

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES November 2021 – October 2023

UBC response to aggression on Ukraine

On 24 February 2022 Russia launched a full-scale, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, which caused death and injuries of hundreds of thousands of civilians and soldiers.

UBC condemned officially aggression on Ukraine, by publishing a statement on the UBC website on 2 March 2022.

On 7 March 2022 the UBC Executive Board, made a decision that the further cooperation with Russian member cities is currently impossible. The Board decided to suspend membership of the Russian cities, to terminate the cities' positions in the UBC organs/bodies, and to change the location of the next UBC General Conference.

UBC member cities were asked for their decisions concerning further UBC actions. The voting cards were sent out. The voting results were:

25 cities voted for termination

13 cities voted for suspension

Special General Conference (General Assembly) was convened online on 20 May 2022. As the result, the membership of St. Petersburg and Gatchina was terminated.

The UBC Executive Board also made a decision to open for the new associated Members from Ukraine.

City of Vilnyansk was the first city, accepted as Associated Member on 4 April 2022.

The following year, at the 90th meeting in Hamburg on 22 June 2022, the Executive Board welcomed the Ukrainian cities of Kramatorsk, Vyshhorod, Pokrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson as Associated Members.

UBC was also very active in terms of helping Ukrainian cities and refugees by donations and spreading info about the needs of cities.

In 2022, 15.000 EUR was donated from UBC to Lviv for the help for internal refugees.

UBC has also decided to support its Associated Member City of Vilnyansk with 10.000 EUR for reconstruction of the bombed hospital.

UBC also asked member cities about their help for Ukraine. 37 member cities sent information about help by sending e.g. buses, money, medicines, food, water and sewage equipment, building machines and many other supplies. UBC collected this information and shared on the website: <https://ubc.net/help-for-ukrainian-refugees-and-cities/>

UBC Secretariat was also receiving requests for help for Ukraine to be spread to the member cities and put on the website, e.g. help for Ukrainian waterworks, humanitarian help in Lviv, Mykolaiv, etc.

The UBC Bulletin Spring 2023 edition was devoted to the theme "Baltic Sea Cities Supporting Ukraine"

The XVII General Conference, held in Liepaja, 24-26.10.23 will have the main topic: "Baltic Sea cities supporting Ukraine".

New UBC Commission

In 2013 the Task Force on Youth Employment & Well-being, chaired by Matti Mäkelä, Turku, was created in order to seek practical and effective solutions to tackle youth unemployment and marginalization. The Task Force prepared the report 'The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices' in 2015. It was decided to continue the work of the TF to help implementation of suggested measures.

In 2021 the Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being proposed a discussion about its future, including the TF new tasks and status, indicating three possibilities: changing the name of the TF, establishing a new commission dealing with education or merging it with the Youthful Cities Commission.

The Executive Board at its 88th meeting on 30 November 2023, online, decided to establish a temporary Commission on Education.

The proposal was supported by the following UBC member cities: Liepaja (Latvia), Naestved (Denmark), Riga (Latvia), Rostock (Germany), Turku (Finland) and Århus (Denmark).

At the Special UBC General Conference (General Assembly) on 20 May 2022, on-line, the Learning Cities Commission was created.

14th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR in Riga, 4-5 October 2023

The Annual Forum of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is a major event that brings together policymakers, stakeholders, and experts from across the Baltic Sea Region. This year's edition was organized jointly by the Riga City Council, Union of the Baltic Cities and VASAB, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia and the Baltic Sea Strategy Point. The Forum organization was financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme. UBC was the project partner with the budget of 15.000 €.

This year the Forum covered the topic of Safe and Sustainable Baltic Sea Region for Future Generations. Special attention was paid to the climate affairs and green energy. And since the main agents of change and progress are young people, a strong focus on the importance of youth engagement in decision making was placed and a strong youth representation took active part in the event.

UBC through its antenna in Brussels organized and moderated a workshop "Youth empowerment 2.0 in the 21st century – trends and policy solutions" within the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2023 on 5 October 2023 in Riga. The policy workshop aimed to explore the opportunities and challenges faced by young people in the 21st century and to identify policy and ICT solutions that can empower and enable them to shape a better future for themselves and for society as a whole.

More information: <https://www.eusbsr.eu/annualforum2023>

Projects

UBC has increased its involvement in the externally funded projects, especially from INTERREG BSR, Erasmus+, Horizon and Swedish Institute.

