

**MINUTES FROM THE 41ST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
Riga, Latvia, 15-16 October 2004**

CLOSED SESSION, 15 October

The 41st meeting of the UBC Executive Board was held on the 15-16 October 2004 in the City of Riga, Latvia, upon the invitation of Mr Gundars Bojars, Mayor of Riga, Vice-President of UBC. The meeting was divided into the closed session attended by the members of the Board and the general session open to the commissions, cities and guests.

The meeting in Riga raised a great interest among the cities – over 70 delegates from 32 member cities participated in open part. Additionally on 15 October there was a working meeting of the leaders of UBC commissions and networks. Also UBC Network on Youth Issues decided to hold its session in connection with the Board meeting.

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

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

The meeting was opened by Mr Gundars Bojars, UBC Vice-President, who chaired the closed session of the Executive Board. 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.

Mr Gundars Bojars from Riga and Mr Christopher Odmann from Stockholm, were elected to check the minutes.

3. Observer status in the Committee of the Regions.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki informed the Executive Board that UBC received an observer status to the Committee of the Regions which proves that Brussels recognizes the work carried out by our organisation. The letter of the Committee of the Regions Secretary General Mr Gerhard Stahl is attached to the minutes. The Board underlined that through the participation in the Committee of the Regions Plenary Sessions UBC will have a chance to influence the work and policies of this important European Union institution. The last Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions held in Brussels on 29-30 September 2004 was attended by UBC President Per Boedker Andersen.

4. Theme of the VIII UBC General Conference, Turku, 29 Sept – 2 October 2005.

**5. UBC task force on logistic corridors in the Baltic Sea Region – update.
EC consultation document "Motorways of the Sea".**

Points 4 and 5 of the agenda were treated simultaneously.

UBC Vice-President and Mayor of Turku Armas Lahoniitty warmly invited all UBC member cities to attend the VIII UBC General Conference in Turku in 2005.

Following the discussions at the previous Board meeting in Kristiansand, Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, proposed the theme of the General Conference to be connected with the transportation and logistics corridors in the Baltic Sea Region. UBC realises that improvement of transportation corridors is crucial for further development of the whole region. At the General Conference in

Turku UBC shall also discuss how to strengthen the structures and operating capacity of the UBC in order to meet the expectations of member cities in the enlarged Europe.

Mr Lohikoski informed that UBC received the European Commission's consultation document on "Motorways of the Seas" concept to be financed through the revised Trans-European Network Transport Guidelines (TEN-T). The document is attached to the minutes. Mr Lohikoski said that UBC Logistics Task Force created in Kristiansand welcomes the Commission's implementation framework of the "Motorways of the Seas" concept and hopes it will contribute to the improvement of intermodal transportation system in the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Lohikoski, on behalf of the UBC Logistics Task Force invited all member cities to Brussels on 24 November to discuss how we can benefit from the EU resources allocated to this new initiative.

Moreover the City of Turku put forward an idea that UBC could arrange annually a forum for the policy makers in the Baltic Sea Region. So far the first day of the General Conference serves as such a forum but the GC is held bi-annually. The proposal will be discussed at the UBC Presidium meeting in November.

Decision:

The Executive Board decided that the theme of the VIII General Conference in Turku in 2005 will be devoted to the transportation and logistics corridors in the Baltic Sea Region.

6. UBC & Atlantic Arc Cities statement on EC communication on dialogue with associations of local authorities – reply from the EC.

7. Signing of cooperation agreement with Atlantic Arc Cities.

Points 6 and 7 of the agenda were treated simultaneously.

In July 2004 UBC signed the cooperation agreement with our sister organisation on Atlantic coast - Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities. The document was signed during the general conference of CAAC. Mr Maciej Lisicki, Gdansk, represented UBC there. UBC cooperation with CAAC focuses on lobbying for cities interests on one hand and on facilitating joint projects between our member cities on the other hand.

Mr Zaboklicki reminded that UBC and CAAC prepared a joint comment on the European Commission communication "Dialogue with associations of local authorities on the formulation of EU policy". In this communication the Commission informed about launching annual hearings for associations to inform them about its annual program and major policy initiatives that have a significant local impact. In the joint statement sent to the EC President and Regional Policy Commissioner we welcomed an opportunity to meet the Commission on regular basis and at the same time we expressed our opinion that organisations should not only be informed about EU policies but also should be given an opportunity to influence these policies. Our reaction was noted in Brussels. Director General of Regional Policy replied in a letter that annual meetings "will offer the opportunity to the associations to inform the Commission about the expectations of their members concerning the development of EU policies". The letter is enclosed to the minutes. This joint UBC-CAAC statement proves that acting together make our voice stronger in Brussels.

Mr Lisicki added that apart from the cooperation on European policies, member cities from UBC and CAAC are very interested to participate in common transnational projects. Since the cooperation agreement has been signed there was intense partner search between Baltic and Atlantic cities for Interreg III C projects.

Mr Zaboklicki added that on 30 September both organisations submitted a joint application to the PRINCE programme which promotes the benefits of the enlargement of the European Union. The project consists of the series of seminars directed to local administrations, business sector, media, etc.

8. Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.

The following persons represented UBC at the international conferences and meetings in the latest months. The delegates submitted reports from the conferences (except last two meetings).

