



Petter Rindforth

Stockholm – the capital of Scandinavia®

Mr. Petter Rindforth from Fenix Legal KB discusses some of the major complications that arise when trademarking city names and features, looking at specific examples such as Stockholm and Oslo.

According to the European Union Intellectual Property Office's (EUIPO's) Guidelines for Examination in the Office, Part B, Examination, Section 4, Chapter 4, regarding "Descriptive trademarks article 7(1)(c) EUTM, it is "in the public interest that signs that may serve to designate the geographical origin of goods or services remain available, not least because they may be an indication of the quality and other characteristics of the categories of goods concerned, and may also, in various ways, influence consumer preferences by, for instance, associating the goods or services with a place that may elicit a favorable response".

However, names of cities around the world are working well as trademarks for the cities and related regions/countries. When you hear or see a certain city name, you will directly connect that name to specific goods and services, such as cheese, entertainment, beautiful views, skiing, sailing, chocolate, diamonds, etc.

Local city authorities in the USA have a tradition to catch those identifying visions, create distinctive city slogans, and register them as trademarks. Some examples are:

- US Reg No 3848214 "WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS STAYS IN VEGAS" (Owner: Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority)

- US Reg No 4015044 "HUNTSVILLE THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT" (Owner: Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County, Inc.)
- US Reg No 3292768 "WHERE YEE-HAH MEETS OLÉ" (Owner: Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce)
- US Reg No 4 249 123 "MEMPHIS: AMERICA'S AEROTROPOLIS" (Owner: Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce)

Also, Europe has developed a tradition of focusing on city names for marketing, with or without related slogans.

Helsinki (Helsingfors), the capital of Finland, founded in the 16th century by the king of Sweden as to compete for trade with Tallin, is today the cultural, medial, economic and political center of Finland. In 2000 Helsinki was chosen by the Commission of the European Union as a European Capital of Culture. However, for a long time there was no specific branding policy for Helsinki. The city arms, created in 1639, was still used officially and related trademarks were only used for limited times to refer to specific occasions.

The Helsinki City Board started a process called "A Brand New Helsinki" (<http://brandnewhelsinki.fi/en/>) in June 2015. The people of the city were invited to participate as city ambassadors but also visitors were invited to comment on plus and minus aspects. The project

Résumé

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Stockholm
The Capital of Scandinavia

resulted in a decision that, as from June 1, 2017, the classical city arm will be used more rarely, in favor of a number of different colorful symbols. The reason to not create a specific traditional trademark is explained as “an image of Helsinki is created wherever people experience the city”, concluding that “Helsinki in 2020 will be a city of powerful people, acts, and encounters”.

Oslo, the capital of Norway, has an ongoing project of finding a way to market Oslo as a trademark. In 2015, the Business of Cities Ltd conducted an international benchmark study (Clark & Moonen, 2015), looking at Oslo’s performance in international indexes and benchmarks. It turned out that Oslo was the 53rd most measured city in international benchmarks, by number of index appearances, whereas Stockholm was at place 12, and Copenhagen at place 29.

Oslo has therefore created the “Oslo Brand Toolbox” (<http://www.oslobrandbox.no>), with some general guidelines on how to market Oslo as the origin of a company’s goods and services. The position is identified as “Oslo – the young, pioneering city”. The general guideline – “Oslo is the brand” – is summarized with two examples:

- Behave like a pioneer (“Cool, who did that? Oslo!” is the reaction we are looking for)
- Include “Oslo” in project names, hashtags and every type of communication

In Denmark, there is no clear separate advertising for the capital Copenhagen. Instead, VisitDenmark, the Official Tourism Organization of Denmark, is using a figurative trademark VisitDenmark (with logo of the Danish flag in a heart format) to market Denmark as a tourist destination abroad, with a view to attracting more holiday visitors and conference delegates, who can generate increased revenue for the tourism industry (www.visitdenmark.com).

The Trademark is registered as EU Trademark (No 004325536) covering goods and services in classes 16, 35, 39, and 41. The marketing is targeted to four target groups:

- 1) Fun, Play and Learning (for families),
- 2) The Good Life (for adults who prefer the quiet life),
- 3) City breaks (for people who like the metropolis atmosphere), and
- 4) Business tourism.

However, the city trademark that indeed is the most well-known and discussed in international media is “Stockholm – the Capital of Scandinavia”.

The name Stockholm first appears in historical records from 1252, although there is no exact date on when the city was founded. Also, the history of the name is debated, but the most common version is that the name is originally two words: “Stock-holm” – “Log-islet”.

Back in 1252, around 100 people lived in Stockholm. Today, the population is around 2.3 million, whereof 950 000 in the city central part of Stockholm.

