

**MINUTES OF THE 77TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
Stockholm, Sweden, 10 November 2016**

1. Opening of the meeting by UBC President and adoption of the agenda. Election of two persons who, together with the President, will check the minutes.

The Executive Board meeting was opened by Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities. The meeting adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes.

Members of the Board of Audit - Marta Chełkowska, Gdańsk and Roger Kaliff, Kalmar, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

2. Information from the Task Force on Strategy and General Conference 2017.

The Board in Rostock, March 2016, authorised the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss the implementation of the UBC Strategy. Presidium created the Task Force. The Board in Kaunas, June 2016, authorised the Task Force to deal also with preparations to the XIV General Conference to be held in Växjö in 2017. The Task Force met in Växjö on 13-14 October 2016.

The report of the Task Force is attached to the minutes.

2.1 XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö, 24-27 October 2017.

Mikko Lohikoski, Chair of the Task Force, presented the main conclusions of the TF work concerning the next UBC General Conference. "Leadership for the future. Global solutions for sustainable development" has been suggested as the overall title of the conference. The programme should be shaped according to the UBC Strategy goals and priorities. The speakers should be expected to deliver speeches exactly on topics relevant to the GC theme and the UBC cities interests.

The GC shall be interactive and interesting in content and working methods, e.g. using digital technology and media. Youth and gender dimension should be an integrated part of the programme. The Cities and Commissions should be involved in organization and running the GC. The UBC and the city of Växjö should ensure the media visibility.

Three seminar proposals are proposed to be included into the GC programme, namely:

- Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN) seminar
- Resilient UBC Cities – Climate change adaptation and mitigation (UBC Sustainable Cities Commission)
- Urbanization, Mobility and Immigration (URMI) project.

Bo Hjälmeffjord and Sofia Asplund from Växjö presented the city, the venue and its capacity. Also, they brought some ideas of study tours. They would reflect Växjö's title "The greenest city in Europe" and involve, for example, green areas or culinary dimensions.

The presentation was followed by the discussion.

Jyrki Myllyvirta, Mayor of Lahti, paid attention to the fact that the UBC's message to the cities should be more clear and focused. The same concerns the conference theme. It should directly refer to the urban dimension, otherwise it would fit any organization in the world.

Wolfgang Schmidt, Chair, Smart and Prospering Cities Commission, raised three questions, namely the necessity to include the commissions in the GC, the possible questionnaire on the cities' interests that could help UBC and its commissions focus on 1-2 certain topics. Also, he proposed to look at the UBC as a part of the macroregion.

The discussion also focused on the youth involvement. How can we really involve the youngsters in the General Conference so that we all benefit from such encounter?

Lena Hernandez Modin, Chair, Youthful Cities Commission, stressed that the youth was open to any discussion. Practicalities may be more challenging.

The problem of youth participation was raised by John Lauritzen, Councillor, city of Næstved. How can we manage to engage those youngsters who seem to be not interested in politics and social life? How to counter the youth marginalization?

Maja Wagner, Councillor, city of Gdynia, suggested changing the perspective and letting the young people create the system of communication instead of imposing the adults' way of thinking.

The practical solutions referring to the problem of the youth exclusion could be presented during the General Conference. As Jaana Simula, Chair of Cultural Cities Commission informed, the city of Pori could bring some good examples on how to work with the youth, e.g. through art and culture.

Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, mentioned the newest issue of the Bulletin, devoted to the healthy and inclusive cities, which contains a number of ready-to-apply solutions.

Karin Wohlgemuth, city of Rostock, pointed out that the question of peace and stability in the region should be brought up e.g. in the resolution. In her opinion the cities, cooperating with each other, are the real peacemakers.

Another important question was mentioned by Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, namely legitimacy and the need for involvement of the politicians. The major work is done on the level not visible by the city mayors. They have to be engaged into the UBC so that they could see its value.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Task Force to continue its work on preparations of the General Conference 2017.

2.2 UBC Strategy implementation.

Mikko Lohikoski presented also the TF report on UBC Strategy implementation. Comprehensive review of UBC structures, re-structuring of the UBC Commissions, formulation and adoption of evaluation criteria,

formulation of criteria for cooperation with business entities and companies, as well as the renewal of UBC Statute were reminded as the most important processes completed by the UBC GC in Gdynia.

