

**MINUTES OF THE 51<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**BRUSSELS, 7-8 FEBRUARY 2008**

The 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 in Brussels in the premises of the Committee of the Regions. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February the Board members had the possibility to participate as observers in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions. UBC Board was addressed by Mr Uno Aldegren, Chairman of Committee of the Regions Commission for External Relations and Decentralised Cooperation (Relex). Mr Aldegren informed the Board about creation of “Interregional Group Baltic” within the Committee of the Regions which task is to lobby for Baltic Sea region interests. He also added that the European Commission is considering a special “Baltic Sea Programme / Strategy” which is to be announced at the end of 2008.

**1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

The meeting was opened by Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union, Mayor of Kolding. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the Committee of the Regions for hosting the UBC Executive Board meeting and to the Stockholm Region representation (UBC Brussels Antenna) for help in the meeting organisation. The meeting adopted the agenda attached to this report.

**2. Election of two persons who, together with the President, will check the minutes.**

Ms Urve Tiidus, Vice-President of UBC, Mayor of Kuressaare and Ms Charlotta Svanberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

**3. Evaluation of the IX General Conference in Pärnu.**

President Per Bødker Andersen evaluated the latest General Conference held in Pärnu, Estonia, on 27-28 September 2007. In the opinion of the Board the conference was successful. The GC was attended by 274 participants including representatives of 77 Member Cities as well as invited guests from international institutions. The first day of the conference was devoted to three main topics: Cities’ response to the climate change, Culture as a driving force for municipal development, Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of the society. The second day was devoted to internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finances etc. Among the keynote speakers there were: Ambassador Valdis Krastins, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials, Council of the Baltic Sea States; Mr Alan Lloyd, Vice-President of the Bureau of the Congress of Local & Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe; Mr Uno Aldegren, President of RELEX commission, Committee of the Regions; Mr

Xosé António Sánchez Bugallo, Mayor of Santiago de Compostela, President of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities. Mr Andersen informed the Board that he received a kind letter from President Bugallo who warmly thanked for the invitation and described the conference as highly interesting.

#### **4. Application for membership from Halmstad (Sweden).**

Mr Carl Fredrik Graf, Mayor of Halmstad, submitted application of the city of Halmstad to join the Union of the Baltic Cities. The application is attached. Mr Graf provided general information about Halmstad and presented the movie introducing the city.

The city of Halmstad lies in the south west of Sweden, on the coast facing Denmark. With the 90,000 inhabitants Halmstad makes the 18th largest city in Sweden and is the residential city in the County of Halland. Halmstad hosts two universities, the Halmstad University and the military university. The tourism sector is growing fast with 13 golf courses in the municipality and with the hosting of the 2007 Solheim Cup. With its strategically location, Halmstad is a logistical centre connected with airport, railway, motorway and the full service port.

The twin towns of Halmstad are Gentofte in Denmark, Hangö in Finland and Stord in Norway. In 2007 the municipal council adopted new guidelines for international affairs. Areas of special international interests are for example health care technology, tourism, experience economy.

Within the UBC Halmstad believes there will be opportunities for benchmarking with cities acting as good examples in international cooperation. The possibilities coming from the structural funds and the Interreg IVB Baltic Sea Programme will in this respect be valuable. UBC will give Halmstad opportunities to develop, together with other UBC cities, the Halmstad Maritime Festival and the Baltic Sail.

#### Decision:

The Board decided to accept Halmstad as member of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished Halmstad a successful cooperation with remaining 104 UBC member cities.

#### **5. UBC comments to the EC Blue Paper ‘An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union’.**

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director Communication and Ext. Affairs, Turku, reminded that in the first half of 2007, UBC took position on the EU maritime policy and passed comments on Green Paper on European Maritime Policy to the European Commission, which accordingly had thanked UBC for its valuable contribution. UBC had also participated in a number of

international conferences of the European maritime policy. Several member cities had been active on this issue, including Turku, which had organised in July 2006 the first BSR –related conference on the Green paper, with the participation of Commissioner Joe Borg.