There have been 11 projects run in the reported period with UBC as a partner/co-beneficiary (CREST/ Erasmus+, Baltic Sea Youth Platform/ Erasmus+, Umbrella 2.0/ Swedish Institute, - PITCH /Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Yupad / Erasmus+, DECARBOMILE/Horizon, 14th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR in Riga/Interreg BSR, PA SECURE KIDS/ DG Justice EC, VOALA/Swedish Institute, BYFORES/ CBSS Project Support Facility, BSR Cultural Pearls/Interreg BSR.

- CREST

The project “Creative Repurposing of Educational Spaces for Innovative Student centred Environments” addressed the challenges of educational institutions in the processes of repurposing of educational buildings and spaces. That included i.a. the lack of professional expertise when it comes to creating and sustaining learning environments that support learning process and implement principles of learning ergonomics.

The project duration 2020-2022. It was co-financed by the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Union. UBC was project partner with a budget of 31.700 €.

The activities included the mapping of existing practices models of repurposing educational buildings and spaces, creation of a model for educational institutions on how to implement repurposing that is adapted to the contemporary needs and their piloting in the partner countries and finally dissemination and advocacy.

More information: <https://cresteu.org/>

- Baltic Sea Youth Platform

Baltic Sea Youth Platform (BSYP) was a platform for young people who want to improve the political impact of youth on decision-making in the Baltic Sea Region, develop tools for better knowledge transfer and serve as a facilitator for various innovative projects.

Project duration 2020-2022. The project was co-financed by the EU ERASMUS+ programme. UBC was project partner with a budget of 22.769 €.

BSYP enabled young adults to come up with concrete actions and project ideas to allow for an increased participation of youth in the society. The BSYP functioned as a platform to reach out to decision makers to share these ideas. The platform contributed to the development of sustainable policies for future generations and the creation of future experts with the cohesion and stability at heart. Even though the BSYP project ended, the activity and energy of young people still remained on a high level. In January 2023 the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF) was officially launched. The BSRYF is youth-driven, while supported by organisations previously active within the BSYP and others.

More information: <https://bsyp.eu>

- UMBRELLA

The project's goal was to increase awareness and knowledge of transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. More specifically, the project aimed at initiating a process for the

development of strong multi-actor and multilevel governance partnerships that could undertake cross-sectoral sustainable solutions while following the principles and objectives of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, EU Green Deal and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Project duration 2021 – 2022. The project was financed by the Swedish Institute and the Interreg South Baltic programme. UBC was project partner with a budget of 30.000 €.

Project activities included i.a. series of webinars and meetings covering the topic of EUSBSR and its compliance with EU Green Deal and UN SDG. Moreover, various awareness raising events and communication campaigns took place. And with the introduction of the flagship initiative practical knowledge and tools for implementation were provided.

More information: <http://umbrellaproject.eu/>

- PITCH

PITCH is a three-year project that has been approved in September 2021. PITCH stands for 'a model for gender-sensitive integration strategies based on Personalised, 4egulate4tory, 4egul, and multistakeHolder approaches.'

This project directly engages 210 migrant women from Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Spain, Cyprus, Lithuania and Sweden, and the staff of 5 municipalities, 7 local research/civil organisations. Project duration 2021-2024. The project is co-funded by the EU - Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). UBC as a project partner obtained 50.000 €.

So far the PITCH model has been created – a common EU framework to be used for the development of local integration strategies. Moreover, to facilitate the process of integration in the host communities, PITCH has developed interactive maps that visualise important services that migrant women may find useful (employment, education etc.). The local integration strategies and the PITCH Model are currently being put into practice in the municipalities of Malmö, Ipsonas, Neapoli-Sykies, Palermo, Seville, Koper and Vilnius.

The first phase of integration strategies include the recruitment of language and cultural mediators in all countries who will support the migrant women. The so called 'Cozy Corners' gatherings will host discussions around trainee women's background, education, experiences in the host community and the activities they wish to attend during the second phase of the integration strategy. As a result each woman will have her own personalised map, outlining the activities (social, active citizenship, upskilling) they intend to attend between September 2023 and February 2024 in the respective municipality.

More information: <https://pitch-eu.eu/>

- YUPAD

The YUPAD project aims to enable young people to understand, practice, and influence participatory budgets across European cities. The project will develop the capacity building of educators and local authorities to implement participatory budgeting and increase civic participation among the youth. Project duration 2022-2024.