The new UBC Strategic Framework 2016–2021 sets the following priorities:

- Implementation of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021,
- EUSBSR and Blue Growth Strategies,
- Towards a New Urban Agenda for Cities,
- Promoting Smart Growth and Digitalization,
- Stronger, more proactive, goal-oriented and member-driven UBC.

The recommendations of the TF is to speed up the implementation of the Conclusions and Proposals of the UBC Task Force on development (25.2.2013) and UBC Communications and Marketing Strategy. Among the most important tasks listed by the TF, there is a discussion on how to justify the cities involvement in the international cooperation and UBC. The Union needs to demonstrate, through practical examples, that cooperation brings added value to participating cities.

Another major challenge is to activate the members in the Commissions and to strengthen the cooperation between the UBC Executive Board and the Commissions. Though the reorganization of the Commissions structure has been successful, there is still a space for improvement.

The TF recommends to provide a meeting platform for the mayors to attract the political level attention to the UBC and its Commissions work. It could be a Mayors/Urban Forum organized every second year, meetings of Mayors/political representatives on the occasion of major BSR conferences (e.g. EUSBSR Annual Forum, June 2017 Berlin) or Mayors' lunch during the General Conference.

Also, the cooperation Board – Commissions – Secretariat should be intensified, including nomination of liaison persons Board-Commissions.

Another task would be to increase the capacity of UBC and Commissions in development projects, and role of secretariat in this process. Also, the expert exchange should be developed.

To streamline the UBC work, it was suggested creating a yearly time-table – “The UBC Clock” – starting from 1 January 2017.

Last but not least, the question of some withdrawals from UBC was raised. The TF proposal was to discuss it and to develop counter-measures – as we know that “UBC membership pays off”.

Jyrki Myllyvirta suggested that the UBC should focus on specific areas to attract the cities.

Per Bødker Andersen underlined the importance of the cooperation with and between the Commissions.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Task Force to continue its work.

3. UBC Work Plan to Support Youth Employment and Well-Being, information on the progress and proposals for next steps of work.

The UBC General Conference decided in October 2013 to establish a Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-being. Task Force presented its' final report during the next general conference in Gdynia, Poland, in October 2015. The final report called The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices was based on the idea of seeking answers to three basic questions: why?, where?, what?

A new agenda for the Task Force was set in UBC Board meeting in June 2016 in Kaunas, Lithuania. The agenda includes the following measures:

- co-operation inside the UBC,
- joint projects,
- follow-up survey on the implementation of the Youth Employment and Well-Being Programme,
- workshops and seminars.

UBC cities have developed new forms of co-operation with the Baltic Sea Flagship projects and also started to plan new projects together. Good examples are Mentoring and Support for the Refugee Youngsters projects, which include partners from Finland, Sweden, Poland and Latvia.

The Task Force conducted an online survey about the implementation of the Youth Employment and Well-Being Programme in early autumn 2015. The overall picture that emerged from the survey was mostly positive, but with some important caveats. A new survey will be conducted 2017 to make sure that we're still moving to a right direction.

Task Force's best practices were also disseminated at the seminar "Is youth social entrepreneurship the solution for sustainable rural areas?" organized on 9 November by Seed Money Facility BYSED project, Coompanion Kalmar & BS NGO Network during the 7th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR "One Region, One Future - Vision 2030 for the BSR".

The next step for the Task Force is IAEGV-conference in Madrid in November 2016, where the Chair of the Task Force would held presentation about Finnish Youth Guarantee models. Conference offers also an opportunity to disseminate the results of the UBC work.

Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, informed that a seminar 'Planning of the European-wide Youth Employment and Youth Guarantee' is considered to be organized in connection with Committee of the Regions (CoR) Plenary Session in Brussels in 2017. President Andersen spoke about the seminar with the CoR President Markku Markkula who demonstrated his positive attitude towards this initiative.

The Task Force report is attached to the minutes.

4. Information from the UBC Task Force on Refugees.

At the 75th UBC Executive Board meeting in Rostock held on 16 March 2016 in conjunction with the conference on refugees, the Board decided to authorize the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss

how UBC could follow the results of the conference on refugees in Rostock and promote exchange of know-how between the member cities in question. Presidium created a Task Force led by the City of Rostock.

The Task Force met in Kaunas on 6 June 2016. The meeting was attended by representatives of the cities of Rostock, Naestved, Kaunas, Turku, Växjö and the Secretary General.

