

**MINUTES OF THE 76<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
Kaunas, Lithuania, 7 June 2016**

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

The Executive Board meeting was opened by Per Boødker Andersen, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the hosts, for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold its 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting in the City of Kaunas. The meeting adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes.

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

Mantas Jurgutis, Councillor, City of Kaunas, and Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor, City of Växjö, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

**3. Application for membership from the City of Darłowo, Poland. Presentation of Darłowo.**

The city of Darłowo applied for the membership in UBC, application is attached to the minutes. Darłowo was represented at the Board meeting in Kaunas by the Mayor Arkadiusz Klimowicz and the City Secretary Krzysztof Walków.

Mr Walków made a presentation of Darłowo, attached to the minutes. Darłowo is a coastal town located in the northwest part of Poland. The town has around 14.000 inhabitants. During its 700 years history, the town was a residence of the West Pomeranian princes, a birth place of Eric of Pomerania, the king of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, a witness of wars, fires and hurricanes.

Darłowo is well-known for its port. Its renovation and expansion in recent years has made it the most important regional commercial and tourist port in the area. It is one of the biggest fishing centres in Poland. Constant development of the port and road infrastructure allowed to open an economic zone which is now ready to welcome investors.

The town is also a popular tourist destination. Its beautiful sandy beaches and numerous cultural events attract half a million tourists every year.

Decision:

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

**4. UBC Work Plan to Support Youth Employment and Well-Being, Matti Mäkelä, Chair, UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being.**

Matti Mäkelä reminded that in 2013 UBC established a Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being to collect best-practices and highlight the challenges and solutions in the field. Since then there were 6 meetings and 27 experts from 15 UBC member cities in 6 countries worked on the final report called 'The

Good, The Bad and The Next Practices'. The report serves as a handbook for professionals and others interested in the topic. It presents concrete suggestions, raises questions to be solved in the future and is a valuable tool to combat youth unemployment and marginalization. At the General Conference in Gdynia, October 2015, it was decided to continue the work.

In February 2016 the report was sent out by secretariat to all kind of stakeholders, including respective ministries, EU institutions, international organisations. Publication received very positive responses and proposals of cooperation in this important field. Mr Mäkelä added that the report was also presented at the Baltic Sea Labour Forum in Gdańsk, October 2015, Baltic Sea Region flagship projects meeting in Hamburg, February 2016, and at the kick off meeting of the Youth Guarantee Programs in Spain in 2016. Mr Mäkelä informed about planned future actions, for example: thematic workshops on refugees guidance, public private sector cooperation for employing youngsters, follow-up survey in 2017 on programme implementation, seminar in Brussels. He added that a question on funding of such seminars should be discussed. Draft UBC Work Plan to Support Youth Employment and Well-Being is attached.

Per Bødker Andersen encouraged the Task Force to continue its work. He informed that he promoted the report in the Committee of the Regions. Mr Andersen shall propose CoR that the UBC is ready to present its work on youth employment promotion at the CoR plenary session.

John Lauritzen, Councillor, Naestved, added that there is also a high unemployment rate in the age group 25-35, among the young people who are not educated. Some of them have families, so there is a question how to cope with this problem.

Marie-Louise Rönmark, Chair of City Council, Umeå, underlined that there is a big need to continue the project taking into account that thousands of young refugees come to Europe, for example during last year around 8.000 unaccompanied children came to Sweden, 90% of them were boys from Afghanistan.

Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, stressed that the continuation is important also because it's a good marketing tool for UBC. Member cities made a good work, the report was sent to many institutions and got very positive responses, so UBC can serve as expert. He also added that there is a lot of discussion in the BSR to develop closer youth cooperation, and there is a need to establish a network. One of the issues should be well-being of the youngsters, so UBC should participate.

Mantas Jurgutis, Kaunas, reminded that there is also a question of quality of education linked to youth employment. In Lithuania many people leave and never come back. How Lithuania can compete with the free education system e.g. in Denmark? We should be aware of differences between the old and new members of EU and opportunities they offer. The question is how to encourage people to come back.

