



UBC COMMISSION ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Activity Report

to the VIII UBC General Conference
01 October, 2005 in Turku

Reported period: november 2003 to september 2004

Meetings:

At the 7th Commissions Meeting on 19 October 2003, within the framework of the VII UBC General Conference in Klaipeda, it became clear that the Commissions work has to be re-organised and re-orientated towards the needs of the interested cities, on the UBC Social Charter and on EU priorities. The decision was then, besides the regular Commission's Meeting, to organise also task force meetings with selected participants for special concentrate stronger on real interest of the cities. Guidelines of the activities of the Commission should be the Social Charter and the EU Strategy Against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The partner network within the Commission was refreshed.

On 19-20 January the 1st Task Force Meeting on Health and Social Affairs took place in Rostock. The agenda was prepared in common by Stockholm (chair) and Rostock (secretariat). Representatives of the cities of Riga, Klaipeda, Reda, Helsinki, Turku, Stockholm, Gävle and Rostock and social scientists from Vilnius and Rostock met to define the next working direction and methods.

The representatives exposed the special situations of their cities. As a result of this analysis two specific working groups were set up which will push forward the exchange of experience and the project development in the next future: **the Working Group on ,Children and Youth on Risk', chaired / co-chaired by the cities of Riga / Gävle and the Working Group on ,Employment', chaired / co-chaired by Klaipeda and Helsinki. A small UBC Social Charter Working Group was also set up, in charge to find a way how to implement its goals within UBC cities.**

Further interesting themes under debate were:

- the EU Strategy on Poverty and Social Exclusion broken down to National Action Plans how to work with it in the municipalities,
- experiences in transnational EU project design, application, implementation and follow-up and
- the Open Method of Co-ordination as an Instrument of international co-operation work.

On 14 May the 2nd Task force meeting ('core group'), took place in Riga. Representatives of the Commission's Working Groups coming from Riga, Klaipeda, Stockholm, and Rostock met in order to precise next steps of the Commission's and the Task Force's work and took the following decisions, i.a.:

For the Working Group on ,Children and Youth on Risk':

- Exchange of Experience on Children Crisis Centres.
- Intensive cooperation with *Social Hansa*. The Commission will propose a joint meeting in Lübeck on *Children and Youth at Risk*.
- Cooperation with partner organisations like CIF (Council of International Fellowship, www.cifinternational.com) in order to take part in international low-budget exchange programs of social workers.

- Planning next steps to push forward the exchange of experience and the project development in the future

For the Working Group on ,Employment‘:

- Definition of measurements in the cities how to work with the EU Strategy on Poverty and Social Exclusion broken down to National Action Plans (NAPs) and Local Action Plans
- Planning of a meeting dealing with unemployed depending on social welfare.

For the UBC Social Charter working group:

- Discussion of the first working paper presented within the Working Group

For the Commission’s Secretariat in Rostock:

- Production of a Commission’s Leaflet

On 21 of September 2004 a small team out of the *Working Group on Children and Youth on Risk* met in Stockholm in order to plan the next steps to push forward the exchange of experience and the project development in the next future. Participants at the meeting were active persons from Riga, Turku and Stockholm of *the Working Group on Children and Youth at Risk*. The meeting was co-ordinated and the agenda prepared by Stockholm. Main focus was “Strengthening of networking and more thematic meeting occasions” according to one of the tasks of the action plan 2003-2005. The participants agreed on that the Commissions goals could be put into practice best if they meet the well defined city’s commitments/interests to take an active part in UBC, to work with the prioritised fields and to do it within the framework of UBC. A questionnaire on key issues was developed with the purpose of getting a picture of the cities priorities among different fields and the interest to develop transnational co-operation or networking between the cities.

The different National Action Plans on social inclusion and the CBSS action plan were the starting point in this process of priorities’ identification.

It is planned to organise workshops on the prioritised fields by the cities, also including representatives of CBSS and other relevant international organisations in order to profit from their work on social issues. The workshops will be the starting-point to establish the working group.

Another team out of the *Working Group on Employment* is planning a first meeting in purpose to prospect the next step to push forward the exchange of experience and the project development in the near future. The work is being done in co-operation by Stockholm, Klaipeda and Helsinki

Cooperation with other UBC Commissions and Networks:

Womens’ Network:

During the reported period, intensive conversations have taken place with the UBC Women’s Network in order to combine forces in a common project concerning gender mainstreaming, regarding one of the target groups the Commission is dealing with. A first trial at the beginning of 2004, the project application *Combating the Silence and Invisibility of Trafficking Locally* at the EU Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs/Horizontal and international issues/Equality for women and men, unfortunately, was not successful. The UBC Social Charter was discussed during the Network Meetings.

Commission on Sport, annual meeting, 02-04 April 2004 in Narva / Estonia:

The following common aspects were found: The Commission is emphasising the social aspect of sports and, especially, the involvement of handicapped persons in sports activities. *The UBC Social Charter* is one of the basic documents, both Commissions have strong connection with. The very successful *Hansetour Sunshine 2003*, project under the umbrella of UBC and the Commission on Health and Social Affairs, was respectfully mentioned (next international itinerary: 2005 or 2006).

Commission on Environment, annual meeting, 22-25 April 2004 in Sundsvall / Sweden:

In the workshop *Social Integration and Health* was pointed out that the cooperation of both Commission should be strengthened on the common base of the BLA21. This document could also be a good leading conception for the discussion about the implementation of the UBC Social Charter. Sundsvall could deliver excellent examples of how to handle BLA21 in a community. One interesting item was the visit of the Nacksta quarter with a lot of measures of social intergration of persons from different nationalities.