

**MINUTES FROM THE 26TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
Siauliai, Lithuania, 27 November 1999**

INTRODUCTION

The 26th meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 27 November 1999 in the City of Siauliai, Lithuania, upon the invitation of Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, Mayor of Siauliai.

The meeting was attended by nineteen participants. The list of participants is included as annex 1 to this report.

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the Agenda.

The 26th meeting of the UBC Executive Board was opened by Mr Anders Engstrom, the President of the Union. Mr Engstrom greeted all participants and wished them a successful meeting.

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, Mayor of Siauliai, welcomed all delegates and wished them the fruitful discussions and a pleasant stay in Siauliai.

The meeting adopted the Agenda attached as annex 2 to this report.

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

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, Mayor of Siauliai and Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth, Head of Foreign Relations, Rostock, were elected to check the minutes.

3. Introduction of the new Executive Board.

President Anders Engstrom reminded that at the General Conference in Stockholm, new cities have been elected to the Executive Board, these are: Liepaja, Pori, Siauliai, St.Petersburg, Tartu. The remaining cities – Aalborg, Bergen, Gdansk, Rostock, Stockholm – served as Board members also in previous two-year period. Mr Engstrom warmly welcomed representatives of newly elected Board member cities.

The President presented the most important questions to be handled by the Board in the forthcoming year, particularly: internal organisation; action plan; strategic projects eg. EU enlargement, Agenda 21; EU program for BSR; cooperation with other Baltic organisations; youth network; cities in Belarus; northern dimension.

4. New Member Cities.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki informed the Executive Board about new applications for Union membership submitted by the cities of: Kronshtadt, Lomonosov, Peterhof (Russia) and Jelgava (Latvia).

Mr Anders Engstrom put forward a question whether mentioned above Russian towns are independent towns or districts of St.Petersburg.

Ms Elena Ivanova, expert in Committee for External Affairs, St.Petersburg, informed that the heads of administrations of mentioned towns are appointed by the Governor of St.Petersburg, but the cities have elected City Councils.

Decision:

The Board decided to accept mentioned above cities as Members of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished them a successful cooperation with other UBC members. The number of Union member cities reached the figure 96 (see annex 3).

5. Adoption of UBC Internal Regulations.

The President reminded that the final version of UBC Internal Regulations was completed at the Executive Board meeting in Tartu in June. In September the General Conference made an amendment in the Statute saying that the Executive Board has the right to formulate and adopt the UBC Internal Regulations.

Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth, Head of Foreign Relations Department, Rostock, informed that she would like to propose amendments to the version of Regulations adopted by the Board in Tartu eg. add a paragraph concerning the Board of Audit.

Decision:

The Board decided to postpone adoption of UBC Internal Regulations till the next meeting. The Board asked Mrs Wohlgemuth to provide the Secretariat with proposed amendments three weeks before the next meeting.

6. Discussion on how to implement the new UBC Strategy.

President Anders Engstrom reminded that the new UBC Strategy was recently adopted by the V UBC General Conference in Stockholm. During the discussion the Board members expressed opinions that in order to implement the Strategy an Action Plan should be developed. The President proposed to authorise the Presidium, Secretary General and Project Manager to prepare, in close cooperation with the Commissions, the draft of the Action Plan.

Decision:

The Board accepted the President's proposal.

7. UBC internal structure.

President Engstrom reminded that at present UBC has the following structures: General Conference, Presidium, Executive Board, Commissions, Board of Audit, Secretariat. There are also working networks ie. Contact Persons, EU-Coordinators, LA21 Network, Women's Network, Youth Network, BCB Editorial Board.

Mr Engstrom expressed an opinion that there is a need to reactivate a task force dealing with information, communication, public relations – the Task Force on Information.

Decision:

The Board authorised Ms Ewa Kurjata (Szczecin), Ms Ewa Depka (Gdynia), Ms Iwona Smigerska-Belczak (UBC Secretariat) and Ms Cay Sevon (Turku) to prepare for the next Board meeting, a proposal of tasks to be carried out by the new UBC Task Force on Information.

The Board asked the Secretariat to remind the member cities that all cities have the right to participate in the work of all Commissions. The cities should appoint their representatives to selected Commissions and inform about it the chairpersons of the Commissions.

President Engstrom informed that in the beginning of next year the Presidium would like to meet the Commission chairpersons to discuss how to work in the future.

Mr Audun Oiestad, Department Director, Bergen, reminded that the Board should determine who of the Vice-Presidents shall be the first and who shall be the second vice-president.

Decision:

The Board decided to make a decision in question at the next meeting.

8. Financial matters.

President Engstrom informed he has applied to Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for resources to extend the employment of Mr Juhan Janusson. SIDA decided to grant UBC with only half of applied amount. Mr Engstrom proposed to employ Mr Janusson for another year. The total costs of employment (including salary, official trips, hotels, telephones, office, materials) would be 71.116 Euro, of which 28.902 would be paid by SIDA, 9.601 by Kalmar, 6.836 by EU coordinator project, 25.777 by UBC. Mr Janusson's salary would be respectively decreased in case he would succeed in obtaining external grant(s) for UBC project(s).

