

WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESSES

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Mayor of the Hanseatic City of Rostock

Mr Anders Engström

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Mr Helmut Holter

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Council of the Baltic Sea States

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr Arno Pöker
Mayor of the Hanseatic City of Rostock

Dear distinguished guests, mayors and dear friends from UBC member cities,

The 11th September has changed our world. We all learned to value our most precious good – freedom. We estimate it from different historical backgrounds but some of us have paid a high prize. Already two hundred years ago the German philosopher and linguistic researcher Wilhelm von Humboldt said: *There is no security without freedom.*

We strongly condemn the impacts of terror on the citizens in New York and in Washington. At the latest since 11th September we had to detect that we must also protect our liberty, our living and working together. It may be necessary to use for that means of diplomacy, military and secret service. To all our conviction it is now however particularly important to co-operate across the borders with each other, to talk, to research, to celebrate, to live - now on purpose! Our response to the terrorist acts can only be to ensure continuous co-operation and to strengthen thus peace and liberty in the Baltic Sea region.

To live longer, healthier and more satisfied - this is the result of the second annual report on the social situation in Europe recently presented. In the quantitative and qualitative analysis of social trends it was stated that people stay longer healthy and that the expectation of live has raised. We have to take into account that the population is getting older. And there are still big differences of income between the EU member states, without taking into account the EU accession countries. This fact alone makes clear what kind of challenges are awaiting us in Europe.

In the Union of the Baltic cities, where Rostock is a member since 1991, one hundred member cities from all Baltic sea countries are meeting this challenge. The UBC members are working together on political and local level. The co-operation is voluntary and independent from the priorities of each city. Rostock, together with Lübeck, is co-ordinating the Commission on Health and Social Affairs.

I have the great pleasure to welcome you to the VI UBC General Conference under the ambitious topic 'Social Justice in the Baltic Sea Region in the New Millennium'.

Politicians and experts participating will share their experience. With regional inputs from many of our member cities, the conference focuses on practical solutions for a better social life.

Another highlight will be the celebration of the 10th anniversary of our Union of the Baltic Cities. As the host of the Conference we would like to honour our name 'Hanseatic City of Rostock'. Always when peaceful trade across the sea was possible - like in times of the Hanse - Rostock and its people were doing well. The name 'Hanseatic City' stands as a symbol of peace and partnership. And this is again the case since the past ten years.

The league of peaceful trade, its traditions, the old trade routes across the sea - all this is recreated in one or the other way. During the past decade, Rostock has transformed to an important trade point. Many ferry lines have settled here. The city became a central point of sea trade to Scandinavia. Due to the extension of the EU, Rostock moved more to the geographical centre of this economic union. Rostock is situated in straight line between the metropolis of Berlin and Copenhagen. At the same time, the port of Rostock has developed to a bridgehead for the trade not only with Scandinavia but

also to and from Eastern Europe. Thanks to the strong relationship to Scandinavia, most modern ship building industry has settled here.

At the same time Rostock is the economic, scientific and cultural centre of the land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Rostock is an important investment place. Many modern enterprises have settled here in the past years; in the surroundings of the port about 250 businesses have settled - from a malt factory to a coal power station. The University of Rostock is a very important factor for the economy. The University and connected institutes, scientific-technical solutions have been developing for the building trade, ship building, agriculture, environmental protection and medicine.

Rostock has become a destination for the international cruise shipping - maybe due to the short distance to the German capital Berlin, the proud passenger ships, the luxury liners from all over the world, also bring the glamour to our city. And they take something with them: the beauty of the Hanseatic city of Rostock we are proud of.

