

**MINUTES FROM THE 36<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE  
BOARD OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES  
Umea, Sweden, 28-29 March 2003**

**CLOSED SESSION, 28 March**

The 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 28-29<sup>th</sup> of March 2003 in the City of Umea, Sweden, upon the invitation of Ms Marie-Louise Ronnmark, Mayor of Umea.

The first part of the meeting (closed session) was attended by the Members of the Executive Board. The second part of the meeting (open session) was open to all Member Cities.

The list of participants is included as an annex to this report.

**1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

Ms Marie-Louise Ronnmark, Mayor of Umea, welcomed all delegates and wished them the fruitful discussions and a pleasant stay in Umea. Ms Ronnmark made a presentation introducing the city of Umea.

The meeting was opened by Mr Per Boedker Andersen, the President of the Union. Mr Andersen greeted all participants and wished them a successful meeting. The meeting adopted the agenda attached as an annex to this report.

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

Ms Marie-Louise Ronnmark, Mayor of Umea and Ms Beate Waltdmann, Assistant to the Mayor of Lubeck, were elected to check the minutes.

**3. Applications for UBC membership.**

President Andersen informed about the applications for UBC membership from the Cities of Orebro, Gavle, Lulea (Sweden) and Grodno (Belarus). Applications are attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board decided to accept the cities of Orebro, Gavle and Lulea as Members of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Having in mind that Belarus is not a country bordering the Baltic Sea, the Board decided to grant the city of Grodno with the observer status.

The Board wished mentioned above new cities a fruitful cooperation with other UBC members. The updated list of member cities is enclosed.

**4. VII General Conference in Klaipeda – status of preparations.**

Ms Ina Sidlauskienė informed the Board about the status of preparations to the VII UBC General Conference in Klaipeda, 17-19 October 2003.

- the conference Organising Committee chaired by the Mayor Rimantas Tarasievicius has been established.
- Klaipeda City Council has allocated the necessary financial means of 35.000 Eur as contribution to the GC budget.

- Invitations to VIPs in Lithuania have been sent out and several confirmations received among them from the Prime Minister of Lithuania.
- Preliminary reservations at 4 hotels have been made.
- Contract conditions for renting the premises of Drama Theatre as the main venue of the conference have been discussed with the theatre director.
- A contract with an artist has been concluded and a draft version of the conference invitation brochure has been created.
- A cultural program was discussed with relevant institutions.
- UBC member cities were contacted to investigate the interest to hold exhibitions. 15 cities responded and they will be further contacted by the organisation committee for details.

The Organising committee will continue to work according to the plan and in close cooperation with the UBC Secretariat.

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General, presented the draft programme of the General Conference. First conference day will be fully devoted to the conference theme: “The Baltic Sea Wave - Business Development in the New Europe”.

As regards the keynote speakers, UBC has sent preliminary invitations to:

- Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
- Mr Erkki Liikanen, EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society
- Mr Albert Bore, President of the Committee of the Regions
- Mr Leif Pagrotsky, Minister of Industry, Employment and Communications

Vice-President Armas Lahoniitty informed the Board that Mr Liikanen most probably will not be able to participate in the General Conference.

President Andersen informed that Mr Bore has not yet given final reply to the invitation.

Juhan Janusson, Political Adviser, informed that Mr Pagrotsky has received the invitation but it is too early for him to confirm his participation.

Mr Zaboklicki reminded that UBC intends to invite high-ranked representative of Baltic Business Community to speak at the GC in Klaipeda. Mr Lahoniitty informed that he will ask the company Fortum to provide a speaker.

The second day of the conference will be devoted to internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finances etc.

The draft programme of the General Conference is attached to the minutes.

## **5. UBC Strategy revising process.**

This item was moved to the next meeting of the Executive Board.

## **6. UBC contribution to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Dimension Action Plan.**

Mr Juhan Janusson reminded that UBC and other Baltic organisations have been requested by the Council of the Baltic Sea States to submit ideas and proposals to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-06. He informed that UBC contribution to NDAP has been prepared and sent to the CBSS. CBSS forwarded UBC contribution to the European Commission. The text of the UBC contribution is attached to the minutes.

The Board underlined the importance of UBC involvement in the NDAP. The Board expressed its hope that the new NDAP will not remain on the paper, but will be successively implemented and the resources for its implementation will be mobilised.

#### **7. UBC policy on sponsoring.**

President Andersen informed the Board that he has sent applications for sponsorship to several large companies operating the Baltic Sea region. So far the responses have been negative, he said.

Mr Anders Engstrom, Kalmar, expressed an opinion that perhaps UBC should ask for sponsorship for concrete projects instead of asking for general sponsoring.

Vice-President Lahoniitty informed that he has applied for sponsorship to the energy company Fortum and the application was treated positively. Fortum decided to sponsor UBC with 20.000 EUR within the two-year period.