Mr Engstrom also proposed to change Mr Janusson's title to the UBC-EU Coordinator; the new title would reflect in a better way his actual tasks.

Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock, expressed an opinion that discussed amount of UBC contribution ie. ca. 26.000 Euro is almost the whole reserve in the UBC budget for 2000. Mrs Wohlgemuth said that the solution could be to employ Mr Janusson for half a year and look for external funds in the meantime.

Decision:

After discussion and voting (7:3) the Board decided to employ Mr Juhan Janusson as UBC-EU Coordinator for another year. UBC contribution in the period concerned shall not exceed 25.777 Euro.

The Board requested the Secretariat to present, at the next meeting, the UBC budget for 2000, taking into account UBC financial result from 1999.

9. Involvement of LA21, women and youth in the Commissions work.

President Anders Engstrom expressed an opinion that all UBC Commissions should involve LA21 aspects in their daily work. The Commissions should also strive to involve more women and young people in their activities.

The Board fully agreed with the President's opinion and encouraged all UBC Commissions to follow these guidelines.

10. Youth Network.

Mr Anders Engstrom informed that UBC has been approached by a network of young people who would like to strengthen contacts between the youth from UBC member cities. In order to have a better platform for activities, the network would like to act as UBC informal structure. The network will have a meeting in Gdansk in January 2000.

The Board endorsed the youth network initiative and encouraged all member cities to support the network.

11. Major Baltic organisations and the EU enlargement in the BSR.

President Engstrom reminded that UBC has regular contacts with major Baltic organisations such as CBSS, BSSSC, CPMR BSC, Baltic Parliamentarians and others. It is very important to work out a common standpoint towards the EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Engstrom informed that the next meeting of major Baltic organisations will be held in Oslo in December, in association with the CBSS Senior Officials meeting.

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas expressed an opinion that UBC should urge the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) to put more emphasis on the Baltic Sea Region. The Board agreed with Mr Lankauskas opinion that CLRAE should pay more attention to the problems of Baltic Sea Region.

12. Situation in Belarus cities.

President Engstrom reminded that Belarus government authorities informed him in April that they would like cities from Belarus to join UBC. The President invited in June to Tartu two representatives of Sapieha Foundation (pro-democratic movement) from Belarus who introduced the Board with the situation of cities in Belarus. They informed that the local authorities in Belarus are not elected democratically but appointed by the government.

Mr Eugenijus Gentvilas, UBC Vice-President, who investigated the situation of cities in Belarus, fully confirmed the information provided by Sapieha Foundation. Mr Gentvilas

proposed that in order to work out the UBC policy towards the cities in Belarus, UBC representative should meet Mr Siemion Szarecki, leader of democratically elected parliament of Belarus, dissolved by President Lukaszenko.

Decision:

The Board agreed with the proposal and authorised President Anders Engstrom and Vice-President Eugenijus Gentvilas to meet Mr Szarecki and discuss the problem.

13. UBC involvement in Victoria Lake region.

President Engstrom informed that Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) carries out a project to help the cities from Victoria Lake region in Africa to strengthen their network. Within the frames of the project, SIDA sponsored the trip of Mr Engstrom and Mr Mikko Jokinen to Uganda and Kenya. UBC delegation had several meetings with the authorities of cities situated in the Victoria Lake region. President Engstrom signed a "*Partnership Document*" between UBC and Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation. SIDA asked if UBC could help to establish the secretariat of LVRLAC, through providing necessary know-how. All related expenses would be covered by SIDA.

Decision:

The Board authorised the President to answer positively to SIDA's request.

14. Proposals from cities and commissions.

14.1 Validation of Municipal Environmental Audits (MEAs).

Mr Risto Veivo, UBC Environmental Coordinator, informed that MEAs have so far been run in Tallinn, Parnu, Panevezys, Klaipeda, Turku and Pori. In order to give additional support to the follow-up and implementation of the proposed improvements, the Commission proposes that each audit should be validated by external body. Suitable external bodies for validation would be the UBC and HELCOM.

Decision:

The Board approved the proposal and authorised the Commission's secretariat to make necessary arrangements for the validations.

14.2 Updating of UBC LA 21 Action Program.

Mr Veivo recalled that the UBC Local Agenda 21 Action Program was approved by the V General Conference in Stockholm. According to the program, the Executive Board has the overall responsibility for the implementation, and it is also expected to update the program on the basis of proposals made by technical coordinating body - the Commission on Environment secretariat. Mr Veivo introduced several updates to the Program.

Decision:

The Board approved proposed updates and decided to authorise the Secretariat of the Commission to make technical updates in the Program, in the future.

