a city with a dramatic landscape, and due to

The colourful landscape around Bergen is very popular with the locals, and the highest of Bergen's seven mountains – Ulriken at 642 meter above sea level – is only a few minutes' drive from the city centre or a several hours' walk from the Fløyen mountain.



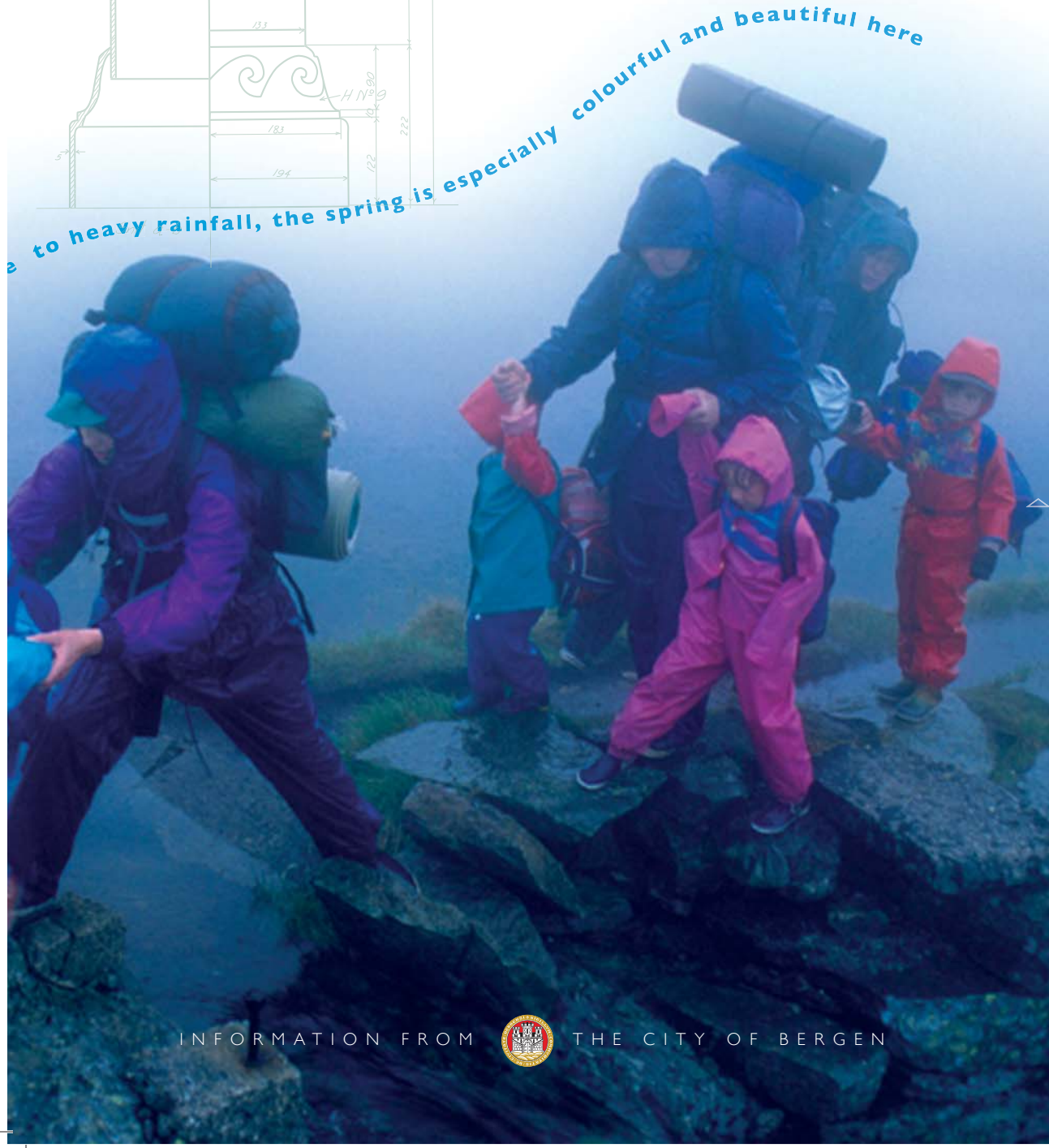


to the celebrated viewpoint on Mount Fløyen, and here the locals can get away from it all on one of the many peaceful footpaths.

