

**MINUTES FROM THE 19TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
Aalborg, Denmark, 28-29 October 1997**

INTRODUCTION

The 19th meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 28-29 October 1997 in the City of Aalborg, Denmark, upon the invitation of Mr Kaj Kjaer, Mayor of the City of Aalborg.

The first day of the meeting was attended by the members of the Executive Board and the chairmen of the Commissions. The second day was open for the representatives from all member cities.

FRIDAY, 28 November 1997

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the Agenda.

The 19th meeting of the UBC Executive Board was opened by Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union. Mr Engström greeted all participants and wished them a successful meeting.

The welcome words were given by Mr Kaj Kjaer, Mayor of Aalborg, who wished all delegates the fruitful discussions and a pleasant stay in Aalborg.

The meeting adopted the Agenda.

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

Mr Kaj Kjaer Mayor of Aalborg and Mr Timo Kvist Deputy Mayor of Turku were elected to check the minutes.

Introduction of the new UBC Executive Board.

Mr Anders Engström, President of the Union, introduced the new members of UBC Executive Board - the cities of Klaipėda and Rēzekne.

UBC procedures - election of Secretary General.

President Anders Engström proposed Mr Paweł Żaboklicki from Gdańsk as a candidate for UBC Secretary General.

Decision:

The Board elected Mr Paweł Żaboklicki as a Secretary General of the Union for 6-years period.

IV UBC General Conference in Gdańsk - evaluation.

Mr Anders Engström underlined that the IV UBC General Conference titled "Baltic Sea Cooperation Forum" was attended by the highest number of member cities so far - approx. 250 participants representing 63 member cities and 50 international organisations. The keynote speakers - leaders of major Baltic organisations, foreign ministers and EU Commissioner -

significantly contributed to the conference success. During four workshops the conference discussed the most challenging topics of the Baltic Sea region.

The Board expressed cordial thanks to the City of Gdańsk for hosting the conference underlining Gdańsk hospitality and its unique atmosphere.

As regards the next conference in Stockholm in 1999 the Board urged all member cities and the commissions to provide the secretariat with relevant documents one month before the assembly, so they can be distributed to the conference participants in due time. The secretariat was authorised to prepare the time-schedule for receiving and spreading the documents.

Report from the visit to the European Commission.

The UBC visit to European Commission took place on 14-15 October 1997. The Union was represented by President Anders Engström, Vice-President Bartłomiej Sochański, Project Manager Juhan Janusson and UBC-EU Project Leader Dominik Górski. The delegation met representatives of several EU Directorates General (DG) to discuss further intensification of UBC-EC relations. The meetings were arranged by Copenhagen and South-Sweden EU offices in Brussels. The main conclusion from the discussions was that UBC lacks clear policy towards the EU and must work it out as soon as possible.

Discussion on UBC Policy.

President Anders Engström stressed that in the beginning the Union's main goal was to initiate cooperation and exchange of experiences between its members. Now, after six years of activity, there is a demand for UBC to review and develop its policy and strategy of work.

During extensive discussion the Board highlighted the following issues, which must be reflected in Union's policy:

- Development of the network cooperation and exchange between the member cities;
- Promotion of democratic, economic, social, environmental and urban development;
- Safeguarding and promoting the interests of Baltic Cities towards national and international organisations especially the EU.

Decisions:

1. The Board urged all member cities to contribute to the process of forming UBC policy by answering the following questions:

- what does your city expect from UBC membership ?
- what aims do you consider important to be included in UBC general policy and the working programme ?

The answers should be sent to UBC secretariat by the 15 January 1998.

2. The Board decided to establish a working group responsible for formulating the policy on the basis of the above questionnaire. The working group shall consist of the UBC Presidents and representatives of four cities appointed by the President.

Proposals from the Commissions.

Mrs Lillian Westerberg from Stockholm - the leading city of newly established UBC Commission on Business Cooperation - invited the members of Executive Board to Stockholm on 10 February 1997 to discuss the structure, aims and scope of activities of the new Commission.

Proposals from Member Cities.

