

## REPORTS FROM THE CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

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- W.4** Baltic Sea Actors - ways and tools for cooperation and coordination.

## WORKSHOP I.

### “Agenda 21- Local, Regional and Governmental cooperation”

*Rapporteur: Mr Esko Sorakunnas*

#### **Opening and introduction**

Co-chairman of the UBC Commission on Environment, *Mr Carl Nielsen*, opened the workshop by welcoming all the participants. A total of 31 participants were present.

#### **Contributions**

##### ***„Development of Local Agenda 21 in Northern Europe and Worldwide”***

**Mr Kari Porra**, ICLEI

ICLEI, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, is an international cooperation network serving local level actors, i.e. municipalities and NGOs. It has approximately 260 members worldwide. ICLEI is looking for new projects which would strengthen environmental protection at the local level. For instance, ICLEI’s Internet site could be utilised in developing Local Agenda 21 activities in the Baltic Sea Region.

Mr Porra emphasised that Local Agenda 21 is a process realising the Rio Declaration at the local level. It combines environmental protection with social and economic issues. As Local Agenda 21 activities have already been started in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Germany, it would be important to use this experience to initiate and support similar activities in the Baltic countries, Poland and Russia as well. The Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum has recently been established to facilitate this exchange of experiences and know-how. Also UBC is actively participating in the work of Baltic Local Agenda 21 Forum.

##### ***„Baltic 21 - Creating an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region”***

**Mr Peter Gavelin**, Member of the Baltic 21 Senior Officials Group, Director of Environment and Health Office, City of Sundsvall

Mr Gavelin, the UBC representative in the SOG, presented briefly the progress made so far in the Baltic 21 process. The process emphasises regional cooperation, and the work builds on what already is going on in the region, e.g., HELCOM and VASAB 2010 activities. The main sectors for attention are: agriculture, energy, fisheries, forestry, industry, tourism and transport. For each of these, two lead-countries have been appointed. The time schedule is short as the Baltic 21 should be ready for consideration already during the first half of 1998. Progress as it occurs in this work is published on the Baltic 21 website: <http://www.ee/baltic21>

##### ***„Health and Agenda 21 at the Local Level”***

**Ms Mari Hakkala**, WHO Temporary Adviser, Turku Healthy Cities Coordinator

The Healthy Cities Network is an international movement for health and sustainable development in the cities. Its main principles are political dialogue and consensus, networking of practitioners, growing body of knowledge, community initiatives at work and intersectoral collaboration. The

network of European Healthy Cities consists of 35 cities, but the national Healthy Cities networks worldwide sum up to almost 600 cities.

Healthy Cities can be a valuable vehicle in promoting and implementing Local Agenda 21 projects. It may be used to integrate philosophies and principles of the strategy Health for All and Local Agenda 21. In addition, it provides a mechanism for sustainable political commitment as well as intersectoral cooperation and implementation of action.

### **Discussion**

The contributions were followed by a lively discussion about Local Agenda 21 activities in different municipalities. E.g. the Norwegian City of Kristiansand has been very successful in implementing LA 21. Another good example is the Finnish City of Lahti, that could be called the pioneer of Finnish Local Agenda 21 work.

## **WORKSHOP II.**

### **“European Union in the Baltic Sea Region today and tomorrow - a challenge for Baltic Cities”**

*Rapporteur: Mr Juhani Janusson*

### **Opening and introduction**

The Project Leader of the UBC EU information Project, also vice chairman of Szczecin City Council, *Mr Domenik Gorski*, opened the workshop by welcoming all the participants.

### **Contributions**

#### **Ms Ivi Eenmaa, Mayor of the City of Tallinn**

UBC has changed at this General Assembly. Five larger and smaller Estonian Cities are among those which became members yesterday. This is the most convincing proof of the organisations vitality and its necessity for cities around the Baltic Sea.

You are probably well informed of the initial assessments of the potential new members of the European Union. Thus, together with the Polish colleagues, we are waiting for the decisions that will be made at the end of this year.

Integration into the European Union is an enormous and extensive task, which in addition to government bodies and ministries involves the entire Estonian society with all its structural units, particularly local self governments. Our closest neighbours Finland and Sweden are the youngest EU members. Regardless of the economic and cultural similarities, our preparatory work has been different, especially on the level of self-governments. The project *European Integration and Local Self Government*, initiated by the Union of the Baltic Cities, the conclusive general conference of

which will be held in Tallinn on 17-18 November, is a unique form for systematising the experience in the process of integration.