The official symbol of Stockholm is the S:t Erik logo, used since 1376, but officially recorded first at the beginning of 1900. Erik (also called Erik IX) was king of Sweden 1156-1160. No historical records of King Erik have survived, and all information about him is based on later legends that were aimed at having him established as a saint, which was done by the Catholic church around 1198.

The S:t Erik logo is only to be used when the City of Stockholm is the sender and was also, until recently, the only official “trademark” for services provided by the city authorities.

However, in literature and local marketing, slogans such as “Stockholm, the city that swims on the water”, “the Beauty on the water”, and “the Venice of the North” have been used for hundreds of years to describe and advertise Stockholm.

The active work of branding Stockholm started in 2003, after the city had suffered dramatically from the dot-com crash the year before. Before 2003, Stockholm’s marketing focus had mostly been domestic and introverted but due to increasing globalization it had to reconsider the objective.

Julian Stubbs, founder and CEO of UP THERE, EVERYWHERE, described as “the world’s first full-service global cloud-based agency” (www.upthereeverywhere.com) was commissioned to develop a new trademark focused on an international audience to attract international tourism and business.

The result, presented 2006, was “Stockholm – the Capital of Scandinavia”. The expression was explained by the following three claims:

1. Stockholm is “Scandinavia’s natural center”
2. Stockholm is “Scandinavia’s economic center”
3. Stockholm is “Scandinavia’s thriving cultural city”

As Mr. Stubbs described it, “simply put, we saw that Stockholm is the most important place in Scandinavia for tourism and for business”.





The trademark logo is meant to communicate a progressive society and a high-tech industry, but also “old town” and important heritage.

There are two figurative versions registered as EU Trademarks:

- No 004633021, registered December 8, 2006 for goods and services in classes 16, 24, 25 and 35
- No 013184304, registered January 14, 2016 for goods and services in classes 16, 24, 25, 35, 36, 39, 41, 43 and 45

The meaning of the slogan is, of course, that “if Scandinavia was a country, then Stockholm would be its capital”. Mr. Stubbs identified the slogan as “bold, simple and just a little provocative...”

And it was indeed provocative: both Danish and Norwegian politicians reacted, arguing that their respective cities were in fact the capitals of Scandinavia, and in social media circulated an ironic version: “Stockholm – The Gateway to Finland”.

But it worked as planned, or even better.

According to VisitStockholm (visitstockholm.com) the number of foreigners/tourists that spent at least one night in Stockholm 2017 was 14 million, which is an increase of 70% of people from outside Europe since 2012. The main increase are related visitors from USA (+30%) and China (+30%) compared to 2016.

One reason of the success is the fact that, although Stockholm during these years has seen three different political majorities, independent of their ideological views the politicians have recognized and supported the opportunity to market Stockholm this way.

Who can use the trademark? As opposed to what applies to the S:t Erik logo, “Stockholm – The Capital of Scandinavia” may be used by all who wish to work together to promote the development of Stockholm as a region for new business and tourism. There is of course a trademark /branding manual that needs to be followed, and can easily be found online at: <https://varumarkesmanual.stockholm.se/varumarkestrategi/capital-of-scandinavia/>

It gives some examples and 5 simple guidelines:

- The logo should always be used in conjunction with an international target group to market and position Stockholm and the Stockholm region in the world;

- In the context of both local and international audiences, the logo will coexist with the co-branding logo S:t Erik, where Stockholm – The Capital of Scandinavia positions and markets Stockholm for an international target group, and S:t Erik serves as a sender logo, such as cultural festival;
- The logo should always be used for participation at international fairs and exhibitions to promote the benefits of Stockholm and the Stockholm region;
- The logo should always be used for international events conducted in Stockholm – when the event has been granted marketing support, generates visitors and / or is monitored by international media;
- The logo may not be reworked or replaced with typed text.

The next step to market Stockholm is the activating of the city’s own top level domain: .stockholm.

According to Ms. Marcelle Abou Haidar, Project Manager at the City of Stockholm, the city “will be the world’s smartest city by 2040. Owing our own top-level domain goes hand in hand with the digitization and smart city strategy that the city has decided.”

Dot Stockholm is of course not the shortest of all the new top-level domains in the world. However, the short version .STHLM has no international reputation, and may also be too easy to misspell.

Dot Stockholm will be activated within short and initially only used to market and inform the public of the city of Stockholm’s own over 300 web sites with everything from cultural, social, educational, travel, hospital and political information. If it works out in a safe and creative way and is used for information by both local peoples and tourists, it may be that it also opens up for commercial domain names in the future.

As to the other Scandinavian countries, only Helsinki has also registered their own TLD: .helsinki. Remains to see what Oslo and Copenhagen will do when the next registration phase open in the future. At least Oslo will continue to be active. After the initial complaints of Mr. Stubbs new trademark for Stockholm, he was in fact signed up to create the abovementioned campaign for Oslo.