

**MINUTES OF THE 52<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**KURESSAARE, ESTONIA, 5 JUNE 2008**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 in Kuressaare upon the invitation of Ms Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare and the Vice-President of UBC. The meeting was attended by members of UBC Executive Board, invited guests and the observers from six Estonian cities. The list of participants is attached to the minutes.

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

The meeting was opened by Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union, Mayor of Kolding. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the hosts of the meeting for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold the meeting in Kuressaare. The meeting adopted the agenda attached to this report.

Mr Toomas Takkis, Chairman of the Kuressaare City Council and Mrs Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare, heartily welcomed the participants. Mr Takkis informed the Board about the structure of Kuressaare City Council and City Government. Ms Tiidus made a presentation introducing the city of Kuressaare.

Kuressaare was granted the town freedom 445 years ago and it is the only city on the island of Saaremaa. The population is 15.000. The territory of the city is 15 sq.km of which 25% is covered with gardens, parks and other green areas. There are no big-scale industries in Kuressaare. The main field of industry is tourism. In cooperation between the public and private sectors, efforts have been taken to increase the attractiveness of the city for both its inhabitants and guests. The seven spa-hotels provide a variety of health and leisure treatments, infrastructure has been developed for active holidays and lifestyle. Cultural life is rich throughout the calendar. Kuressaare offers good quality education, including general education as well as vocational and higher education.

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

Ms Urve Tiidus, Vice-President of UBC, Mayor of Kuressaare and Ms Charlotta Svanberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

**3. Application for membership from Międzyzdroje (Poland).**

Mr Michał Sutyła, Chairman of the City Council of Międzyzdroje, submitted the application of Międzyzdroje to join the Union of the Baltic Cities. The application is attached. Mr Sutyła

provided general information about Międzyzdroje and presented the movie introducing the city. Mr Sutyla heartily invited the UBC Executive Board to hold one of the next meetings in Międzyzdroje and passed an invitation letter to President Andersen.

The city of Międzyzdroje is a 170-year-old summer resort situated on the biggest Polish Island Wolin in the north-west part of the West Pomeranian province. It is the commune counting about 6,8 thousands of inhabitants with thousands tourists from Poland and other countries coming for vacation.

The greatest attraction of Międzyzdroje is a beautiful sandy beach, from which a 395 m long pier goes far into the sea. At the pier there is a “white fleet” harbour offering cruises on the ships. The city is surrounded by Wolin National Park and from the north by open extensive panorama seawards. The mild microclimate, rich in iodine air, a lot of sun and warmer than elsewhere water in a shallow here Pomeranian Gulf, create excellent conditions for lying on the beach, walking and travelling by bicycle. Visitors in Międzyzdroje can have not only rest on the beach but also can take part actively in cultural and sports attractions, which take place in the presence of stars of the cinema, stage and sport.

#### Decision:

The Board decided to accept Międzyzdroje as member of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished Międzyzdroje a successful cooperation with other 105 UBC member cities.

#### **4. Declaration of common interest between Committee of the Regions and Baltic Sea organisations, Arne Ören, Chairman of BSSSC.**

Mr Arne Ören, Chairman of Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) encouraged UBC and other organisations representing local and regional authorities in the Baltic Sea region to sign the declaration of common interest between Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Baltic Sea organisations.

CoR and BSSSC signed such declaration in February 2007. Mr Ören underlined that as a result of signing the declaration BSSSC obtained possibility to: involve its expertise in selected areas of interest of CoR, take part in dialogue between the EC and the associations of regional and local authorities, participate in conferences and other activities, promote its initiatives and events, undertake joint actions related to CoR’s responsibility for safeguarding local and regional interest.

Mr Ören stressed, that BSSSC was in a several occasions represented by CoR in the dialog with the EC. BSSSC has also a cooperation with CoR and DG Regio concerning its next annual

conference which would be held in September in Kaunas. Mr Ören said this declaration was very important to strengthen contacts between BSR local and regional authorities and CoR.