The Bergeners are an active bunch, and there are 900 sports clubs with more than 100,000 members in Bergen. One sports club in particular stands out and really gets the locals going: Bergen's football club, Brann (meaning Fire)!

FACTS ABOUT BERGEN

Each inhabitant in Bergen utilises an average of 450 litres of water every day. The municipal water and sewage authorities are responsible for water supply and sewage management.



Due to heavy rainfall, the spring is especially colourful and beautiful here



City of Caretakers

The Norwegian public health system was conceived in Bergen when Norway's very first public general practitioner was appointed in the city in 1603. The Leprosy Museum at St. Jørgen's Hospital is a fascinating depiction of a hospital environment from the 18th century. The museum is the very location for the research breakthrough against leprosy and is one of few preserved leprosy hospitals in Northern Europe. The leprosy archives are on the UNESCO Memory of the World register.

Public health is very much in focus to this day. The highly specialized Haukeland University Hospital is one of the largest hospitals in Scandinavia and has centres of expertise in a number of areas that serve both the regional and the national level.

Bergen spends a significant share of its budget on health, care and social services. The City of Bergen has invested considerably in sheltered housing and institutions for the elderly, for people with learning difficulties and special needs, and for people suffering from mental illness. These services include sheltered work facilities and measures as well as leisure activities. The city has pioneered the integration of the arts and mental health, and one prominent initiative is the Amalie Skram House – a user-controlled, creative centre for people suffering from mental illness.

The municipality has established a range of low-threshold services for people with drug addictions. This means that they need not be “clean” to get help. Among these services is “Strax-huset”, an institution that provides essential and easily accessible services to improve the quality of life for drug addicts.



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The City of Bergen has re-organised the care for the elderly, and from 2007, the city will provide care for 2133 persons in nursing homes and for 267 persons in other institutions for the elderly. The city will also offer 900 homes specially designed for the elderly.





The City of Bergen devotes a large proportion of its resources to health, care and social services.

Bergen is a city focused on health care and has a significant expertise in this field