A good example might also be a joint project of 1966 between the Danish Self-Governments Union and the Unions of Estonian Cities, publishing EU information materials necessary for local governments and training specialists in the field of euro-integration for local governments. Dear colleagues, on behalf of the Estonian local governments I would like to thank you for your assistance, still stressing that we need continuous training of experts also through UBC.

**Mr Göran Färm**, Norrköping City Councillor

The process aiming at EU accession is not only about formal demands - legislation, rules and regulations of the union. The most important is the actual, real change of society, the social and economic development of the citizens every day life. A better life for the citizens is the objective, the EU membership only the tool to achieve it. One of the most important parts of this process is involving the local and regional level in the process.

The EU institutions in a white paper from the late 80's identified some 300 obstacles that needed to be overcome or levelled to be able to create one, harmonised market. This was the starting point for an extremely rapid and systematic process of co-operation and action to integrate a number of very different economies.

I would like to see a new white paper or process not only dealing with the formal legislative framework and not only with the creation of a free single market. Our plan should include the practical and physical change of infrastructure, education, transport, attitudes, business climate etc.

Within the BSSSC, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, where I am a board member, and chairing the working group on economic development, we have started to discuss this idea. And perhaps we could start doing it together - the different organisations representing the local and regional levels in the Baltic Sea area.

The most important aspect of this idea is that unlike the EU white paper on the single market with its top-down model we should create a broad process on the local and regional level, a bottom-up approach.

The main idea is that we must develop a joint strategic action program and from that develop important concrete projects and convince our governments and the European Union that the realisation of these programs is worth the money.

So - my basic message is: east/west integration is not only matter of treaties with Brussels, but more of a broad every day process to involve citizens, local and regional authorities and SMEs.

**Mr Rudolf Niessler**, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG16/A3

#### THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE (ESDP)

The first official draft of the ESDP was approved by the Ministers responsible for spatial planning in Noordwijk on 9/10 June 1997.

The document provides a selection of main policy options for the development of the European territory. Policy options focus on the following questions:

- how to achieve a more balanced and polycentric system of cities and a new urban-rural relationship;
- parity of access to infrastructures and knowledge; and
- prudent management and development of the natural and cultural heritage.

The document proposes three levels of co-operation on spatial development:

- at the European level on the territorial impact of Community policies and for developing a spatial policy agenda;
- at the transnational level on national policies with a territorial impact and for developing integrated spatial development policies; and
- at the regional/local level.

Further, spatial development policy provides for an excellent framework of cooperation with non-member countries. The experience of the Interreg IIC programme on the Baltic should enable us to further develop cooperation models on spatial development of large territories.

**Mr Juhan Janusson, UBC Project Manager**

Very often, when we discuss the development in our region, emphasis is laid on what has been archived the last six years. It is of course very impressive, but if we do the other way around, try to look six years ahead, we might find that the development might be still more impressive from today. By then maybe the Baltic Sea is an inland sea of the European Union.

This creates challenges for the local governments on both sides of the Baltic Sea. In the southern and eastern shores, the EU gives both access to new markets as well as becoming beneficiary of all the resources the EU has to offer. But equally important are the obligations and perquisites a EU membership brings.

The UBC has taken as one of its strategically important projects to prepare the cities of the region for the enlargement of the EU. We have already started in a small scale, but hope to bring the project to one major contributor to a swift and easy transition into the EU. The project is lead by the chairman of this work-shop, and the leading cities are Copenhagen and Szczecin.

**Mr Grzegorz Grzelak, Chairman of Regional Assembly of Local Authorities of Gdansk Voivodship,**

The Baltic Sea Region consists of countries with differing legal systems. The countries associated to the EU and Russia have different possibilities to use EU funds and facilities than the present EU members. One main goal for the cities and regions in the Baltic Sea Region is to obtain EU support for exchange between local and regional communities.

The Euro-Region as an institution could be used to speed up the integration process around the Baltic Sea. Three documents of the Council of Europe are very important to implement as a common base for regional and crossborder cooperation:

- The Outline Madrid Convention on Transborder Cooperation
- European Charter of Local Self-Government
- European Charter of Regional Self-Government

These documents should be implemented into the legal system of all Baltic Sea states. Simple ratification is not enough. This involves a huge amount of legislative work.

