

MINUTES FROM THE 8th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

Tallinn, Estonia, 27 November 1993

INTRODUCTION

The eighth meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 27 November 1993 in Tallinn, Estonia.

The Meeting was attended by members of the Executive Board of the Union, representatives of Union's Working Commissions as well as international organizations - Council of the Baltic Sea States and Nordic Council of Ministers.

The meeting was opened by Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union; the welcome words were given by Ms Kersti Kont, Head of Foreign Relations Department of Tallinn City Government.

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

The Meeting adopted the agenda.

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

Mr Andris Teikmanis from Riga and Mr Paul-Otto Johnsen from Kristiansand were elected to check the minutes.

Presidents remarks on II General Conference of the Union.

President Anders Engström once again expressed his thanks to the authorities of Kaliningrad for organizing and hosting the General Conference of the Union. President emphasized that Conference was actively attended by the representatives of international organizations engaged in Baltic region development i.e. Nordic Council, Council of Europe, Helsinki Commission, Council of the Baltic Sea States as well as financial institutions: World Bank, European Investment Bank, Nordic Environment Finance Corporation. Mr Engström underlined that Baltic Sea Environment Protection was the main topic of the Conference. Major cities of South-East Baltic submitted presentations regarding their input to Helcom Baltic Programme implementation describing carried out and planned investments at municipal utilities. Mr Engström also indicated that Action Plans of each Union Working Commissions were submitted and adopted during the Conference.

Work of the Commissions.

The Meeting in Tallinn was attended by representatives of Working Commissions who reported on latest Commission activities and informed about planned events and meetings in 1994.

Mr Sławomir Szafrąński from Szczecin, representative of Commission on Culture reminded that major Union culture event - International Culture Festival of the Union will take place in Kaliningrad in June 1994. Before the Festival, the city of Kaliningrad plans to organize a yacht cruise around the Baltic with Festival Fire to advertise the event. The Board already urged all member cities to be visited by the festival yacht to give the crew all necessary aid. Mr Szafrąński informed that in 1996, Copenhagen will be the cultural capital of Europe and suggested that Union should take part in number of events related to this fact. He also mentioned that project of the exchange of the musicians between the Baltic cities initiated this year will be continued also next year.

Mr Szafrąński informed the Board Members that Union was one of the co-organizers of symposium entitled "The Town-Hall in Baltic Towns", Gdańsk, 25-27 November 1993, attended by scientists, historians and cities representatives. Presentation of town halls as a symbol of common heritage of the Baltic cities was the major purpose of the symposium.

Mr Alexander Zubarev from Kaliningrad, representative of the Commission on Transportation submitted report, provided by the chairman of the Commission prof. Maciej T. Krzyżanowski. Report outlines the results of Commission's work during the first period of Union activity and brings recommendations for the future. Report recommends closer cooperation between commissions on transportation and environment, in order to achieve economical and environmental sustainability of Baltic region and proposes organization of joint seminar in 1994.

Following presentation of the report Mr Zubarev submitted a proposal to the Executive Board from the UBC member cities of Kaliningrad region in Russia to support officially the idea of opening the Vistula Bay area, including the city of Baltijsk, for international inland water transportation and tourism. Mr Zubarev stressed that such statement may cause positive influence on Russian government and Kaliningrad administration to solve this issue. The problem of the activation of Vistula River Bay transport link has already been raised by the Commission on Transportation. The Commission is of the opinion, that it would improve existing poor transport capabilities in this region.

Decision:

The Board authorized the Commission on Transportation to prepare resolution supporting above proposal. Secretariat was commissioned to send the resolution to Russian government and Kaliningrad administration and inform Polish authorities about the statement.

Projects related to the work of the Commissions:

"Fax and Memosystem" Project by Kalmar/Riga

Above project as well as problems related to the creation of electronic mail network linking member cities are to be discussed at the Meeting of UBC Commission on Telecommunication to be held in Riga on 6th of December 1993.

"Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme" by Aarhus/Turku

This project has been discussed under the item 5 of the agenda.