Matti Mäkela said that quality of education is a key issue when we talk about unemployment. There are different challenges in different countries, but we still can learn from each other because maybe someone was already in the similar situation in the past and found solutions.

John Lauritzen added that when Denmark spends money on education for foreigners e.g. from Lithuania, then hopes that they will stay in Denmark and work there for some time. There is a question how to make benefits from this situation for both countries.

Per Bødker Andersen underlined that we must cope urgently with the unemployment. UBC countries have lower unemployment rate than the countries in the south of Europe, so UBC should give good examples how to do it.

Decision:

The Board accepted the work plan and authorized the Task Force to continue its work.

**5. 'Youth leisure time as one of the instruments that prevents social and economic exclusion', Lena Hernandez Modin, Gävle, Chair of Youthful Cities Commission.**

The UBC Youthful Cities Commission (YCC) met in Turku on 12-15 April 2016. The main topic of the meeting was the youth leisure time defined by the Commission as one of the instruments that prevents social and economic exclusion. Margarita Navickaite, Kaunas, on behalf of Lena Hernandez Modin, Gävle, Chair of Youthful Cities Commission, made a presentation.

Leisure time has a great impact on the young people. It can enhance and extend skills and general well-being, as an addition to a well-functioning life in family and school. In case of less satisfying family or school situation, good leisure time can be a compensatory and affirmative counterbalance.

The values of leisure time activities are numerous: freedom, motivation and challenges that are not too big, good health. Such activities are valuable for personal development, especially social skills, self-confidence, self-empowerment, better adult relationships.

From the public health perspective, activities of leisure time contribute to the physical and mental health as well as the fight against dependencies like alcohol, smoking, drugs, gambling.

Social perspective shows that leisure time activities can protect against antisocial behaviour and abuse.

The Board took note of the report and encouraged the Commission to continue its important work. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

**6. 'Developing an integrated and attractive urban entrance to the town centre, on the example of the city of Söderhamn', Mara Liepa-Zemesa, Riga, Member of Steering Committee, Planning Cities Commission.**

Mara Liepa-Zemesa, Riga, reminded that the Planning Cities Commission (former Commission on Urban Planning) for over ten years has been holding two seminars per year. During each seminar the urban planning specialists look for solutions to the concrete practical problems that the host city has. They work in separate groups and at the end they present the outcome to the local politicians and planners.

At the conference held on 22-25.05.2016 in Söderhamn, the participants focused on a strategic area which starts with the Portal of Söderhamn at the motorway and the Travel Centre, continues through the town centre and further on to Söderhamn by the sea (the inner bay in Stugsund) and the archipelago.

The authorities of Söderhamn plan to develop these areas, add new qualities and create a more attractive entrance to the town. They want to have a richer environment and develop an approach passage with a spatial continuance. Another aspect was to promote commuting by public transports, and minimize the

impact on the environment. The participants had study tours, worked in two groups, and at the end of seminar they proposed few solutions.

The next meeting will be held in autumn in Klaipėda. Ms Zemesa invited member cities to host the meetings of the Planning Cities Commission in the future.

Bo Hjalmeffjörd, Växjö said that bringing experts together is a very good methodology. He asked if the other commissions work in the similar way, or perhaps they could learn to do it.

Per Schöldberg, Växjö, praised good scheme of the meeting and expertise making. He also suggested that it would be a good example for other commissions to work more methodologically and get more concrete outcome of the seminars.

Ms Zemesa reminded that there had already been a few joint meetings with other UBC commissions in the past.

John Lauritzen had an idea that the Planning Cities Commission could also take into account creating open spaces, as the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission suggests for meeting people, when making plans in the cities.

Per Bødker Andersen answered that the way commissions are working shall be respected, the Board can only ask them to combine the ideas. The Board should not also give too many political points of view to the work of the Commissions, because that would limit their creativity and work.