The Board welcomed information from Mr Lahoniitty and expressed an opinion that search for sponsors should be continued and UBC should work out its sponsoring policy.

#### **8. Financial matters.**

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed that UBC financial report for 2002 has been sent to all member cities on 3 March 2003. He said the report brings the details on: UBC incomes and expenditure; fees paid by member cities; expenditure of UBC Commissions; cities contributions to the secretariats; UBC projects with external funding; cities contributions to the UBC events. The Board approved the financial report for 2002. Subsequently Secretary General presented the estimated budget for 2003. The Board adopted the budget.

Mr Zaboklicki also presented the draft proposal of new membership fees. UBC fees has not been raised since 1999. The new membership fees are needed in order to cover the necessary costs and to give respective resources to the commissions and networks. The Presidium proposed that in 2004 the fees for “eastern” cities should be 65% lower than fees paid by “western” cities. The Presidium stressed that gradually the fees for member cities in all countries should be levelled, eg. in 10 years time perspective.

The Board authorised the Secretary General to submit the proposal of new membership fees at the next Board meeting.

#### **9. Information on project SUCI (Sustainable Citizenship).**

Mr Juhan Janusson informed that UBC has been invited to take part in a consortium that plans a large project to be financed by the 6th Framework. The aim of the project is to utilise the new tools available for increased communication between the citizens and the politicians / local authorities. The main actors in the consortium are European research institutions, research consultation companies and think-tanks. The role of UBC is to find suitable and interested cities, in cooperation with other regional cities networks and to coordinate the participating cities. The project is planned to last for about 4 years. The start of the project is expected January 2004. The information on the project is attached to the minutes.

#### **Decision:**

The Board decided that UBC will be involved in the project.

## **OPEN SESSION, 29 March 2003**

### **1. Report from the closed session of the Board.**

President Per Boedker Andersen summarised questions discussed by the Board during the closed session on the previous day.

### **2. Presentation of new member cities.**

Representatives of the newly accepted member cities of Orebro, Gavle and Lulea made general presentations introducing their towns. Short information on mentioned above cities are attached to the minutes.

### **3. Swedish policy in the Baltic Sea region.**

Mr Hans F. Groenwall, Ambassador in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the Swedish policy towards the Baltic Sea region. The presentation of Mr Groenwall is attached to the minutes.

Mr Groenwall put forward an idea to organise a series of seminars along the borders between i.a. the Baltic states and Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. The aim would be to get together politicians and local authorities from the border regions concerned and to let them listen and learn how crossborder activities have been carried out the last decade in our region and how they have facilitated contacts and initiatives in practical life. Mr Groenwall proposed UBC to be one of the actors organising such seminars.

The Board expressed its thanks to Mr Groenwall for his interesting presentation on Swedish policy in the BSR. The Board described the proposal to arrange seminars on cross-border cooperation as interesting and offered UBC readiness to be a co-organiser, provided that CBSS adopts the initiative as its own and financing would be secured from external sources.

### **4. Latest initiatives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.**

Ambassador Hannu Halinen, Director of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, presented an overview of the most important issues for the BSR, the CBSS is currently working with. The presentation of Mr Halinen is enclosed to this report.

Mr Halinen stressed the importance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Dimension Action Plan. He reminded that UBC has conveyed its views and recommendations on the NDAP to the EU Commission in February this year. Mr Halinen commended UBC for a very comprehensive and constructive contribution. He appreciated that UBC is underlining that "CBSS must also have an important role in the continuing efforts to develop NDAP".

The Board expressed its thanks to Mr Halinen for his important contribution and confirmed that UBC is ready to continue to work together with CBSS on the most vital issues concerning the BSR.

### **5. Report from the meeting of Commissions Chairpersons.**

Mr Slawomir Szafranski, Chairman of the Commission on Culture, reported from the meeting of the chairmen and coordinators of the UBC Commissions and Networks. The meeting was held on the previous day. The report from this meeting is attached to the minutes.

## **6. Reports from the Commissions & Networks.**

The following representatives of the UBC Commissions and Networks submitted activity reports from the period June 2002 – February 2003. The reports are attached to the minutes.

Commission on Business Cooperation – Kari Loytty / Vytautas Juodagalvis

Commission on Culture – Slawomir Szafranski

Commission on Environment – Guldbrand Skjonberg / Risto Veivo

Commission on Health & Social Affairs – Karin Wohlgemuth

Commission on Sport – Ewa Depka

Commission on Tourism – Viktor Rydell

Commission on Urban Planning – Lars-Goran Bostrom

Women's Network – Lillian Westerberg

EU-Coordinators Network – Thomas C. Andersen

Task Force on Youth Network – Magdalena Marchlewicz

The Commissions on Education, Information Society and Transportation were not represented but provided the written reports.