Crossborder cooperation with border areas of the Russian Federation, specially Kaliningrad and Leningrad Oblasts, should be taken into consideration. It is vital to co-ordinate contradictory interests of all countries and regions in the Baltic Sea Region through the EU crossborder cooperation programs.

Poland shall keep the freedom of establishing rules and regulations regarding government action in economic policy. However, the polish regulations should be compatible with international organisations, like WTO and specially EU. The EU rules will be changed before Poland joins the EU. However, some basic EU rules will remain unchanged:

- Programmation - detailed programs that involve strategic, human and financial resources

- Partnerships between institutions, specially between the Commission and the local, regional and national level.
- Complementarity - the EU cannot replace national financial engagement, only be complementarian.
- Concentration on efforts - common tasks should be carried out with EU as well as national funds.

### **Discussion**

The contributions were followed by a lively discussion.

## WORKSHOP III.

### “Local self-government in the Baltic Sea Region - tendencies and obstacles”

*Rapporteur: Mr Audun Oiestad*

### **Opening and introduction**

Department director Audun Oiestad from City of Bergen, who chaired the workshop, opened the workshop by welcoming all the participants and introducing the speakers. Aprox. 25 representatives followed Workshop 3.

### **Contributions**

#### ***„The Fundamental needs of cities of Central and Eastern Europe”***

**Mr Andrzej Jankowski**, Secretary of the City of Gdańsk

Mr Jankowski underlined the challenges for the new democracies referring to

- self-government in public administration systems,
- the need of building out an infrastructure as basis for a modern strategic urban planning that secures the economic development,
- the need for the local Government administration to reinforce the dialogue with the public and training and practicing programmes for the staff in a structured contact with Western European cities.
- the need to meet the social-economic challenges in the cities in the Central and Eastern European cities.

#### ***„Revitalization of local democracy through decentralization”***

**Mr Dag Larsson**, Deputy Mayor of Stockholm

Mr Larsson presented the ideas behind their reform in Stockholm:

- to shorten the distance between the decision-makers and the public through decentralization,
- to let the local initiatives be an active part of the local democracy.

Also the local government administration in the Western European cities needs a democratic revitalization.

### ***„Local Democracy: The Challenge of Institution-building”***

**Dr Anne Lise Fimreite**, Social Scientist of the University of Bergen

Dr Fimreite presented challenges for the political leaders in the local government administration:

- ability to solve local problems and deliver services,
- to live with instability is part of a living democracy,
- there will never be enough money. The leaders have to follow their visions and make their own priorities.
- good leadership and management will increase the democratic qualities in the local government .

### **Discussion**

The presentation of papers was followed by a discussion. It was focused on the needs of the cities of Eastern- and Central Europe. The local government must deal with the needs of the public. The administration must be efficient and we have to find new ways to strengthen the local democracy.

### **Conclusions**

The participants agreed to the following conclusion:

In the paper from Andrzej Jankowski it was underlined that to deal with the problems in Central and Eastern Europe we first have to deal with the preconditions for solutions:

- strategic planning,
- well-functioning administration,
- self-government.

The Workshop 3 will ask the Executive Board to set up a programme between the cities to give people in the administration in Eastern- and Central European cities opportunity to visit and learn from the experiences in the other member cities in this fields.

## **WORKSHOP IV.**

### **“Baltic Sea Actors - ways and tools for cooperation and coordination”**

*Rapporteur: Ms Sonja Hilavuo*

### **Opening and introduction.**

Chairman of the UBC Commission on Communication, Lars Malmborg, opened the workshop. A total of 31 participants were present. He introduced that the aim of this workshop, as set out by the board meeting in Bergen, is to define areas where the organisations on national, regional and local level will be able to work together.

In the preparation of this workshop he had found at least four clear possible areas. Of these, two are discussed in parallel workshops, namely Agenda 21 and the enlargement of the European Union.

In this workshop the emphasis is put on two other matters, spatial planning and communication. The work by VASAB has shown that spatial planning is needed to secure growth in the region and at the same time pave the road to a sustainable society.