The project is financed from the EU Erasmus+ programme. UBC is the project partner with the budget of 51.000 €.

So far, the project team has prepared the YUPAD Cookbook – a set of participatory budget "recipes", based on the existing needs analysis of the target groups. Furthermore, the YUPAD

Calculator was also created – a tailored platform that gathers input from young people on policy priorities, expected outcomes, and their preferences for concrete projects in a city.

The UBC team has been in charge to develop the YUPAD Bees, the next step in creation of the system that provides the methodology for development of concrete projects or initiatives suggested within the YUPAD Calculator. The UBC is also in charge for communication and dissemination aspect of the project.

More information: <https://yupad.net/>

- DECARBOMILE

The project focus is on interoperable and multimodal vehicles for last mile delivery in urban contexts. Especially to develop improved delivery methods, tools and methodologies, and implement and test them across Europe to lower carbonization of last mile logistics activities. Multimodal and electric vehicles present a strong potential for greening transportation in cities, particularly in terms of optimised delivery service, improved air quality and reduced congestion. The project gathers 31 partners from 10 different countries. Project duration 2022-2025. The project is financed by the EU Horizon programme. UBC is a project partner with the budget of 150.000 €.

The UBC team has taken part in the 5egulateon benchmarking regarding urban distribution of goods in the cities and also in analysis of the current legal framework. The next phase in the project introduction thus aims to implement participatory mechanisms to properly engage the relevant actors of the specific local areas through agile co-creation methodologies and activities. UBC will support the process through the call for expression and interest in its network to identify interested Member Cities and their relevant local actors including business associations, neighbourhood associations, logistics operators, etc.

More information: <https://decarbomile.eu/>

- 14th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR in Riga, 4-5 October 2023

Information about the project – see page 2.

- PA SECURE KIDS

Project's objectives concentrate around the issue of strengthening the sustainability and impact of child participation mechanisms in decision making processes of dealing with different types of hazards and emergencies at both national and local levels. Project duration 2023-2025. The project is co-funded by DG Justice European Commission. UBC is a project partner with the budget of 8.925 €.

As for now the project is in the early stage as it was launched in the beginning of 2023. However, the kick off meeting has already been held and a mapping process will be organized to understand the children and youth participation in the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). By the end of this year strategic guidance for the implementation of inclusive crisis communication with children and youth is planned to be drafted.

More information: <https://cbss.org/projects-cbss/pa-secure-kids/>

- VOALA

VOALA is a transnational project that aims to enhance society's resilience to natural and man-made disasters by strengthening inclusive, cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and volunteer organisations in crisis management in the Baltic Sea Region. Project duration 2022-2024. The VOALA project is funded by the Swedish Institute. UBC is project partner with a budget of 7.000 €.

National round tables were held to discuss the role, mission and coordination of volunteers in BSR with special focus on civil protection. In 2023 UBC Safe Cities Commission will organize an international round table with the same topic. In June Hamburg hosted international conference on the matter. By the end of the year an analysis of existing practices and development of recommendations will be created in order to develop a larger scale EU application.

More information: <https://cbss.org/projects-cbss/voala/>

- BYFORES

The BYFORES project aims to enhance resilience to natural and man-made disasters by strengthening inclusive, cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and volunteer organisations in crisis management in the Baltic Sea Region with special focus on youth engagement. The project looks into the role that young people can play in managing and coping with disaster risks and reducing vulnerability through capacity building, education, and awareness raising. Project duration 2022-2024.

UBC is project partner with a budget of 9.000 €. The project is funded by The CBSS Project Support Facility.

An international workshop for youth volunteers' organizations, trainers and authorities was held in Helsinki where best practices regarding risks and hazards, such as floods, Ukrainian war etc. were presented. In addition, both the obstacles and challenges of cooperation and involvement of volunteer organizations in civil protection authorities work were discussed and how to eliminate or minimize them. During 19-20 June 2023 International conference of volunteers and authorities was held in Hamburg. Furthermore, the joint international scenario-based exercise for youth will be organized in Finland in autumn to contribute to the appeal of volunteering with a special focus on youth and participation in Disaster Risk Reduction. And by the end of the project the recommendations will be developed to better direct volunteer-authority cooperation in the near future in the Baltic Sea Region.

