

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

12-13 October 2001 (Rostock) – 17-18 October 2003 (Klaipeda)

Introduction

Since the VI General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, held in Rostock on 12-13 October 2001, the Union has grown up. The number of Union's members has crossed the figure **100**.

The new members are: Maardu (Estonia), Fredericia (Denmark), Moletai (Lithuania), Orebro, Gavle, Lulea (Sweden). The city of Grodno (Belarus) received the observer status.

During mentioned period the Union has accepted new members, built up its own network, launched new projects and political initiatives, organised a number of conferences, seminars and events.

The Union developed existing and established new contacts with other Baltic and European organisations and institutions i.e. European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Eurocities, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, and others.

Political issues and activities raised by UBC

The period has been characterised of a continuation of the increase of political role of UBC in Europe and the Baltic Sea Region. UBC has strongly supported the development of the cooperation between the governmental levels in our region, focused around the Council of Baltic Sea States. The idea is to create a common voice from all government levels on matters that concern our region and its relation to the European Institutions. This will strengthen the Baltic Sea Region considerably. The cooperation has improved considerably during the last year, and hopefully the development will continue.

2nd Northern Dimension Action Plan

CBSS has coordinated the work among BSR actors of creating the 2nd Northern Dimension Action Plan, which can be of great value regarding EU policies that originates from the conditions in Northern Europe. UBC has actively contributed with opinions both when the draft document was created as well as giving opinions on the EU document on Northern Dimension.

UBC Political Role in Europe

The new proposal on a new EU constitution opens new and very interesting perspectives on local level role in the European Union. It opens new ways for local level networks and organisations to operate in connection with Committee of Regions. One increasingly important issue is how this shall be implemented in practice. This issue will probably be of great importance the next coming years.

Sustainable Development

UBC is, especially through its Commission on Environment, one of the important European actors in the field of Sustainable Development. The co-operation between UBC and other organisations and authorities is broad and fruitful. UBC activity is reflected in the commitment taken in the UBC Agenda 21 Action Program.

UBC Social Charter

The 6th UBC General Conference in Rostock adopted the UBC Social Charter. It will have a profound importance in the process of archiving a minimum level of social commitment from the member cities on social issues.

EU Transportation Policy

The EU Transportation Policy, as expressed in the White Book on Transportation as well as the development of the Trans-European Network TEN, is very unfavourable for the Baltic Sea Region since it only involves road, rail and air transportation. Maritime transportation has not got the attention needed to reflect its importance in the Baltic Sea Region. There is a risk that we will get a very small share of the transportation infrastructure funding in the EU system.

Cross-Border Cooperation

The rules and concepts regarding Cross-Border Cooperation is very disadvantageous for the Baltic Sea Region. Of all available funding for cross-border co-operation, only about 2% reaches our region. The main reason is a lack of understanding of the nature of maritime borders, which we have a lot here.

UBC Executives during this two-year period

Mr Per Boedker Andersen, President, Mayor of Kolding
Mr Armas Lahoniitty, First Vice-President, Mayor of Turku
Mr Arno Poeker, Vice-President, Mayor of Rostock
Ms Liisa Pakosta, Vice-President, Tallinn
Mr Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General, Gdansk

Executive Board during this two-year period

Aalborg/Naestved	Denmark
Baltiysk	Russia
Gdansk	Poland
Kristiansand	Norway
Kuressaare	Estonia
Liepaja	Latvia
Luebeck	Germany
Panevezys	Lithuania
Pori	Finland
Stockholm	Sweden

Executive Board Meetings

Six Executive Board Meetings took place during the reporting period between Rostock and Klaipeda General Conferences:

33rd Executive Board meeting, Tonsberg, 2 February 2002
34th Executive Board meeting, Viljandi, 7-8 June 2002
35th Executive Board meeting, Panevezys, 8-9 November 2002
36th Executive Board meeting, Umea, 28-29 March 2003

37th Executive Board meeting, Rostock, 18 June 2003

38th Executive Board meeting, Klaipeda, 16 October 2003

The Executive Board played significant role in the progress of UBC activities. The Board considered and approved a number of projects, actions and initiatives submitted by the Presidium, Commissions, Networks and Member Cities. The projects, initiatives, activities, events and other actions carried out by UBC during the described period are outlined in this report.

