



## **Commission on gender equality – Annual report for October 2009-October 2010**

### **Strategy for creating gender equality**

In line with international developments, the strategy in the UBC today also encompasses the promotion of gender mainstreaming. Adopted by the world community at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, gender mainstreaming means integrating a gender perspective into all areas and at all levels of decision-making and management of the societies. It means to systematically work for an equal distribution of power, resources and opportunities between women and men. The European Union and national governments within the EU have adopted the gender mainstreaming strategy, also the UBC.

The Commission has been focusing on three main areas promoting gender equality and these are:

- Combating prostitution and human trafficking
- Issues of the labour market
- Social planning, urban planning and planning work

### **Action Plan Follow-up on focus areas**

#### **1. Combating prostitution and human trafficking**

Participation in conference on trafficking issues, European Parliament. All results will be presented to Commission members for dissemination throughout UBC area. This event took place on March 16 at European Parliament. During the spring of 2010 we were preparing to start campaign. Unfortunately due to cancelled meeting of spring this was not possible, so this will be late autumn and spring of next year (2011).

The Commission has been working hard to make a conference possible with stakeholders concerning the Baltic Sea Strategy and including work on trafficking issues and combating prostitution. We prepared a conference with minister participation, BSSSC, regional development office, politicians to discuss how the ongoing work could be handled. Due to ashcloud (the evening prior to event) we had to cancel the entire conference. All speakers were in different cities. The work is not wasted though since we built up contacts and have got people involved. We are of course hoping to make this conference happen in 2011 instead.

## **2. Issues of the labour market**

### **Women, enterprise, employment in local development**

Participation in transnational project on Women, enterprise, employment and local development. Best practice and dissemination will be forwarded to all Commission members from project partner (city of Umeå).

This project deals with matters concerning the labour market and is one of the focus areas in our Action Plan (for 2010-11). Concerns are women and enterprise/entrepreneurial possibilities/hinders, the gender segregated labour market and its consequences and possible changes. The project is transnational and involves partners with a large mix of interesting experience and best practice. The project will be followed by the Commission and results will be disseminated to all UBC member cities on website.

## **3. Social planning, urban planning and planning work**

Several member cities are working on issues concerning gender issues and town planning. Among the projects are working with safety issues linked to passages and bike paths throughout the town, another project is concerning bus and bus stops, especially at night time. There is also work being done on town planning strategies concerning gender issues. There has been good exchange of ideas between several cities around this topic.

### **Meetings**

Spring meeting cancelled due to ash cloud.

Autumn meeting in Panevezys, Lithuania – October 2010

Participants from Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Sweden took part in this meeting which was held in the city of Panevezys. Preparation of campaign for winter and 2011, study visits to shelter house and social help centre, seminar on gender equality for municipality of Panevezys for staff and politicians. This was the first time we made the meeting in this way and we decided to continue and develop our meetings in this direction. This will combine working meetings with seminars and dissemination of knowledge throughout the UBC area.

We also made a study visit to Vilnius, Lithuania, where we had a very interesting program. One of the important meetings for future collaboration was a meeting at the newly opened European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE). They were very interested in the UBC network and our Commission work and report. Another meeting was with the municipality of Vilnius and we were hoping that this would inspire future Vilnius participation in the Commission.



*UBC delegates with Ms. Barbara Limanowska (Senior Gender Mainstreaming Expert - EIGE) and Ms. Ana Sofia Fernandes (Stakeholders' Co-ordinator - EIGE)*

## **The European Charter for equality of women and men in local life (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)**

There is an updated list of all UBC member cities who have signed the Charter on our website. The Charter can be downloaded, as can the declaration form for signing.

This year has been very interesting and we hope to continue and to expand work with issues on gender equality on long term and sustainable way. We have had several new cities joining the Commission and we are very happy that the Cities of the UBC are getting more interested in our work.

This report is written by Helene Brewer, coordinator of Commission on gender equality