

**MINUTES FROM THE 34TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
Viljandi, Estonia, 7-8 June 2002**

CLOSED SESSION, 7 June

The 34th meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 7-8th of June 2002 in the City of Viljandi, Estonia, upon the invitation of Mr Peep Aru, Mayor of Viljandi.

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

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

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

The 34th meeting of the UBC Executive Board was opened by Mr Per Boedker Andersen, the President of the Union. Mr Andersen greeted all participants and wished them a successful meeting. The meeting adopted the agenda attached as an annex to this report.

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

Mrs Bjorg Wallevik, Mayor of Kristiansand and Mr Peeter Jalakas, Chairman of Kuressaare City Council, were elected to check the minutes.

3. Adoption of Action Plan 2002-2003.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen reminded that the Action Plan 2002-2003 was deeply discussed by the Board at the last meeting in Toensberg. Several amendments have been made. Afterwards the document have been sent out for comments to all member cities. Mr Zaboklicki informed that the document have been completed with the action plan of UBC Women's Network.

Decision:

The Board decided to adopt the UBC Action Plan 2002-2003. The document is attached to the minutes.

4. Implementation of the UBC Social Charter.

Ms Petra Hamann, Rostock, reminded that the Social Charter (enclosed) was unanimously adopted at the General Conference in Rostock in October last year. The Commission on Health and Social Affairs (H&SA) was authorised to make a working programme on Social Charter implementation in member cities.

First the Commission intends to prepare the guidelines to describe more broadly each point of the Social Charter. Secondly the Commission wants to elaborate a catalogue of indicators to evaluate how member cities are reaching social standards stated in the Charter. In order to do it, the help of all UBC Commissions and Network is needed. The next step would be the elaboration of the catalogue of measures through which the Charter could be implemented in the cities. The Commission intends to prepare the first analysis on Social Charter implementation in member cities, for the next General Conference in Klaipeda 2003.

The Commission divides implementation process into three periods. The first period 2000-2001 is already finished, the goal was to elaborate and to adopt the Social Charter. The second period is 2002-2003 - analysis of situation in member cities; elaboration of guidelines; catalogue of indicators; catalogue of measures; and the most important - the endorsement of Social Charter by the member cities. The third period will concern the report on implementation status of the Social Charter in UBC cities.

The Commission on H&SA will act as steering group and will coordinate the work between different UBC bodies which must be involved in the process such as Commissions, Networks, Presidium, Board, member cities and external experts.

The Commission suggest that each city should appoint a person responsible for Charter implementation. This person shall work closely with the city board, city council, social department, experts, NGOs.

The Commission requests all member cities to propose experts who will evaluate the process of Charter implementation. Mr Hamann proposed for example Max Planck Institute in Rostock, Social Hansa, former UBC Vice-President Mr Michael Bouteiller who was involved in Charter creation since the beginning.

The Commission proposed that the Presidium and the Board should monitor the whole process continuously.

Mr Juhan Janusson, Political Adviser to UBC President, proposed to add a small reference group of local politicians who would monitor the process of Charter implementation. President Andersen supported this idea.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director of External Affairs and Communication, Turku, said that it is very important to ensure active cities participation in the process of Charter implementation. In order to achieve cities participation, the process must serve practical interests of the cities, as

much as possible. The process should not mean collecting the data only, but should also involve seminars, discussion forums, exchange of experiences etc.

Mr Arno Poeker, UBC Vice-President, Rostock, stressed that the Social Charter is the first charter ever adopted by UBC and its implementation is a new important task and challenge for the whole organisation.

Mr Poeker suggested that external experts and politicians responsible for monitoring the process shall be appointed by the Presidium.

Mr Anders Engstrom, UBC Honorary President, supported the idea and stressed that mentioned persons should come from east, west and north of the Baltic Sea Region as different countries have different social policies.

Mr Liutauras Kraniauskas, Klaipeda, expressed an opinion that the Social Charter could be successively transformed to the monitoring system of social development in UBC member cities. He also proposed an institute for social research in Vilnius to the external experts group.

Mrs Bjorg Wallevik expressed an opinion that the Social Charter could stimulate the dialogue between the city authorities and the citizens. Through the Charter implementation process the city can inform citizens about its social policies and projects and the citizens can have real influence on shaping the city social policy.

