

## Digitalization from an urban perspective – Potentials through city collaboration and regionalization

Fehmarnbelt Days 2018, 29 May 2018 in Malmö

### Management Summary

The increasing digitization is changing all municipal processes and redefines relations between city to society and city to region. The seminar by Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and Baltic Development Forum (BDF) gathered answers to this disruptive revolution:

- What are the main challenges and opportunities for modern cities?
- Are cooperation and regionalization factors for successful digitalization?

Key questions:

- What opportunities and challenges face cities as digitalization processes increasingly integrate all sectors of city administration, planning & operations?
- What benefits are imagined for why cities should collaborate on digitalization issues?
- What barriers face cities in regional 'digitization' collaboration given the fact that cities compete to attract and retain new digital industries and labour?

### City cases

The first part of the seminar started with two perspectives on how to deal with the potentials and challenges of digitalization in the Cities of Hamburg and Malmö.

Thomas Jacob (Senate Chancellery of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg) gave an insight into Hamburg's Digital City Strategy – reaching from organizational structures to specific digital domains, i.e. e-culture, urban data, digital administration. As the development of intelligent mobility concepts is one of the main challenges for cities, Thomas presented the main aspects of Hamburg's "Intelligent Traffic System". Cooperation as the exchange of experiences and sharing knowledge is seen as a positive factor for the development of digital processes especially when the cooperation is directly between the relevant sectors.

Maria Stellingher Ernblad, (CIO City of Malmö) and Charlotta Alegria Ursing, (CEO Minc) focused on the question on how to realize the city's digital agenda and their effort of building bridges between public and private sector. Malmö Incubator (Minc) as start-up house and accelerator is a destination for the vital start-up scene in Malmö. The City of Malmö aims to profit directly from the ideas developed within this scenery by bringing them together with the needs of the City and offering a platform for testing digital solutions. Instead of complex and long-term IT solutions they change to small collaborations directly addressing the current challenges.

### Expert input

The first part of the seminar was rounded up with an expert input by Pernilla Johansson (Chief Economist Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Southern Sweden) who emphasized the role of cities in a digitalized world. With view to the State of the Digital Region 2016 report, she denied some

studies that assume digitalization would stop the trend of urbanization: Digitalization and urbanization seem to go hand in hand and we can still see a high growth of jobs in urban areas – especially when it comes to digital skills. Cities should use i.e. city networks to raise their visibility and to connect digital markets to strengthen their region.

## Discussion

The panel discussion started with a short input by Carsten Adamsen, Chairman UBC Youthful Cities Commission. Carsten delivered a statement of one of the young members of the commission who put emphasis on the fact that the often called digital natives do not discuss “digitalization” as a challenge – for them it is of much more importance to be actively involved in the cities’ development.

The panelists and the audience discussed the important role of young people when it comes to urban digitalization and how to attract them, i.e. via social media, direct contact. Also the question how to efficiently implement digitalization processes was discussed. Via top-down strategies or actively engaging citizens in the concept. As an example for the bottom-up approach, the City of Malmö directly involved students in the digital strategy process.

## EU Digital Cities Challenge

Pärtel-Peeter Pere, CEO Future Place Leadership presented first results of the European Commission’s Digital Cities Challenge initiative and reflected on digitalization as a location factor and “tool for attractiveness”. Regarding to this assumption he introduced another project for the Nordic States: “Digitalisation for attractive cities and regions”.

## UBC & BDF

**Union of the Baltic Cities:** UBC Smart and Prospering Cities Commission offers a reliable network of entrepreneurs, scientists and administration experts from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. We run seminars and projects on city attractiveness, innovation and digitization. Chaired by City of Kiel.

**Baltic Development Forum:** A think-tank and high-level network for business, politics and academia in the Baltic Sea Region. We provide platforms for collaboration, publish the latest thinking, and facilitate public - private dialogue, to advance the potential for innovation, sustainable growth and competitiveness.

## Contact

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