Mara Liepa-Zemesa added, that during seminars of the Planning Cities Commission the local planners are not involved in the preparation of the solutions and proposals, so the participants can work independently, without any pressure.

The Board took note of the information and encouraged the Commission to continue its vital work. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

## **7. Introduction of the concept of Open Spaces, Jarosław Józefczyk, Vice-Chair, Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission.**

The main topic of the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission meeting, held on 18-20 May 2016 in Trelleborg concerned the concept of Open Social Spaces.

Open Social Space is a place where a community can get together, work and play together, talk to each other and discuss matters important for the community, and act together in order to make a their living better.

Jarosław Józefczyk, Vice-Chair of the Commission, informed about a new approach to third places. They are not home, not work, but social places for dialoguing. Third places are vanishing, e.g. there are no public laundries where people meet. In the new communication technology era people don't meet face to face, generation model is changing. The solution are open spaces, places where people meet and talk. Such places can be physical – squares, parks, streets, indoor, and virtual – Facebook, fan pages, social media.

They have many advantages – there are no access barriers, they offer cheap or free services, no club membership. Information is widely spread, structure is rather flat with a leader, not a boss, atmosphere is informal, fun. In the open spaces one can make friends or new relations, make a bargain, gain new knowledge or abilities. Open spaces favour the feeling of togetherness, stronger identification with a group or place, citizenship, tolerance, acceptance, respect and co-creation. The moderation in those places is needed because of some risks: oversteering, institutionalization, domination of one group over others, devastation.

Mr Józefczyk presented some already existing open spaces in Gdynia, Karlstad and Trelleborg. He summed up that there are lots of open spaces in the cities. The Commission defined them, mapped how many and where they are, visited them and finally positioned them on the innovation spiral. The Commission piloted a methodology of diagnosing this phenomenon. It is possible to build local strategies for strengthening and development, and also to make better integration etc. using the open spaces.

Jarosław Józefczyk informed also that at the meeting the Commission's chairmanship was passed from Gdynia to Trelleborg.

Piotr Grzelak, Vice-Mayor of Gdańsk, asked if the local governments support such open spaces programmes with grants.

Mr Józefczyk answered that local governments pay for some projects, but it is not a systematic support.

John Lauritzen said that it would be good to have an open space for the inhabitants, where also foreigners could come and meet locals.

Mikko Lohikoski wanted to know if there is a possibility of cooperation in this subject with other UBC Commissions, e.g. on physical environment or integrating youth.

Jarosław Józefczyk said that there was already meeting in Gdynia on this issue, one of the solutions is that open spaces can be thematic, e.g. cultural exhibitions.

Per Bødker Andersen said that in the cities there is a competition between numerous associations, and they may be afraid that open spaces will get donations from the municipalities.

Mr Józefczyk stressed that many of the open spaces don't use so many resources as the associations.

Maja Wagner, Councillor, Gdynia, asked if the libraries are also included by the Commission as the open spaces.

Mr Józefczyk answered that the Commission didn't include all the single places, but in the new approach to libraries as media, information centres, they could open the door and people could chat over the books.

The Board encouraged the member cities to be active and contribute to the work of the Commission. Presentation is attached to the minutes.

**8. Baltic Executive Programme “Unboxing the sandbox”, Mikael Olsson and Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański, the Swedish Institute.**

Mikael Olsson informed the Board that the Swedish Institute is the governmental agency established in 1945 with a turnover of approximately 50 million EUR per year. One of the three main orientations is relationship-building activities in the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Partnership countries. The main office is in Stockholm, there are also offices in Visby and Paris.

The Baltic Executive Programme: Unboxing the Sandbox is a new leadership programme designed to help organisations unlock the full potential of transnational cooperation. The programme is initiated and funded by the Swedish Institute as part of its work with EUSBSR Horizontal Action Capacity (see also point 11). Development and recruitment has taken place together with the Norden Association, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and the Union of the Baltic Cities.