"Steps and Aims" Project by Lübeck

Because of lack of the delegation from the leading city of Lübeck this project was not discussed.

UBC proposal of cooperation with HELCOM - submitted at III Helcom PITF Meeting in Brussels by Mr Carl Nielsen.

Mr Carl Nielsen presented the report from HELCOM-PITF Meeting in Brussels 22-24 November 1993, where detailed proposal of UBC cooperation with Helcom was submitted by Union Environmental Commission representative Mr Jorgen Ringgaard. Mr Nielsen reminded that Union proposal concerns cooperation in implementation of 2nd element of the Baltic Programme: "Institutional Strengthening and Human Resources Development" at the local level. Proposal was elaborated by UBC Environmental Commission and consists of comprehensive action plan with different elements under overall heading "Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme".

During the meeting Germany (government) proposed to take the leading role in mentioned Baltic Programme element, but on national level. At the same time ICLEI put forward similar offer, as far as regional aspects are concerned.

The proposal of UBC "Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme" was endorsed by the PITF. PITF expressed its thanks to UBC for the proposal and will give its recommendations to support the realization. PITF decided that in the future Baltic Programmes elements 2 & 1 (Policy, Legal & Regulatory Measures) are to be handled as 1 element. It was decided that the lead role for the two elements will be taken as a joint cooperation between Germany, UBC and ICLEI.

Based on the above Mr Nielsen on behalf of UBC Commission on Environment proposed to the Board the following working plan for next months:

1. Contact to all member cities in question which cities intends to take part in the programme; appointment of responsible contact persons.
2. Preparation of list of activities to be realized in 1994; questionnaire to the cities, who will take responsibility for each activity.
3. Analysis of financing possibilities for each activity.
4. Preparation of applications for fundings.

Mr Nielsen suggested, that the chairmanship of the Environmental Commission would take the responsibility for the future work in close cooperation with the Secretariat.

Decision:

Executive Board accepted working plan presented by Mr Nielsen. Having in mind that "Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme" is to be based on twin-city basis the Board suggested all cities to provide the Secretariat with the list of their twinning connections within the Baltic region.

Proposals to current working routines within UBC by Mr Anders Engström.

Mr Engström submitted the proposals to current working routines within the Union, particularly regarding organization of General Conference, Executive Board and Commissions Meetings. Proposals establish precise time-rules, as regards sending information, invitations, proposals, programmes, reports etc concerning each of above mentioned assemblies.

Decision:

The Board accepted proposed working routines and obliged all Member Cities and Secretariat to follow the proposals.

Statement on national law regulations limiting cities cooperation - proposal from Riga.

Mr Andris Teikmanis, Vice-President of the Union proposed to the Executive Board to proclaim an official statement on national law regulations limiting cities cooperation. Mr Teikmanis indicated that certain laws of national legislation do not allow that a city assist its partner city abroad directly using the assistance resources outside its national territory. This situation leads to unnecessary complications in common projects to be developed between the cities of Baltic region and make less effective our cooperation.

Decision:

Executive Board fully supported Mr Teikmanis proposal and decided to release an official statement expressing the Union wish to modify the legal provisions that limit the direct assistance possibilities between the cities. The statement is to be sent to the governments of all Baltic countries as well as to local self-governmental organizations. The Meeting commissioned Board Members to provide the Secretariat with relevant addresses in each country.

Information by the Secretary.

Report from the II General Conference of the Union.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, on behalf of the Secretary of the Union, presented foregoing version of the report from the II General Conference of the Union in Kaliningrad. He informed the meeting that report will be soon copied and distributed to all member cities as well as Conference participants, directly after receiving three missing statements to be included in the report.

Newsletter No. 5

Mr Żaboklicki presented to the Executive Board foregoing issue of the Newsletter No. 5. accordingly to previous editions the Newsletter consists of three thematic sections:

1. Work of the Union. This section provides information about conferences, meetings, events, organized by Union in 1994 e.g. II General Conference, Conference on TEM, Resource Mobilization Conference, Environmental Summercamp etc.
2. Information from members. Includes information about various initiatives and projects launched by Member Cities and other materials obtained from the cities, f.e. International Art Festival in Kaliningrad, educational courses in Kalmar, culture initiatives from Riga.