More information: <https://www.spek.fi/en/advocacy/international-cooperation/byfores/>

- BSR Cultural Pearls

The BSR Cultural Pearls project aims to support authorities in the Baltic Sea Region to develop and implement action plans on "culture and resilience", which will eventually strengthen social cohesion and foster connectedness and shared values so that crises can be overcome more easily. Special attention will be given to the smaller cities and regions. Project duration 2023-2025. UBC is associated partner. BSR Cultural Pearls is co-funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme.

The project's kick off meeting was held in Stockholm 29-30 March 2023. Each month from April till June virtual workshops took place on the importance of culture for social and urban resilience. The workshop "Cultural pearls" will be held at the UBC General Conference in Palanga, 25 October 2023. During the event problems and challenges of small towns and cities with decreasing attractiveness, brain draining of young residents, dwindling social engagement will be highlighted and possible solutions will be presented.

More information: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/bsr-cultural-pearls/>

Bulletins

The Baltic Cities Bulletin published by the UBC Secretariat provides information about the work of the Union and news from the member cities. Moreover, an emphasis is put on covering some specific fields of general interest which are presented as main themes of each issue.

In the last period the following issues have been published: "Improving health and well-being through inclusion and sport in Baltic cities", "Making the world a better place through education", "Culture's Role in Times of Crises", "Baltic Sea Cities Supporting Ukraine".

Link to the bulletins: <https://ubc.net/publications/bulletins/>

UBC Executives during two-year period

Mantas Jurgutis, Kaunas, President

Elina Rantanen, Turku, First Vice-President

Piotr Grzelak, Gdańsk, Vice-President

Vyacheslav Kalganov, St. Petersburg, Vice-President (until 20.05.2022)

Jørgen H. Kristiansen, Kristiansand, Vice-President

Paweł Żaboklicki, Gdańsk, Secretary General

Executive Board during two-year period

Arendal, Norway

Elva, Estonia

Gdynia, Poland

Kemi, Finland

Kiel, Germany

Kolding, Denmark

Liepāja, Latvia

Panevėžys, Lithuania

Riga, Latvia

Rostock, Germany

Trelleborg, Sweden

Umeå, Sweden

Executive Board Meetings

Three Executive Board meetings took place during the reporting period between XVI and XVII General Conferences. Due to the pandemic, one was held online:

90th Executive Board meeting, Hamburg, 22 June 2023

89th Executive Board meeting, Aarhus, 1 December 2022

88th Executive Board meeting, online, 30 November 2021

The Executive Board played meaningful role in the development of UBC activities. The Board considered and endorsed a number of actions, initiatives and projects submitted by the Presidium, Commissions and Member Cities. The projects, initiatives, activities, events and other actions carried out by UBC during the described period are outlined in this report.

Special General Conference (General Assembly)

Due to the Russian aggression on Ukraine a Special General Conference (General Assembly) was held online on 20.05.2022.

The General Assembly made the decision to terminate the membership of St. Petersburg and Gatchina.

New Learning Cities Commission was also established.

Board of Audit during two-year period

Marta Chełkowska, Director of Tourism Department, Pomorskie Voivodship

Frede Danborg, International Coordinator, Guldborgsund

Roger Kaliff, Chairman of the City Council, Kalmar

UBC Secretariat

Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat is located in the City of Gdańsk at the residence of the City Council. The Secretariat provides daily service to the UBC and its members. The Union has been satisfied with the work performed by the Secretariat. The financial matters have been handled properly as confirmed by the auditor. The Union would like to express its thanks to the City of Gdańsk for its contribution to the UBC.

UBC Antenna in Brussels

UBC Antenna in Brussels has contributed to the internal development of UBC. The capacity to identify strategic priorities and plan followed with the policy priorities and policy passport was the focus of Antenna's work. The Antenna also helped moderate some internal meeting, like

Commission meetings, workshops in General Conferences, etc. Antenna took part in Umbrella 2.0 project and two Annual forums for the EUSBSR as co-organiser and partner.

To set up well-organised activities and reach the goals, a RoadMap for UBC positioning in Brussels was finalised in 2021. Following the planned activities, visibility events were conducted, enhancing key partnerships with the Committee of Regions, European Commission, etc.

Antenna took an active role in the Future of Europe, local democracy debates, as well as topics related to youth, digitalization etc. Antenna has designed, applied and lobbied for UBC

presence in key European weeks: European Week of Cities and Regions, Week of Macro-Regional Strategies, and European Green Week. Also, UBC was represented in several events organised by regional or city representation offices operating in the EU arena. UBC

Policy passport was created. Partnerships with the Committee of Regions or Eurocities were revoked.