The proposals of the TF in Kaunas were as follows:

- to have some practical meetings, where cities could share knowledge. Cities are so full of work, but everybody needs this fresh input to see how the others solve the problems
- to have a space on the UBC website to discuss, debate, bring proposals and share ideas
- actions of the Task Force should be seen also by the political levels.

Karin Wohlgemuth, city of Rostock, presented the report of the TF.

The cities of Naestved, Kristiansand and Växjö decided to meet and share the daily challenges and solutions. The first meeting in Naestved took place already, the second one is planned to be held in Kristiansand, and the meeting in Växjö is to follow.

Another task was to create visibility on the political level. For this purpose, Karin Wohlgemuth participated in two meetings.

Meeting of the Reflection Group on Refugees and Migration within the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities within the Council of Europe was held on 16 June 2016. The working group had the task to prepare a report named: "From reception to integration: the role of local and regional authorities facing migration" and to propose a resolution. The input from UBC was appreciated, referring to the situation of several cities from different countries in the Baltic Sea region. UBC could serve as a platform for further exchange of experiences, examples and expertise.

German Briefing on the Meeting of the 28 EU Government Representatives took place on 30 June 2016. The European refugees crisis was one of the topics. The Rapporteurs came from the Representation of the European Commission in Germany, the German Foreign Office/ Department on EUROPE and the Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy/ Chargé on Europe.

The idea to create a space on the UBC websites remains to be discussed.

The report of the TF is attached to the minutes.

5. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, UBC involvement.

5.1 7th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the BSR, Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016, two seminars co-organised by UBC.

Paweł Żaboklicki informed about two seminars co-organized by the UBC.

“Nothing about us without us - sustainable and a green future and prosperity, growth and jobs from a youth perspective” seminar, held on 8 November, focused on involving in the discussion young people as well as politicians from local and regional level. The seminar brought an added value to the Strategy Forum by including a bottom up perspective on the Baltic Sea Region Vision 2030, sustainable and a green future and prosperity, growth and jobs from a youth perspective.

The seminar raised the voice of the young people of the Baltic Sea Region and brought their views and proposals into the discussion. The seminar was organised by BSSSC, UBC and EuroRegion Baltic.

The second seminar, entitled "Cities and Regions: Drivers or Bystanders in the Baltic Sea cooperation" was held on 9 November. It focused on cities and regions as key players in the Baltic Sea Cooperation. The experts and panellists discussed the role of cities and regions. Is it really understood and appreciated by the governments and other stakeholders?

Prof. Kristine Kern, University of Potsdam and Ass. Prof. Stefan Gänzle, University of Agder, Kristiansand, presented their analysis and future scenarios, which were followed by the discussion. One of its conclusions was that city partnerships can provide good ground for reconciliation in difficult political situations in the Baltic Sea Region.

The seminar was organised by UBC with Land Brandenburg, BSSSC and CPMR BSC.

5.2 EUSBSR Horizontal Action ‘Capacity’, activity report and discussion on how to engage cities, regions and other stakeholders in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The discussion was postponed to the next Board meeting.

6. Information and proposals for next steps from Communication Manager on implementation of the UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy.

Irene Pendolin, UBC Communications Manager, reported on communications and marketing follow-up.

UBC’s face-lift is complete and the new UBC logo has been launched both in web and print applications. The new UBC website www.ubc.net was opened in June 2016, and the feedback has been very positive: commissions and member cities see the new website as modern, fresh, easy to access and to use and also visually attractive – a good calling card for the UBC.

Among the Communications Manager’s proposal, there was organising a joint meeting/workshop of the commissions (including commissions’ communications officers) to discuss and learn about how to get commissions’ messages across on the new website and social media, as well as learn how to update the site – one person in each commission (commission’s communications officer) could get basic training and be permissible to update the commission’s pages.

The Baltic Cities Bulletin has also been renewed according to the new visual look of the UBC and other applications, e.g. new general brochure, new PowerPoint templates and roll-ups were produced.

It was recommended by Irene Pendolin that the Bulletin would be published in a digital format rather than printed. According to Ms Pendolin, moving to e-Bulletin would be cost-effective, environmental-friendly and modern way of communicating UBC's messages. The e-Bulletin would be promoted through UBC digital newsletter (newsletter template is at the moment in process).

UBC was also visible on Facebook. Improved synergy and cooperation with the Commissions was suggested.