3. Views. Review of other significant activities and facts concerning Baltic Sea region: information on CBSS, report from Women's Conference etc.

Draft proposal of UBC budget for the year 1994.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki from the Secretariat submitted a draft proposal of Union budget for the next year. The proposal was made on prerequisites: Union incomes and expenditures in 1994 will be comparable to the ones in first one and a half year of activity.

Expected incomes from annual fees should cover following expenses: meetings organization, travels and conference fees for President and secretariat, communication (phones, fax, mail), office maintenance and materials, publications.

Taking into account present level of Union income, there is no possibility to finance the projects initiated by Union members and Commissions. The Union must seek for external funds for each project implementation and development of its activities in general.

Having the opportunity, that the meeting was attended by representative of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Ms Eve Kuusmann - Estonia holds chairmanship of CBSS in 1994 - President of the Union put forward UBC application to CBSS for financial support as regards "Fax and Memosystem Project", "Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme" and general activity. Ms Kuusmann assured the Executive Board that CBSS give the high consideration to the Union application.

Decisions:

1. The Board generally accepted the draft proposal of the Union budget for the next year. At the same time the Board commissioned Secretariat to prepare for the next Executive Board Meeting more detailed budget proposal, taking into account Union incomes and spendings in 1993.

2. Considering the problem of strengthening the Commissions work (particularly to increase the number of meetings) it has been proposed to assign in 1994 up to 2000 USD to each Commission. Decision concerning above will be made during the next Executive Board Meeting after discussing final budget proposal.

3. The Meeting authorized the Secretariat to find out the possibilities of gaining extra financial sources through commercial activity with the aim to support Union budget.

Rules of co-financing of UBC members initiatives and meetings.

Decision:

The Board authorized the president to decide each time about possibility of Union co-financing of member cities initiatives and meetings in accordance with actual financial situation of the Union.

Other matters.

Report from Conference on Subregional Cooperation in Stavanger.

President of the Union reported that the Conference took place in Stavanger, Norway on 7-8 October 1993. The Meeting was attended by representatives of regions of Baltic Sea States. Participants discussed possibilities for expanded subregional cooperation. UBC was also invited to the Conference and was represented by Mr Dagfinn Ovrebotten, representative of Union member city of Bergen. Mr Ovrebotten introduced the Conference participants to the aims and activities of the UBC underlining regional aspects of Union projects. An outcome of the Conference was creation of the working group on subregional cooperation headed by Schleswig-Holstein. The Conference expressed the opinion that actions on regional level must be coordinated with ones on city level and invited Union of the Baltic Cities to such cooperation.

Seminar on public traffic - proposal from Kalmar.

Mr Anders Engström, informed about proposal from Kalmar to organize next year the seminar concerning public transportation services systems in market economy countries. Seminar is directed to the countries transforming their economies to market economy i.e. Baltic Republics, Russia, Poland. For the trial course organizers propose to invite representatives of one country f.e. Lithuania. Politicians and heads of public transport departments from state, regional and city authorities will be invited to the seminar.

Resolution:

The Board supported the idea of course organization and encouraged the city of Kalmar to proceed with all necessary arrangements. Republic of Lithuania was invited to participate in the trial course.

Current information on courses/trainings initiated by the Union.

President of the Union, Mr Anders Engström informed the Meeting about present status of trainings organization.

Course for journalists.

The course for journalists entitled "Journalism and Democracy" has already started in Kalmar on 15 November and will continue until 3 December 1993. Selected journalists from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia will learn the basis of mass-media functioning in democratic and market economy system.

Course on transfer of knowledge of Swedish social insurance system.

The course has been preliminary scheduled on May 1994. Costs of organization will be covered by Social Insurance Association in Sweden and local authority for unemployed people. Apart from issues related to Swedish social insurance system seminar will also deal with problem of elderly people care.

Training for the leaders of study circles.

The project realization depends on obtaining necessary financial means. Relevant application for 3 mln Swedish crowns has been put forward to governmental agenda BITS.