UBC Antenna developed new projects in cooperation with the UBC Secretariat and Commissions. Antenna prepared 11 funding applications, success rate 63%, budget awarded 437.941€, including the first Horizon project. The visibility of UBC as a partner in European projects has increased and there is a high demand for UBC as a partner in diverse project consortiums. Also, several funding Days were designed and implemented in order to inform cities about the opportunities for European funding.

UBC Commissions

In the reported period the UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission:	Lead City:
Cultural Cities	Kaunas
Inclusive and Healthy Cities	Rostock
Learning Cities	Turku
Planning Cities	Gdynia
Safe Cities	Liepāja
Smart and Prospering Cities	Kiel
Sustainable Cities	Turku
Youthful Cities	Riga

Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions within the reporting period are concisely described below.

Cultural Cities Commission

Chair from April 2022 Nomeda Domeikienė, Kaunas

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- Open Meeting of the Commission on 18.05.2022 in Kaunas, intended to discuss the current affairs of the field of culture
- Participation in the European Capital of Culture Forum 19-20.05.2022 in Kaunas Conference “Biržiška Readings’22: Knowing is Freedom” 02.12.2022 in Kaunas, organization and participation
- Open Meeting of the Commission on 05.03.2023 intended to share your experiences in overcoming the challenges that arise
- Conference "New Experience of Libraries in the Context of Environmental Changes" on 06-7.03.2023, organization and participation

Projects

1. Project “Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearls for more resilient Cities and Regions”

2. Project: "UrbCulturalPlanning"
3. "Culture 4 Climate (C4C)"

Cooperation with other organisations:

The cooperation mainly took place on project basis. In March 2023 "Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearls for more resilient Cities and Regions" project kick-off meeting was held in Stockholm with 12 organisations from seven BSR states. Moreover two international conferences organized, where Lithuanian and foreign cultural, educational and scientific institutions took part.

Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission

The Commission is chaired by Jannis Dammann, Rostock. The Vice-Chair is Rita Seidel.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- 14.10.2021; Kick-Off Meeting "Inclusive Cities", online, 19 participants (Rostock, Sejny, Panevėžys, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Tartu, Gdańsk, Hamburg)
- 30.03.2022; Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission's webinar, the event was dedicated to municipalities, sport institutions, NGOs and all organisations active in the field of sport and/or inclusion, 3 speakers presented insights into concrete and successful projects in Germany, Denmark and worldwide.
- 25.08.2022; Commission's Meeting, Rostock, no international participants were present; the topic was Inclusion in Sports and the participants had the chance to network with local and international partners. The interactive workshop on inclusion in sports was conducted by the German Olympic Sports Confederation.
- 07.03.2023; working meeting, online, main topic was the future work within the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission; a survey was prepared to prioritize the commission's work in the coming years.
- 29.03.-14.04.2023; the UBC Secretariat sent out the survey to the Members of the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission

Based on the survey results and due to restructuring in the Rostock Volunteer and Sports Network the chairman decided to resign from his office. Interest has been expressed from Gdańsk to take over the position.

Other activities

- Organization of the "Baltic Sea Cup" 2022/2023 (Competition in athletics for children 8-14 years)

Learning Cities Commission

The Commission is chaired by Matti Mäkelä, Turku. The Vice-Chair is Troels Heilmann, Næstved.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- 1st online Meeting, 24.5.2022, first meeting of the Commission; discussions and decisions about the activities of 2022

- Meeting & Study Visit, Turku, Finland, 19.-20.9.2022, planning and organising the work of the LCC; study visits
- STEAM in Kindergarten, webinar, 15.11.2022, STEAM in Kindergarten in Turku – presentations: The child is a researcher and practitioner / Best STEAM practices from Copenhagen
- 2nd online Meeting, 25.11.2022, results of the Autumn's activities were shared and discussed, further actions were planned, and co-operation with other actors mapped
- School Segregation, webinar, 30.11.2022, presentations: Measures to reduce school segregation / Best practices in learning
- Circular Economy in Vocational Education, webinar, 25.1.2023, Circular economy in vocational education
- 3rd online Meeting, 31.1.2023, Spring activities were planned; programs and activities of the UBC Education Conference (Turku) and UBC General Conference (Palanga) were discussed
- 1st Advisory Board, online meeting, 28.3.2023, Advisory Board's role, tasks, and activities were planned and discussed; LCC activities were presented
- Meeting and Study Visit; Gdansk, 17-18.4.2023, Commission's activities (past, present, future) were mapped and discussed; study visits
- 4th online meeting, 25.5.2023, the preliminary agenda of the Autumn's Education Conference was shared and discussed
- 5th online meeting, 16.8.2023, Education Conference check-up
- 2nd Advisory Board, online meeting, 30.8.2023, Discussions about the UBC Education Conference and LCC plans for the year 2024
- Education Conference, Turku, 20.-21.9.2023, dissemination of best practices, networking, future development plans
- Meeting, Turku, 22.9.2023, evaluation of the conference, planning of the year 2024