14.3 Cooperation with TAIEX.

Mr Veivo informed that UBC started the cooperation with the European Commission's agency TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange). UBC Commission on Environment and TAIEX are jointly organising three seminars on the implementation of EC environmental legislation in Baltic States. The first seminar attended by 85 participants was held this week in Kaunas. Seminars in Jurmala and Tartu will be organised in next two weeks.

The Board took note of the report and encouraged other Commissions to propose TAIEX to organise analogous seminars in other fields.

14.4 Secretariat of the Commission on Environment.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, co-Chairman of the Commission on Environment, applied to the Executive Board, to allocate annually 10.000 Euro from the UBC budget 2000-2001, to co-finance the costs of the Commission's Secretariat in Turku (analogically to the period 1998-1999). The major part of the secretariat costs is covered by the city of Turku.

Decision:

The Board decided to postpone the decision on co-financing the Commission secretariat in Turku, when the UBC financial result for 1999 is known. The Board authorised the Presidium to make decisions on co-financing the secretariats of UBC Commissions.

14.5 General Conference in 2001.

Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth proposed the following theme for the VI General Conference to be held in Rostock in 2001: "Social justice in the Baltic Sea Region in the new Millennium". Special fields could be as follows: social equality, involvement of youth, strengthening of handicapped. The conference would adopt a UBC 'Social Charter'. Mrs Wohlgemuth proposed 12-13 October 2001 as date of the conference and 11 October for the Board meeting. Mrs Wohlgemuth asked if Rostock can use sponsors to co-finance the conference.

Decision:

The Board approved the theme and the date of the VI General Conference. The Board meeting will be held as usual on the eve of the conference. The Board confirmed that, as usual, the sponsoring can be used to co-finance the conference costs.

14.6 Project "Prevention of Trafficking in Girls and Women".

Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth informed that this year the Commission on Health & Social Affairs submitted an application to EU DAPHNE programme to obtain funds for the project "Prevention of Trafficking in Girls and Women". The total budget of the project was ca. 65.000 Euro. Unfortunately the application was not approved by DAPHNE. Mrs Wohlgemuth requested the Board to allocate 5.000 Euro for project implementation in the smaller scale.

Decision:

The Board decided to consider the application at the next meeting.

14.7 “UBC Maps” project.

In March 1999 the Board granted the Task Force for Communication and PR with the sum of 7.000 USD to implement the project “UBC Maps”. The project was scheduled to be implemented in 1999. Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia, asked the Board if the project could be implemented and necessary resources allocated in 2000.

Decision:

The Board decided to postpone the decision in question, until the tasks and priorities of the new Task Force on Information are formulated.

14.8 Secretariat of the Commission on Education.

Mr Ivo Eesmaa, Mayor of Kardla, Vice-Chairman of the Commission on Education, applied to the Board for 5.000 \$ to co-finance the costs of the Commission’s secretariat, which was established in Kardla in October 1999.

Decision:

The Board decided to allocate 5.000 \$ for the secretariat of the Commission on Education from the UBC budget for 2000.

15. Reports from the conferences attended by Union’s representatives.

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

- Meeting between CBSS, UBC, BSSSC and Barents Region, Oslo, 21 October 1999 – reported by Mr Anders Engstrom

The Barents Region showed interest in cooperation with UBC. The Board decided to invite a representative of Barents Region to the next Board meeting.

- BSSSC Conference, Kaunas, 29-30 October 1999 – reported by Mr Anders Engstrom
- CLRAE Conference of Border Regions, Timisoara, 29-30 October 1999 – reported by Mr Juhan Janusson.

The conference adopted Mr Janusson’s amendment to the conference resolution calling for CLRAE’s closer attention to the problems of the BSR. Mr Janusson proposed to lobby CLRAE to hold the next conference of border regions in the BSR.

Decision:

The Board asked the Presidium to encourage the mayors of UBC member cities to offer CLRAE their readiness to host the next conference of border regions.

Mr Risto Veivo informed about the Third European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns to be held in Hannover on 9-12 February 2000.

16. Questions raised at the meeting.

The cities of Liepaja and Jekabpils requested Union of the Baltic Cities for assistance in the development and implementation of the strategy fighting unemployment in these cities. At the moment mentioned cities have no experience and no sufficient resources to develop effective employment policy, without professional assistance.

Decision:

The Board asked the Commission on Health & Social Affairs to assist Liepaja and Jekabpils in the exchange of experience and project design, in the field of employment development.

17. Next Meeting of the Executive Board.

The Board decided that following an invitation from Mr Juhani Leino, Mayor of Kemi, the next meeting of the UBC Executive Board will be held in Kemi, Finland, in the end of March 2000. (the meeting will be held on 31 March – 1 April 2000)

18. Closing of the Meeting.

Mr Anders Engstrom expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and to the City of Siauliai for its warm hospitality and closed the 26th Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Anders Engstrom
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki
Secretary

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas
Adjuster

Mrs Karin Wohlgemuth
Adjuster