

UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES REPORT OF THE X GENERAL CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The X General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 23-26 September 2009 in Kristiansand, Norway, at the invitation of the Mayor of Kristiansand.

The first day of the Conference was devoted to the topic: “Baltic cities for economic and climate solutions – a developed Baltic Sea Strategy”. The Conference discussed the implementation of the new EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the problem of climate change, the impact of economic slowdown on cities. The second day was devoted to internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finances etc. The Conference programme is enclosed with the report.

The Conference was attended by 215 participants including representatives of 73 Member Cities as well as invited guests from governments and international organisations. The list of participants is attached to this report.

THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2009

PLENARY SESSION

Mr Per Sigurd Sørensen, Mayor of Kristiansand, warmly welcomed all participants at the X UBC General Conference in Kristiansand.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities, opened the X General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

The following speakers delivered keynote addresses during the plenary session:

Mr Hallgeir Aalbu, Director General, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Kingdom of Norway

Ambassador Kornelija Jurgaitiene, member of Council of the Baltic Sea States Committee of Senior Officials, Lithuania

Mrs Maria Åsenius, State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs, Kingdom of Sweden, Presidency of the European Council

Councillor Kay Twitchen, member of the Committee of the Regions, rapporteur on Climate Change, on behalf of Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions

Mr David Sweet, European Commission DG Regional Policy, adviser to Director General Dirk Ahner

Mr Miquel Rosselló, member of the Executive Committee of the Consell Insular of Mallorca, Arco Latino

Ms Jannike Arnesen, Kristiansand Youth Council representative

Mr Svein Grandum, R&D Manager, Product Development, Elkem Solar

Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Chairman of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The keynote speeches are enclosed with the report.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

The following workshops were held concurrently after the plenary session:

I. To improve the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region

Moderator: Commission on Environment (Turku) and Commission on Energy (Oskarshamn)

II. To make the Baltic Sea Region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced economic development

Moderator: Commission on Information Society (Tampere/St.Petersburg) and Commission on Business Cooperation (Kaunas/Kiel/Kolding)

III. To make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive

Moderator: Commission on Tourism (Koszalin/Szczecin). Support: Commission on Transportation (Gdynia), Commission on Urban Planning (Helsinki), Commission on Youth Issues (Kalmar), Commission on Culture (Vaasa), Commission on Sport (Gdynia)

IV. To make the Baltic Sea Region a safer and more secure place

Moderator - Commission on Health and Social Affairs (Kristiansand). Support: Commission on Gender Equality (Umeå), Commission on Education (Kärdla/Norrtälje).

The workshop summaries are enclosed with the conference report.

FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2009

COMMISSION MEETINGS

In the morning the UBC Commissions held working meetings in order to discuss reports for the last period and action plans for the next two-year period.

OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly was opened by Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union.

REPORT ON UBC ACTIVITIES

President Per Bødker Andersen submitted the report on UBC activities during the period October 2007 – September 2009. The UBC activity report is enclosed. The General Conference approved the report on UBC activities October 2007 – September 2009.

REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONS

The following representatives of the Commissions submitted reports and action plans to the assembly:

Commission on Business Cooperation – Mr Wolfgang Schmidt
Commission on Culture – Ms Tarja Hautamäki
Commission on Education – Mr Kurt Pettersson
Commission on Energy – Mr Stefan Windh
Commission on Environment – Mr Björn Grönholm
Commission on Gender Equality – Ms Helene Brewer
Commission on Health and Social Affairs – Mr Jørgen Kristiansen
Commission on Information Society – Mr Esa Kokkonen
Commission on Sport – Ms Beata Łęgowska
Commission on Tourism – Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski
Commission on Transportation – Mr Zygmunt Zmuda-Trzebiatowski
Commission on Urban Planning – Ms Sirpa Kallio
Commission on Youth Issues – Ms Ilona Evelyn-Rannala

The Conference took note of the reports. The activity reports and action plans of the commissions are enclosed.

ALTERATION IN THE STATUTE

The Board of Audit in its recommendations to the General Conference presented in September 2007 in Pärnu, suggested making a change in the Statute of the UBC, so that the absolution was not only for the Presidium and Secretary General, but also for the Executive Board.

The General Conference approved the alteration. The revised Statute is enclosed.