The European Commission published, on basis of wide consultation, on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2007, a paper entitled “An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union”, also known as the “Blue Book” (attached), and a working document discussing the Blue Book in greater detail, in the form of an Action Plan for the period of 2007-2009. The European Heads of State and Government, in their conclusions of the European Council on 14 December 2007, welcomed the Commissions proposals, thus giving the birth of a new integrated European maritime policy.

The policy is in many ways very significant for the UBC and its member cities, stressed Mr Lohikoski. The integrated approach to the issues linked to the Baltic Sea is a must to ensure, that the values of sustainable development and need for economic prosperity can be balanced. Member cities also have a keen interest to follow the development of an integrated approach to the issues of governance; local and regional, national and European. UBC and its cities should be active in the forthcoming process to formulate national integrated maritime policies, and to ensure that main non-EU partners – in our region especially the Russian Federation and Norway – are part of the process.

Another important dimension is to highlight the raising of public awareness of the maritime sector and of the need for integrated maritime policy. Among new initiatives is the proposal to observe annually a European Maritime Day on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Mr Lohikoski proposed, taking into view the great strategic importance of the European Maritime Policy of the BSR, that an in-house Task Force should be established to follow development in this field and formulate proposals for the UBC and member cities in this respect. This task Force would be open to member cities.

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President of UBC, informed that Turku was ready to act as the chair of such a Task Force. The Board decided to establish the Task Force and confirmed Turku as its chair.

## **6. UBC comments to the EC Green Paper ‘Adaptation to climate change in Europe - options for EU action’.**

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki recalled that being aware of the negative consequences of climate change, UBC adopted during its IX General Conference in Pärnu a Resolution on Climate Change. The resolution stressed that in our opinion it is possible to combine increased welfare for our citizens and economic progress for our local companies with better energy

efficiency and reduced emissions. UBC encouraged its member cities to take all necessary steps to reduce their harmful contribution to the climate change and to make plans for adaptation to effects that are already foreseen in the cities. UBC will promote strategies, development projects, partnerships and educational activities to minimize the negative effects of the climate change (floods, storms, infrastructure and water supply problems) and to ensure as friendly and safe environment as it is possible.

Together with CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, UBC responded to the EC Green Paper “Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action”, emphasizing the key role of local authorities when dealing with the effects of the climate change. UBC recommended in its position that local authorities and regions should be supported by EU in how they can inform and educate the citizens about their own responsibility to reduce their impact on climate. UBC contribution was drafted by the Commission on Energy and the Commission on Environment. The full text of UBC-BSC response is attached to the minutes.

Mr Zaboklicki added that the next Baltic Cities Bulletin will be devoted to the climate change problem and encouraged the member cities to contribute to the publication. The bulletin will present stories on cities’ contribution to the fight with climate change through reducing greenhouse gases emissions. The cities will also write about impacts of climate change on city life – storms, floods, infrastructure damage, water supply problems etc.

## **7. UBC contribution to the EC Green Paper on Urban Transport (Mobility) promoting the Sustainable Urban Transport Planning.**

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed the Board that through the BUSTRIP project the UBC contributed to the European Commission Green Paper on Urban Transport recommending Sustainable Urban Transport Planning (SUTP) in cities across Europe which aims at improving the state of the urban environment, and reducing urban sprawl, traffic and pollution. The EC communication on the Thematic Strategy for the Urban Environment confirmed the preparation of SUTPs as an important cornerstone in the de-coupling of economic growth and transport growth in cities.

The UBC BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation & Planning) project is one of the first European projects to test, further develop and implement the concept in concrete. The project was coordinated by the Commission on Environment and Commission on Transportation was one of the partners.

Currently, the Action Plan on Urban Transport, which is a follow-up to the Green Paper, is in the consultation phase that is open until 15 March 2008. The BUSTRIP project has been invited together with the PILOT project (run by the POLIS) to a consultation meeting with DG Energy

and Transport Unit for Clean Urban Transport on the Action Plan. The meeting was held on 14 December 2007 in Brussels.

The purpose of the meeting was to give concrete examples that could be fed into the Commission's work with an Action Plan. The Commission was very interested to listen to challenges and problems encountered by the cities. Information from the meeting is attached to the minutes. UBC will contribute to the consultations on the Action Plan with the written statement.