Board of Audit during this two-year period

Mr Bartłomiej Sochanski, City Councillor, Szczecin

Ms Silvia Loebner, Head of Auditing Department, Wismar

Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, City Councillor, Siauliai

UBC Secretariat

The Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat since UBC creation has been located in the City of Gdansk. The Secretariat provides daily service to the Union and its Members. The Union has been highly satisfied with the work of the Secretariat. All financial matters have been handled properly. The Union would like to thank the City of Gdansk for its contribution to the UBC over the past years.

UBC Commissions

In the described period the UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission:

Commission on Business Cooperation
Commission on Culture
Commission on Education
Commission on Environment
Commission on Health & Social Affairs
Commission on Information Society
Commission on Sport
Commission on Tourism
Commission on Transportation
Commission on Urban Planning

Lead Cities:

Tampere, Kaunas
Szczecin, Espoo, Visby, Bergen, Tartu
Kardla, Norrtälje
Turku, Nacka
Rostock, Luebeck
St.Petersburg
Gdynia, Karlskrona
Kalmar, Palanga, Kaunas, Rostock
Goteborg
Helsinki, Malmo, Umea, Riga

The Commissions oversee Union activities in each of the respective areas. Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions within the reporting period are briefly described below.

I. Commission on Business Cooperation

In 2002 the Commission has been chaired by Mr Kari Loytty, Tampere. In 2003 the Commission has been chaired by Mr Vytautas Juodagalvis, Kaunas.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Business Cooperation is located in Kaunas, Lithuania.

In 2002 the annual meeting of the Business Commission was held in Tampere. 28 participants from eight member cities attended the conference. The main topics of the meeting were "Support of local business" and "e-city".

During the meeting the city of Tampere was selected to make a project on the theme "How to develop successful technology parks/business incubators", based on the know-how gained from development of technology park and business incubator concept in Hermia (one of eight leading business and innovative centers in Europe). The project proposal was developed from the fact that in one country and in one city there are different organisations functioning in the field of business and industry.

The general aim of the project is to promote and support innovative entrepreneurship in selected Baltic cities, by improving the services of existing regional support structure. This is seen as a vital activity in order to develop the competitiveness in regions. The following participants are involved in project development since December 2002: Siauliai University Technology Park, Cities of Panevezys, Gdansk, Klaipeda; Ministry of Economy of Lithuania, Klaipeda University, Hermia Business Development, Baltic Institute of Finland.

In May 2003 the City of Kaunas hosted the annual meeting of the Commission. The representatives of 18 cities from all countries around the Baltic Sea participated. The Commission focused in 2003 mainly on the theme "E-dimension: Public and Private partnership". Initially it was planned to discuss three main topics, namely: e-dimension, innovations via technological parks and business incubators, and formation of the municipal budgets: accumulation of funds for the EU investment projects.

The participants acknowledged that the three topics are very important for all the cities and should be further developed at other meetings. The e-dimension issues can be discussed in cooperation with the UBC IS Commission.

Finally the meeting decided to establish the Commission Secretariat in the City of Kaunas with one person dealing with Commission activities. The Secretariat will try to enhance the business cooperation among the member cities and to coordinate various activities related to this field.

II. Commission on Culture

The Commission is chaired by Mr Slawomir Szafranski, Szczecin and Ms Riitta Hurme, Espoo.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Culture is located in Szczecin, Poland.

Meetings

6th Annual Session of the Commission

The session titled "Culture Education in Latvia and the Significance of International Collaboration in Music and Art Education" was held in Riga in April 2002. The session was open by Ms Karina Petersone, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. Some 40 persons from 8 Baltic countries took part. The session in Riga was divided into three topics: Music,

Folk Music and Visual Arts. During two days, 19 experts presented different aspects of art education in the Baltic region on both state and municipal levels. There were interesting debates on a number of problems connected with art education, as well as a look at international projects initiated by schools. Participants of the session were present at concerts during the 15th International Music School Festival and visited Bolderaja Art School and Riga Art School, which are the leading art centres for children and youth in Riga.