The declaration was signed for a 2 year period and has to be renewed. At present the declaration is in the CoR Secretariat, in the process of updating. It shall be signed by the CoR Secretary General Mr Gerhard Stahl and BSSSC at the end of June or in September the latest. Mr Ören expressed hope that UBC would join the declaration, together with B7 and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen stressed that it was very important to have a Baltic voice heard in CoR. He said that the local and regional organisations from Mediterranean, Ionian and Black Sea regions also were joining forces to have one voice heard. He reminded that it was a question of being heard and receiving money. He recommended to the Board that UBC should sign the declaration. Mr Andersen also said, that he had already discussed this initiative with the Secretary General of CoR Mr Gerhard Stahl. Mr Andersen said that we had a bridge building, because of having not only EU countries interests, but also Russian and Norwegian interests. Russia is a country of a special interest for CoR, as the Committee has some special programs for that country.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director of the External affairs and Communications, Turku, agreed that fostering BSR cooperation, visibility and presence in Brussels would be of a benefit for the Baltic organisations. He asked on which terms UBC would join the declaration. He underlined that UBC must be treated as an equal partner in the activities where our organisation is participating.

Mr Arno Ören said that he hadn't seen the final proposal, but our organisations were different organisations and therefore have to be treated on equal basis. He said that if there was no such treatment in the draft, it would have to be re-designed.

Mr Andersen agreed that we should wait for the draft to make our judgement. Both organisations have the right to participate in the plenary sessions of CoR, both are recognised by the Committee as separate organisations, and this should be reflected in the document..

#### Decision:

The Board decided UBC was willing to sign the declaration with CoR as an equal partner. The final decision will be taken after receiving the draft of the new declaration.

## **5. Presentation of B7 Baltic Islands Network.**

Ms Anu Vares, Chairman of B7 Board made a presentation introducing the organisation.

The B7 is a co-operation of the 7 largest islands in the Baltic Sea from 5 countries that started in 1989. The partners of the co-operation are, Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Åland (autonomous region of Finland), Öland (Sweden). The mission of the B7 is to contribute, through international co-operation, to the development of its member islands and to the achievement of their goals.

The structure of B7 comprises Steering Committee, Board, workgroup Environment, workgroup People to People and facilitator. Steering Committee is the political body, and Board - the management body.

The main priorities for the Saaremaa Chairmanship 2008 are: Regional policy and status of islands, Development strategies and future of islands in the BSR, EU strategy for the BSR, Maritime policy, Implementation of the B7 strategy.

Some of the important events to be held in 2008 are: conference “How to link socio-economic development and environmental protection?”, B7 youth camp in Saaremaa in July, B7 Games on Öland, B7 Annual Conference “Future of islands in the Baltic Sea region” in December. Main projects led by B7: TransPlan (Transparent Energy Planning and Implementation), Baltic Master (maritime safety), and Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN).

B7 supports the idea of the EU strategy for the BSR for the purpose of defining: the challenges countries and regions of the EU face; how EU policy can link with countries and regions strategies; EU measures to support and develop islands in the BSR. The B7 position on the strategy for the BSR contains challenges the B7 islands are facing, ideas for improvements, and a question how an EU Strategy can support B7's plans.

The other areas of B7 interest are: demographic developments, transport / access, economic development & competition in outer regions, climate change affecting the island, energy and environment, maritime safety and security, social & cultural development, education & training, tourism.

UBC President Per B. Andersen and BSSSC Chairman Arne Ören stressed that all three organisations should join forces when promoting issues strategic for the Baltic Sea region.

## **6. Baltic Cities & Regions contribution to the process of creation of new EU Baltic Sea Strategy.**

Ms Madelen Charyszczak, UBC Brussels Antenna at Stockholm Region office, informed

about Baltic cities & regions contribution to the process of creation of new EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

During the Council of Ministers in December 2007, the Council asked the European Commission to develop an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The deadline was given to June 2009 and the responsible DG was to be DG Regio in cooperation with many other Directorates. Already in 2006 the European Parliament had adopted a Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, drafted by Alexander Stubb from the Baltic Intergroup. The main reason why this Strategy was seen by the Council of Minister as something urgent was due to the environmental challenges which needs help to be addressed.