Projects

Learning Cities Commission is involved in ERASMUS + G-STEAM project with total budget of 400.000 €. The project promotes interest in science, technology and green skills through an increase in both the quantity and of STEAM in schools.

Cooperation with other organisations:

- Meeting with StartNet network in Brussels in March 2023.
- Participation in School to Work network in Hamburg (December 2022) and Stockholm (April 2023)

Planning Cities Commission

Planning Cities Commission Chairperson is Paulina Szewczyk from Gdynia. Mara Liepa-Zemesa from Riga is Vice Chairperson. The Planning Cities Commission Secretariat is located in Gdynia.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- The UBC Smart and Prospering & Planning Cities Commissions and the City of Kiel held the Seminar "District of the Future" on 14-17 June 2022 in Kiel.

- UBC Planning Cities Commission held the “Energetic, Energy On-line Meeting”, on 15 December 2022
- The UBC Talks webinar was held on 30th May to prepare better to the workshop during the Seminar to be held on 13-15 September 2023 in Turku
- The UBC Sustainable Cities & Planning Cities Commissions and the City of Turku held the Seminar “Revitalizing urban space connected to the Sea” on 13-15 September 2023 in Turku.

Cooperation with other organisations

9th VASAB Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region, 1-2 June 2023, Wismar (Germany) and Expert’s Conference on the updated VASAB Vision 1 June 2023 in Wismar.

Safe Cities Commission

The Commission is chaired by Kaspars Vārpiņš, Liepāja. The Vice-Chair is Torbjörn Lindström, Turku.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- “Civil protection challenges for cities concerning the war in Ukraine” meeting, Tartu, Estonia, 1-3.06.2022, discussions about the impact of Russian aggression on civil protection measures
- EUSBSR PA Secure Steering group meeting, Hamburg, Germany, 13-15.12.2022, main topics covered: local early warning system, sharing safety education experiences and a study visit to exchange methods for building better and safer environment for the people
- “Cooperation with volunteer organisations active in fields of civil protection and building resilient society” meeting, Gdańsk, Poland, 13-14.09.2023, together with representatives from Ukraine - presentations and experience exchange on existing volunteer cooperation with municipalities and how to improve it

Projects

Safe Cities Commission is involved in several projects:

NEEDS ERASMUS + project with total budget of 426.990 €. The project is addressing the skills gap and mismatch between the societal security education and the knowledge needs in the field. It also deals with the lack of structured transnational cooperation and dialogue between Higher Education Institutes, practitioners, and experts in tackling these issues.

VOALA project with total budget of 42.000 € financed by The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The project aims to enhance society’s resilience to natural and man-made disasters by strengthening inclusive, cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and volunteer organisations in crisis management in the Baltic Sea Region.

BYFORES project with total budget of 104.000 € financed by The Finnish National Rescue Association, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia, Union of the Baltic Cities, Ministry of the Interior of Finland, Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service, Danish Civil Protection League. The project aims to enhance resilience to natural and man-made disasters by strengthening inclusive, cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and

volunteer organisations in crisis management in the Baltic Sea Region with special focus on youth engagement.

PA Secure Kids DG Justice project with total budget of 696.000 €. The project aims to contribute to sustainable and inclusive mechanisms for child participation in planning, implementation and follow up of national and local measures for building resilient societies..

From NEEDS to SEEDS project financed by the CBSS with total budget of 23.874 €. The project helps to build a shared culture of professionalism in the societal security field.