Meeting of the Commission Board

The main topic of this meeting held in Gdansk in February 2003 was discussion on the VII Annual Session of the Commission on Culture to be held in Szczecin, in October 2003. The City of Szczecin presented to the Board two new project proposals: "A strand of Baltic Pearls: A History of Cities in the Region" and "The Baltic Landscape. The Visual Imagery of the Baltic Sea".

7th Annual Session of the Commission

The session was held in Szczecin in October 2003. The title was "Museums, Galleries, Artists Run Spaces in the Baltic Cities. Innovative Forms of Social Communication". The session discussed how contemporary art exists in social consciousness and the role that museums, galleries and artists can play in creating better relations with their audience. The session elected the new Board of the Commission and discussed Commission's strategy and action plan in the forthcoming years.

Projects

Biennial of Contemporary Art

The Commission recommended 30 artists from all countries around the Baltic Sea to the 4th edition of the Biennial opened in October 2001 in Szczecin under the title "SYBARIS. The fatal attraction of civilisation". The idea of the IV Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art was to put on display in Szczecin sensual, intriguing, professional and carefully crafted art objects without limiting the artists to restrictions of form or genre. Biennial exhibition was accompanied by a series of seminars. The 5th Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art titled "Extra Strong-Super Light" was held in October 2003 in Szczecin.

ArtGenda

ArtGenda is intended as a forum for the presentation of young artists of all traditional genres (literature, performance, fine arts, design, architecture, music, film, photography, media etc.) from 18 cities around the Baltic Sea. Since 1996, ArtGenda has been organised every second year, each time in different city and each time focused on different themes. ArtGenda 2002, hosted by Hamburg, was staged without a theme. Instead, the biennial took the form of a gigantic, interdisciplinary artistic workshop, which attempted to both integrate the Baltic artists and at the same time involve them in the life of the city. Over two weeks, some 100 artists were permitted to carry out their own projects and were encouraged by the organisers to spontaneously join in and react to any of the other activities.

MARE ARTICUM the Baltic Art Magazine

In 2001 two issues were published. October's Gender Entropy issue presented articles focusing on the cultural definition of gender. In December a special issue entitled Sybaris. The Fatal Attraction of Civilisation accompanied the IV Biennial of Baltic Contemporary Art and presented examinations of current hedonistic and pop-culture trends in contemporary art.

Two issues also were published in 2002. MA's Globalisation issue investigated the way in the globalisation processes is leading to new ways of perceiving social reality. The issue also touched on the risks of the expansive "Euro-American" model of culture to those cultures that are not familiar with western institutions of public life. In Art & Politics, MA examined the use of art and its definitions as a tool for stimulating social debate and as a form of engagement with the public. In 2003, a new issue entitled "New Art in St. Petersburg", was edited in collaboration with the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.

III. Commission on Education

The Commission is chaired by Mr Kurt Pettersson, Norrtälje and Mr Ivo Eesmaa, Kärđla.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Education is located in Kärđla, Estonia.

Since the last General Conference in Rostock, the activities of the Commission on Education has been focused on projects with young people. Several projects were initiated. Exchange of experiences has been a part of every meeting. The teachers and politicians/ civil servants shared their experiences in the field of education.

Meetings

In 2002 the meeting of the Commission took place in January nearby Norrtälje. 19 participants from 5 countries were present at the meeting.

The meeting discussed inter alia:

- projects for 2002 - "Summer School for potential researchers in the field of aquatic ecology" and "Meeting Point of Different Cultures"
- educational planning coordination - educational boards, professionals; cooperation in teaching of languages
- school democracy

In February 2003 9 people from Norrtälje and Kärđla had a meeting to discuss Commission's activities in 2003. It was decided to go on with 2 Summer School projects in year 2003.

The Commission meeting in Keila, May 2003, discussed inter alia the continuation of mentioned above projects for youth.

Projects

"Meeting Point of Different Cultures", August 2003.

The project has been organised 3 times: in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The aim of the project is to become aware of participants' own roots and to understand differences between different cultures. In 2003 participants studied the history and culture of native places from 1940s to 1960s. The project gives the possibility for communication, the development of English speaking skills and motivation for learning foreign languages.

In 2003 five schools participated in the project - from Norrtälje, Tartu, Tukums, Šiauliai, Kärđla.