## **8. Action Plan 2008-2009.**

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki presented the draft of the UBC action plan for 2008-2009. The Action Plan includes guidelines and priorities for the UBC organs i.e. Executive Board, Presidium, Secretariat, Commissions.

Mr Zaboklicki introduced the following political priorities for the UBC in the forthcoming period:

- Monitoring and influencing European Union policies which have an impact on local authorities; contributing to the process of creating a new Baltic Sea Strategy of the EU
- Promoting sustainable development, renewable energy, energy saving. Climate change. Eco-friendly urban transport.
- Contributing to the process of shaping the European Maritime Policy
- Culture as driving force for municipal development
- Securing gender equality perspective in cities policies
- Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society
- Cooperation with other Baltic and European organisations

The Board members expressed some comments to be included in the action plan.

Mr Jan Björinge, City Manager, Umeå, stressed it should be added the UBC will contribute to the process of creating a new Baltic Sea Strategy of the European Union.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski said that UBC shall support all actions aimed at cleaning the waters of the Baltic Sea and this should be reflected in the paper.

The Board authorised the secretariat to include mentioned remarks in the document. The Board adopted the action plan 2008-2009. The document is attached to the minutes.

Moreover Mr Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja, informed he was appointed as chairman of intergovernmental program VASAB 2010 concerning spatial planning in the BSR. Mr Ansins stressed UBC and VASAB could make joint statements on BSR issues.

## **9. Questionnaire on UBC further development.**

Mr Lohikoski, in his capacity as the chair of the Working group on UBC Further Development, gave an overview about the results of a member city survey conducted in 2007. Altogether, 39 cities had responded to the survey, and its results can be seen as useful reflection about the views of member cities. As the answers have been also processed so as to recognise differences between smaller and bigger cities (under and over 100.000 citizens), it also indicates various needs of cities. Mr Lohikoski thanked the Secretariat of the UBC Commission of Environment, and especially Mr Björn Grönholm and Ms Niina Salonen for their great help in formulating and analysing the survey.

In general, the Baltic Sea issues seem to be of great importance for the member cities (an average of 4.13 points in the scale of 1-5) and the bigger the city, the higher the score. Most important subjects seem to be the energy policy, economic development, social integration and cultural understanding. Likewise, the UBC seems to be a very relevant organisation in this respect (average 3.61, bigger cities 4.00).

Among many issues included in the survey, such questions as increased exchange of good practices and expertise, EU liaison and lobbying as well as policy implementation seem to be high up on the agenda. Cities also see the need to involve more political leadership in the UBC work as well as to develop practical expert/official involvement and exchange. Also, cities want UBC to profile itself as a lobby organisation of behalf of the BSR.

According to Mr Lohikoski, the results which have to be further analysed, are creating a good basis for the further development of UBC priorities and structures. It was decided to continue the mandate of the Working Group and discussion on these issues will be continued in forthcoming meetings of the Board.

## **10. Membership fees in 2007.**

Mr Zaboklicki informed the Board that the membership fees in 2007 were paid by the vast majority of UBC members (98%). Only two cities Baltijsk and Moletai have not paid the fee. Moletai (25.000 inhabitants) has not paid the fee for the last two years. The city informed that it is too early for them to be engaged in international network. Baltijsk has not paid the fee for three years. The Board commissioned Baltijsk to pay due fees as soon as possible. The table with fees paid in 2007 is attached to the minutes.

## **11. Budget for 2008.**

Secretary General Zaboklicki provided the Board members with the proposal of the budget for 2008, the document is attached to the minutes. The income consists mainly of the membership

fees and the money transferred from 2007. The expenditure major positions are: commissions, meetings, services/maintenance, publications, communication, antenna in Brussels.

Decision:

The Board adopted the budget for 2008.

Mr Lohikoski proposed, that the issue of corporate sponsorship/partnership should be taken up for discussion in order to clarify the procedures and to gain more such partners. The current UBC sponsor is energy company Fortum which sponsors UBC with 10.000 eur annually.