Bergen has a

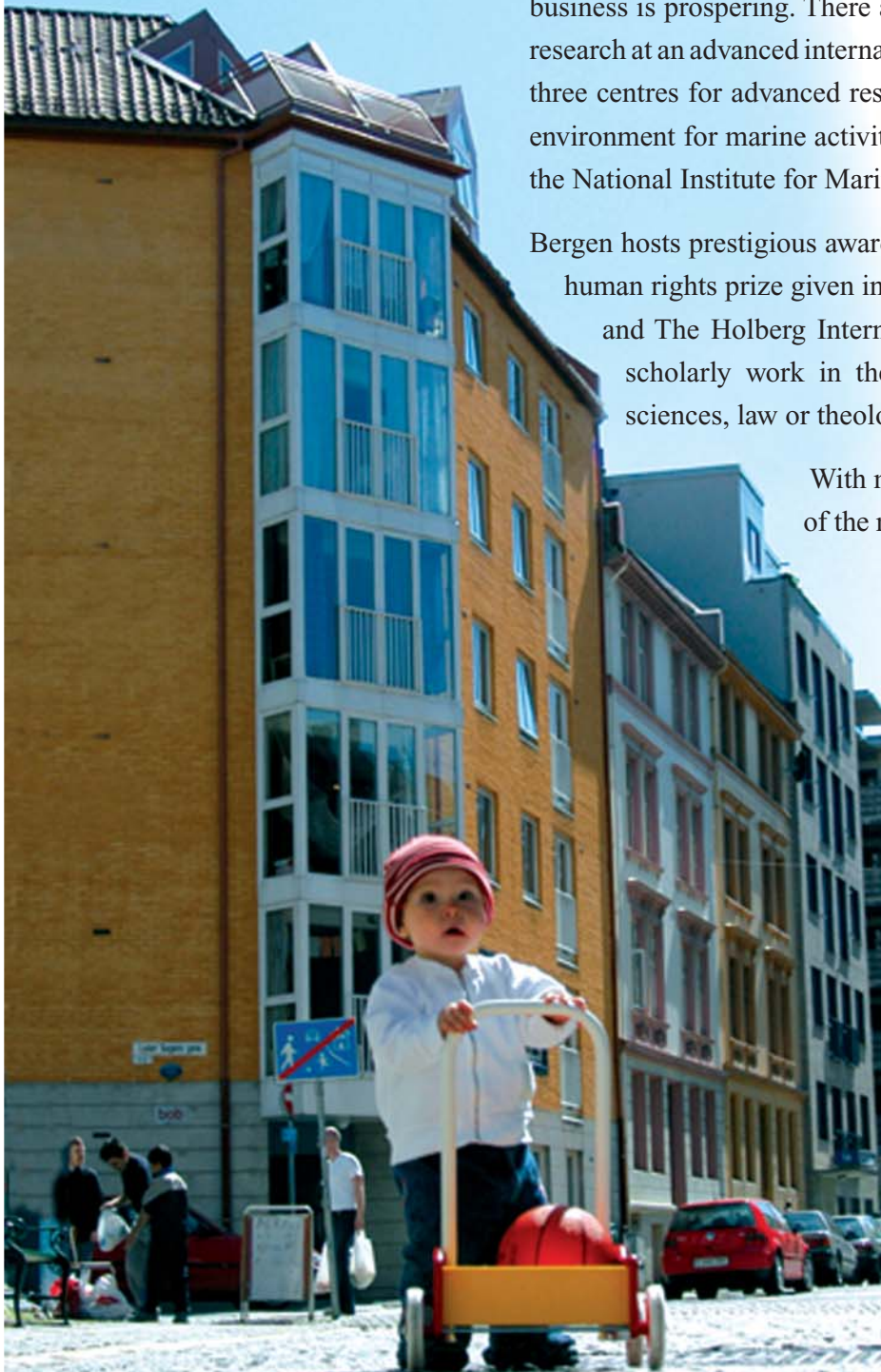


City of Future

Bergen has a vibrant research and development environment, and business is prospering. There are a number of institutions that conduct research at an advanced international level. The University of Bergen has three centres for advanced research, and the city has the best research environment for marine activities in Northern Europe, among which is the National Institute for Marine Research.

Bergen hosts prestigious award ceremonies; the Rafto Prize, an annual human rights prize given in the memory of Professor Thorolf Rafto, and The Holberg International Memorial Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the fields of arts and humanities, social sciences, law or theology.

With more than 30,000 students, Bergen is one of the most popular cities for students in Scandinavia. They have plenty to choose from, including the University of Bergen, the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Bergen University College and Bergen National Academy of the Arts.



a vital research and educational environment and focuses on building knowledge and expertise

There are also a number of private schools of higher education. Most out-of-town students soon feel right at home, thanks to the open and welcoming nature of the people of Bergen.

The City of Bergen plays an active role in Education in Bergen, a project comprised of municipal, educational and businesses representatives whose aim is to turn Bergen into an even more attractive city for students.

Bergen is a great place to grow up. The municipality makes considerable contributions toward adapting school buildings to an open and modern method of learning. New tools are introduced to ensure that pupils get the absolute most out of their education.

Bergen spends more money on children's culture than other Norwegian municipalities, and the City of Bergen devotes time and resources into making sure that pupils make the most of the city's vital cultural scene. Bergen is pioneering the development of new and creative ways to involve and educate children into the arts. The Bergen School of Culture provides a varied educational programme of music, dance, theatre and fine arts to 4000 children and young people in the city.