The programme targets the local and regional level in the BSR; in particular senior elected officials (politicians) and the head of administrations (administrators), representing the strategic level of “owners”, with the position to redesign existing governance structure that has endorsed the “sandboxing” of transnational cooperation. The “owners” – municipalities and regions – should have a better insight and overview of the projects, as this will give them a bigger influence on the projects and will contribute to the long lasting outcomes.

The programmes are explicitly non-technical in nature, seeking to empower officials and administrators to be more active in the world of projects that is often dominated by project specialists with their own discourse of project terms and acronyms.

The problem addressed in this programme is that there are many projects, but only few long-lived results. During 25 years of Interreg program there were over 25 thousand projects, but not so many long lasting impacts. When projects are working as satellites to their owners (they are in a sandbox, isolated from the main system), they are not part of the daily life of organizations, then the implementation is very difficult to carry out.

A result of this cooperation is that more than 15 UBC members enrolled in the pilot three module programme together with an equal number of representatives from regional bodies in the eight EU-member countries in the BSR. The first module took place in Warsaw (22-24 February), the second in Riga (11-13 April) and the final module took place in Tallinn (13-14 June).

John Lauritzen added that this is a new way of working, perhaps we should be more critical and do less but better.

Bo Hjalmeffjörd said that he is working as a project developer and he has a big challenge to mobilize people. This project gives good opportunity to think a little wider and offers some valuable ideas.

Paweł Żaboklicki added that a big asset of this programme is that it’s not purely technical, but it shows how to develop personal skills, creativity, innovative thinking. Mr Żaboklicki praised the devoted coaches – experts coming also from the business sector.

Moreover Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański introduced the Baltic Leadership programmes which address the challenges within respective policy areas of the Strategy. Baltic Leadership programmes are the training programmes for policy area coordinators. Together they try to identify specific challenges within the policy area. Since 2012 BLP worked with areas: health, sustainability, safe, secure. After summer the programme will focus on policy area education, especially Labour Market Mobility.

Baltic Leadership programmes consist of 2-4 modules, 3-5 days each. Approximately 20-30 persons from BSR countries as well as Russia, Belarus, Norway and Iceland participate in the programme. After holidays there will be an information campaign for 2017. UBC will be invited to be part of the programmes.

The Board thanked representatives of Swedish Institute for the presentation and expressed hope for further cooperation with SI within the EUSBSR HA Capacity and other potential joint endeavours.

## **9. UBC work on refugees issue.**

### **9.1 Proposals from Task Force on Refugees how UBC could follow the results of the conference on refugees in Rostock and promote exchange of know-how between the member cities in question.**

The UBC conference on the refugees situation in the Baltic Sea cities was held in Rostock on 15-16 March 2016. The conference gathered around 70 civil servants and politicians from the region. The conference aimed at sharing ideas and practical solutions on how to integrate the newcomers.

The meeting adopted the resolution entitled “Refugees - a challenge and a chance for the cities of the Baltic Sea Region”. The resolution calls for solidarity between EU countries and stresses that the UBC cities take the immigration not only as a challenge but also as a chance for further development – all inhabitants contribute to the local well-being.

We are aware that the refugees’ integration process is long-lasting one and should get continuous attention. The conference was a first such opportunity to present the cities’ experiences and also a good starting point to further discussions. The UBC’s idea is to collect the best practices and solutions and spread them across the region and Europe.

At the 75<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting in Rostock held on 16 March 2016 in conjunction with the conference on refugees, the Board decided to authorise the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss how UBC could follow the results of the conference on refugees in Rostock and promote exchange of know-how between the member cities in question. Presidium created a Task Force led by the City of Rostock. The TF met in Kaunas on 6 June 2016. The meeting was attended by representatives of the cities of Rostock, Naestved, Kaunas, Turku, Växjö and the Secretary General.

Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock, informed about the outcome of the first meeting of the Task Force held on the eve of the Board meeting. The group was of the opinion that the most important is an exchange of best practices and knowledge. Everybody has some solutions how to integrate refugees, giving them work, housing, schooling, or at least giving them a chance to make their own life, as fully accepted persons. The proposals of the TF are as follows:

- To have some practical meetings, where cities could share knowledge. Cities are so full of work, but everybody needs this fresh input to see how the others solve the problems.

- To have a space on the UBC website to discuss, debate, bring proposals and share ideas.
- Actions of the Task Force should be seen also by the political levels.

Per Bødker Andersen underlined that it's important to follow up this topic, and ask all cities to participate with good and bad examples. He informed that UBC received an invitation from the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to the second meeting of the Reflection Group on the report "From reception to integration: the role of local authorities facing migration" which is to be held on 16 June 2016. UBC will be represented by Karin Wohlgemuth who will report about the Rostock conference and the work that followed afterwards.

Per Schöldberg, said that the whole policy area of immigration is known at the national level. He knew the national regulations in Sweden, but not in the other countries. Mr Schöldberg stressed it would be useful to know the regulations in other countries and to learn how other people think, plan and act. The City of Växjö will be participating in the network.

Jarosław Józefczyk, Gdynia, said that talking about good examples from member cities, it is very important to establish some kind of factors for measuring the well done job in these migration issues. The Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission at the meeting in Trelleborg saw that there were indicators of effectiveness of the action: food, sheltering, shower, safety.

If we establish some kind of palette of indicators, we could make an analysis, which cities or regions are coping with the situation or not. It is not a question of judging, but a question how we can manage the situation with limited resources in a very massive social phenomenon, using effective indicators. The city of Trelleborg copes with the situation well, the refugees didn't make any crime or serious breaking the rules of the local society.

Mikko Lohikoski expressed opinion that despite of political agreements the stream of immigrants coming to Europe will continue. Our cities will face this question of immigration, multicultural challenges, how to manage diversity in our societies for a long time. From the very beginning UBC was sharing experiences between the cities. Concerning immigration, some countries like Baltic States, do not have big experience due to historical and other reasons. Others, like Sweden, are forerunners in this for long time having very excellent results and also coping with problems. So we have to share information, work together. It's the strength of our network.

Per Bødker Andersen added that problem of immigrants has to be solved not only in the parliaments, but also in the cities, where the newcomers will stay. He also suggested that we need to share the experiences on how was the culture in the countries the refugees came from, so that would be easier to transform the daily life of immigrants into the Nordic way of thinking.

The Board encouraged the Task Force and all member cities to continue this important know-how exchange on refugees receiving and integration.

## **9.2 Baltic Cities Bulletin 'Refugees - a challenge and a chance for the cities of the Baltic Sea Region'.**

Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, informed that the latest issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin is devoted to the refugees' integration. The cities share their experience in welcoming the newcomers, present best practices and measures that can be helpful in the integration process, e.g. education, culture, sports or

access to the labour market. Also, the speakers from the Rostock conference contribute with their thoughts and advices. The Bulletin brings also the information on latest UBC meetings and activities, news from the member cities and more. Publication was sent out to all member cities as well as to the Baltic and European organisations and institutions.

#### **10. Information from the Task Force on implementation of the UBC Strategy 2016-2021.**

UBC Strategy 2016-2021 was adopted at the UBC General Conference in Gdynia 29 October 2016. Later on it was slightly adjusted after receiving comments from member cities and commissions.

Mikko Lohikoski, Strategy Coordinator, reminded that at the 74<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting in Rostock held on 16 March 2016 the Board decided to authorize the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss implementation plan of the Strategy. Presidium created the Task Force to be chaired by the Strategy Coordinator. The cities nominated to the Task Force: Kaunas, Kristiansand, Lahti, Växjö.

Mr Lohikoski stressed that the previous UBC Strategy was towards organizational issues, updating the structure, methods of work, improvement of the commissions' effectiveness etc. This work must be continued.