Decision:

The Board accepted the plan on Social Charter implementation submitted by the Commission on Health and Social Affairs and authorised the Commission to go on with the implementation process. The Board decided that Presidium can appoint external experts and local politicians to monitor the Charter implementation process.

5. Date and theme of VII General Conference in Klaipeda.

President Per Boedker Andersen proposed to hold the VII UBC General Conference in Klaipeda on 17-19 October 2002. Mr Liutauras Kraniauskas from Klaipeda confirmed that this date is possible for the city of Klaipeda.

As regards the possible theme of the conference President Andersen stressed the EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) seems to be the most important question, as the enlargement is expected in 2004.

Mr Juhan Janusson suggested that the conference should discuss not the enlargement itself, but the potential challenges for the BSR after the EU enlargement.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski stressed that the EU enlargement will be a historical moment when the old division of Europe will be finally overcome. He proposed that conference should look at the new role of the Baltic Sea Region in the Europe of tomorrow.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki informed that the City of Gdynia and the Commission of Sport noted that the year 2003 has been announced by the Council of Europe as the European Year of Disabled and they proposed that this might be also reflected in some way at the General Conference in Klaipeda.

Mr Liutauras Kraniauskas proposed that the process of globalisation could be the theme for the General Conference in Klaipeda.

Vice-President Arno Poker stressed that October 2003 will be the perfect time to discuss the EU enlargement and the future of the BSR in new united Europe. He underlined that we should all make efforts to arrange good speakers and interesting programme of the conference.

Mr Juhan Janusson suggested that the heads of major Baltic Sea organisations should have a meeting in connection with the General Conference in Klaipeda.

President Andersen thanked the Board members for interesting inputs to the discussion on the theme of the GC in Klaipeda and concluded that the conference should discuss the future of the BSR as a part of the EU.

Decision:

The Board decided to hold the VII GC in Klaipeda on 17-19 October 2003.

6. Updating of the UBC Strategy.

The present UBC Strategy was adopted by the General Conference in Stockholm in 1999. The President appointed a working group consisting of persons working close to the Presidents ie. Juhan Janusson, Pawel Zaboklicki, Mikko Lohikoski, Anita Boje, Tonu Karu, plus Maciej Lisicki in order to get balance between east and west. The task of the WG is to update the UBC Strategy.

The WG proposed that there should be a clear connection between the basic documents of UBC ie. the Statute, the Strategy, the Action Plan, and the Internal Regulations. The targets of the Strategy shall be the UBC Member Cities, potential UBC members, other local and regional authority organisations, European Institutions.

The WG proposed the following working plan. First a survey on the new strategy is to be sent out to all member cities. The results of the survey should be presented at the next Board Meeting. A first draft of the revised strategy should be sent to the UBC Member Cities for comments. The result should be presented at the first Board meeting in 2003. The second Board meeting in 2003 should submit a final proposal to the General Conference in Klaipeda.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski proposed to ask a group external experts to evaluate the UBC Strategy in order to bring new insights and ideas to the Strategy.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Working Group to continue its work on updating the UBC Strategy, according to the proposed working plan.

- 7. UBC contribution to the Convention on the EU's future.**
- 8. UBC comment on the White Paper on European Governance.**

President Per Boedker Andersen proposed to treat the above questions together. He said that it is too early now for the UBC to contribute to the Convention of the Future of the European Union. He suggested that the Presidium and staff should follow the developments in question and UBC should make its contribution at the later stage.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski agreed that it is too early now to take a formal stand on the Convention on the future of EU. But nevertheless the process has started and it is very important that we should all be in touch with our national convention members, to influence them as much as possible, he said. He also stressed that UBC should get acquainted with the position of Eurocities in question. In the message to the members of the Convention, the Eurocities requested the EU to formally recognise the principle of local self-government, to develop a kind of mechanism how the voice of the cities and regions could be heard in the European Union and to provide channels for systematic and transparent dialogue between the European Commission and local and regional authorities. He said we should keep ourselves informed on the process of the Convention.