"Summer School for potential researchers in the field of aquatic ecology", June 2003

The research school was organised by the Erken Laboratory, which is situated in the countryside of Norrtälje, Sweden. 15 students stayed for 4 weeks, they lived together at the laboratory site. The students had lectures in general limnology and a concluding week where they summarised their work. The students worked independently with their research project under the protective wings of international supervisors. The primary objective of the research school is to let the students work with scientific research.

IV. Commission on Environment

The Commission is chaired by Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku and Mr Guldbrand Skjonberg, Nacka.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Environment is located in Turku, Finland.

Meetings

Three EnvCom and Agenda 21 meetings were organised during the reporting period. The first one in Nacka in May 2002, the second in Kolding in November 2002 and the third in Kaunas in May 2003. The meetings had thematic approaches. Themes included for example air quality, bio-diversity, energy, sustainable consumption and construction / planning, Johannesburg Summit and exchange of good practices. The meetings gathered up to 70 participants and were also attended by several partner organisations.

Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin

Three editions were published. Member cities and several cooperation organisations contributed very actively to the contents. In edition 1/2003 also the bulletin started a thematic approach with Environmental Management Systems as the first theme. The approach proved successful and has been further developed in edition 2/2003 (Sustainable Consumption and Production).

Local Agenda 21 Survey was carried out in the autumn of 2001 and published in winter 2002. It provided high quality results with 85% of member cities responding. The survey results, as a follow-up to the 1998 survey, showed that local Agenda 21 has increasingly become mainstream strategy in UBC member cities. According to the survey the UBC is the most important channel of good working models and practices to its members in the field of sustainable development.

The EnvCom has designed the **Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2003** based on the themes of Air Quality, Bio-diversity, Energy, Environmental Health and Information and Education. The award ceremony is foreseen to take place on the occasion of the General Conference in October in Klaipeda.

The Commission made active policy work in the following forums:

- World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002
- European Working Group on Sustainable Urban Management

- European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign
- Baltic 21 and Helcom

Project activities

EMAS - Peer Review for Cities (2002-2004)

UBC together with Eurocities, University of West England and 18 European cities are carrying out the EMAS - peer review for cities project. The main focus of this project is on developing and extending the use of EC Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in local authorities. The EMAS-peer review method as an innovative approach is being developed and applied to encourage cities to work together. Ten UBC member cities are participating in the project. The total budget is EUR 711.000 and the project is co-funded by the DG Environment. The project builds on the success of the Municipal Environmental Auditing (MEA) in Baltic Cities as well as on the EMAS experiences of the project partners.

TBestC

The TBestC project (Transferring Best Environmental Practices between Towns and Cities) is giving five city couples a chance to work on transfer of good practices during 2003-2004. The good practices concentrate on five themes: Biodiversity, Energy, Environmental Health, Air, and Information and Education. TBestC builds on the experiences resulting from the former good practice project and develops the exchange and city coupling methods further. An interesting aspect is cooperation with the US Regional Environmental Office for the BSR.

Baltic University Urban Forums

The UBC is a partner in this newly launched Interreg III B project, coordinated by the Baltic University Program. The project aims at benchmarking of good environmental and sustainable urban management practice in several city-university groups. Within the project, also a large number of local seminars in the participating cities will be organised.

V. Commission on Health & Social Affairs

The Commission is chaired by Ms Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Health and Social Affairs is located in Rostock, Germany.

UBC Social Charter

The VI UBC General Conference in Rostock unanimously adopted the UBC Social Charter. In order to reach the aims included in the Charter, the Commission prepared a strategy / action plan which was presented to the 34 Executive Board Meeting in June 2002 in Viljandi.

A translation team delivered the versions of the Charter in all 10 Baltic languages. They were sent out to all member cities. All versions were included on the UBC website. In November 2002 all UBC Commissions and Networks were contacted to give their ideas on Charter implementation.

Since January 2003 the Commission have been encouraging public persons to become ambassadors of the UBC Social Charter in order to create awareness of this paper on the international stage through presenting it at various conferences and seminars.

The UBC member cities have been contacted since April 2002, some cities already named a contact person. The financing of the scientific work in the implementation of the UBC Social Charter is pending on appropriate co-funding.