Cooperation with other organisations:

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat, EUSBSR PA Secure (Member of Steering group), European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS)

Smart and Prospering Cities Commission

The commission is chaired by Wolfgang Schmidt, Kiel. The Vice-Chair is Christian Lausten Sørensen, Aarhus.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- “EU Creative Ports” project, online seminar, 21.04.2022, the aim was to consider the state of the Cultural and Creative Industries in the Baltic Sea Region, exchange insights into the project and its tools, explore the results and recommendations of the project and raise awareness of the CCI Contact Desk
- “District of the future”, seminar, 14-17.06.2022, Kiel, thirty experts from urban planning and economic development were invited to design a vision for this District of the Future
- “Sustainable Urban Mobility Solutions in the Baltic Sea Region”, online seminar, 28.09.2023, the seminar covered the topic of the latest trends in smart urban mobility from various speakers

Projects

CREATIVE PORTS CONTACT DESK

The Creative Ports Contact Desk links CCI support organisations and cultural institutes in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and can guide you to the right contacts and internationalisation know-how! The CCI Contact Desk is a hub for new contacts and exchange of knowledge. It operates as an entry point providing international connections. It offers guidance to help you find the right internationalisation tools and know-how. And it is a well of knowledge of all things Creative Ports.

Cooperation with other organisations

Goethe-Institute, Swedish Institute, STRING , Creative Ports Contact Desk, Digital Week Kiel, Waterkant startup festival

Sustainable Cities Commission

Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC) is hosted by the City of Turku, Finland.

The UBC SCC Secretariat was led by Esther Kreutz.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- Commission meeting in Greifswald, 27–28.04.22
- Joint meeting with Planning Cities Commission, Turku 13-15.09.23
- UBC TALKS webinar series (February, October, November)
- Session at Urban Future Conference, Helsingborg, 1–3.06.22
- Workshop at IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition, Copenhagen, 11-15.09.22
- Project meetings

Presentations at:

- 13th Annual Forum for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Lappeenranta, 28-29.09.22
- Interreg Baltic Sea Region Conference, Hamburg, 19-20.10.22

Major projects

EMPEREST – Eliminating Micro-Pollutants from Effluents for Reuse Strategies (2023-2025)

BALTIPLAST – Baltic Approaches to Handling Plastic Pollution under a Circular Economy Context (2023-2025)

SUMPs for BSR – enhancing effective Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning for supporting active mobility in BSR cities (2023-2026)

Climate-4-CAST – A Climate Action decision Support Tool to accelerate cities' progress towards climate neutrality (2023 – 2026)

Cooperation with other organizations:

EUSBSR, CDP, HELCOM, VASAB, CBSS

Youthful Cities Commission

The commission is chaired by Dmitrijs Zverevs, Riga. The Vice-Chair is Aistė Valadkienė, Klaipėda.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- In-person meeting, 18-20.05.2022, Riga, participants discussed about the future activities of the Commission, also wide range of youth work practice was shared
- Online meeting, 23.11 2022, organizational matters and thematic clusters concept finalization
- Online commission promo event, 18.01.2023, the meeting was dedicated to promotion of the Commission's actions, its projects and introduction of thematic clusters
- Kick-off meetings of thematic clusters, 1/2/8.03.2023, three thematic clusters have been set, the intention was to exchange of experience and joint projects
- Informal meeting (hybrid), 28.06.2023, Klaipėda, meeting covered organizational matters regarding the youth conference, thematic clusters
- Partnership building events for Erasmus+ calls (online), 1.02.2023 and 6.09.2023, connection meetings between commissions' participants and NGOs

Projects

BALTIC SEA YOUTH PLATFORM The project jointly developed by UBC, CBSS, BSSSC, Euroregion Baltic and a range of youth organisations improve the political impact of youth on Baltic Sea policymaking and develop tools for better knowledge transfer.

Commission has also supported implementation of the following projects in which the member cities are official partners:

(RE)PRESENT This Erasmus+ project brought together youth workers, pedagogical staff and civil servants from Kolding, Kiel and Riga for an intense training on youth participation. The project particularly focused on ways and tools for meaningful involvement of less active and marginalised youth in different settings (school, community, city, country).

YOUTHFUL BALTIC The project led by the city of Palanga will bring together young people from 4 UBC countries to discuss problems that are on the agenda of this year's UBC General Conference. Young people will discuss among themselves and later share their thoughts and concerns on the topics with cities' officials during the General Conference.

Cooperation with other organisations

CBSS Secretariat, UBC Brussels Antenna, UBC Learning Cities Commission