The EU enlargement is offering enormous chances for the whole Baltic region, also Rostock will profit from them. For the future of the people in the whole Baltic region it's important to fill this co-operation with life. In this case I agree with that unknown author who meant: *A good partner is like an old wine - the older, the better.*

In this sense I wish success to the VI General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

OPENING ADDRESS

Mr Anders Engström
President of the Union of the Baltic Cities

Herr Minister, Gospodin Ambassador, Herr Uberborgmeister, representatives of the European Commission, European Council and our sister organisations, distinguished guests and invited speakers, our guests from Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation, dear friends from member cities,

This General Conference is historic. It is our tenth anniversary, and we also welcome our member city number 100, which is the Capital of Germany, Berlin. It is also my last General Conference as UBC President. Tomorrow the General Conference will elect a new UBC President.

Both the Baltic Sea Region as well as the UBC has developed tremendously during these ten years. When we started, the probably strictest section of the iron curtain in Europe had just fallen, and there was a tremendous need for contacts between cities across our Baltic Sea. UBC turned out to be a very successful platform for such contacts.

The first years were in many ways dominated by the search for new contacts and learning to know each other again after so many years of useless division. But soon the contacts developed to normal daily contacts between cities in democratic countries. UBC also developed to one of the major political organisations in our region, and UBC is met with respect from many different actors.

But the road to the future lies ahead of us. Our region shows a level of stable economic and political development that in my opinion is unique in the world. UBC has been a very important part of this development, which we all should be proud of.

One of the most important processes at the moment is the enlargement of the European Union in our region. EU accession will have impact on practically every field of city activity, some less and perhaps difficult to distinguish, but some are very obvious and far-reaching. It can also be rather costly for the new EU cities, for example in the field of environment. Cities are often the implementing partner of many policies that has its source in the EU accession, even if it often take the form of implementing national legislation which is adopted to the European Union.

It is, in my eyes, absolutely beneficial for a successful EU enlargement process that opinions and experiences of cities are utilised in this process. Cities and their organisations, like national local authorities associations and UBC, should be a discussion partner as well as the national governments. UBC is ready to contribute in that discussion in a constructive way.

One important part of the policies is also implementation of the Northern Dimension and the Action Plan for the Northern Dimension. I would especially like to mention Kaliningrad in this context. Kaliningrad is a valuable UBC member, and we have great interest to secure constructive solutions when Kaliningrad will be surrounded by EU states in a near future.

UBC has for some time very strongly pointed out the necessity of a facility to finance co-operation project between local and regional authorities which are adopted to the needs of cities in terms of size, eligible activities and concepts regarding cross-border co-operation across maritime borders, but until now with limited success. The Danish Government has proposed a special fund for such projects, to be financed by CBSS member states. I strongly support the idea and I hope that the initiative will be successful.

The theme, "Social Justice in the new Millennium", reflects one of the main spheres of city activity as the social field is one of the large items in city budgets. Many of our citizen benefit of the social services, and the social sector is a large employer.

There are many reasons that social issues are important. The base for a stable political and economic development is social justice. Our security can be threatened by social disorder. Criminality thrives in poverty. Our history tells us that social injustice can even give rise to revolutions and civil war.

But for me social justice is also a question of solidarity. Solidarity between individuals as well as between countries and continents. We cannot create a fair and pleasant Baltic Sea Region, or even a whole planet in peace and order, if we neglect solidarity. It is our duty to hand over to the coming generations a world of peace and stable development in all fields.

However, social policy has attracted too little attention in the discussions across the Baltic Sea. It is therefore an important step to high-light the social issues and to give them increased importance in the development of the Baltic Sea Region. The social sector must be in order if the stable political and economic development in our region shall continue successfully.

The social sector can mean different things. Traditionally the city sector, at least in the Scandinavian countries, has primarily worked with helping people in need, like elderly care, social assistance, care for disabilities, for children and so on.

The European Union is rather much concentrating on social and employment policy as a mean to raise the competitive strength of Europe. Good working conditions, life-long learning and increased wealth and cohesion are seen as crucial parts of a European Policy – but I think we will hear more about that later today.

Perhaps this is a good way of dividing the responsibilities. Both perspectives are necessary and they interact. But it is important to understand that in the long run also the European Union Social policy is dependent of the activities in the social field as implemented in cities.