The UBC Social Charter was already presented and discussed i.a. at the following events: Conference WoMen and Democracy, Tallinn, February 2003; Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Days in South Sweden, Malmö, May 2003; Conference Young Voices of the BSR, Kalmar, May 2003; during the Hanse Tour Sunshine, July–August 2003.

Hanse-Sunshine-Tour 2003

for Children suffering from cancer and other chronic diseases around the Baltic Sea. The Commission cooperated in the preparation of the tour itinerary including important contact work. The Tour took place from 25 July to 10 August 2003 and lead the cyclists through the cities Greifswald, Wismar, Lübeck, Kiel, Kolding, Copenhagen, Malmö, Kristianstad, Karlskrona, Kalmar, Oskarshamn, Västervik, Norrköping, Nyköping, Stockholm, Turku and Helsinki collecting money and goods, taking it all to special organisations, hospitals etc. in the cities Tallinn, Pärnu, Jurmala/ Riga, Liepaja, Palanga, Klaipeda, Kaliningrad, Elblag, Gdansk/ Sopot/ Gdynia, Slupsk, Koszalin, Szczecin. The tour became a big success, after having mobilised humanitarian aid of 3 million Euro. The Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, gave his personal congratulations to Prof. Richter and the whole team. A follow-up tour is planned.

Social Hansa

Social Hansa, a former project, was established as an organisation, with an office in Lübeck. Several meetings and discussions took place, analysing the possibilities of cooperation (Social Charter, mutual visits at meetings, correlation of networks, project 'Social Monitor' of the BSR, etc.) and assisting in the creation of the constitution.

Participation in conferences

- Conference 'Aspects of Women's Entrepreneurship – Dialogues Open New Horizons', Rostock, October 2002
- Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference on 'WoMen and Democracy', Tallinn, February 2003
- Social Hansa - International Foundation Meeting

VI. Commission on Sport

The Commission on Sport is chaired by Ms Beata Łęgowska, Gdynia.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Sport is located in Gdynia, Poland.

Annual Meetings

In 2002 the Commission annual meeting was held in March in Karlskrona with the participation of representatives of 13 cities from 5 countries. The subject of the meeting was "Integration of the disabled through sport". Presentations were given by representatives from

Poland, Denmark and Sweden. In addition, grants for sporting events were allocated. In 2002 the Commission allocated (from the UBC budget) grants for sport events in the member cities, in the total amount of 4 500 EUR. For the first time one of the main criteria in grant allocation was the participation of the disabled sportsmen in competitions.

In April 2003 the annual meeting held in Aalborg gathered representatives from 6 cities from 4 countries. Its title was “Sport as a rehabilitation tool for integration” and five presentations related to meeting theme were given. Additionally the participants could see how it feels to be disabled during a study tour in “The Association for Disabled in Aalborg”.

In 2003 the Commission founded the “Equal Opportunities Prize” (3000 EUR). The Prize’s objective is to focus undertaken activities on achieving equal rights for people with disabilities as well to support their full integration with the society. The Prize will be awarded to one UBC member city for the best organised sporting event addressed to people with disabilities.

Cooperation with other organisations

In the reported period the Commission cooperated with the following organisations: Aalborg Senior Sport, Association for Disabled in Aalborg, Danish Sport Association from Aalborg, SISU Idrottsutbildarna from Sweden, Swedish Sports Organisation for the Disabled (SHIF).

Social Campaign “Without Limits”

The campaign was initiated in connection with the adoption of the Social Charter by UBC and the announcement of the year 2003 – European Year of People with Disabilities. The campaign aims at exchange of experience and cooperation among cities located in the Baltic Sea Region in order to effectively solve problems of the disabled as well as to eliminate social and mental barriers.

Within the campaign the following actions were taken:

- Questionnaire on situation of People with Disabilities in UBC Member Cities
- Conference “Without Limits” in Gdynia, September 2002
- National Conference “Open Cities”, Gdynia, May 2003
- Drawing Competition “Dreams Without Limits” addressed to disabled children
- Art Exhibitions as the result of art competition
- Desk calendar with works sent for ““Dreams Without Limits” competition

VII. Commission on Tourism

The Commission on Tourism is chaired by Mr Kyrre Dahl, Kalmar.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Tourism is located in Kalmar, Sweden.