Ms Pendolin said UBC would need to start proactive media work and inform the BSR media about our aims and especially our results. This should also be taken into consideration when planning the next UBC General Conference in Växjö – it would benefit the UBC to get more media attention. Communication Manager intends to work out a plan for media activity as well as media lists for the Baltic Sea Region.

The report is attached to the minutes.

The Board authorised the Communication Manager to continue the work on UBC communications.

7. Proposal on cooperation between Baltic Sea cities and Eastern partnership / Black Sea cities, City of Gdańsk and WiseEUROPA Institute.

Adam Balcer, Project manager in WiseEuropa Institute, presented the proposal of cooperation between UBC, city of Gdańsk and Eastern partnership / Black Sea Cities.

An expert platform was proposed to be established which would provide professional expertise and insights into a variety issues (ie. culture, history, ecology, economy, energy, local administration, society) for the Baltic and Eastern partnership / Black Sea cities. The platform will gather experts and municipal officials from both regions specializing in various fields and organize thematic seminars. The main outcome of these meetings will be analysis and ready-to-use expertise published regularly (in form of reports, case studies, guidebooks, feasibility studies, etc). The project working title is "Between Baltic Sea and the Black Sea: The cities as engines of interregional cooperation".

Project initiators intend to apply to various institutions for the financial support (i.e. the Swedish Institute, The Swedish International Institute of Local Democracy, the European Commission programmes).

More information about the project is attached.

Decision:

The Board stressed the importance to strengthen democratic processes, economy, environment etc. in the cities of Eastern Partnership / Black Sea countries for the benefit and stability of the Baltic Sea

Region and Europe as a whole. Due to limited resources UBC cannot effort to support the project financially but is ready to assist in project promotion and dissemination.

8. Connections between culture, education and new technologies, Cultural Cities Commission.

Jaana Simula, Chair, Cultural Cities Commission, presented the information about the recent Commission's meetings, namely in Słupsk and Ustka, Poland on 15-17 June 2016, organized together with the Sustainable and Safe Cities Commissions, and in Turku on 25-27 September 2016, organized jointly with Youthful Cities Commission.

The Board members were also informed about the project BSR Cultural Planning initiative. Application was sent to Interreg Baltic Sea Region Seed Money on 28 October 2016. The project aims at promoting cultural planning as an innovative and collaborative tool for citizen participation in inclusive & sustainable city development in the BSR. The "Cultural Planning" proposal, supports all the PA Culture priorities under the EUSBSR objective "Increase Prosperity", mainly the PA Culture priority action 2: 'using the innovative force of culture for societal development'.

The Board took note of the report. The report is attached to the minutes.

9. Information from the Working Group on Gender Equality.

Hanna Maidell, Helsinki, and Małgorzata Tarasiewicz, Gdańsk, delivered information on the recent Working Group on Gender Equality activities and plans for the future.

The WG held two meeting in 2016 – on 21 June in Gdańsk and on 9 November in Stockholm. One of the main aims of the meetings was to promote the gender equality within the UBC and its Commissions. The 'responsibility matrix' was created, e.g. WG members are delegated to the UBC Commissions.

The WG plans to organize the conference in March 2017 in Gdańsk together with CEMR, devoted to the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

The Board took note of the report. It is attached to the minutes.

10. Attractive cities - talent management and place promotion, Smart & Prospering Cities Commission.

The report from the activities of the Smart & Prospering Cities Commission was presented by Wolfgang Schmidt, the Commission's Chairman.

In 2016, the Commission held two events on the subject of innovation ecosystems (Copenhagen, May 2016) and attractive cities (Hamburg, September 2016). The number of participants (Copenhagen 20, Hamburg 40) and the internal and external visibility of the UBC could be increased significantly.

The Commission strives to get external funding with the ongoing applications of two projects from the Europe for Citizens (30.000 EUR) and INTERREG (170.000 EUR) programmes.

In 2017 two meetings in Munich and Växjö and a joint meeting with the Planning Cities Commission and a stronger participation of the Youthful Cities Commission are planned.

The main challenges for 2017 are closer ties to the Presidium and the Executive Board, integration into the UBC's overall strategy, improvement of communication and marketing and strengthening the commitment of the member cities.

The Board took note of the report. It is attached to the minutes.

11. Integration of Natura 2000 sites with urban planning and sustainable development, Sustainable Cities Commission.

Björn Grönholm, Head of Sustainable Cities Commission secretariat, informed that SCC held two meetings in 2016. A joint meeting of three UBC Commissions on "Cultures of Sustainability in Baltic Cities" which took place on 15-17 June in Słupsk and Ustka was devoted to the question of safe and sustainable events. The outcome from the discussions will be a 'Guidebook for smart and sustainable event management'.