It is my belief that this General Conference will bridge the gap between the European Union and the cities when speaking of the social sector. This will in the long run contribute to a better European policy as well as better policy in the cities for the benefit of our citizens.

OPENING ADDRESS

Mr Helmut Holter
Minister on Labour and Construction, Deputy Prime Minister
Mecklemburg-Vorpommern

Labour market policy needs sense and embodiment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, naturally I am very pleased to be able to welcome you here in Rostock. And I would like to bring you the best greetings and wishes of our Prime Minister of this federal state Dr. Harald Ringstorff. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is a hospitable country and we are pleased about everyone, who takes advantage of this hospitality.

I am however particularly happy to welcome especially you, Ladies and Gentlemen, the envoys of nearly 100 member cities from ten countries, here in Rostock. I am convinced that the cities have an highly important task in the European integration process around the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea region was shaped as a divided Europe. For more than ten years now the Baltic Sea countries are getting closer to each other. The region is booming. But it will still take some time, until we have everywhere approximately the same living conditions. In some regions it may sound utopian for the people to achieve the living standard and the social security of their neighbours. But we will reach it. Together we can achieve everything, against each other nothing.

I can tell you this due to the experiences, which we made in the east of Germany the last ten years. A complete structural change has been lived through. The country lived traditionally on the agriculture, shipbuilding and the ports. As the most thinly populated state of Germany with 1.8 million inhabitants this structural change met us particularly hard. For some solid enterprises the requirements were simply excessive during the introduction of the free-market economy. They did not have a chance. As a result we are still having high - much to high - unemployment rates. And thus I got to the conference topic. Where citizens cannot assume their human right on work, there are urgent actions for a social justice required.

I am saying this, without denying that in the past ten years giant steps were gone. Much money went into the development of the infrastructure. The new motorway grows daily from west to east through our country and we have one of the most modern communications networks in Europe.

Some of you could witness with your own eyes that the cities have got a new look. Inhabitants feel well in the reconstructed flats and also in the suburb settlements. As a minister on construction I say that with considerable pride. As an employment minister however the drastic reduction of jobs in the building industry is from great concern to me. And I could specify further problems. But I do not want to go further into complaints. I know again from my own experiences that the German unification and the entry into the European Union (EU) has been a large challenge. This process did not only have winners.

The social burdens have to be carried above all by the municipalities. The long-term unemployment leads into social neediness and social marginalisation. I find it however good and important, that you as local politicians of the Baltic Sea region joined to discuss the questions about social justice.

I have heard about the UBC Women's Network, which takes care about problems of those, which are affected by unemployment and discrimination. I have read from your initiatives on adult qualification in Kaliningrad and I am very grateful for those initiatives. In our modern communication society, determined by Multimedia, lifelong learning is getting ever more important.

We in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania tailor qualification measures exactly to the individual possibilities and abilities of unemployed persons or of people threatened by unemployment. We teach those abilities which are required by the enterprises. We are succeeding better and better with this.

Only one example underlining this. Country-wide the enterprises of biotechnology are successfully developing. With the network of these enterprises, the labour office and educational institutions we are finding out, how we can kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand which processes are to be organised in such a manner that the creative people in the enterprises are released of simple tasks, and on the other hand, how jobs with less demanding qualification can be developed. We hope thus to diminish the lack of specialists in innovative areas and at the same time to bring more people in occupation.

I recalled on problems, please let me also tell you about the chances for development. The optimism for the future of all inhabitants in the Baltic Sea region is finally based on that.

The target is it to create positive basic conditions for an innovative economic and scientific location. We want to create chances for the people and I consider it important to get creativity into the country.

The fourth year in consequence Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will also be the German lander with the highest increase in tourist accommodations in 2001. The number of foreign guests is constantly increasing.

New techniques and medical treatments are used at our university clinics in Rostock and Greifswald. The 36 hospitals in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania have been partly completely rebuilt, reconstructed - and all medicine-technically on the most modern standard. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania becomes a cure country.