Women's Network applied for 5000 EUR for activities in 2003. The Board authorised the President to make a decision in question.

The Board took note of the reports. The Board praised the Commissions and Networks for their active work and encouraged them to continue their important tasks.

## **7. Information on the project SUCI – Sustainable Citizenship.**

This item was treated on the previous day – see page 3 of the minutes.

## **8. Implementation of the UBC Social Charter – present status.**

Ms Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock, informed the Board about latest developments concerning the implementation of the UBC Social Charter adopted at the VI General Conference in Rostock in October 2001. She emphasized that Social Charter was translated to all 10 Baltic languages and sent out to all UBC member cities. The full report on the implementation of the Social Charter is attached to the minutes. Ms Wohlgemuth applied to the Board for funding to facilitate the charter implementation process. The Board authorised the President to make a decision in question.

The Board authorised the Commission on Health & Social Affairs to carry on the process of Social Charter implementation.

## **9. UBC presence in Brussels.**

Ms Krista Taipale-Salminen from Turku Southwest Finland European Office in Brussels informed the Board about the presence of UBC member cities in Brussels. She informed that 44 UBC cities are represented in Brussels by 21 Regional European Offices. Ms Salminen underlined that there is already existing base for building up a network of UBC European Offices in Brussels which could, for instance, provide support and promotion of UBC interests in Brussels. Presentation of Ms Salminen is enclosed to the minutes.

The Board expressed an opinion that the wide presence of the UBC member cities in Brussels should be utilised to promote UBC initiatives and policies in the European Commission.

#### **10. UBC Drawing Competition "Dreams Without Limits".**

Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia, reminded that 2003 has been declared by the Council of European Union as European Year of People with Disabilities. Having this in mind Ms Depka proposed to organise an International Drawing Competition for disabled children from UBC member cities, entitled "Dreams Without Limits". The final of the competition will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003 in the city of Gdynia. The rules of the competition are enclosed to the minutes.

#### Decision:

The Board supported the proposal and authorised the Commission on Sport to go on with project implementation.

#### **11. UBC-LVRLAC project – update.**

Mr Juhan Janusson informed about latest developments in the project between the UBC and the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC). Mr Janusson's report is attached to the minutes.

The Board took note of the report.

#### **12. Latest information on NGO Forum in Turku, 8-11 May 2003.**

Mr Mika Akkanen, Turku, reminded that Baltic Sea NGO Forum is a meeting point for various kinds of non-governmental organisations from the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. The aim of the forum is to strengthen civil society in the region by offering the NGOs in different Baltic Sea countries an opportunity to exchange ideas and develop new networks, and to carry on a dialogue with the public authorities. Baltic Sea NGO Forums are held annually under the auspices of rotating presidencies of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Mr Akkanen said Turku welcomes NGOs interested in Baltic Sea cooperation to participate in the III Forum in Turku.

The Board encouraged all member cities to inform NGOs in their cities about this important event.

#### **13. Reports from the conferences and meetings attended by Union representatives.**

President Andersen informed that since the last Board meeting UBC was represented at the following conferences and meetings:

- Seminar on SUCI, Brussels, 12 November 2002 (J.Janusson)
- Eurocities General Conference, Barcelona, 28-29 November 2002 (A.Lahoniitty)
- Conference on SUCI, Brussels, 17 January 2003 (J.Janusson)
- Labour Market Forum in Helsinki, Finland, 11 February 2003 (M.Lohikoski)
- Seminar on SUCI, London, 8 February 2003 (J.Janusson)

#### **14. Questions raised at the meeting.**

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed that UBC has been approached by the organisers of the Symposium "Religion, Science and the Environment". The initiative stemmed from growing concern over the declining state of the earth's environment, particularly its marine waters. Four symposia has been convened since 1995. Scientists, environmentalists, policy-makers and representatives of the world's main religions drawn global attention to the degradation of the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea, the Danube River and the Adriatic Sea.

In summer 2003, Symposium V, The Baltic Sea: A Common Heritage, A Shared Responsibility will convene on a vessel navigating around the Baltic Sea. The ship will visit Gdansk, Kaliningrad, Tallinn, St.Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm. The event is hold under the joint

auspices of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Mr Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission.

The Board supported the event and authorised the Commission on Environment to help the organisers to identify environmental experts who would speak at the seminars to be held during the symposium.

**15. Next meeting of the Executive Board.**

President Andersen informed about the invitation of the Mayor of Rostock, Mr Arno Poeker, to host the next meeting of the UBC Executive Board.

Decision:

The Board decided to hold its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting in the City of Rostock, Germany, on 18 June 2003.

**16. Closing of the Meeting.**

President Per Boedker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and to the City of Umea for its warm hospitality and closed the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen  
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki  
Secretary

Ms Marie-Louise Ronnmark  
Adjuster

Ms Beate Waldtmann  
Adjuster