The second meeting 'Natura 2000 and urban development efforts' and 'How to implement Integrated Stormwater management' was held in Jelgava on 12-14 October. As a result of the meeting in Jelgava, as well as of the ongoing work with the iWater project, the UBC SCC will continue to focus on storm water management. A new initiative is a project focusing on climate change and storm water effects in relation to safety plans in urban areas.

The report is attached to the minutes.

12. Initiatives from Safe & Sustainable Cities Commissions.

Kaspars Varpins, Chair, Safe Cities Commission, and Björn Grönholm, Sustainable Cities Commission, presented two initiatives resulted from these two Commissions' cooperation.

1st initiative is the FiRe Concept – Regional Fire and Rescue concept for a safe and secure archipelago region that applied for funding from the Central Baltic Programme. The project promotes local and regional authorities in the creation of a Regional Rescue Concept including Fire safety, Oil spill prevention and Rescue activity with focus on accidents and first aid.

2nd initiative: CRCC – Making communities resilient to climate change: cross-sectoral cooperation in capacity building has been developed in collaboration with Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Its idea is to expand the existing network of civil protection stakeholders in the BSR by widening the geographical coverage of the partnership and by building up new partnerships to join efforts for reducing the vulnerability of the societies towards the emerging climate change.

The Board supported the initiatives of the Commissions.

More information is attached to the minutes.

13. UBC and Carbon Disclosure Project Memorandum of Understanding.

At the 76th UBC Executive Board meeting in Kaunas in June 2016 there was a proposal to sign Memorandum of Understanding between UBC and Carbon Disclosure Project.

Following the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021, as adopted at the 13th General Conference, Leadership for Climate-smart Baltic Cities is a key focus for UBC’s work. The cities can take climate change aspects into consideration in their entire decision making, e.g., in urban planning, mobility planning, energy related actions (efficiency, production) and buildings. Many UBC cities indeed efficiently seek to take the leadership in becoming climate-smart, decreasing their greenhouse gas emissions and using renewable energy sources efficiently. CDP strives constantly to build new knowledge and is interested in the Climate Leadership examples of BSR cities. The reporting system of CDP will also benefit from having more BSR cities using it.

The proposed co-operation would – utilizing UBC’s network and CDP’s reporting system, database and knowledge – produce a state-of-the-art report on strategic Climate work and Leadership in Baltic Sea region cities. This would be prepared for by involving more BSR cities to report for CDP and then by utilizing the analytical tools of CDP registry for studying the strategic leadership and key actions of these cities.

The text of the memorandum is attached.

Decision:

The President signed the memorandum.

14. Baltic Cities Bulletin “Inclusive and healthy cities”.

Paweł Żaboklicki informed about the latest issue of the Bulletin entitled “Inclusive and healthy cities”. The cities shared their experiences on how to prevent exclusion and marginalization. The ideas range from sport competitions, planning of recreational areas that foster meetings, involvement of NGOs, senior’s call centres and volunteering to more comprehensive solutions. The latter implies reformulating the city’s policies and changing the way of thinking. Instead of care, support is offered to activate those from vulnerable groups as everyone has something to offer to the whole community. The cities create opportunities that shift people’s focus to cooperation for the common interest and welfare. The Bulletin was published in 3400 copies.

15. Next 78th UBC Executive Board meeting.

The 78th meeting of the UBC Executive Board will be held in Kristiansand, Norway, on 15-17 February 2017, upon the invitation of the Mayor of Kristiansand.

16. Any other business.

Bo Hjälmeffjord, city of Växjö, informed about the conference Baltic Sea Future which will be organised in Stockholm in spring 2017. The conference aims on gathering mayors, civil servants, scientists and the business sector for a transdisciplinary discussion on the challenges and opportunities for the Baltic

Sea Region. As discussed the UBC should aim at reaching out to the mayors and should ensure visibility at key events to promote membership. He proposed that the UBC should consider participation in this event. The Board asked Mr Hjälmeffjord and the UBC secretariat to find out more on the event and participation conditions.

Per Bødker Andersen
Chairperson

Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary

Marta Chełkowska
Adjuster

Roger Kaliff
Adjuster

The meeting documents are available at: <http://www.ubc.net/taxonomy/term/247>