The Commission has decided to focus the Strategy on four thematic areas to make the Baltic Sea region: an environmentally sustainable place; a prosperous place; an attractive place; a safe and secure place. The idea with this strategy is to align already existing policies and funding s in the region, implement fully the acquis, brand the region and use best EU relations with Russia and Belarus etc.

The Commission is following a timetable that indicates some main happenings: there will be two stakeholder summits, the first one is taking place in Stockholm on the 30th of September. Around 300 persons will be invited to attend the conference and among these a couple of representatives from every Baltic Sea organisation will have places reserved. The second stakeholder summit will be in Rostock in early February 2009. Between those two conferences four round table discussions with expert in the four different thematic areas will be arranged. In September-October DG Regio will start an open consultation on a website dedicated to the development of the Strategy. The strategy will be formalised in March-May 2009 via a communication from the European Commission with a 10-15 page strategy, a rolling action plan with timetables and responsible actors, which will be revised every year, and an annex with contributions, analyses and recommendations.

Baltic Cities and Regions have been actively monitoring this process. In Brussels the Informal Baltic Sea Group (iBSG), an informal network gathering around 55 regional offices, has been continuously in contact with the main responsible for the development of the Strategy. Two major events have been organised. A seminar on the 22nd of April with the objective of gathering latest information from the EU institutions on this issue, and on the 4th of June, with the objective to give contributions from cities, regions and organisations to the development of the Strategy. UBC was here represented in the panel discussion by the Director of Stockholm Region and the UBC Antenna office. The Commission has been very pleased with these initiatives as they are keen to receive contributions and suggestions from different actors in the Baltic Sea region.

Many Baltic Sea organisations are currently developing their contributions. The Commission has not yet put anything on paper so there is still a good possibility to actively contribute to the development. The stakeholders meeting in Stockholm on the 30th of September will be the best opportunity to influence as the Commission still need a lot of input and UBC should have a common position paper ready at this time.

President Per Bødker Andersen said we should decide what contribution to the strategy UBC shall make. He stressed we must start preparations of our position paper.

Professor Esko Antola, Turku, informed he worked in the newly established think-tank in Turku, called Centrum Balticum. The Centrum specialises in Baltic Sea issues and the question of the Baltic strategy is number 1 in the agenda of the Centrum.

Mr Antola stressed the Baltic Sea strategy of the EU was a potential turning point in the evolution of regionalisation in the Baltic Sea area. It therefore calls for a pro-active approach of the UBC. The UBC with its 106 Member Cities without doubts is a major stakeholder in the process. In order to fulfil its role as a key stakeholder, the UBC needs its own vision of the future of the region. The first step therefore should be to secure that UBC is regarded as a stakeholder and a partner to the Commission. In order to furnish the UBC both with the vision and concrete proposals it would be of a great help if the Executive Board could see it feasible to establish a task force to prepare the vision and the concrete proposals.

According to expressed comments from the EC, the making of the strategy is designed to be an open process which is kept open for the bottom-up influence. The strategy is designed to lead into an action plan. This opens possibilities to influence it and call for concrete proposals from the stakeholders. The first stakeholder conference in Stockholm in September 2009 offers the first platform for influencing the process and the UBC should prepare itself for that event.

Professor Antola suggested, that the main focus for the UBC should be the governance in the region. The members of the UBC have occupied a key role in the governance of the region and the future shall further enhance their role. Cities are closest political actors representing the interests of the citizens. This gives them a special role in the future strategy.

According to professor Antola, the starting point of the UBC strategy should be the proximity of cities both to the citizens and to markets. Cities produce density that helps to provide intensifying learning, reflected in universities and other higher learning institutions. The variety of possibilities and openness associated with urban areas makes them important places of innovation and produce assets that attract businesses.

The UBC should also pay attention to the need to see a close link between the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Maritime Strategy of the EU. In the Baltic Sea region their closeness is evident and needs full attention. Cities become increasingly important nodes in transports and logistics. The UBC should take the linkage between the two strategies into account and pay attention to it in its approach to the EC.

