



UBC COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT REPORT October 2009 – May 2010

Short background– challenges of Baltic Cities

Today, the UBC is extremely well placed to tackle the urgent environmental challenges that the Baltic Cities are facing. At the same time, we also have very good possibilities to contribute to sustainable development at our region and we want to be a preferred partner in different tasks, projects and events. The Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2009 show that especially hard challenges are climate change, too excessive use of natural resources, wealth gaps, demographic changes and the state of the Baltic Sea to work on with during the upcoming years.

The mission of the UBC Commission on Environment is to tackle those challenges by all the means provided by our efficient network through sharing of problems, information and knowledge, approaches and solutions. In order to work more effectively we must improve our performance in all the fields and have clear goals and targets for our activities. Another important task for the UBC Commission on Environment will be to continuously develop and improve actions for the benefit of our member cities. This is a task for the whole UBC network and all levels of the UBC organisation are needed in order to improve these internal and external practices.

The potentiality of our network to support our member cities in treating the challenges is good and it is at the moment also fairly well mobilised. Plans and activities for the new UBC Sustainability Action Period 2010 – 2015 have already taken place and ambitious goals have been listed. The UBC and the UBC Commission on Environment has to develop the working methods in order to support our UBC member cities more efficiently. *To develop the UBC activities so that they meet the needs of our member cities will be our main tasks during the upcoming years!*

Focus on the Environment and Sustainable Development of Baltic Sea cities

The UBC is also running the large cross-sectoral action programme on sustainable development, the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010-2015. Environmental and sustainability related work of the UBC is organized at the Commission on Environment.

UBC Commission on Environment

The UBC Commission on Environment, co-chaired by Mr. Mikko Jokinen, Turku, and Mr. Thorsten Geissler Lubeck, has together worked since September 2009. They are assisted by the Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat, hosted by the City of Turku until 2015. In April 2010 Mr Thorsten Geissler was elected out as Deputy Mayor in City of Lubeck and thereby will not continue as Co-Chairman for UBC Commission on Environment (neither for UBC Commission on Energy). A new Co-chairman will be recruited during summer and appointed in the next UBC Commission on Environment meeting in October 2010.

The secretariat has been actively starting the work with the new cross-sectoral UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010 – 2015 approved in the General Conference in Kristiansand September 2009. The basic resources provided by the host city and the UBC combined with the successful project funding have enabled the secretariat to carry on a strong coordination role with a current staff number of 17 full-time professionals (Finnish-Swedish-Polish-Russian-German, Lithuanian). The secretariat is located in the Baltic Sea House in the old centre of Turku.

UBC Commission on Environment activities

The commission is activated in different development projects, policy-, networking-, and capacity-building activities. However, the most important resource of the commission are the active UBC member cities who contribute with their knowledge, experiences, motivation and strong involvement for the mutual benefit.

During the reporting period a *joint UBC Commission on Energy, Environment and Transport meeting* took place in March 2010 in Gdynia with approximately 60 participants. The meeting in Gdynia discussed Climate change related issues seen from Transport, Energy and Environmental point of view as well as also



discussed how UBC should develop our services and activities in order to more efficiently serve our member cities.

The *UBC Good Practice Database* is working to better serve and collect information, data, good practises etc. from projects, meetings and UBC member cities. More than 430 Good Practice cases are already listed in the database (see www.ubcwheel.eu). These cases and pages have been visited by more than 1 million visitors!

Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin has been further developed and thematic editions on “Sustainable Solutions for cities” 1/2010, with the editorial written by the Danish Minister of Environment Mrs Karen Ellen Ellemann, has been published. The Bulletin is made together with UBC Commission on Energy and discussions with other UBC Commission take place for the moment. The electronically version of the Environmental Bulletin is more and more requested. The Commission website has continuously been developed. Please see www.ubc-environment.net.

In April 2010 the UBC Commission on Environment started to use the internet based *Adobe Connect Pro* facility actively for meetings and web based conferences. This is a possibility that enables more participants on the same time as it reduces the need to travel and thereby save a lot of resources.

European Union Policy co-operation on environment and sustainable development

In line with the working principles of the UBC, the Commission on Environment has also contributed strongly to Baltic Sea Regional and European policy co-operation processes on cities’ environmental governance and sustainable urban development. The commission is representing the UBC at the CBSS/Baltic 21 and the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). UBC Commission on Environment has had an active role in the planning of the 6th Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Dunkerque France in 20 – 21 May 2010 where UBC brought the Baltic Sea region experts and cities to Dunkerque.

The implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has started and the UBC Commission has actively been involved in several actions and flagship activities. This strategy goes hand in hand with the new UBC Strategy and UBC Sustainability Action Programme and therefore there has been a need to combine the development of both processes simultaneously. The UBC Commission on Environment has evaluated the different EU BSR Strategy Flagships and is for the moment closely involved in following flagship processes;

Priority area 1 “To reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels”

1.2 “Cleaner wastewater

UBC EnvCom and UBC Energy. How; Follow the policy development, Implementation via following projects, PURE project (by UBC EnvCom) and ITEST project (by UBC Energy)

Priority area 4. “To become a model region for clean shipping”

4.1. “Promote measures to collect ship generated waste”

4.2. “Promote measures to reduce emissions from ships and enhance the development”

4.3. “Introduce differentiated port dues depending on the environmental impact of ships”

4.4. “Eliminate the discharge of sewage from ships”

4.5. “Improve the waste handling on board and in ports”

UBC EnvCom involved in an application called INNOSHIP (with Flagship status) addressing above mentioned issues and tasks. How; Follow the policy development, Implementation via possible upcoming development projects,

Priority area 5. “To mitigate and adapt to climate change and”

5.3 “Create a network of sustainable cities and villages”

UBC EnvCom. How; Follow the policy development, cooperation with responsible country and organisation (Request by the Swedish Ministry of Environment and Boverket).

Priority area 8. “Implementing the Small Business Act: to promote entrepreneurship, strengthen SMEs and increase the efficient use of human resources”



8.4 “Make the Baltic Sea an Eco-efficient region”

Appointed by the UBC Executive board the UBC EnvCom is following the policy development and discussion in a project called Ecoregion project. Similar tasks are handled in the UBC EnvCom project New Bridges

In connection to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region we should promote the UBC Baltic cities Political Forum as an important Forum for policy development and building political commitment!

Main Projects of the UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat

- **We choose life – Youth Against HIV/AIDS** – UBC EnvCom partner in the project coordinated by WHO Healthy Cities Network. 4 Russian cities involved and several expert organizations. TACIS funding
- **CHAMP** – Combating Climate Change. LIFE+ funded project including Finland, Germany, Hungary and Italy. 2009 – 2011.
- **NEW BRIDGES** – Strengthening Quality of Life through improved Management of Urban Rural Interaction. BSR INTERREG IV B Neighborhood programme. 12 partners and 13 associated partners. 2009 – 2011.
- **BaltCICA** – Climate Change: Impact, Costs and Adaptation in the Baltic Sea Region. UBC EnvCom partner in the project. BSR INTERREG IV B Neighborhood programme. 2009 – 2011.
- **PURE Phosphorous Reduction in Baltic Cities.** 7 UBC cities. 11 partners and 18 associated partners. BSR INTERREG IV B Neighborhood programme. 2009 – 2013.
- **Coordination activities Russian neighborhood, Awareness Raising in Russia, Blue Pack and NEAT.** Several Awareness and neighborhood involvement projects between UBC and Russian cities. Ministry On Foreign Affairs and Environment in Finland. 2010 - 2011
- **Solution 2011 Conference.** Coordination and responsibility of a mayor sustainability conference in the Baltic Sea region. To take place during 31.1. – 2.2. 2011 in Turku.
- **SNOOP project.** Ship exhaust emissions effects on marine environment and human health. Central Baltic BSR INTERREG IV A, Neighborhood programme. 6 partners. 2009 - 2013
- **ELTIS + project in starting phase.** EU IIE funding
- **GREENCITY project in starting phase.** Project together with City of Umeå. Life + funding

Applications in the field of Climate change, sustainable maritime policy, ships and ports, sustainable transport and traffic, reduction of nutrients from rivers etc.

Evaluation

The Commission on Environment has an effective secretariat with good resources, hosted and located in the City of Turku.

The secretariat has an international staff of 17 full-time professionals. The purpose of the secretariat is to serve the commission and to manage and co-ordinate the implementation of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010-2015.

The activities and services of the UBC Commission on Environment are closely tied to funding possibilities and the secretariat is therefore dependent of external funding programmes.

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