

MINUTES FROM THE TENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

Liepāja, Latvia, 8-9 October 1994

INTRODUCTION

The tenth meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 8-9 October 1994 in Liepāja, Latvia.

The Meeting was attended by the members of the Executive Board of the Union, representatives of Union's Working Commissions as well as invited persons.

The meeting was opened by Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union; the welcome words were given by Mr Teodors Enins, Chairman of the City Council of Liepāja.

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Meeting adopted the agenda.

Election of two persons who, together with the president, will check the minutes.

Mrs Hjördis Höglund from Sundsvall and Mr Olaf P. Christensen from Aarhus were elected to check the minutes.

Work of the Commissions, projects related to the work of the Commissions.

Report from the Commission on Environment.

Mr Carl Nielsen, Chairman of the Commission submitted report on ongoing and planned Commission's projects.

"Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme".

As regards Cooperative Programme on Institutional Strengthening - UBC contribution to HELCOM Baltic Programme - Mr Nielsen informed that application for co-financing the project has been sent to Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and Nordic Council of Ministers. Both institutions stressed that financial support for the Union is very likely. The decisions will be made in the end of the year. Similar applications will be forwarded to Danish and Finnish governments.

Mr Nielsen also reminded that the Union forwarded its application to LIFE-programme within EU to obtain financial support for Baltic Municipal Environmental Audits. 5 eastern cities (Elbląg, Kaliningrad, Klaipėda, Liepāja, Tallinn) together with 7 western partner cities have declared their interest to participate. The EU-decision on financial support is expected in November 1994.

The following projects have been proposed by the Commission's Meeting in Turku on 8 April 1994, to be implemented in the future:

a. Transfer of equipment for environmental monitoring/control etc.

The Commission will initiate:

- a survey of existing experiences concerning the transfer of equipment among cities to ensure transparency of the possibilities and inspire further actions.

- a sort of "market place" for equipment where member-cities can announce or apply for equipment.

b. Transfer of know-how.

A need for "Best practice guide" concerning examples of transfer of know-how was expressed at the Commission's meeting in Turku. Examples shall be collected from member-cities.

c. Municipal Pollution Load Compilation and Pollution Control DataBase.

The project was proposed by the cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot. The proposal was endorsed by the Commission; mentioned cities were authorized to go on with the project in collaboration with Helcom Pollution Load Compilation.

Mr Mikko Jokinen Vice-chairman of the Commission informed that the Union was requested to participate in the Steering Committee of the Conference ECO-BALTIC: Partnerships for Sustainable Development in the Baltic Sea Region, Lübeck, 8-10 March 1995, to be organized by International Network for Environmental Management (INEM). Mr Jokinen will represent the Union at the Conference.

Report from the Commission on Transportation.

The Meeting took note of the report submitted by Prof. Maciej T. Krzyżanowski, Chairman of the Commission. Mr Krzyżanowski informed the Board about realization status of Commission's Action Plan from 30.08.1993 particularly concerning development of transport infrastructure and links between Poland and Kaliningrad region. Some improvements have been done, but still existing road systems as well as border crossing procedures must be upgraded.

Prof. Krzyżanowski reported on his participation at the II Baltic Sea Conference of Ministers of Transport, Kaliningrad 24-25 February 1994 and the conference on Transportation Sector and Baltic Cooperation in Malmö, 10-11 August 1994 where contemporary and planned transregional transport projects were discussed.

Mr Krzyżanowski also informed that following the Commission's initiative the meeting of four Mayors of: Baltijsk, Kaliningrad, Elbląg, Gdańsk was organized in Baltijsk on 29th of August 1994, which was a "mile step" towards opening the Pilava narrow and Vistula Bay for international shipping and tourism.

Report from the Commission on Social Affairs.

Dr Ulrich Bauermeister from Rostock informed about establishing permanent Commission office in Rostock employing three (earlier unemployed) people. The main goals of the office are:

- the search of EU- development programmes for common projects with eastern municipalities in the Baltic region,

- the elaboration of a study on the labour market situation in the UBC member cities,

- organization of the 2nd UBC workshop on employment development, transnational cooperation and coordination of labour market initiatives promoting new jobs.

Dr Bauermeister submitted a proposal from Schiffbau enterprise (Rostock) to offer the modern Centre for Training and Conferences in Rostock for the Commission meetings, workshops etc.

Another proposal from the Commission is to organize a seminar/training for city decision makers from new democratic Baltic countries being under transition period.

Finally, Mr Bauermeister reminded that the Commission spread a questionnaire to all UBC members, in order to detect the main social problems and demands in the cities.

