



UBC COMMISSION ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Activity Report

to the IX UBC General Conference
28 September, 2007 in Pärnu

Reported period: september 2005 to september 2007

Meetings:

Since the 45 Executive Board Meeting on 11 February 2006 the Commission could welcome a new city member in the board, the City of Kristiansand. In Rostock in August 2006, it was discussed how and into which direction the Commission's work could be impulsed. As a result it was planned the

Workshop on 'Migration in Baltic Cities – Problems, Possibilities, Perspectives' and Annual Commission's Meeting in Rostock on 05 – 07 October, 2006.

Within this meeting migration experts from five countries around the Baltic Sea got together. Additionally, representatives of foreigners' assessment council, municipal administration bodies and citizens' initiatives followed the invitation. In co-operation with the University of Rostock the participants won a general overview of migration in the Baltic Sea Region and exchanged their experiences concerning the treatment of immigrants.

The participation of representatives from the North East of Germany, from Scandinavia and the Balticum states made the workshop enormously attractive since in the course of the last decades each region experienced migration in a different way and has its own migration history. In order to discover potentials and track down perspectives, it was useful to envision the particular backgrounds and problems. Among others, it was discussed what kind of institutions deal with concerns of the local immigrants, and in which way.

The workshop was followed by a publication gathering the contributions which is meant to provide further interested persons, institutions, authorities etc. with the experiences and helpful suggestions exchanged.

A further result was the creation of a new network on xenophobia and migration issues, which agreed to work on the possibility of a common project for deeper exchange of best practices for more specialists within UBC.

The Board / Project group, now consisting of members from Kristiansand, Karlskrona, Gdynia and Rostock met for conversations on 13 April 2007 in Copenhagen. The group reinforced the wish to continue working on the theme of xenophobia. Furthermore, the theme of the next commission's meeting was precised: 'Combatting poverty and social exclusion of children, in a wholistic approach focussing as well on their families'

Workshop on 'Combatting poverty and social exclusion of children and their families' and Annual Commission's Meeting in Kristiansand on 15 – 17 May, 2007.

Poverty and social exclusion of children and their families are among those problems that seem to be very out of place in European societies with annual sky-rocketing GDPs. Yet, despite several action plans and resolutions of numerous states, organisations and communities, they remain unsolved.

The lack of reliable surveys and numbers makes the discussion of poverty and social exclusion of children tricky and as it is also an emotionally fuelled topic it should be discussed with reason. Children and families facing social obstacles and struggling to make ends meet do not need pity but determined actions from those in charge of funds, knowledge and political competence and legitimation. And: actions should be more than financial relief. The 12 participants from 9 cities agreed, that it would be necessary to identify existing data about the child wellbeing in UBC cities and, if they are not satisfactory, to plan some measurement projects which should show the children's situation. This could be a way to establish milestones for the development of policies to improve children's lives in UBC cities. The Workshop will be followed by a publication of all statements still in 2007. The participants decided to design a project structure in order to be ready to apply for funding in 2008.

Visited Conferences:

5th UNDP Forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty's (WACAP), Valencia, 29-31 March, 2006

More than 1,000 participants attended this Forum as representatives from central and local governments, Parliaments, International Organizations, NGOs and academic world. For resources mobilization, UNDP could either sign or conclude several high level agreements during this Forum. The 5th Forum started the dialogue between the United Nations agencies gathered by UNDP on the matter on local governance and urban development, and cities associations coordinated by United Cities and Local Governments to mobilize all these actors around UNDP in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Several meetings between existing and potential partners of ART GOLD programs underway (Colombia, Libya, Uruguay, Morocco, Mozambique, Sri Lanka) or about the programs considered (Chile, Senegal, Mali, Brazil) were held. The region of Provence Alpes Côtés d'Azur, jointly with CRPM, announced the holding of the first international conference of the ART/GOLD program in Marseille in March 2007, where a possible meeting was planned to take place (5+5) on decentralized cooperation between Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

New themes of cooperation were discussed in order to develop and implement innovating partnerships with local governments through a territorial approach of development, focusing on recognition of the role of local authorities in prevention, risk management and rebuilding, fight against HIV/AIDS, prevention and management of conflicts, access to sources of international financing, local economy and employment.

Action Plan 2005 – 2007

- Strengthening of the mutual exchange of experience on good/best practices in the local communities
- Strengthening of Networking with other Commissions and Networks based on the efforts of implementation of the UBC Social Charter in the Commission's and Network's work.
- New policy of support of cities' cooperation projects on social issues
- Strengthening of cooperation and exchanges with other transnational organisations, networks and projects.
- The Commission shall make its network and activities more visible.