Professor Antola concluded, that regionalisation in the Baltic Sea area is part of the ongoing regionalisation in Europe. European Union seems to be moving towards an area of mega-regions. This must be recognized in the UBC approach as well. The Baltic Sea region has many elements that can be utilized as best practices. Obviously the region could learn from other mega-regions in turn. The external dimension of the strategy should be recognized from the beginning.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen concluded that UBC shall contribute to the process of drafting the new Baltic Sea strategy. He reminded that on 5 June there is a national day of Denmark, on 6 June a national day of Sweden, and on 7 June Norway celebrates liberation from Sweden. Those three days in a row, could be our common identity.

Professor Esko Antola underlined that especially in connection with the maritime issues, the adjoining regions, like Russia, should be incorporated. This is a politically sensitive issue, but it is not possible to think about any Baltic Sea strategy without paying attention to the role of Russia.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen said that the +2 situation was our strength, because except for the European Union member countries there were also Russia and Norway. This could make us interesting for other partners in the EU.

Mr Arne Ören informed that BSSSC was preparing a position paper on the strategy of the BSR. He informed that Mr Knud Andersen was nominated a Board member with a special responsibility for the strategy declaration. BSSSC plans to have a draft position ready at the Annual Conference to be held in Kaunas on 17-19 September. The conference will focus on the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Mr Ören proposed that BSSSC, UBC, B7 and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission could join forces. He hoped that those organizations could take part in the BSSSC Conference. A paper with the conclusions from the conference based on the discussions in the parallel sessions would be prepared. This paper would be agreed with UBC, B7 and CPMR-BSC.

Ms Marie Louise Rönmark, Mayor of Umeå, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of UBC, stressed that UBC

should be very pro-active. We are close to the citizens, we know their needs. We need to present our opinion to the strategy, if we want to develop democracy.

Ms Madelen Charysczak reminded that the paper would not be prepared by the EC before the stakeholders conference, so it is still time for UBC to be pro-active.

Mr Andersen suggested that during the next Open Days, which would be held in connection with the plenary session of CoR in October, BSSSC, B7, UBC could join forces and present themselves and their collaboration in the BSR. Those organizations made presentations about themselves at the last plenary session, but more people will take part in the Open Days.

Mr Esko Antola stressed, that it was a strange thing that the EC collects opinions and materials from all possible stakeholders and governments, but will not be able to draw any conclusion before the stakeholders meeting. This fact gives more responsibility to the actors from the region.

#### Decision:

The Board decided, that the city of Turku in cooperation with Brussels Antenna shall prepare the first draft of the UBC position paper on the new Baltic Sea Strategy.

### **7. Report from the UBC Task Force to follow the EU Maritime Policy. UBC statement on the EC Blue Paper ‘An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union’.**

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, UBC Vice-President, Deputy Mayor of Turku, reminded that on the previous meeting in Brussels the Board decided to establish a new task force, open to all member cities, to follow the new EU Maritime Policy. At that meeting it was also decided that the city of Turku would take the responsibility to coordinate this activity. The first step made was to call the UBC member cities to join the task force and to nominate a person who would take part in TF meetings. So far several member cities gave the answers.

Mr Virtanen also informed that EC Commissioner Mr Joe Borg delivered a speech at the last CBSS Baltic States Summit in Riga (held the day before), in which he underlined that the strategy for the Baltic Sea region and the EU Maritime Policy should be developed together, not as a separated items. Mr Virtanen said, that Turku invited professor Esko Antola from the Centrum Balticum to work with the task force, because he was a leading expert of EU issues in Finland.

Professor Esko Antola stressed, that the process of creating the Baltic Sea strategy was similar to the process of creating the Maritime Policy. He reminded that two years ago a green paper on Maritime Policy was issued. The reactions on it (including UBC reaction) were analysed by the



EC and finally the Commission re-organised its activities by establishing a new DG Mare, combining DG Fisheries and Maritime Policy. A special unit for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea was also created. In October 2007, on the basis of above mentioned consultations, the EC published a paper entitled “An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union”, also known as the “Blue Book”. Moreover the EC issued a working document discussing the Blue Book in greater detail, in the form of an Action Plan for the period of 2007-2009.