In the networking and co-operation of hospitals, health resort facilities and tourism industry the so called white economy has got many opportunities for increasing their services for the people. For the development and marketing of products of the medical area – from welfare treatments and cure packages to medical technology – the interaction among the neighbours is important: Hospitals in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania are treating patients from Norway, nurses and physicians operate in hospitals in Sweden.

We have a modern agriculture and the country is strongly orientated on ecological products. We are sure to get larger market shares in agricultural products and higher job-creating effects.

We will be successful if we expand our co-operation relations and do not think any longer alone regional 'on a national scale' but rather in European dimensions. On initiative of Finland the European community has launched a plan of action under the title "Northern Dimension" on the way. Herewith the co-operation receives impulses by concrete projects. This reaches from co-operation in the economy up to the area health, social affairs and education.

For the development of European regions we need still more of such concrete projects. The federal state government like the municipalities, the economy and many institutions from culture and science continue to develop their relations around the Baltic Sea in the passed years. In order to be able to

keep alive these relations, the networks must become closer. Therefore your common work is important and the integration in the Baltic Sea region can be sustainably developed from the bottom up.

At the end, let me, please, say a few words directly to the topic of this meeting. The term sense of proportion has a traditional meaning in the Baltic Sea region. Our ancestors made it to the basis of their success in the times of the Hanseatic League. They could not speculate like the today's on-line brokers via mouse-clicks across oceans with enormous loans, but made business on the spot. Where they merchandised they did it with sense for the local conditions.

And I believe that today we should again recall that. Political sense is in my opinion primarily connected to a consistent regionalisation. That means not only to align the federal state policy more strongly to the requirements of the regions but also to make the actual decisions on the spot. This is mainly more problem oriented, in accordance with the demands and efficiently. Social justice is always concrete, always localised. To develop solutions locally and implement them in partnership, that is for me the only response to the problems of a world-wide globalisation.

Just now my Ministry is finishing the new labour market and structural development programme. With this programme the labour market policy of the federal state is re-arranged.

It is oriented according to the European labour strategy and is assisting the regionalisation. Efficiency and transparency only thus can be achieved. With the new programme districts and cities, social partners and employment administrations are getting new rights in decision making processes in the field of labour market policy.

I was very pleased that, you, Ladies and Gentlemen, have chosen for the conference the topic 'Social Justice in the Baltic Sea Region in the New Millennium'. And this regardless of the Bible word: " the fair one has much to suffer... ". I wish you suffer-free hours in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and a fruitful conference.

ADDRESS OF CBSS

Mr Alexey A. Obukhov

Ambassador-at-Large, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials,
Council of the Baltic Sea States

Mr. President, Distinguished Mayors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to join all the previous speakers in congratulating the Union of the Baltic Cities with the 10th anniversary of its foundation. Bringing 100 cities from all over the region into one framework of practical, down-to-earth interaction, the UBC constitutes an important link in a highly developed system of international co-operation in the Baltic area. It is fair to say that without it this system today would be simply unimaginable.

The Russian Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States is grateful for the invitation to speak at the VI General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities. We cherish the established tradition of the Chairman-in-office of the CBSS – a structure of inter-governmental co-operation – addressing regular gatherings of mayors and heads of municipal councils from all Baltic Sea countries. Not only is your organisation the oldest co-operation structure in the Baltic Sea region – it is also by far the biggest in terms of its membership. The UBC is an important partner of the CBSS and enjoys the status of Special Participant in the Council. In my opinion, such a dialogue testifies to the fact that

transparency is expanding in the north of Europe, and interaction among States and peoples for the sake of sustainable social and economic development is strengthening.