Transport matters are important in the long run to foster trade but what is equally important and can be done faster is to build up good connections through electronic networks, especially Internet.

### **Contributions**

#### ***„The regional approach to Baltic Sea cooperation”***

**Mr Mats Rosén**, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation. BSSSC.

The regions in the ten Baltic states agreed in 1993 to form a political cooperation on a regional level. In the first three years this was done only through an annual conference. In Vaasa in 1996 a more clear scheme was set out with three important parts:

I. A more active board with two representatives from each country

II. Three permanent working groups set up by experts but chaired by a member of the board:

1. People to people. Chairman M. Talasiewicz, Szczecin
2. Economic development, Chairman G. Färm, Norrköping
3. Environment and sustainable development, Chairman A. Ören, Sarpsborg

III. A permanent secretariat in close contact with the Speaker. At the moment Europaminister Gerd Wallter is Speaker and the secretariat is located in Kiel. After the conference in Gdansk 26-28 of October the new chairman is proposed to be Knud Andersen from Bornholm and the secretariat will move to Copenhagen.

The most specific task is to implement on a regional level the so called Kalmar-document from the CBSS meeting in Kalmar July 1996. Through close cooperation with BCCA and UBC, BSSSC sees a lot of possibilities in the next years.

#### ***„Urban networking in the Baltic Sea Region”***

**Ms Helle Fischer**, Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea. VASAB

Ms Fischer gave a broad concentrate of the strategic document, Vision 2010, adopted by the planning ministers in Tallinn 1994.

Vision 2010 have four basic values:

- Development
- Environmental sustainability
- Freedom
- Solidarity

and 14 goals under three major frames:

1. The Pearls: An urban system of international importance
2. The Strings: Effective and sustainable links between cities
3. The Patches: Areas supporting dynamism and quality of life

One of the projects that was proposed in "From Vision to Action" is work on a Baltic Urban Network. The work on urban networking in the Baltic Sea Region should be initiated by spatial planning

through collaboration of towns and cities. The current cooperation should be supported by taking a long term perspective on the competitiveness of the BSR network in relation to other European city networks.

Urban networking would in its first phase only cover the cities referred to as European and Baltic cities. H Fischer warmly welcomed those UBC cities to take part in this network.

***„Baltic Sea Alliance - a new platform for communication”***

**Ms Sonja Hilavuo**, Baltic Sea Alliance, BSA.

Ms Hilavuo presented a new tool for communication in the Baltic Sea Region which will be of great help in future contacts. The three Baltic organisations, UBC, BCCA and BSSSC have formed an alliance to promote an Internet network. This network will be able to offer a new tool for practical work regarding contacts and projects.

The major goal of the BSA is to provide an information network for daily use for the hundreds of member offices. In the near future other interested organisations will be invited to join the system.

The address is [www.balticsea.net](http://www.balticsea.net) and will include among other things; an event calendar, a project gallery, a BSA talkback for discussion and debate. BSA is not a new organisation but a "platform" for communication.

***„Baltic Sea cooperation from Riga viewpoint”***

**Mr Viktors Buls**, UBC Commission on Communication

V Buls thanked for the possibility to give comments on the former speakers from an Latvian standpoint. He was critical to some parts of what he had heard especially the work done by VASAB. In Latvia the city of Ventspils, which is aiming to be an important harbour, claims that when the city has only been classified as a regional city this will destroy its chances to get international funding.

He found the idea of ranking cities wrong especially now when there is a situation under great change. He would agree however that the fields mentioned in the opening are the four interesting ones. Riga and other Latvian cities will of course take part in the various fields but would like an open networking approach.

**Discussion**

In the following debate the questions mostly centred around the spatial planning aspect and the discussion started by V Buls. There was some agreement that urban networking is an interesting task but that it would be an open networking rather than one for just the bigger cities. On the other hand many pointed out that some cities must take the lead if the project should not be too big. It is important however that the project will be open to all interested.

Questions concerning the BSA were of a more practical character but all agreed on the value of having this platform. The Baltic Institute of Karlskrona promoted their work on a Swedish database called Ballad. A question from the audience about BSA and Ballad was answered that the two systems are complimentary.

**Closing the meeting**

The chairman could end up the discussion by concluding that he has found that the four topics mentioned in the beginning also were the major issues to go further with and that an open networking between the three levels will be most fruitful.