Mr Antola said that probably during autumn the new proposals and ideas would be presented. Many countries prepared their lists of priorities. The list of priorities, presented at the stakeholders conference on European Maritime Day - 19-20 May in Brussels, combined several items, one of them was the stakeholders input and involvement in the policy development. Also the increased dialogue among the stakeholders was stressed. The need for regional consultations where appropriate was also mentioned, eg. Baltic Sea regional consultations. Professor Antola expressed an opinion that the Maritime Policy was an example where perhaps we could speak with one voice from the BSR.

A question of non EU actors is also important in the Maritime Policy. According to Mr Antola, the EC notices the very important role of Russia as the biggest user of the Baltic Sea. Mr Antola reminded that Turku organized in 2007 the meeting in St. Petersburg, where the representatives of the EC and Russia met. They discussed only the technical matters, but it was the opening of the relations. Except for Russia, also Norway is very important in the BSR, but this country is already very active in matters concerning the Maritime Policy.

Mr Antola suggested to have the first meeting of the task force in Turku, and then to begin drafting UBC position on the new EU Maritime Policy.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen urged the member cities to be active in the task force on Maritime Policy, because a very important work needs to be done for the future of the Baltic Sea region.

## **8. UBC reply to the consultation on the EC Green Paper on Urban Mobility.**

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki reminded that the European Commission published last year a Green Paper on Urban Mobility (Transport). At the same time the UBC Commission on Environment was implementing a project BUSTRIP promoting the Sustainable Urban Transport Planning methods. UBC decided to contribute to the green paper through this project. The policy recommendations were sent to the European Commission. As a follow up the EC Directorate General for Energy and Transport invited UBC to participate in the consultations on the Action Plan, which will follow the green paper. The Commission on Environment sent a reply to the DG TREN with suggestions to the action plan. UBC reply states *inter alia*:

- UBC advises to prepare and promote a guide for comprehensive mobility plans for urban areas.

- UBC sees the target of reduced need for transport as a crucial part of sustainable urban mobility development.
  - Concerning the Public Transport, UBC observes the need to raise the profile of public transport in Europe, but especially in the new member states.
  - It's necessary to promote the clean vehicles through setting standards and by showing a good example. One of the suggested by UBC actions is to act for local production of fuel especially from waste.
  - UBC emphasises the big role of information and awareness rising. There is a need for information of the impact on the environment and society of different mobility choices.
- The whole UBC reply is attached to the minutes.

Ms Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock, proposed to reconsider the point concerning encouraging member countries to reduce the tax benefits for long work trips by car. She said that it went too far, as the tax systems are different in our countries and there are different reasons to support the travels by car. She suggested to re-formulate this point to encourage the member countries to connect the cities better by the public transport. The tax benefits were reduced lately in Germany and it hit the people who have no other possibility to get to work.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski reminded that there was another point in the UBC reply, encouraging the member cities to develop the public transport.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen asked Ms Karin Wohlgemuth to make a draft proposal of changing this point. The proposal will be sent to the Commission on Environment.

Mr Jørgen Kristansen, member of the Executive Committee of the Kristianstad City Council, informed that there was a discussion in his city about low fares or no fares for the public buses. He would like to get in touch with those UBC cities, which already have tried to implement free city transportation.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen advised him to prepare an e-mail with question about good examples to be sent to all UBC members.

## **9. Application from the Commission on Youth Issues.**

President Per Bødker Andersen informed that the Commission on Youth Issues applied for additional 3.000 EUR in 2008 in order to make a reprint of the "Book of Demands" published after the youth conference held in conjunction with UBC General Conference in Turku in 2005. In 2008 the Commission on Youth Issues already received funding in amount of 13.000 EUR.