Decision:

The Board urged all member cities to return the questionnaire to Rostock, at the same time providing the Commission with the name of contact person responsible for social issues in each city. As regards the seminar for city decision makers the Board obliged the Commission to investigate the possibilities for project financing.

Report from the Commission on Telecommunication.

Mr Viktors Buls from Riga reminded that the most urgent task for the Commission is to implement E-MAIL network linking UBC member cities, providing possibility of immediate communication between the cities and the Secretariat, with further prospect of entering the network by other Baltic and European cities, organizations, small and medium firms etc. The Commission decided that the network will be based on Internet system.

After installing the system in the cities the Commission plans to organize a seminar demonstrating how to operate the system.

The next step after initiating E-MAIL network will be creation of UBC Communication Network Centres to promote exchange of information on various fields between the cities.

Decision:

The Board authorized the Commission to coordinate and accelerate the process of linking the member cities and the Secretariat to the Internet system.

Report from the Commission on Culture.

Mr Sławomir Szafrąński from Szczecin, Chairman of the Commission submitted report on latest Commission activities.

Mr Szafrąński reminded that Commission spread a questionnaire to all member cities to collect information about annual culture festivals and events taking place in Baltic cities as well as about culture institutions established in the cities. Collected information will be then compiled and published in 1995 in form of 2 catalogues:

I. Calendar of Culture Festivals going on in UBC Member Cities.

II. Catalogue of Culture Institutions, Organizations etc. of the Baltic Cities.

On behalf of the Mayor of the City of Szczecin Mr Szafrąński invited representatives from all member cities to take part in the III International Art & Culture Festival of the Union, Szczecin, August-September 1995. The detailed programme of the festival will be presented during the working meeting of the Commission, Szczecin, January 1995.

Mr Szafranski also informed about establishing the links of cooperation with The Baltic Network (music exchange in the Baltic Region) and joint preparation of exchange projects.

Decision:

The Board urged all member cities to return, as soon as possible, the questionnaires on culture events and institutions to the Commission and encouraged all member cities to take part in the III International UBC Culture Festival in Szczecin.

4. Women's activity within the Union.

Report from the Nordic Forum, Turku, August 1-6, 1994.

The Board took note of the report submitted by Mrs Hjördis Höglund from Sundsvall. The Nordic Forum named "Women's life and work - joy and freedom" was the largest project ever organized by the Nordic Council of Ministers. More than 15.000 women came to Turku and discussed their place and role in society, today and in the future. UBC was represented by delegates from the cities of Sundsvall, Kalmar and Karlskrona. They gave an introduction and informed about UBC work. The main message was that it is important that both men and women will participate in the Union work.

II International UBC Women's Conference, Sundsvall, June 1995.

III International UBC Women's Conference, Karlskrona, 9-12 May 1996.

Mrs Höglund reminded that first UBC Women's Conference entitled "The Women and the Labour Market" was held in Kaliningrad, 13-15 May 1993. 35 women from 7 UBC countries exchanged opinions and experiences on the most urgent problems as unemployment, wage discrimination etc. Mrs Höglund informed that next UBC women's conference will be held in Sundsvall (June, 1995) and Karlskrona (9-12 May 1994) in association with "Women Can" Exhibition. The organizers will provide all member cities with detailed programme of the conferences.

Mr Anders Engström added that the city of Kalmar (Nordic Capital in 1997) would like to host the next UBC Women's Conference in 1997.

Decision:

The Board supported the proposals to organize the next International UBC Women's Conferences and authorized mentioned above cities to go on with organizational arrangements.

Next General Conference of the Union.

Mr Anders Engström recalled the II UBC General Conference, Kaliningrad 24-25 September 1993, where following the proposal from the city of Aarhus, it was decided that next General Conference will be held in Aarhus. Mr Olaf P. Christensen, Deputy Mayor of Aarhus proposed the date for the Conference - September 1995 and once again invited all 55 member cities to his home city.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal from Aarhus to held the Conference in September 1995. The exact date will be decided later on.

New UBC Member Cities

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Executive Secretary of the Union informed the Executive Board about new applications for Union Membership as follows:

- Fredericia (Denmark)
- Kotka (Finland)
- Rēzekne (Latvia)
- Rønne (Denmark)

Decision:

The Board decided to accept above mentioned cities as the Members of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished them successful cooperation with remaining UBC members. The number of Union member cities reached the figure of 55.

Information from the Secretary.

The latest issue of the Union Newsletter.

Mr Żaboklicki presented the latest issue of the Union Newsletter consisting of three main thematic sections:

I. Work of the Union - provides information from Executive Board and Commissions Meetings, UBC seminars, workshops and projects.