The President informed that four member cities from Latvia and Lithuania ie. Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys and Riga requested the UBC Executive Board to express support for their countries in the efforts to begin the negotiations for EU membership at the same time as other applicant states from the Baltic Sea region.

Mentioned cities are of the opinion that all applicant states from the Baltic Sea region shall start negotiations at the same time, in order to assure equal conditions for future development of those countries.

During the discussion representatives of the cities from Nordic countries and Germany stressed that their national laws do not allow the cities to express opinions on foreign issues, but they can express their views as persons.

Having in mind above the members of the UBC Executive Board gathered in Aalborg issued a statement supporting the cities in applicant countries in the efforts to support their states to qualify for EU-membership and for equal negotiation chances.

Additionally Mr Rimvydas Vastakas from Klaipėda introduced the project to organise the UBC Off-Theatre Festival in Klaipėda on 10-15 May 1999. The festival would be attended by small theatre groups from Baltic Cities.

Decision:

The Board expressed its support to the project and authorised the city of Klaipėda together with the Commission on Culture to go on with festival organisation.

Questions raised.

The President informed about a letter from newly established WHO Baltic Healthy Cities Office in Turku, in which UBC is proposed a cooperation in the field of health promotion in the cities.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal of cooperation and authorised the Commission on Social Affairs (responsible also for health issues) to take further contacts with WHO in question.

Mr Anders Engström informed that the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC) proposed the UBC to be a partner in the project called BALDER. The project aims at promoting the heritage tourism, in particular viking, Hanseatic, amber, maritime and nature heritages.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal and authorised the Commission on Tourism to take further contacts with BTC in question.

Mrs Lillian Westerberg, Stockholm, informed the Board that several UBC member cities expressed an opinion that there is a need for coordination of numerous Baltic Sea sailing events.

On 17 December 1997 the city of Karlskrona will organise a meeting of Baltic cities interested in cooperation in that field.

SATURDAY, 29 November 1997

Report from the Board meeting of November 28.

President Anders Engström briefly summarised the main issues discussed by the Board on the previous day.

New Member Cities.

President Anders Engström informed the Executive Board about new application for Union Membership submitted by the City of Cēsis, Latvia.

Decision:

The Board decided to accept the City of Cēsis as a Member of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished Cesis a successful cooperation with other UBC members. The number of Union member cities reached the figure **79**.

Questions to the Commissions.

Mr Anders Engström asked Mr Mikko Jokinen, co-chairman of UBC Commission on Environment, about the latest developments in Baltic Local Agenda 21, stressing the need to involve grassroots level in the process.

Mr Mikko Jokinen informed that the process is developing on two levels:

- **Baltic 21** which is the governmental level,
- **Baltic LA 21 Forum** which is the local level.

UBC is represented at both levels. In September 1998, UBC will organise a Baltic LA 21 Forum conference in Turku.

Mr Jokinen also informed that a working group consisting of 7 member cities will be appointed to work out the UBC Local Agenda strategy.

Mrs Petra Hamann, Rostock, secretariat of the Commission on Social Affairs, informed that following the Executive Board's decision, the Commission included the health issues to the scope of its activities. The Commission discussed cooperation possibilities with the WHO Healthy Cities Office in Turku. Moreover the Commission started the project called the UBC Social Market Place - member cities have been asked what used equipment (medical, school etc.) they could donate to other cities.

Informal meeting of major Baltic organisations.

Mr Anders Engström informed, that on 27 October 1997 during the annual conference of BSSSC held in Gdańsk, following UBC initiative, the leaders of major Baltic organisations i.e. Union of the Baltic Cities, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association held an informal meeting. The major Baltic organisations agreed to hold annual meetings in order to work out joint projects and discuss

Baltic strategic issues such as policy towards the EU. Next meeting is planned to be held in the beginning of 1998.

Report from UBC-EU Conference in Tallinn.

Mr Bartłomiej Sochański, UBC Vice-President, reported from the UBC-EU Conference in Tallinn attended by 200 participants from over 30 member cities. The conference was the major event of the UBC-EU Information Project aimed at preparing UBC member cities from applicant countries for the EU enlargement.