The Commission informed that the new book “Book of Possibilities”, which is one of the outcomes from the youth conference “Under the Surface” held in Pärnu in 2007 in connection with the IX UBC General Conference, is now printed and ready for distribution. The book is a follow up of the above mentioned “Book of Demands” which has been very popular and widely used but no more copies are left.

Application form the Commission is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board decided to grant the Commission with 3.000 EUR for the reprint of the “Book of Demands” and authorised the Secretariat to make respective changes in the budget.

**10. UBC Antenna in Brussels – proposal of new agreement.**

UBC Executive Board decided to sign a new agreement with the Stockholm Region on the UBC representation in Brussels for the period of October 2007 - September 2008.

The aim of the Antenna is to raise UBC visibility and lobby Union’s initiatives in Brussels, to monitor the EU policies which affect the Baltic Sea region and the local authorities, to inform the member cities about EU funding opportunities, initiatives and events.

The agreement will be automatically extended for another period if no other decision is taken. The agreement is attached to the minutes.

**11. Helsinki-Turku initiative to clean the Baltic Sea - new developments.**

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director Communication and Ext. Affairs, Turku, informed the Turku-Helsinki challenge of saving the Baltic Sea, endorsed by the UBC General Conference in Pärnu, was sent to over 600 various organisations in Finland, and well over 110 of them already reacted positively. Many cities, business enterprises, NGOs and other organisations already worked out their own action plans. Now the challenge was being internationalised to all BSR countries. The Mayors of Turku and Helsinki sent a letter to their colleagues to all member cities in UBC and BaltMetropolises network, urging them to endorse the challenge and to draft their own action plans for the Baltic Sea.

An international steering group was under formation to plan and promote the international dimension of the Turku-Helsinki challenge. The following cities were invited to participate in its work: St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Tallinn, Pärnu, Riga, Vilnius, Klaipeda, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Berlin, Lübeck, Copenhagen, Århus, Oslo, Kristiansand, Stockholm, Umeå. The first meeting of this steering group was planned to be held in Helsinki on 12 – 13 June, 2008. Mr Lohikoski

appealed to all UBC member cities to take up this challenge and join the movement for a cleaner Baltic Sea and promised that Turku would keep all cities informed about the developments.

President Per Boedker Andersen urged UBC cities to participate in the activities.

## **12. Reports from latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.**

President Andersen informed that below UBC representatives represented UBC at the following international conferences:

- The 3rd Territorial Dialogue for Growth and Jobs, Committee of the Regions, Ljubljana, 4 March 2008 (Maciej Lisicki, Deputy Mayor of Gdansk)
  
- Meeting on influencing the EU policies by associations of municipalities, organised by Barcelona Provincial Council and Arco Latino, Barcelona, 6 March 2008 (Marie-Louise Rönmark, Mayor of Umeå, UBC 1st Vice-President)
  
- Spring Session of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Malaga, 13-14 March 2008 - (Mikko Lohikoski, Director, City of Turku)
  
- Forum 'Cities of the future', Committee of the Regions, Brussels 10 April 2008 (Per Boedker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding, President of UBC).
  
- VASAB annual conference on “Baltic Sea Region Spatial Development Policies in European Context: avenues to the Long Term Perspective”, Riga 23 April 2008 (Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepaja, Chairman of VASAB)
  
- 15th Plenary Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Strasbourg, 27-29 May 2008 (Soeren Revsbaek, Councillor, City of Naestved)
  
- INTA international conference “Smart High Rise Development in Metropolitan Cities”, Gdańsk, 29-31 May 2008 (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)
  
- Informal Baltic Sea Group seminar on the BSR Strategy, Brussels, 4 June 2008 (Thomas Friis-Konst, Director, Stockholm Region Brussels Office / UBC Brussels Antenna)

The Board took note of the information. Reports from the conferences are attached to the minutes.

### **13. Creation of the Task Force responsible for the X General Conference in Kristiansand.**

According to the decision of the IX UBC General Conference held in Pärnu, Estonia, in 2007, the next X General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities will be held in the City of Kristiansand, Norway, on 23-27 September 2009, upon the invitation of the Mayor of Kristiansand.