Mr Lohikoski informed that last year the European Commission produced a White Paper on the reform of European Governance and requested comments from different organisations on that paper. While the Convention is looking how to built a new Europe and how to reform the structures, the White Book was a kind of more limited goal - a view of the Commission how to make the present system to function more properly. In this White Book the EC rediscovered the role of the regional and local authorities and that is important for us. The EC is going to publish the White Book II this summer. Mr Lohikoski prepared a UBC comment

on the White Book of European Governance, which was sent by the secretariat to the Board members.

Decision:

The Board adopted the document as UBC comment on the White Book of European Governance. The comment is enclosed to the minutes.

Mr Juhan Janusson informed there is another EU White Paper on Transportation. He said UBC should comment it also as the Baltic Sea Region is hardly mentioned there.

President Andersen proposed that the Commission on Transportation would prepare a draft of UBC comment on the EU White Paper on Transportation.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal.

9. Conclusions of the Seminar ‘Electronic UBC’ in St.Petersburg.

President Andersen reminded that the Board in Toensberg in February authorised the cities of St.Petersburg, Stockholm, Tampere, Turku and other cities interested in IT sector, to hold a meeting and discuss the question whether UBC should create the Commission on IS.

Mr Serguei Zhdanov, Deputy Chief, Committee on Informatisation and Communication, St.Petersburg, informed that the meeting was held in St.Petersburg on 25-26 April 2002 and presented the outcomes from the seminar. Presentation of Mr Zhdanov is attached to the minutes. The main conclusion was that the city of St.Petersburg supported by Stockholm, Tampere, Turku proposed to create the UBC Commission on Information Society.

Decision:

The Board decided to create the UBC Commission on Information Society with St.Petersburg as Commission’s lead city. The Board encouraged all member cities to participate actively in the work of the new Commission.

10. UBC policy on sponsoring.

President Andersen raised the question whether UBC should turn to selected companies for the sponsorship of its activities. He reminded that so far UBC activities have been financed from the membership fees and from the project grants. In order to further develop its activities UBC must look for additional resources. The conclusion from the Board discussion on this item was that UBC should try to get sponsors to fund its activities but the rules of sponsoring must be very clearly defined. The Board decided to take up this issue again at the next meetings.

11. UBC-LVRLAC cooperation – update.

Mr Anders Engstrom and Mr Juhan Janusson informed that currently the contents of the second phase of the UBC-LVRLAC cooperation project is being discussed with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), which is funding the project. The description of the second phase of the project is attached to the minutes.

The Board took note of the report.

12. Agreement with Eurocities.

President Andersen informed that the cooperation agreement between the UBC and Eurocities was signed on 6 June 2002 in Helsinki between himself and Ms Eva-Riitta Siitonen, President of Eurocities. The final text of the agreement is attached to the minutes. The first practical cooperation between UBC and Eurocities will take place in Brussels on 5 July 2002 where both organisations will jointly contribute to the conference "EU Enlargement from a Local and Regional perspective".

13. Other matters.

President Andersen informed that the UBC Women's Network applied for 5000 euro in 2002 and in 2003 to strengthen its activities.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Presidium to check whether it is possible to grant the Women's Network with these resources.

OPEN SESSION, 8 June 2002

1. Report from the closed session of the Board.

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

Mr Peep Aru, Mayor of Viljandi, welcomed all delegates and wished them the fruitful discussions and a pleasant stay in Viljandi. Mr Aru made a presentation introducing the city of Viljandi.

Mr Georgy Bystrov, Mayor of the city of Maardu, Estonia, made a presentation introducing his town. The city of Maardu was accepted as a UBC member at the last UBC Executive Board meeting in Toensberg held in February 2002. The Board thanked Mr Bystrov for the presentation and wished Maardu a fruitful and long-lasting cooperation with other UBC member cities.

3. Report from the meeting of Commissions Chairpersons and report from the meeting Presidium-Commissions.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku, co-Chairman of the Commission on Environment, reported from the meeting of the chairmen and coordinators of UBC Commissions and Networks, and from the meeting between Commissions / Networks leaders and the UBC Presidium. Both meetings were held on the previous day. The report from these meetings is attached to the minutes.

4. Reports from the Commissions & Networks.

The following representatives of the UBC Commissions and Networks submitted activity reports from the period October 2001 – May 2002. The reports are attached to the minutes.