During the last two year period the Commission on Tourism has been occupied with project development for the UBC member cities. The Commission stressed that education in tourism is of utmost importance to all member cities. The Commission obtained projects grants from the European Commission and the Interreg IIIB programme.

Commission activities

The Commission's first application - Baltic Welcome Center, was granted in December 2001, the member cities in the project are: Kalmar, Växjö, Kaliningrad, Narva, Cesis. Palanga and Malbork are expected to join. The project is now half way through. The project deals with the development of a Baltic Sea Wide standard for Welcome Centers, as well as spatial planning and investments in buildings and IT.

The second application of the Commission was granted in December 2002. The project Ancientimes started in March 2003 and will last for three years. It deals with development of cultural heritage sites. "Edutainment", education through entertainment, meaning interactivity, is one of the most important conceptions of the Ancientimes project. To create new concepts for exhibitions as well as investments in heritage sites and marketing are also important issues.

The Baltic Tourism Academy project was phased out in 2001, with many interesting seminars on different topics. A CD-ROM is available to order from the projects' homepage, disseminating the contents of the seminar series. It contains detailed and valuable information on event management, from planning to follow-up.

Commission meetings

The Commission held two official meetings during this period, the first one in Palanga, Lithuania in August 2002 and the second one in Cesis, Latvia in August 2003. Both meetings focused on education in tourism, featuring educational excursions and lecturing from for instance the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as representatives from the Interreg III ABC Joint Secretariats and disabled organisations etc. The meetings often function as natural partner search forums for cities within the UBC network.

VIII. Commission on Transportation

The Commission on Transportation is chaired by Mrs Lisa Sundell, Goteborg.

In 2001 the City of Göteborg took over the chairmanship for the Commission on Transportation and since then the Commission has developed strongly. The Commission decided to focus on three areas in order to encourage sustainable transport solutions:

- public transport - how to develop the management of public transport systems
- cycling - to learn why and how to improve the conditions of cyclists and pedestrians
- mobility management - exchange of information on the potential for mobility management-tools to develop efficient, sustainable transport habits

The following seminars and meetings have been held during the reporting period:

- A **Public Transport Seminar** took place in April 2002 in Riga. The title of the seminar was "Worst practice in managing public transport – mistakes we have made for others to avoid". More than 40 participants representing 23 UBC member cities from 9 BSR countries participated. Questions were raised about strategic planning to facilitate efficient public transport, how to organise public transport and ways to finance investments and to operate the public transport systems. The Commission also had an Annual Meeting in Riga. The participants discussed how the commission will work and how to use the network as efficient as possible.

- To the **Bicycle Seminar** in Cesis September 2002 more than 40 participants from 20 different cities in the BSR came to take part. There were speakers from national, regional and local level in Latvia presenting the Latvian cycling development programs and project. There were also speakers from Copenhagen, Örebro and Malmö talking about the cycling policy and route planning in those cities. After the presentations there was a discussion about how to plan for cycling, what the benefits are and how it is possible to change attitudes.

- A **Mobility Management Seminar** was held in Tallinn and Paldiski in April 2003. 35 participants from 15 different cities in the BSR came to the National Library in Tallinn to participate in the conference. Mobility management was presented as a complement to an already existing infrastructure. Questions concerning increased efficiency in transport systems through new technique, attractive transport solutions, attitudes and new forms of collaboration were discussed. At the Annual Meeting in Paldiski the participants discussed, among other things, how the commission could work and how to use the network as efficient as possible.

Other activities:

The Commission contributed to the UBC Baltic Cities Bulletin 1/2002 which focused on “Transportation in Baltic Cities”. This was at the same time as the Commission on Transportation had its re-start and several TransCom members took their chance to show good transport examples from their cities. The publication also resulted in a growing network of interested member cities.

A questionnaire has been sent out to the UBC contact persons and to the commission’s network in August 2003. Individuals representing the member cities were asked to indicate what subjects they are interested in and what could be topics for the commission to work with. They should also indicate if they would like to be involved in a working group supporting the Commission on Transportation.

IX. Commission on Urban Planning

The Commission on Urban Planning is chaired by Mr Jussi Kautto, Helsinki.