The new Strategy framework defines why UBC is needed and why it should work regionally, how to continue renewal process, etc. Effective, proactive, representative UBC is needed in order to, among others, promote cooperation and exchange of experiences in different ways; defend and promote the interests of the cities, especially small and medium size ones; promote cities as drivers for smart and sustainable growth.

Mikko Lohikoski reminded the work priorities for the 2016-2021: implementation of Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 “Stairway towards Sustainable Baltic Cities”, which is now done mainly by the Sustainable Cities Commission; European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and Blue Growth strategies; towards a new Urban Agenda for Cities; promoting Smart Growth and Digitalization; stronger, more proactive, goal oriented and member-driven UBC. To achieve this goal, the renewal process of UBC must be continued. The work of the Executive Board must be activated to better utilize the potential and expertise of this organ.

Mr Lohikoski stressed that among the tasks for years 2016–2017 there is an effective functioning of the organization's structures, by strengthening the capacity of Union's organs, improving expertise in key policy areas (e.g. youth unemployment, migration); optimising the role of the secretariat. Another task is to improve UBC communication, visibility and outreach, which is now being made by the renewal of the logo, bulletin and website.

As stated in the Strategy, continued implementation of the UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy must be ensured, Communications Network work must be continued, work of the Communications Manager should be extended.

Mikko Lohikoski underlined that the General Conference obliged the Board to implement the strategy priorities in a two year period, and at the next General Conference in 2017 a report should be presented. Task Force would come up with the proposals on these issues at the next Executive Board meeting.

Mr Lohikoski proposed that the Task Force (extended if needed) would also act as the Working Group for preparing the next General Conference and would suggest the main theme and concept for the General Conference by the Executive Board meeting in November.

Karin Wohlgemuth, informed that the Task Force on Refugees discussed the day before that the migration could be the theme of the General Conference or at least of one of the conference workshops.

Bo Hjalmeffjörd said that the City of Växjö proposed that the General Conference would be held in the week 43, which starts from 23 October 2017. The dates of the Committee of the Regions and the Council of Europe's CLRAE Sessions should be checked in order to avoid overlapping of dates.

Per Schöldbberg agreed that Task Force could also be responsible for preparation of the General Conference. He also supported the idea of the workshop on migration – but not only on a crisis, but on the aspect of open society. He stressed that a clear framework for the General Conference should be prepared this autumn.

President Andersen said that he would like to ask the member cities to rise the topics they are interested in. More ownership should be given to the cities.

Bo Hjalmeffjörd said that there was a discussion in January with Swedish member cities. They suggest having the General Conference more interactive.

Denis Mustonen, Lahti, added that the conferences are pretty old-fashioned. The format should be changed; involving audience and experts is needed, also more speaking to each other, not only listening to the speakers.

Mikko Lohikoski reminded that some years ago the Baltic Sea organizations eg. ,UBC, CBSS, BSSSC, CPMR BSC used to have coordination meetings. Meetings were organized in connection with annual conferences. UBC should develop closer cooperation with our partner organizations. UBC could host such meeting on the occasion of the General Conference.

Decisions:

The Board decided that the Task Force on Strategy implementation will also be responsible for preparation of the General Conference (extended if needed).

The service of the Communication Manager will be prolonged till mid 2017.

## **11. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, UBC involvement.**

Mikko Lohikoski, Strategy Coordinator recalled that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was created in 2009. It was the first macro regional strategy in Europe.

The strategy is horizontally very wide – it involves not only the EU countries, but also other countries having influence on the Baltic Sea Region - Norway, Russia, Iceland, Belarus.

The strategy is also vertically very inclusive, as it's not only governmental strategy, but it involves all stakeholders, actors: cities, regions, businesses, universities, civil society organizations etc. – everybody who is sharing the common goals of serving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity in the region. Multilevel governance is an overall guiding principle.