II. Information from member cities - includes information about latest initiatives and project launched by the cities.

III. Views - review of other significant activities and facts concerning Baltic Sea Region.

Financial report from the year 1993.

Mr Żaboklicki presented the financial report of the Union for the year 1993.

The summary of the report:

Contribution from Member Cities: 998.822.400,- PLZ

Contribution from the city of Gdańsk: 540.000.000,- PLZ

(office rent, staff remuneration)

Expenditure: 864.282.650,- PLZ

(meetings, telecommunication, publications etc.)

Decision:

The Board accepted the report.

Union incomes from membership fees in 1994.

Mr Żaboklicki submitted report about UBC incomes from membership fees transferred by the cities in 1994 (status on 30.09.94).

Total income: 1.422.133.200,- PLZ (62.492,5 USD)

Mr Žaboklicki informed that 6 member cities has not paid so far their membership fees for 1994 (status on 30.09.94), these are:

Bremen, Elbląg, Kołobrzeg, Kuressaare, Pärnu, St.Petersburg.

Other matters.

Reports from the Conferences attended by the President.

- Council of the Baltic Sea States, 3rd Ministerial Session - Tallinn, 24-25 May 1994
- III Parliamentary Conference on the Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area - Warsaw, 5-6 May 1994
- Hansa Business Days - Kiel, Germany 15-16 March 1994

President Anders Engström reported on his participation in above conferences and events during which he was able to present the Union project and activities and establish new links of cooperation. Mr Engström also informed, that together with Mr Žaboklicki, he will represent the Union at the 2nd Conference on Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, Lübeck-Travemünde, 17-19 October 1994.

Report from 1st Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) - Strasbourg, France 31 May - 3 June 1994

Mr Viktors Buls from Riga informed the Board that the 1st Session of the Congress (new Congress replaced the old Standing Conference) was attended by Mr Andris Teikmanis, Vice-President of the Union who submitted a paper introducing UBC work and produced by the Secretariat. Mr Buls added, that at the Session the Union was granted with the observer status to the new CLRAE, which allows UBC representatives to attend and speak at Congress plenary sessions.

Report from the Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns, Aalborg, 24-27 May 1994

The Board took note of the report submitted by Mr Mikko Jokinen, who represented the Union at the Conference and chaired one of the workshops concerning the Coastal Towns. During 3-day conference, aspects of local development towards sustainability were discussed at the workshops by over 600 participants from 30 European and 4 non-European countries. A Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability was established by more then 300 representatives of European local authorities, national governments, institutions and experts.

1000 Anniversary of the City of Gdańsk "997-1997".

Mr Andrzej Jankowski, Secretary of the city of Gdańsk informed the Board that in 1997 Gdańsk will celebrate its 1000 anniversary. The city of Gdańsk will organize a number of various events such as culture festivals, yacht races, sport competitions, fairs and exhibitions, scientific seminars etc. going on through the whole year in order to commemorate the city Millennium.

Mr Dariusz Knowski added that city of Gdańsk established an organizational committee of the Millennium which spread a letter to all member cities inviting them to take part in mentioned events and asking for the new ideas concerning the celebration.

Mr Jankowski and Mr Henryk Woźniak, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk put forward the proposal to organize in Gdańsk, the General Conference of the Union in 1997, in connection with the Millennium.

Mr Engström informed that also in 1997 the city of Kalmar will celebrate 600 anniversary of Kalmar Union. Representatives of Gdańsk and Kalmar agreed to coordinate actions and events to be organized in both cities.

Report from the course on Social Welfare, Kalmar 15-21 May 1994

The Board took note of the report submitted by Mr Bengt Enge from Kalmar. The seminar was directed to the representatives of UBC member cities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia and who had an opportunity to learn about the structure of Swedish social welfare, unemployment benefit system, social insurance system etc. Mr Enge informed that Kalmar authorities, together with the Union, are willing to organize further seminars on social field.

Seminars on public transport - report on present status.

Mr Anders Engström reminded that this Union project is directed to 5 major cities of Lithuania and its aim is to support public transportation reform processes in these cities. Following UBC application the project costs (350.000 SEK) will be covered by the Swedish Ministry of Transportation. The seminars for politicians and managers will be organized in the beginning of 1995. Furthermore, Mr Engström informed, that Swedish government will probably assign 15 mln SEK to purchase the new buses for mentioned cities. Analogical projects are planned to be carried out also in Estonian and Latvian cities.

Baltic Vision and Strategies 2010 Report - UBC contribution.