The Commission on Urban Planning has grown to a network of some 120 professional planners from about 50 member cities from 10 BSR countries. The planners follow latest development in the field of physical planning and public design in the cities around the Baltic Sea.

In the reported period the Commission organised the seminars in Riga (2002), St Petersburg (2002) and Kolding (2003). The Commission produced colour reports from the seminars.

Riga Seminar, April 2002

The seminar theme was “Public space – problems and possibilities”. 78 participants from 31 UBC member cities from 10 countries participated in the seminar. In the seminar the participants worked also as consultants for the city of Riga. They studied as planners four different districts in the UNESCO world heritage area in the old town. The participants handled: inner court yards, the main pedestrian allee, the green belt around the old town and how to enlarge the commercial city centre.

St Petersburg Seminar, September 2002

The theme of the seminar was “Developing the historical industrial belt of St.Petersburg and the new masterplan”. 35 participants from 15 UBC cities from 8 countries attended the seminar. In the seminar the Commission handled the historical industrial belt, which is situated around the magnificent city centre. There were lectures of its history, conservation and revitalisation and lectures on the actual real estate development projects and on the legal framework of land ownership and leasing.

Project ABC – Alliance of Baltic Cities

The ABC project is a new start in the field of Urban Physical Planning and Public Design in the UBC cities. It is a new step towards deepening the cooperation and a fine possibility to learn more from each other about possibilities, challenges and problems and to see the results as a built city environment. The Commission prepared under the leadership of the City of Malmö an INTERREG III B application: “ABC – City Network Cooperation for Local Approaches to Regional Strategies”.

The BSR Interreg IIIB Committee accepted the project in December 2002. EU will co-finance the project with max. 255.957,00 euro in the years 2003–2005. This money is the financial support to the participants from EU cities. The Estonian, Latvian and Polish cities made their applications in 2003 to get financial support from EU Phare, but they did not succeed.

The partners of the ABC project are 27 UBC member cities from 7 BSR countries. The lead partner is Malmö City Planning Department. Within the ABC project there are six seminars or project meetings in: Kolding, Vaasa (2003); Liepaja, Viljandi (2004); Gdynia, Malmö (2005). The seminars are also open with certain terms to the participants from UBC member cities, especially from the cities which belong to the network on the Commission on Urban Planning.

The Kolding Seminar, April 2003

The first seminar of the ABC project had a theme “Developed Urban Management, City Renewal and Development towards Sustainability”. 39 participants from 26 member cities from 8 countries took part. There were lectures about the Danish Planning System about the Regional Planning in Jylland. The participants worked in three working groups. Each working group made suggestions to the small scale investments in Kolding.

The next ABC project seminar will be held in Vaasa in October 2003 and the theme is “Cities as regional engines, urban design and regional development”.

UBC Women’s Network

The UBC Women’s Network is chaired by Ms Ulla Lundqvist, Turku.

UBC Women’s Network strives to promote women’s participation at all levels of cooperation within the Baltic Sea area building networks not only between the women’s organisations and the authorities in the Cities of UBC but also in order to create a “women’s lobby” towards the European Union. The network is open to women politicians as well as women working in the administration in the member cities. The network is used to inform about issues, events and projects with the aim to keep the interest alive for gender equal societies and to enlarge women’s possibilities to participate in the social dialogue and politics.

Women's Network has organised and participated in the following events during the period:

- October 2001, seminar in Narva, disseminating the results of the 3 R-project.
- December 2001, September 2003, meetings of the Women's Network of Estonian Cities.
- April 2002, Round-Table in St.Petersburg during the 2nd Annual Baltic CBSS NGO-Forum, theme "Women Networking in the Municipalities in the Baltic Sea Region".
- November 2002, Network Meeting and a two-day Seminar "How to raise money for social activities" with the assistance of Siauliai City, Women's NGO Association and University. 60 participants representing NGO's and UBC cities.
- February 2003, Network Meeting in connection to Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference Women and Democracy in Tallinn.
- May 2003, the coordinator participated in the workshop at the 3rd Annual Baltic CBSS NGO-Forum, Turku, the theme was Gender Equality and Human Rights in Changing Societies.