We cannot achieve these results without the active involvement of cities and regions, therefore when in June 2015 the member states adopted a new Action Plan accompanying the EUSBSR, they included UBC as one of the coordinators of the Horizontal Action (HA) "Capacity". The other coordinators are the Baltic Sea NGO Network and the Swedish Institute.

The task of the Horizontal Action "Capacity" is to increase the project capacity, skills and competence of all stakeholders involved in the Strategy, through the training programs. Many people are not used to work internationally, and there are always new people, new generations coming.

The other dimension of the Horizontal Action "Capacity" is to ensure broad participation of local and regional authorities. According to Lohikoski number of UBC cities and some commissions, especially Sustainable Cities, have been active, but we haven't fully utilized the opportunities and possibilities of the EU Strategy or the seed money facilities to develop projects. The coordinators encourage also other organizations, cities, regions and actors to plug in to the EU Strategy.

The European Commission and the member states expect from the coordinators good advice, how to promote this dimension. Mikko Lohikoski expressed opinion that it would be good to establish a group of cities within UBC and maybe invite few other organizations to discuss these issues. He stressed that we are expected to come up with good proposals, suggestions, initiatives. This should be done as UBC has a formal role as a coordinator in this HA. Mr Lohikoski proposed to send a letter to UBC members asking them if they are involved in the Strategy, what kind of projects they would be interested to bring in to such working group, etc.

Each year an EUSBSR Annual Forum is being held in different Baltic Sea country. This year it will be in Stockholm on 8-9 November 2016. UBC Executive Board meeting is planned to be held in connection with this event.

Mr Lohikoski stressed that it is very important that the UBC cities and Board members would participate in the forum so that their voice would be heard and UBC would be visible. The Finnish and Swedish Prime Ministers are already confirmed as speakers, there will also be a number of political seminars.

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed that over 70 proposals of seminars have been proposed to the Forum organisers by various organisations.

UBC together with other organisations submitted proposals to hold four seminars:

1. Youth involvement in the labour society. BSR Vision 2030 - youth perspective - "Nothing about us without us" - youth representatives in dialogue with politicians from local and regional level. The seminar organizers: BSSSC, UBC, Euroregion Baltic. The plan is to invite two young persons from each organization to have a presentation or to talk about the issues from the youth point of view, also two civil servants and two politicians.

2. How to enhance the role of cities and regions in the Baltic Sea cooperation? The seminar organizers: UBC, Brandenburg region, BSSSC.

3. Insiders vs. outsiders in the EUSBSR: how to cut the Gordian knot of transnational cooperation? The seminar organizers: Swedish Institute, UBC, CPMR BSC and the Norden Association.

4. Under the acronym umbrella: what is the added value of the various pan-Baltic organisations? The seminar organizers: Swedish Institute, Norden Association / Baltic Sea NGO Network, Centrum Balticum / UBC, Nordregio.

Paweł Żaboklicki said that the organisers will need to cut the number of seminars as 70 proposals is too many. Some of the seminar applications concern similar topics, so Forum organizers may ask concerned organizations to join forces with the others.

Secretary General also added that the organizers of the Strategy Forum had been in contact with the Secretariat. The organisers consider to invite UBC to the forum plenary session together with EU Commissioner, Prime Ministers and other high level speakers. Mr Żaboklicki said that it would be a great opportunity and promotion for UBC.

The President stressed it shows that UBC is considered by Baltic and European stakeholders as a good and reasonable partner.

The Board warmly encouraged the member cities to participate and contribute to the EU Strategy for BSR Annual Forum, Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016.

## **12. Information from Communications Manager on the new UBC website.**

Irene Pendolin, UBC Communications Manager, Turku, was not able to attend the UBC Executive Board meeting in Kaunas. Ms Pendolin prepared a power point presentation, attached to the minutes.

The new UBC website was launched on 3 June 2016. The website was designed by advertising agency KMG from Turku. It is not a final version, the site is being constantly developed and updated by Communications Manager and UBC Secretariat, especially member cities' information, documents etc.

