



UBC COMMISSION ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

ACTIVITY REPORT FEBRUARY – SEPTEMBER 2011

Due to local elections our commission has launched its work in February this year. Our Letter of Intent has met moderate interest from UBC members. We got feedback even in 3 months after its publishing. This extended in time reaction has facilitated decision about starting with some minor initiative. Making use of the fact that two more Polish cities Gdańsk and Koszalin have recently declared will to access our commission activities, we have arranged in May first meeting of the commission in Sopot, Poland. Representatives of three Polish cities, nine persons were present, among them deputy mayor of Elbląg. This event was meant as a working meeting with intention to get broader agreement and support of future program. Some good practices were exchanged too, however more important was decision about future collaboration.

In particular representatives decided to organize next open commission meeting this September in Elbląg under leading subject "Senior citizens and the city".

This initiative was meant as exchanging cases, experiences, and solutions which work well in practice. Main questions are:

- how cities care about elderly people
- how cities counteract senior citizens' exclusion
- how cities can benefit from senior citizens.

The date and theme were set with intention to eventually prepare good background for contribution to the workshop devoted to ageing society during General Conference in Liepaja.

Along with recruitment new participants we entered into correspondence with two international organizations operating in Baltic Sea Region. These are Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being and Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.

Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) is the intergovernmental organization acting on ministerial level, which Expert Groups create strategies, guidelines and practical solutions of problems connected with public health and social issues on macro level.

I had an appointment with NDPHS Head of Secretariat Mr Marek Maciejowski, who introduced me to some projects under development of his organization.

These plans address:

- alcohol and drug related harm among young people,
- healthy nutrition, prevention and correction of overweight and obesity, promotion of physical activity among school-aged children,

- health policy and strategy support to combat non-communicable diseases and hazardous and harmful lifestyle epidemic in Northern Dimension geographical area,
- development of Occupational Health Services,
- development new roles and tasks to local hospitals in support of primary health care in BSR.

I have submitted invitation for a representative of NDPHS to attend with speech to our workshop during General Conference in Liepaja to the Committee of Senior Representatives, which is equivalent to the UBC Executive Board.

Baltic Region Healthy City Association, which is also a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the BSR promotes health conditions in urban areas in BSR and supports WHO programs concerning urban health issues. It aims at increasing the awareness of the local governments to take health as a central part in their decision making in the cities belonging to the Healthy Cities Networks and other interested actors.

I had the appointment in Turku with Ms Johanna Reiman, Executive Director of the association and invited her to attend event in Liepaja. City of Turku is UBC as well as Healthy Cities Network member and health promotion in context of ageing population may be interesting for the audience.

Regarding other speakers for the General Conference workshop, I addressed Professor Peteris Zvidrins, Head of the Chair of Statistics and Demography, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Latvia, who agreed to deliver lecture about demography and ageing in BSR.

On 15-16 September 2011 in Elbląg Old Town City Hall took place open Commission on Health and Social Affairs meeting with 37 participants from 4 countries. Poland was represented by: Elbląg, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Koszalin, Malbork, Ustka. Finland was represented by: Helsinki, Turku, Vaasa. Latvia was represented by Riga. Estonia was represented by: Narva, Tallinn and Tartu. Together 13 cities were present. The base for the agenda of the event was “Elbląg Programme for the Elderly for years 2009-2013” which is being implemented in the host of the meeting. There were 10 lectures delivered by participating cities. Besides, participating in the event, representing NDPHS Mr Marek Maciejowski submitted presentation on subject: “Promoting public health and social well-being internationally” proposing once again cooperation with the NDPHS in implementing projects his organization works on. Full list of the NDPHS projects actually under development is now available on UBC website <http://www.ubc.net/commissions,29.html> together with other conference materials. At the end of the meeting representing Vaasa Mr Jukka Kentala initially declared will to organize the next UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs meeting in his city in 2012.

Attending Elbląg meeting Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General introduced forthcoming XI UBC General Conference in Liepaja programme where Commission on Health and Social Affairs will organize W3. Workshop titled “How to meet the demographic challenge ; the ageing society”.

We invited following speakers to deliver a lecture for this event:

1. Demographic development in Baltic Sea Region – Prof. Peteris Zvidrins, Head of Chair of Statistics and Demography, University of Latvia.
2. Primary health care and social care system development to meet the demographic challenge related to ageing– Prof. Arnoldas Jurgutis, International Technical Adviser for the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS), Klaipeda University

3. Promoting health and responding to challenges of ageing society – WHO Healthy Cities – Johanna Reiman, Executive Director, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.

ACTION PLAN 2012-2013

According to the agreement of the UBC Board, The City of Elbląg presides the works of UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs from 2011. Hereby we would like to present the UBC Board action plan for the years 2012-2013.

Health and social problems are common and affect all inhabitants of Baltic Sea Region, nevertheless previous attempts to maintain activity in this domain were ineffective.

For this reason, main topic the Commission should focus on its reactivation and increasing awareness of possible cities' cooperation in the Commission.

The other goals of the Commission on Health and Social Affairs continue:

- increase of awareness of contemporary health and social problems in local authorities and society as a whole,
- promotion and support of UBC member cities projects related to health and social issues,
- cooperation with other UBC Commissions and external organizations in the field of health and social issues.

Because Elbląg has started from the very beginning and actually reactivated the Commission on Health and Social Affairs our activities will be continuously addressed simultaneously in following two directions. First of them is raising awareness and recruitment new active Commission's participants while the second aim are the other goals stated above.

In 2011 we entered into relations with two organizations sharing our interests. They are Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) and WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the Baltic Region (WHO CC) and with both we want to develop further co-operation.

Representative of NDPHS has attended meeting of the Commission in Elbląg offering cooperation in some projects NDPHS expert groups work on. This proposal has met with some interest from the present cities' representatives and there is also a chance for UBC to become NDPHS partner together with all the organizations mentioned previously. We plan to expand this relation.

We also intend to collaborate further with WHO CC aiming in popularization "Healthy Cities" idea. Main goal of this organization is increasing awareness of the local governments to take health as a central part in the decision making process. The themes of the UBC Commission for Health and Social Affairs are well in line with the WHO themes. There are also 24 WHO Healthy Cities in the Baltic Sea Region and this may be a good basis for our future co-operation.

We will strive to organize two meetings of the Commission every year. In 2012 hosting cities of the Commission meeting will be Vaasa (Finland) and Elbląg (Poland). Proposed general topics of these events are:

- Vaasa – non-communicable diseases,
- Elbląg – health care systems’ organization.

In 2012 we will try to launch our Commission website to facilitate access to the information about current Commission activities and contact.

Taking all above into consideration we would like to propose following plan of work for year 2012:

First half of 2012	Launching Commission website.
May 2012	Meeting of the Commission in Vaasa (Finland) under leading subject: “Non-communicable diseases”.
September 2012	Meeting of the Commission in Elbląg under leading subject “Health care systems’ organization”
All over 2012	Continuous popularization of the Commission among UBC members.

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