The city's sports clubs benefit from free entrance to all municipal sports arenas, and the City of Bergen aims to keep the city in motion by requiring at least one hour of physical activity per day for all pupils in municipal schools.



FACTS ABOUT BERGEN

The Bergen Scenarios 2020 project is a concerted effort among central institutions, including the municipality, to develop visions for a resilient and prosperous future for Bergen and all its inhabitants.



The City of Bergen provides schooling to roughly 30,000 children and has become a major expert in establishing private day-care centres.

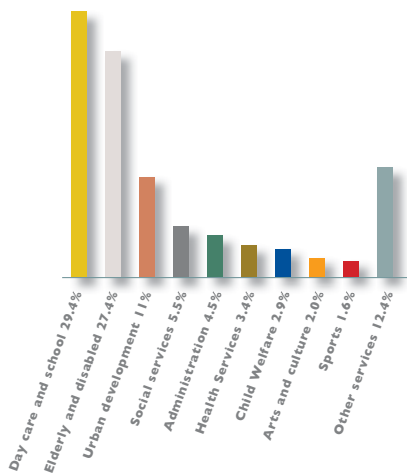


City Management

The City of Bergen has a parliamentary system of government.

THE CITY COUNCIL

The City Council is the supreme authority of the Municipality of Bergen. It has 67 popularly elected representatives. The Mayor chairs the City Council, and council members are elected for a four-year period. The City Council makes decisions on major issues concerning the city, most notably the city budget and the strategic planning and development of the city. The City Council meetings are held once a month and are open to the public.



The figure illustrates the distribution of the City of Bergen's annual 10 billion kroner spending.

THE CITY GOVERNMENT

The City Government is responsible for the city administration and financial management. It makes proposals to the City Council and is responsible for carrying out the decisions made by the City Council. The City Council elects the City Government, which at the moment consists of five members called commissioners. One does not need to be a member of the City Council to become a commissioner. The commissioners have a function similar to that of government ministers, and the Chief Commissioner is the "Prime Minister" of Bergen.

Bergen has a parliamentary system of administration, and our Chief Commissioner is





City Connections

AIRPLANE

The Bergen Airport at Flesland has direct flights daily to many destinations in Norway and Western Europe. Every year around 4 million air travellers pass through the Bergen Airport.

TRAIN AND BUS

Bergen is the end stop on the Bergen-Oslo railway across the beautiful Norwegian mountains, and city is well connected to the fjords of Western Norway via trains as well as buses.

BOAT

Cruise ships and ferries take you from Bergen to many European destinations on a weekly and bi-weekly basis, and the Port of Bergen has many ship calls and cruise passengers every year.

The famous Coastal Steamer begins in Bergen and takes you all the way up the Norwegian coast on a trip that we like to call the world's most beautiful voyage at sea.



s the "Prime Minister" of Bergen

INFORMATION FROM



THE CITY OF BERGEN

City of Difference

The people of Bergen are different, and they are proud to know it. They quickly get involved in city events and are extremely proud of their home. They carefully cultivate their uniqueness, taking good care of their own traditions. Perhaps the most visible and audible of these are marching, drumming and uniformed boys' bands or *buekorps*, a tradition that has recently been renewed with a number of girls starting their own *buekorps*.

Visitors to Bergen may suspect that the dramatic climate has taken its toll on the souls of the locals, whose mood changes often are as surprising as the weather. The upside of this is an ardent and sometimes noisy commitment to the events that go on in the city. This often extends to a heated political debate on matters of interest to the (said) majority and has given birth to many a song written as a tribute to Bergen.

The people of Bergen are anything but indifferent.



Post

Bergen kommune
Postboks 7700, N-5020 Bergen,
Norway

Visit

Rådhusgaten 10

E-mail

info.avd@bergen.kommune.no

Telephone

(+47) 55 56 62 00

Fax

(+47) 55 56 61 73

Internet

www.bergen.kommune.no
www.visitbergen.com

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