The issue of sponsorship/partnership shall be discussed in forthcoming meetings of the Board.

**12. UBC Secretariat, Secretary General, in the next period.**

President Andersen reminded that at the IX General Conference in Pärnu, 27-28 September 2007, following the proposal of the Mayor of Gdańsk, it was decided to maintain the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk for another four-year period. The Board decided to re-elect Mr Pawel Zaboklicki as Secretary General for another four-year period.

**13. Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.**

President Andersen informed that lately UBC was represented at the following international conferences:

- Baltic Development Forum, Tallinn, 4-6 November 2007 (Mikko Lohikoski, Director, City of Turku)
- BSSSC Board Meeting, Gdansk, 16 November 2007 (Pawel Zaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)
- EUROCITIES Annual General Meeting, Gdańsk, 21-24 November 2007 (Pawel Zaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)
- 72nd Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, 28-29 November 2007 (Per Boedker Andersen, UBC President)
- Annual Consultation with the CBSS Special Participants and Strategic Partners, Copenhagen, 5 December 2007. (Soeren Revsbaek, Councillor, City of Naestved)

The written information from above conferences is attached to the minutes.

**14. UBC Antenna in Brussels – proposal of new agreement.**

This item of the agenda was postponed to the next Board meeting.

## **15. Any other business.**

### **15.1 Invitation to the conference "Networking in the Baltic Sea region – Focus on Well-being", Turku, 20-22.08.2008.**

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President of UBC, Vice-Mayor of Turku, invited Mayors of the UBC member cities to the conference "Networking in the Baltic Sea region – Focus on well-being" to be held on 20 August 2008 in Turku. The conference will highlight the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The aim of the conference is to discuss the role and importance of promoting health and well-being as key elements of attractiveness and prosperity of the cities. Invitation from the Mayor of Turku is attached to the minutes.

### **15.2 The Clean Baltic Sea project.**

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki informed the Board he was visited by representatives of John Nurminen Foundation of Finland and Bjorn Carlson Baltic Sea 2020 Foundation of Sweden. These two private foundations work for a better condition of the Baltic Sea, more specifically to reduce eutrophication, stop overfishing and reduce toxics in the Baltic. They currently work on a joint pilot project where they investigate the opportunities to support Baltic Sea cities and water companies in intensified phosphorus removal from municipal waste water in order to improve the condition of the Baltic Sea. Large financial support has been recently given to St.Petersburg. Phosphorous has been recognized by various studies and HELCOM as the main cause of massive blue-green algae blooms in the Baltic Sea. Information about the project is attached to the minutes.

### **15.3 Proposal from UBC EU-coordinators network.**

Ms Madelen Charyszak, Stockholm Region, UBC Antenna in Brussels, presented a proposal from UBC EU-coordinators Network (led by EiZ Rostock) on corporate participation of UBC member cities in the Open Days in Brussels in 2009. The aim of the planned participation should be a better promotion of UBC members and the UBC itself in Brussels. During the Open Days the best practice projects of the commissions and member cities could be presented. The proposal is attached to the minutes.

The Board found the proposal as very interesting. The Board stressed that the EU-coordinators Network must do all preparations in close cooperation with UBC Antenna in Brussels.

### **15.4 Baltic Model United Nations.**

Ms Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock, introduced the project Baltic Model United Nations.

Model United Nations are professional simulations of the United Nations for students and other young people. Participants act in place of diplomats from UN member nations and represent the



country's policy in UN bodies like the Security Council or the General Assembly. The delegates must draft a resolution on a committee's topic. The resolution is discussed and amended by the young diplomats. During three days conference the students are offered to witness international politics intensively and actually get involved in it.

The Board described the initiative as interesting and encouraged member cities to participate in the project.

#### **16. Next meeting of the Executive Board.**

Ms Urve Tiidus, Vice-President of the Union, Mayor of Kuressaare, warmly invited the Board to Kuressaare in the beginning of June 2008.

#### **17. Closing of the Meeting.**

President Per Bødker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and closed the 51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen  
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki  
Secretary

Ms Urve Tiidus  
Adjuster

Ms Charlotta Svanberg  
Adjuster