The Board expressed its appreciation to all cities involved in the conference preparation, in particular to the city of Tallinn which hosted the event.

Moreover Mr Sochański stressed that in order to achieve its objectives the project should be continued. To obtain resources for project continuation, the project leading city Szczecin submitted an application to the BSPF. Having in mind the importance of the project Mr Sochański proposed that the project leader shall be invited to the Executive Board meetings.

Decision:

The Board encouraged all member cities to participate actively in the next stage of the project and decided the project leader shall be invited to the Executive Board meetings.

One of the issues discussed at the UBC-EU conference was the document "Towards an urban agenda in the EU" published by the European Commission. The Board expressed an opinion that UBC, like EUROCITIES, should have the possibility to comment the document.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Presidents together with Gdańsk and Copenhagen to find out whether UBC may send its comments on the document to the European Commission.

Latest UBC project applications.

Mr Juhan Janusson submitted report on latest UBC project applications to Baltic Small Projects Facility EU programme along with the information on ongoing UBC projects.

Ms Petra Hamann, Rostock, Commission on Social Affairs, and Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku, Commission on Environment, reported on latest project applications submitted by mentioned Commissions. Detailed information is enclosed along with the PM's report.

During the discussion the Board stressed that more emphasis must be put on propagating successful projects carried out by member cities, so other cities could implement similar projects at home. The Board suggested to use UBC Internet homepage managed by the city of Kalmar for this purpose. The UBC website could also be used as project partner search forum.

Finally the Board authorised the Project Manager to prepare regular written information on EU and other programmes available for the cities, including the deadlines.

Baltic Cities Bulletin 3/97.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki introduced the newest issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin which brings information on extensive cooperation between the Baltic cities, latest Union's meetings and activities, UBC "who is who" directory, news from member cities and more.

Mr Żaboklicki informed that the next issue of BCB will be devoted to Baltic Cities Business Cooperation and the deadline for sending the articles is March 10, 1998.

The Board expressed its appreciation to the Editorial Board for the professional level of the bulletin and encouraged all member cities to contribute actively to the next issue of BCB.

Report from the Task Force meeting in Kalmar.

Ms Sonja Hilavuo, chairman of the UBC Task Force for Public Relations and Communication, reported from the second TF meeting held in Kalmar on 5-7 October 1997, attended by over 30 participants from 25 member cities.

Reports from conferences attended by Union's representatives.

The following delegates submitted reports from the conferences where they represented the Union of the Baltic Cities:

- 6th Conference of Baltic Parliamentarians, Gdańsk, 15-16 September 1997 - reported by Mr Anders Engström

- Major Baltic Rim Cities Conference, Turku, 18-19 September 1997 - reported by Mr Anders Engström

Additionally Mr Timo Kvist, Deputy Mayor of Turku, reported from the 2nd part of Major Baltic Rim Cities Conference held in St.Petersburg on 3-5 October 1997.

- European Investment Bank Forum 1997, Stockholm, 23-24 October 1997 - reported by Mr Paweł Żaboklicki

- 5th BSSSC Conference, Gdansk, 27-28 October 1997 - reported by Mr Anders Engström

- International Black Sea Club Assembly Meeting, Izmit, Turkey, 30 Oct.-2 Nov. 1997 - reported by Mr Juhan Janusson

Matters raised at the meeting.

Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia, informed that the City of Gdynia is interested to start cooperation within UBC in the field of education but the existing Commissions do not cover this topic.

Decision:

The Board authorised the city of Gdynia to prepare a written proposal to the next Board meeting suggesting the form of UBC involvement in the field of education.

Next Meeting of the Executive Board.

Mr Anders Engström, President of the UBC and the Mayor of Kalmar, proposed to organise the next (20th) meeting of the UBC Executive Board in Kalmar 20-21 March 1997.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal.

Closing of the Meeting.

The Chairman of the Meeting, Mr Anders Engström expressed his thanks to the City of Aalborg for hosting the delegation and closed the XIX Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Anders Engström

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki

Chairman

Secretary

Mr Kaj Kjaer

Mr Timo Kvist

Adjuster

Adjuster