The Board decided to establish a task force responsible for the preparation of the General Conference. The Board appointed the following persons to the task force: Jan Björinge (Umeå), Mikko Lohikoski (Turku), Jan Odegaard (Kristiansand), Karin Wohlgenuth (Rostock), Paweł Żaboklicki (UBC Secretariat).

### **14. Any other business.**

Ms Marie-Louise Rönmark informed that several member cities of the Commission on Urban Planning prepare a cooperation and competition project proposal named Visual Cities. Umeå is the project leader. The project aim is to improve participant democracy in the urban planning process by using modern information and communication technology ICT. Information about the project is attached to the minutes.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki informed that UBC secretariat sent out a call to all members to prepare information about interesting activities, events and conferences which would be held in the cities in 2009. The Secretariat plans to publish a calendar with those events, containing photos. The calendar will be sent out to the cities and various institutions around Europe.

Mr Żaboklicki also thanked the cities for providing stories to the latest Baltic Cities Bulletin which was devoted to the Climate Change. The cities provided stories showing their contribution to the fight with climate change through reducing greenhouse gases emissions. The cities also wrote about impacts of climate change on the city life – storms, floods, infrastructure damage, water supply problems etc.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen informed that this number of the UBC Bulletin was well accepted by the Committee of the Regions, because there are examples, how cities cope with the problem of climate change. Those examples can show the citizens, that preventing the negative effects of the climate change can be done. Mr Andersen said that it was a good way of presenting the work which is being done in UBC.

The bulletin was printed in amount of 5.600 copies and costed 3.410 EUR. The bulletin was sent out to some 260 cities in the BSR and to approx 900 addresses around Europe.

Mr Żaboklicki informed that the UBC Commission on Tourism decided to apply to the Baltic Sea Region Programme (former Interreg) for funding for the project Agora, which concerns the development of tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The Commission was not able to apply by itself, so the UBC secretariat will do it on behalf of the Commission.

Ms Karin Wohlgemuth informed that the project BALMUN, supported by the UBC Executive Board, had successfully concluded a few days before. There were 130 delegates from several countries. The second round of the project is planned for the next year.

Ms Wohlgemuth also informed about the project named “Rostock thinks 265 degrees”. It is an initiative to have a Year of the Sciences in 2009 in Rostock. The aim is to make a science more visible to the people. In June an international group shall be established. Ms Wohlgemuth invited other UBC cities to join this initiative.

Ms Wohlgemuth suggested that there should be written down a detailed guidelines for the commissions financial reports. The commissions receive 9.000 EUR annually.

Mr Żaboklicki responded that the rules for financial reporting had been so far as follows. In the beginning of the year the commissions provide their budgets to be approved by the President. In the end of the year the Secretariat asks the commissions to provide copies of receipts and describe for which budget line each spending has been made. If the information provided by the commission is not complete, the secretariat asks the commission for missing data. Information provided by the commissions is transparently published and sent out to all UBC member cities. The commissions’ reports are also examined by the Board of Audit.

Mr Andersen said that present model of financial reporting was clear and there was no need for further written guidelines and paragraphs.

Ms Helene Brewer from the UBC Commission on Gender Equality, Umeå, invited male representatives of cities to join the commission. She also informed that the commission decided to participate in the program URBACT with the project devoted to labour issues. Ms Brewer added that the campaign against trafficking on human beings would be prepared by the commission.. She also said the commission was preparing the statistics concerning gender issues at work in the Baltic Sea region, and they would be ready for the next UBC General Conference in Kristiansand in 2009.

## **15. Next meeting of the Executive Board, Växjö, Sweden.**

Ms Charlotte Svanberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, Sweden, warmly invited the Board to Växjö, on 29 October 2008. The UBC Board decided to hold the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Växjö. Part of the meeting with the annual reports of the Commissions will be open to all member cities.

## **16. Closing of the Meeting.**

President Per Bødker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and closed the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen  
Chairman

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki  
Secretary

Ms Urve Tiidus  
Adjuster

Ms Charlotta Svanberg  
Adjuster