Tourism education courses.

Courses on tourism education are to be organized as soon as required financial sources will be acquired.

Cooperation with other international organizations.

Observer status to CLRAE.

Mr Žaboklicki informed that Secretariat received information on granting UBC with observer status to Council's of Europe Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. This means that Union is entitled "to sit in Plenary Sessions of CLRAE; exceptionally and with the leave of the CLRAE given each case, such observers may speak in plenary session". Furthermore, UBC "may, at its own expense, submit memoranda relating to subjects on the agenda of plenary sessions".

Application for observer status to HELCOM.

Mr Žaboklicki also informed that following preliminary settlements between President of the Union and Mr Ulf Ehlin, Executive Secretary of HELCOM, UBC officially applied for observer status to Helsinki Commission. Presently an official response from Helsinki Commission is expected.

Proposal from Liepāja - influence of oil terminals on Baltic environment.

UBC member city of Liepāja in Latvia proposed to the Board Meeting to discuss plans of construction in Baltic Republics the number of oil terminals at the open sea and its possible impact on environment. Ms Nijole Pozarskiene from Klaipėda informed that prime ministers of Latvia and Lithuania already had preliminary talks concerning this issue. It was not decided whether the new terminals will be build existing ones will be modernized.

Decision:

The Board Meeting expressed opinion that above problem must be solved on governmental, not on city level. At the same time the Board authorized UBC Environmental Commission to investigate possible impacts of constructing such oil terminals on sea environment.

New UBC Member Cities.

Mr Žaboklicki informed the Executive Board about new applications for Union Membership as follows:

- Pärnu (Estonia)
- Helsinki (Finland) from the 1 January 1994

Additionally Mr Engström informed that Lithuanian cities Vilnius and Kaunas expressed interest to join the Union. Presently, the official decisions of their City Councils, as regards membership in the Union are being expected.

Decision:

The Board decided to accept the cities of Pärnu and Helsinki as a Members of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Board Members visits and meetings scheduled for the year 1994.

The President of the Union and other Members of the UBC Executive Board informed about their plans concerning scheduled visits, meetings and conferences in the year 1994. The President suggested that representatives of Executive Board Member Cities should intensify contacts with other Union Member Cities in their countries.

Next Meeting of the Executive Board.

Decision:

The Board decided that next Meeting of the UBC Executive Board will be held in Spring 1994. The site of the next Meeting has not yet been defined. The city of Liepaja from Lithuania expressed the wish to host the Board Meeting.

Additionally the following speakers addressed the Meeting:

* Ms Hjördis Höglund from the City of Sundsvall reported on latest decisions undertaken by European Union as regards women's rights. She emphasized that for the first time, equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women were incorporated as over-riding goals of the Structural Funds. To ensure the principle of equality, measures financed by the Structural Funds are to stand in conformity with the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty including the application of the principle of equal opportunities for men and women.

* Mr Tõnu Karu, Councillor in Tallinn City Government informed the Meeting about the projects initiated by the city of Tallinn.

In November 30, 1993 the City of Tallinn organized Establishment Conference of the Baltic Transport Forum, attended by Ministers of Transport of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and representative of St. Petersburg. The objective of the Forum is to coordinate common activities of above parties aimed at development of regional transport systems. Within the frames of Baltic Transport Forum a Working Groups and Expert Councils are to be set up to deal with the following issues:

- creation of the international data basis
- development of the transit trade
- widening the investment possibilities
- development of the legislation and interstate cooperation
- realization of international transport (infrastructure) projects

Mr Karu also informed the Meeting about number of projects to be implemented in Tallinn within the years 1994-1995, related with the care of disabled people such as creation of:

- Tallinn Children Rehabilitation Centre
- Tallinn Christian School-Home
- Vocational Training Centre for Young People with Disabilities
- The Boardinghouse for Blind and Deaf
- Recording and Braille Centre

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

Mr Anders Engström

Mr Andris Teikmanis

Chairman

Adjuster

Mr Piotr Krzyżanowski

Mr Paul-Otto Johnsen

Secretary

Adjuster