ALTERATION IN THE INTERNAL REGULATIONS

The Executive Board recommended the General Conference to modify the point 4.7 of the internal regulations. Alteration suggested by the Board: ‘Resources should be used to secure a broad representation of municipalities in the work of the commissions.’

The General Conference approved the alteration.

AUDITOR’S REPORT

President Per Bødker Andersen informed the General Conference that the auditor’s report on UBC accounts 2007-2008 was prepared by the licensed auditing company BILANS from Gdańsk, stating that the Union financial transactions and records within the mentioned period had been handled properly. The Conference took note of the report. The auditor’s report is enclosed.

BOARD OF AUDIT REPORT

Ms Ewa Back, Sundsvall, presented the report and recommendations of the Board of Audit. The General Conference took note of the report. The report of the Board of Audit is enclosed.

ABSOLVING THE PRESIDIUM, BOARD, SECRETARY

The General Conference acknowledged the fulfilment of duties by the Presidium, Executive Board and the Secretary General in 2007 and 2008.

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2010-2011

The President presented the Executive Board's proposal of the membership fees for 2010 and 2011. The General Conference approved the membership fees for the financial period 2010-2011. The financial documents are enclosed with the report.

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The following cities were elected as members of UBC Executive Board in the next two-year period: Næstved (Denmark), Kärđla (Estonia), Jyväskylä (Finland), Rostock (Germany), Liepāja (Latvia), Panevėžys (Lithuania), Kristiansand (Norway), Gdańsk (Poland), St. Petersburg (Russia), Växjö (Sweden).

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

The General Conference re-elected for a two-year period:

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding, as President of the Union

Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå, as first Vice-President of the Union

Ms Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare, as Vice-President of the Union

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-Mayor of Turku, as Vice-President of the Union

ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF AUDIT

The General Conference re-elected Ms Ewa Back and Ms Marta Chelkowska, and elected Mr Jukka Vilen to the UBC Board of Audit for a two-year period.

UBC AUDITOR FOR 2009-2010

The President informed the Conference that the Executive Board proposed the licensed auditing company BILANS from Gdańsk as UBC auditor for 2009-2010. The General Conference approved BILANS as UBC auditor for 2009-2010.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

President Per Bødker Andersen presented a proposal of the resolution from the X UBC General Conference. All member cities had a possibility to provide comments to the draft resolution before and during the conference. The General Conference unanimously adopted the resolution. The resolution is enclosed with the report.

UBC STRATEGY

President Per Bødker Andersen introduced the new UBC Strategy 2010-2015. The General Conference adopted the Strategy. The Strategy is enclosed with the report.

UBC SOCIAL CHARTER

Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, first Vice-President of the Union, presented an updated Social Charter of the UBC. The General Conference adopted the updated Social Charter. The updated Charter is enclosed with the report.

UBC SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PROGRAMME

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President of the Union, introduced the UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010-2015. The General Conference adopted the document. The Programme is enclosed with the report.

VENUE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 2011

Following the proposal of the Mayor of Liepāja, Latvia, the General Conference decided to hold its 11th meeting in the City of Liepāja in the year 2011. Mr Jørgen Kristiansen, Kristiansand Councillor, handed over the UBC flag to Mr Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja, wishing Liepāja a successful conference in 2011.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURE AWARD

The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2009 was granted to Umeå, Sweden, for the project “No idling taxicabs in Umeå”. The winner received a grant of 5.000 EUR. Evaluation of the project is enclosed.

The Cultural Prize 2009 (1.500 EUR) for the creative use of information technology was awarded to the city of Gdańsk for the project “The City Signs of Culture”. Evaluation of the project is enclosed.

YOUTH CONFERENCE

In parallel with the General Conference the UBC Youth Conference titled “Bridges over the Sea” was held at the same time in Kristiansand. The conference was attended by over 100 young people from UBC member cities. Both conferences interacted during the workshops. More information about the youth conference at www.ubc-youth.org.

ANTHEM FOR THE UBC

In 1993 famous Russian composer Aleksandra Pakhmutova composed an anthem for the UBC. On the occasion of the X General Conference the song was performed by the choir with a new arrangement and English lyrics. The CDs with the anthem were forwarded to the participants.

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, the President of the Union, expressed his warm thanks to the City of Kristiansand, delegates from member cities, speakers, guests and the UBC secretariat for their outstanding contribution to the success of the X UBC General Conference.