Commission on Business Cooperation – Kari Loytty

Commission on Culture – Slawomir Szafranski

Commission on Education – Ivo Eesmaa

Commission on Environment – Risto Veivo

Commission on Health & Social Affairs – Petra Hamann

Commission on Sport – Ewa Depka

Commission on Tourism – Charlotte Gustafsson

Commission on Transportation – Lisa Sundell

Commission on Urban Planning – Jussi Kautto

Women's Network – Ulla Lundqvist

The EU-Coordination Network has not submitted any report.

Decision:

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

5. UBC Youth Network.

Ms Charlotte Gustafsson, Kalmar, reminded that at the last Executive Board meeting in Toensberg, the Board authorised the cities of Kalmar, Kiel, Kolding and Tallinn to work out a document describing the goals, tasks and structure of projected UBC Youth Network. Ms Gustafsson presented mentioned document which is enclosed to the minutes. She proposed to hold the conference directed to the representatives of youth, as well as civil servants responsible for youth matters in member cities, in spring 2003.

Decision:

The Board approved the proposal to hold the conference on youth in spring 2003 and authorised the working group on Youth Network to continue its work.

6. Involvement of cities from Belarus in the UBC work.

President Andersen recalled that Mr Anders Engstrom, UBC Honorary President, prepared a proposal on involving the cities from Belarus in the UBC work. Mr Andersen said that the

Presidium would like to once again discuss this question before taking it up at the Board meeting. The Board agreed with the proposal and decided to discuss this issue at the next meetings.

7. Project “Without Limits” connected with International Year of Disabled 2003.

Representatives of the City of Gdynia, namely Ms Ewa Depka, Manager of Foreign Relations and Ms Beata Wachowiak-Zwara, Mayor’s Plenipotentiary on Disabled, introduced the concept of the UBC Social Campaign for the disabled entitled “Without limits”. The campaign would be held in connection with the European Year of the Disabled in 2003, announced by the Council of Europe. The campaign also refers to the UBC Social Charter, adopted last year at the VI UBC General Conference in Rostock. The inauguration of the campaign would take place at the conference in Gdynia in August/September 2002. The UBC Commissions declared active participation in the campaign. The description of the project is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board supported the project and authorised the City of Gdynia to go on with the arrangements in close coordination with the Commission on Health and Social Affairs.

8. Reports from the conferences and meetings attended by Union representatives.

- CBSS Ministerial Session, Svetlogorsk, 5-6 March 2002
- Baltic Assembly Conference, Vilnius, 14- 15 March 2002
- 2nd CBSS NGO Forum, St.Petersburg, 18-21 April 2002
- CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, Klaipeda, 27-28 May 2002
- 11th Annual Conference of BCCA, Rostock, 2-3 June 2002

President Andersen reminded that the written reports from mentioned above conferences were sent to the Board members in advance. The Board took note of the reports. The reports are attached to the minutes.

9. New issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki introduced the latest issue of the UBC Baltic Cities Bulletin devoted to “Transportation in Baltic Cities”. The bulletin includes articles sent by member cities, introducing projects and policies concerning public transport, ports, city traffic, cycling etc. The bulletin also provides information on latest UBC meetings and activities as well as news from the member cities. The bulletin is printed in 5000 copies and has been sent out to all member cities as well as to numerous Baltic and European institutions and organisations including the EU.

The Board urged the contact persons in all member cities to distribute the bulletin among departments in each City Hall and send it to various city institutions such as universities, libraries, ports, chambers of commerce etc. The Board expressed its satisfaction to the Editorial Board and the UBC Secretariat for maintaining the high profile of the UBC Bulletin.

10. Questions raised at the meeting.

Mr Juha Savander, Helsinki, briefly introduced the second phase of the project: Baltic Palette Cooperation Network. The description of the project is attached to the minutes.

11. Next meeting of the Executive Board.

President Andersen informed about the invitation of the Mayor of Panevezys, Mr Valdemaras Jakstas, to host the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Decision:

The Board decided to hold its 35th meeting in the City of Panevezys, Lithuania, on 8-10 November 2002.

12. Closing of the Meeting.

President Per Boedker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and to the City of Viljandi for its warm hospitality and closed the 34th Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki
Secretary

Mrs Bjorg Wallevik
Adjuster

Mr Peeter Jalakas
Adjuster