

2015-06-22

Per Bødker Andersen  
President Union of the Baltic Cities  
City Hall  
Akseltorv 1  
DK-6000 Kolding  
Danmark

Dear Mr President,

First of all I like wish to a wonderful summer as I understand you will be spending some time on the Baltic Sea. Before we enter holiday season and everyone gets a well-deserved break, we wish to express a few thoughts related to the General Conference in Gdynia 27-30 October 2015.

We believe it is important for the UBC that we take opportunity of the new momentum to put our network on a positive and constructive path forward. The new commission structure is a good starting point, but we think that they will need the support from our executive board as well as the UBC secretariat to succeed to present useful results for the member cities. In the light of this, we wish to express the following:

- i) We believe that the secretariat needs to take a step forward to support and lead the new commissions to create value for the members. As we perfectly understand that this may be a matter of resources. We think there is a need to consider what can be done with the available budget, but also consider whether additional resources are needed. If that is the case Växjö would be willing to take a discussion on membership fees or organizational changes. The bottom line is that the secretariat must be equipped to support the member cities and commissions in more in a proactive way.
- ii) We also wish to announce that City of Växjö is ready to be on the executive board for the coming period.
- iii) As we mentioned in the Executive Board meeting in Dolina Charlotty, The City of Växjö are ready to host XIV General Conference in 2017.
- iv) We can further inform that Växjö will of-course support the candidacies for You and Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark as President and Vice-President for the coming period.

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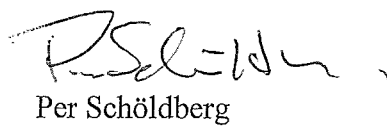
v) Finally we wish to inform you that we are open to actively participate in the General Conference as speaker or otherwise share our recently launched initiative "*the Växjö-declaration*" (attached), in which our city commits to become a fossil free city by 2030 and challenges the Swedish Government and other European cities to also strive towards a fossil free society.

We look forward to future cooperation in the UBC to strengthen the Baltic Sea region.

Best Regards



Bo Frank  
Mayor



Per Schöldberg  
Deputy Mayor

# Växjö Declaration

Växjö urges the Swedish Government and European local authorities to take meaningful action to go fossil fuel free.

**In close collaboration between public and private actors, Växjö, the Greenest City in Europe, has been putting words into action since the 1970s in its environmental work and can proudly show the world that it is possible to work locally towards a global sustainable future. Växjö has set the goal of becoming a fossil fuel free city by 2030, but we cannot do it alone. Växjö therefore urges the Swedish Government and European local authorities to take meaningful action to go fossil fuel free.**

## Energy supply

In the past 20 years the people of Växjö have almost halved their fossil carbon dioxide emissions. Växjö has already built a combined heat and power plant that produce fossil fuel free heating, cooling and electricity. Household organic waste are collected and made into biogas for buses and cars. The proportion of renewable fuels in the transport sector must increase. We already know that it is technically possible to produce renewable vehicle fuel in our combined heat and power plant, but it is a major financial risk for one individual actor.

Växjö urges the Swedish Government to form an economic structure that makes investments in the production of renewable energy profitable.

Växjö urges European local authorities to switch to fossil fuel free energy systems.

## Sustainable travel

Växjö is investing in sustainable travel on foot, by bicycle and by public transport. Our buses run on renewable fuel and we plan to lay cycle superhighways for quick and easy travel within the municipality. Växjö will lead the way in sustainable travel with the implementation of 52 identified measures by 2020. Växjö is part of a region and we need a simple and attractive regional infrastructure that provides accessibility without fossil fuels. We need high-speed trains via Växjö to open up national and international travel possibilities.

Växjö urges the Swedish Government to invest in double tracks on existing railways and in a high-speed track via Växjö and other regional centres.

Växjö urges European local authorities to design towns in a way that promote sustainable transport systems.

## Buildings

Växjö builds in wood. We build passive houses, low-energy houses and energy plus houses in close collaboration between the municipality, private sector and academia. Together with industry and other local authorities in Europe, Växjö is carrying out extensive and innovative energy efficiency improvements in its housing stock. We are finding it difficult to make sufficiently progressive energy requirements due to the national building regulations being too weak and the law preventing municipalities from setting specific requirements. Växjö also feels there is a lack of satisfactory methods and procedures to ensure compliance with the building regulations laid down by the Swedish National Board of Building, Planning and Housing (Boverket).

The City of Växjö, together with Linnaeus University and private actors, is prepared to lead the way in ensuring that energy requirements are actually complied with.

Växjö urges the Swedish Government to give Boverket the task of substantially sharpening the energy requirements of current building norms by prioritizing renewable district heating before electricity as a heating source and ensuring that energy requirements are actually complied with. Växjö also urges the Swedish Government to once again let Swedish municipalities go first in line in making special environmental and energy demands for land sales.

Växjö urges European local authorities to make long-term sustainable investments to reduce the energy consumption of buildings.

### **Consumption**

Växjö will also take responsibility for its own indirect climate impact, i.e. from our own consumption. A growing world population and limited natural resources demands a change in the raw material flows. We will switch from being a society that continuously seeks new resources, utilises them and then discards them, to a society based on sustainable cycles. Extending the life cycle of products, enhancing the quality of newly manufactured products and facilitating re-use saves enormously on resources. Växjö will establish a knowledge transfer centre for circular economy, a reuse village and draw up local control measures for promoting circular economy.

Växjö urges the Swedish Government to draw up control measures that favour circular economy.

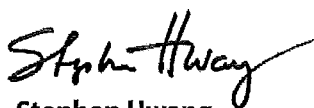
Växjö urges European local authorities to promote circular economy.

### **Collaboration and leadership**

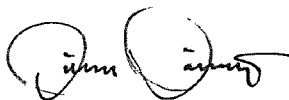
In Växjö we work transnationally to achieve our goal of becoming free from fossil fuels. Växjö has earned the reputation of being the Greenest City in Europe and was one of the first European local authorities to sign the Covenant of Mayors. Växjö leads the way in creating a fossil fuel free society and does it in broad collaboration. To make it possible to achieve the goal, clear decisive leadership is required at national and international levels that lead to a more innovative private sector with great economic development potential.

Växjö urges the Swedish Government to set a goal of becoming the world's first fossil fuel free nation and to urge the European Commission to decide on binding climate goals for the European Union.

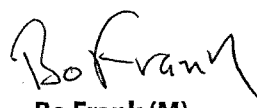
Växjö urges European local authorities to push development in the right direction by signing and living up to the Covenant of Mayors.



**Stephen Hwang**  
Rector  
Linnaeus University



**Niklas Nilroth**  
Chairperson  
Sustainable Småland



**Bo Frank (M)**  
Chairperson  
Executive board, City of Växjö

The Växjö declaration will be handed over on the 25th of March 2015, during Earth Week, to the Swedish Minister of Environment Åsa Romson, and also the Executive Director of Energy Cities, Claire Roumet.