Russia has taken over from Germany the Chairmanship in the CBSS at a historic moment - next spring we also will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of this institution. For the CBSS it was a period of self-assertion, growth, identification of its profile, diversification and specification of its activities. Now it is quite possible to say that the co-operation within the CBSS makes a tangible contribution to creating a new architecture of international relations on the European continent based on democratic values, respect for human rights and the supremacy of international law. One can – and rightfully so - about actual **transformation of the CBSS in the end of its first decade into a full-scale sub-regional international organisation.**

The fact that there are four main structures acting in the Baltic Sea region – the CBSS, BSPP, BSSSC and UBC - makes the problem of **co-ordination** a most urgent one. This has been specifically stressed in the Communiqué from the recent CBSS Ministerial session in Hamburg. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication and to increase the efficiency of efforts undertaken and resources used, a meeting of Chairpersons of all regional organisations and institutions will be held in Riga on 27 October 2001. We look forward to this practical and open exchange of views with our partners, including the President of the UBC.

At this point, more than three months into the term of the Russian CBSS Presidency, there is hardly a need to describe in detail the Priorities of our Chairmanship: You have already had the chance to read them in the CBSS Newsletter and on the Internet and copies are also available at this Conference. Allow me to highlight just the main themes and plans for this CBSS Presidency period, which began last June.

It is necessary to mention in the first place some **major political events that will take place on the Russian territory in 2002** - a meeting of Ministers of foreign affairs to be held in March in Kaliningrad Oblast and the 4th meeting of Heads of government of CBSS Member States to be held in St.Petersburg next June.

Russia will try to make the meeting of Ministers of foreign affairs in Kaliningrad Oblast and the meeting of Prime ministers in Saint Petersburg symbolic events in developing multilateral co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. These meetings are to create a new foundation for progressing in the direction of a further intensification of the Baltic Sea States' sub-regional identity and developing integration trends. Meetings of ministers of culture, transport, trade and economy, communications and information, spatial planning, etc., some of which have been held already, will serve to prepare for the above mentioned events.

Russia sees the principal objective of its Presidency in ensuring continuity and consistency in the work of the CBSS, as well as in promoting in every way the dialogue on urgent issues and long-term perspectives of the Baltic Sea region. The CBSS should enhance its prestige not only as a co-ordinator but also as an initiator of co-operation in the Baltic Sea region.

The Russian Presidency intends to pay particular attention to the **economic component of Baltic Sea co-operation**, creating conditions for implementation of large-scale investment projects. This is in line with the tasks assigned by the Action Plan that was adopted at the 2000 Bergen meeting on economic development. The regular meeting of the Ministers of trade and economy will contribute to achieving those objectives. It will take place in Moscow in March 2002. During Russia's Presidency, the CBSS Working Group on Economic Co-operation is headed by a Russian representative. There is intent to pay special attention to the problems of cross-border and border cooperation, in particular in the area of simplification of customs procedures and of the rules governing the crossing of the border by goods, and also in the area of standardisation and certification.

The Russian Presidency will seek to ensure that co-operation within the framework of the CBSS could promptly address urgent needs of the regions and help solve practical problems. We believe that the establishment of a **Fund to encourage sub-regional development** could be very helpful and here I should acknowledge the strong support received from the UBC in this regard.

Of particular importance within the framework of Baltic Sea co-operation is the **interaction of the CBSS with the European Union**. Having assumed the CBSS Presidency, Russia intends to actively co-operate with the European Union in realising the Northern Dimension Action Plan. This includes above all the Baltic Sea "List of priorities and projects", which was transmitted to the European Commission during the Luxembourg Ministerial conference in April. We count on the support of the EU member states, which are also part of the CBSS, and on the backing of all regional organisations, which have contributed to this List, including the UBC.