Among the novelties there are:

- Carousel slides - UBC's top news and contents we wish to highlight
- "New at UBC" – changing newsfeed – news and events from the UBC and member cities
- "Lifts" – more static information, e.g. how to join the UBC and the work being done in the commissions
- "Footer" (at the bottom of all pages) – UBC's contact information and links.

The information about the new website was sent to the member cities and commissions and there was a post on Facebook. Next steps defined in the contract with advertising agency KMG are: possibility of intranet, general brochure for the UBC, templates (PowerPoint, visit cards etc).

Irene Pendolin encouraged member cities and commissions to send feedback on the website to ensure we have accurate information online and to make the website serve the UBC community even better. For some time the old UBC website will operate alongside the new one at [www.former.ubc.net](http://www.former.ubc.net). All the documents during the transition period will be accessible.

The Board expressed positive opinion about the new website and encouraged to continue this important work.

### **13. Responsibilities of the Secretariat.**

According to UBC Internal Regulations the responsibilities of the Secretariat include, inter alia:

- administration of the institution
- production and distribution of Union documents
- organisation of Union meetings and events
- management of Union finances
- publication of the UBC bulletin, other publications and promotional materials
- Union representation at conferences and meetings (if delegated)
- assistance to Commissions and other Union bodies, as appropriate
- other tasks commissioned by the General Conference, the Executive Board or the President.

The Secretariat is also responsible for updating the UBC website and for the social media namely UBC facebook site.

Communications Manager is also part of the Secretariat team.

President Andersen informed the Board that at the latest plenary session of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels he met the Mayor of Gdańsk Mr Paweł Adamowicz and expressed thanks to the city of Gdańsk for hosting the secretariat.

The Board had a throughout discussion on organization of the UBC work, regulations, procedures and secretariat.

The Board stressed that all institutions even well functioning ones, should periodically evaluate its performance, procedures and organization.

Decision:

The Board decided that UBC should ask some external consulting company specialised in management to check procedures within UBC organization whether something could be organised even better than it is now.

### **14. Any other business.**

#### **14.1 Cooperation between UBC and Carbon Disclosure Project.**

Mikko Lohikoski, on behalf of Risto Veivo, Chairman of UBC Sustainable Cities Commission informed that CDP, previously called the Carbon Disclosure Project, is the world's leading organization on voluntary Climate reporting. Currently over 5500 companies (including 3000 of the largest corporations in the world), 60 states and regions, and this year over 500 cities from 84 countries have used the system to report, share and take action. CDP actively analyses the data provided by the companies, governments

and cities to create knowledge and provide reports on the findings, which enable investors, companies, cities and governments to understand and act on the business case for reducing impacts on the environment and natural resources. Over 800 institutional investors representing over a third of the worlds invested capital rely on the CDP system. CDP is a global not-for-profit organization, founded in 2000 and headquartered in London.

Following the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 and UBC Strategic Framework 2016–2021 adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Gdynia in October 2015, UBC could cooperate with CDP, joining competences. The outcome of the cooperation would be creation of a state-of-the-art Climate Leadership report to be launched at the UBC 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Växjö in 2017. On behalf of UBC, the Sustainable Cities Commission would provide the content input.

In order to start cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding would have to be signed e.g. during 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the BSR, Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016.

The Board took note of the proposal and authorised the Presidium to take decisions on the Memorandum of Understanding and the President to sign it. Background paper is attached to the minutes.

**15. Next 77<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting, Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016**

The next UBC Executive Board meeting will be held on 10 November 2016, in connection with the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the BSR, Stockholm, 8-9 November 2016.

The meeting documents are available at: <http://www.ubc.net/document-categories/executive-board-meeting-documents/76th-executive-board-meeting-kaunas-6-8-june>

Per Bødker Andersen  
Chairperson

Paweł Żaboklicki  
Secretary

Mantas Jurgutis  
Adjuster

Per Schöldberg  
Adjuster