Project activities

Women's Network participates as collaborating partner in the following European projects:

- LIBRA-03/European Programme The Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-05
- Transnational Networks/NET 31 REM/European Program Leonardo Da Vinci

The Women's Network submitted project proposal "Combating the silence and invisibility of trafficking locally" with assistance of two Finnish Women's Centres in Turku.

Task Force on Youth Participation

The UBC Task Force on Youth Participation is led by Ms Charlotte Gustafsson, Kalmar.

In May 2003 the UBC Task Force organised the "Young Voices of the Baltic Sea Region" conference in Kalmar. The conference hosted around 100 youngsters and civil servants dealing with youth issues, 34 cities and 8 countries. The young participants represented schools, youth councils and local NGO's.

The main aim of the conference was to highlight issues important for youth in the Baltic Sea Region, and to discuss the possibilities of youth participation in the UBC. The conference presented an action plan for youth involvement, consisting of five interacting measures to the executive board of the UBC in June 2003: 1) a youth network, 2) a Commission on youth cooperation and participation, 3) annual UBC Youth Conferences, 4) UBC Executive Board to be in touch with young people, 5) cooperation between the UBC and youth.

At the executive board meeting of the UBC, held in Rostock in June 2003, the Board decided that the concept of Network is more suitable for youth involvement than the concept of Commission. UBC Commissions work in specific concrete fields such as environment, business, IT, culture, tourism, sport etc. The Board stressed that the Commission on Youth would be too narrow, as youth should be involved in all mentioned above fields. Thus the formula of Network fits better in this case, just like in case of Women's involvement.

Other UBC activities

UBC-LVRLAC Cooperation Project

Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC) - UBC cooperation gained speed after the 6th UBC General Conference, which was visited by a delegation from LVRLAC.

The project consists of several sub-projects:

- LVRLAC Secretariat. Aims at assisting LVRLAC to build up a local authorities network secretariat, located in Entebbe, Uganda.
- Functional Internal Communications. Intends to connect local authorities with Internet and supply Internet training.
- LVRLAC Women's Network. The result so far is a very active network that plans many activities. UBC Project Leader is former UBC Women's Network Chairman Hjördis Höglund.
- Environmental Pedagogic Centers. The first Center is planned to be opened in January 2004 in Kisumu, Kenya. UBC Project Leader is Mr Guldbrand Skjönberg, co-chairman of UBC Commission on Environment.
- City Council Exchange Program. An exchange of City Councillors between three African local authorities and three UBC member cities (Kolding, Kalmar and Tampere).
- LFA Seminars. The project aims at training to increase skills and capacity to formulate development projects.

The project is lead by a project steering group, consisting of LVRLAC Chairman and vice-chairman, plus UBC Honorary President Mr Anders Engström. UBC has employed Mr Christian Rietz for the project. He is now working at the LVRLAC Secretariat in Entebbe, Uganda, since November 2002. Phase two started in 2002 and will be finalised in June 2004. Juhan Janusson is coordinating the whole project. SIDA has so far granted 800.000 Euro for the project.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

The Baltic Cities Bulletin published by the UBC Secretariat provides information about the work of the Union and news from the member cities. Besides an emphasis is put on covering some specific fields of general interest, which are presented as main themes of each issue. The bulletin is printed in 5500 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities as well as to the number of organisations and institutions, including the EU. The bulletin is available on the Internet at www.ubc.net. In 2001 the following issues have been published - "Youth in the Baltic Sea Region" and "Social Justice in the Baltic Sea Region". In 2002 - "Transport in Baltic Cities" and "Governance in Baltic Cities". In 2003 - "Cities Without Limits" and "The Baltic Sea Wave – Business Development in the New Europe". Member cities actively contributed to the contents and sent many interesting stories related to mentioned above themes.

UBC website and e-news

The Secretariat has further developed the UBC website www.ubc.net which provides information on UBC structure, aims and activities. The main links on the website are: News, Organisation, Member Cities, Commissions, Events Calendar, Documentation Centre, UBC Bulletin, General Conference, Twin Cities, Members www sites, Contact list, Other Baltic & European organisations. UBC also provides electronic news to its member cities on the EU related matters and ongoing UBC projects, meetings and activities.