Particular attention shall be paid to issues related to **Kaliningrad Oblast**. Given its geographic isolation from the rest of Russia and the forthcoming expansion of the European Union, Kaliningrad Oblast should be provided with the necessary conditions for its normal unhindered development and life support, including the solution of the block of visa problems. It will hardly be possible to talk of real co-operation within the Northern Dimension and other programs if eventually Russia finds itself on the other side of the visa barrier. This is where the common interest of all the States and, I might say, of all the cities of the region appears to coincide. Peaceful environment around Kaliningrad Oblast is an indispensable stability element in the Baltic Sea area. The European Union and Russia are engaged in a dialogue concerning this issue. As to the CBSS, it appears to be able to contribute to launching and implementing concrete multilateral projects involving Kaliningrad Oblast. I am convinced that the UBC can contribute a lot here, as well.

The Russian Presidency will also focus its attention on issues of **democratic development**, including human rights and rights of national minorities. Our principled approach is that there should be constructive co-operation on human rights problems. Based on this understanding, we will closely interact with the CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Development, i.a. in the context of the preparation and holding of a conference of national/parliamentary Ombudsmen of the Baltic Sea States in Russia in spring 2002.

A new dimension of the CBSS activities – a forum of non-governmental organisations - is emerging. In May 2001 Lübeck hosted a meeting of representatives of some 150 NGOs. An agreement was reached to create an NGO network in the Baltic Sea region and hold follow-up region-wide gatherings. The CBSS looks forward to finding a new, representative and viable counterpart in the civil society sector.

We proceed from the assumption that the further economic development of the Baltic Sea Region should be advanced on the basis of environmentally adjusted models, tested mechanisms of interaction between the Baltic Sea States aimed at preventing and eliminating the consequences of possible emergencies and major industrial accidents.

Russia will continue the efforts of Germany, our predecessor as the CBSS Presidency, aimed at **safer navigation in the Baltic Sea and cleaner marine environment**. The oil spill, which resulted from the collision of a tanker with another vessel near Denmark in March, attests to the necessity and urgency of these measures. The ministerial meeting of HELCOM member countries in Copenhagen on 10 September became an important step towards a safer maritime navigation. We also hope that the **Agreement on the Exchange of Radiation Monitoring Data** signed at the Ministerial meeting in Hamburg will become a major step towards a stronger nuclear and radiation security in the Baltic Sea region. The issue of Russia's accession to the Agreement is now under consideration.

Securing economically and environmentally sound reliable power supply for the Baltic Sea States is the top priority task. The emerging common **energy** market, realisation of large-scale power and transport projects such as the "Yamal-Europe" system and the North European gas pipeline will

facilitate the fulfilment of this task. In the period of the Russian Presidency, a Russian representative will head the BASREC Group of Senior Energy Officials.

We also plan to focus our attention on the optimisation of the **transport** flows in the region. The meeting of CBSS Transport ministers in Gdansk on 27-28 September gave a strong impetus to the joint efforts in this field.

At present the quality of life depends to a great extent on the protection of people from illegal actions. Russia is determined to actively participate in the work of the Prime Ministers' **Task Force on Organised Crime**. On the initiative of the Russian Ministry of Interior, a meeting of the Operative Committee of this Task Force took place in Moscow this September, where the law enforcement authorities of the CBSS member countries looked into ways of jointly preventing and suppressing the trafficking in drugs, money laundering and smuggling of goods. The horrible events in the US a month ago clearly demonstrated the need for ever-stronger international efforts in the field of combating cross-border organised crime and terrorism. We believe that the CBSS can do its share in this field on a regional level.

I would like to conclude by expressing on behalf of the CBSS our deepest appreciation of the personal efforts of the outgoing President of the Union of the Baltic Cities, Mr Anders Engström. A true pioneer of Baltic Sea co-operation and friendship, he has always demonstrated over these many years a remarkable dedication to our common goals, paired with extraordinary energy in promoting ideas and concrete projects aimed at bringing our peoples and societies closer together. We wish him all the success in his future endeavours and express our sincere hope that he will remain active in Baltic Sea affairs. Welcoming the new leadership of the UBC, I would like to reiterate the point that during the term of its CBSS Presidency the Russian side counts on the support of the CBSS Special participants, including such important long-time partners as the UBC and its member cities.

Thank you.