Mr Engström reminded that the Union has been requested by the coordinators of VASAB 2010 to make its commentary on Final Report of "Vision and Strategies around the Baltic 2010". The proposal of UBC commentary was prepared by Mr Lars Malmberg from Kalmar, after consultations with several experts from member cities.

Decision:

The Board approved the commentary to the Final Report on "Vision and Strategies around the Baltic 2010", prepared by Union experts.

Proposals from the city of Kaliningrad.

- Relay race Kaliningrad-Gdańsk-Berlin "50 years of peace".
- Festival of the Navies of the Baltic Countries, Kaliningrad 96.

Mr Vitaliy Shipov, Mayor of Kaliningrad put forward a proposal to organize in 1995, under auspices of the Union, the relay race Kaliningrad - Gdańsk - Berlin in order to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of II World War.

Another project proposed by Mr Shipov is to organize in 1996 in Kaliningrad the festival of the Navies of the Baltic Countries.

Decision:

The Board found Kaliningrad proposals as interesting and authorized the city of Kaliningrad to carry on with projects organization in cooperation with the Secretariat.

In addition, the Board encouraged the cities of Gdańsk and Rostock to cooperate with Kaliningrad in relay-race project realization.

Baltic Cities Service Center Network.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, on behalf of the city of Turku proposed to establish in each member city a Baltic Cities Service Center (BCSC). The goal is to create a system that enables project workers from other cities to work without difficulties in each member city. The BCSC would thus function as a working base and also as local contact and information office, where all materials about the city in question, the other member cities and the city network would be concentrated.

Decision:

The Board agreed that creation of such Centers in each of 55 UBC member cities should be far-reaching goal for the Union. At present stage of Union progress the cities should use more efficiently their own existing human-resources and structures to deal with Union projects. The Board once again urged all member cities to appoint reliable contact persons responsible for work within the Union and to inform the Union Secretariat about these nominations.

Baltic-Sea Business Coordinator.

Mr Carl Nielsen informed about new project started by the city of Aarhus called Baltic-Sea Business Coordinator, involving cooperation with selected cities from the Baltic Sea area. The aim of the project is to assess the export possibilities for the companies operating in Baltic cities. The project coordinators requested the Union to avail its network of contacts to promote the project among member cities. The list of UBC contact persons has been already forwarded to project coordinator.

The transformation of ex-military Airports.

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, chairman of Šiauliai City Council informed the Board about the main problem in his city - conversion of ex-military airport. This problem is common for many other cities from former communist countries. There are two major problems: ecological pollution and airport restructuring for civil purposes.

Decision:

1. The Board authorized the Commission on Environment to raise the question of airport soil contamination on HELCOM forum.
2. The Board authorized, Mr Paul Hviid Kristensen from Copenhagen, EU adviser, to investigate the possibilities of EU financial participation in ex-military airports transformation for civil purposes in the eastern Baltic cities.

Problem of nuclear waste disposal.

Mr Torsten Carlsson, Mayor of the city of Oskarshamn addressed the participants with the lecture introducing Swedish system of nuclear waste disposal. Mr Carlsson underlined that problem of nuclear waste disposal concerns most of the Baltic countries and the city of Oskarshamn is ready to share its knowledge and experiences in this question with the other Baltic cities.

International UBC Economic Exhibition - report on present status.

Mr Jan J. Stoppa, representative of WTC Gdynia - Expo informed the Board about the status of preparations to the Exhibition. He informed that Exhibition will be divided into two parts:

I. InterBALTIC'95 - an opportunity to exchange experiences and achievements in the field of administration, technology, culture, tourism, transport etc.

II. InvestBALTIC'95 - a platform enabling the filling out the investments gaps existing in Baltic countries.

Following the suggestion from one of Exhibition co-organizers, the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA), Mr Stoppa proposed to the Board to change the name of the event to International Exhibition of the Baltic Sea Region.

As regards the exact date of holding the event Mr Stoppa proposed the 23-25th of March 1995.

Decision:

The Board approved proposals from Gdynia regarding final name and date of the Exhibition.

Baltic Students Cooperation - proposal by AIESEC.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki informed the Board that International Association of Students in Economics and Trade (AIESEC), Local Committee from Gdańsk University requested the Union support for joint project to develop contacts between Baltic students. AIESEC is the largest worldwide student organization operating at 8000 universities in 81 countries. The objectives of UBC-AIESEC cooperation are as follows:

- to enable exchange of knowledge and experiences between students,
- to build up exchange training programmes,
- to carry out common projects,
- to support integration process between Baltic countries.