- 9th General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Schwerin, 3-4 June 2004 (Arno Poeker, Vice-President)
- New Hansa of Sustainable Ports and Cities Stakeholder Seminar, Lübeck, 22 June 2004 (Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General)
- 5th General Assembly of the Conference of the Atlantic Arc Cities, Nantes, 1-3 July 2004 (Maciej Lisicki, Member of UBC Board)
- 3rd International Riga Forum devoted to "Cities and Ports", Riga, 19-20 August 2004 (Gundars Bojars, UBC Vice-President)
- 13th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Bergen, 30-31 August 2004 (Maciej Lisicki, Member of UBC Board)
- Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of CBSS, Gdańsk, 9 September 2004 (Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General)
- Conference "EU Enlargement, Poland and New Neighbours – focus on early warning & civic security", Gdansk, 10-11 September 2004 (Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General)
- Ars Baltica Forum, Gdańsk, 23-24 September 2004 (Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General)
- 6th Plenary Session, Forum of Adriatic & Ionian Cities, Chioggia, 16-17 September 2004 (Gunars Ansins, Member of UBC Board)
- Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 29-30 September 2004 (Per Boedker Andersen, President)

The Board took note of the reports. The written information about mentioned conferences is attached to the minutes.

9. Maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region.

The Executive Board in Riga once again raised the issue of maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Anders Engstrom, Kalmar, reminded that UBC since several years demands from the European Commission to treat the maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region in similar way as the land borders. Non-paper on maritime boundaries is enclosed to the minutes.

The European Commission recently published a proposal for regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument for the years 2007-2012. The document is attached to the minutes.

The Board stressed that UBC opposes the limit of 150 km maritime border to be eligible for funding. In case of Baltic Sea Region such distance can not be set definitely. We expect a more flexible approach taking into account historical, social, cultural and economical factors, in order to support the cross sea-border cooperation between the Baltic cities.

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed the Board that the question of maritime borders will be discussed at the coordination meeting of Baltic Sea organisations to be held in Malmoe on 23 October.

10. Conference on "Baltic Sea Region - Perspectives 2010", Brussels, 23 Nov. 2004.

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed about the conference "Baltic Sea Region – Perspective 2010" to be held in Brussels on 23 November 2004 at the premises of the Committee of the Regions. The conference is co-organised by several Brussels offices of our member cities. The aim of this event is to promote the Baltic Sea Region amongst the Brussels policy actors – politicians, representatives of EU institutions, business community, NGOs, media. UBC will take an active part in this important forum. All member cities are welcome to attend this conference.

The Board endorsed the conference and encouraged all member cities to participate in this important event promoting our region in Brussels. The conference program is attached to the minutes.

11. Application for membership from Slonim, Belarus.

The application for membership from Slonim, Belarus, was preliminarily treated by the Board at the previous meeting in Kristiansand. During the discussion the Board repeated the arguments taken up in Kristiansand. The Board concluded that at present stage the full membership for the Belarus cities is not possible due to two basic reasons. Firstly as long as Belarus is a state of dictatorship we can not accept the cities with not democratically elected authorities as members. Secondly, in the opinion of the Board, the extension of the "UBC territory" on the another country would require a discussion and decision of the General Conference. It was stressed however that we shall not punish the citizens for the regime and we shall allow the civil society to participate in the UBC events and projects in order to stimulate democratic changes in Belarus.

Decision:

The Board decided to give an observer status to the city of Slonim, analogically to the observer status given to the city of Grodno two years ago. The Board decided that Slonim can take part in the UBC events on the condition that it is represented both by the representative of the authorities and the representative of the civil society (NGO).

12. UBC/LVRLAC project – a new stage.

Mr Risto Veivo, Turku, reminded that the Executive Board meeting in Kristiansand delegated the UBC President to decide on a new management solution for the UBC-LVRLAC cooperation project, as the phase II of the project ended on 30 June (later extended till 30 September). In order to give new dimensions to the project (namely environmental and sustainable dimension) the Commission on Environment / City of Turku was discussed by the Board as potential coordinator.

Following the decision of the Executive Board, UBC President inquired from the EnvCom Secretariat and its host, the City of Turku, whether they would be interested to take on the management responsibility of the project on the side of the UBC.

After considerations the EnvCom Secretariat and City of Turku decided that they are ready to take the responsibility. This offer included a term that both content and financial management responsibility would be delegated. This proposal was communicated in a letter to UBC President, who approved it.

Subsequently Mr Veivo informed about the project present status and about the preparations for the next phases of the project. More details are given in the document attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board decided:

1. to take note of the new management and contracting arrangement (as decided by UBC President)
2. to take note of the status of the project and of the preparation process for next phases
3. to delegate UBC President – on the proposals of UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat – to nominate UBC representatives for the Project Steering Group (PSG) and endorse on behalf of the UBC Terms of Reference (ToR) for the PSG.

13. Matters raised at the meeting.

No further questions have been raised.

14. Next meeting of the Executive Board.

Mr Hakan Wiklund, Lulea, on behalf of Mr Karl Petersen, Mayor of Lulea, warmly invited the Executive Board to hold its next meeting in Lulea, Sweden, on 4-6 March 2005.

Decision:

The Board accepted the invitation from Mr Petersen and decided to hold its 42nd meeting in the City of Lulea, Sweden, on 4-6 March 2005.

15. Closing of the Meeting.

Vice-President Gundars Bojars expressed his thanks to the Board members for the fruitful meeting and concluded the closed session of the 41st Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

OPEN SESSION, 16 October

The open session of the Executive Board meeting was chaired by Mr Armas Lahoniitty, 1st Vice-President of the Union.

1. Brief information from the closed session of the Board.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki summarised questions discussed by the Executive Board during the closed session on the previous day.

2. Presentation of the City of Riga.

Ms Inga Nemse, Head of Riga City Marketing Division, made a multimedial presentation introducing the history, culture, development plans, statistics, structure, international contacts, leisure facilities and architecture of the city of Riga.

3. Information on current activities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

UBC closely cooperates with the Council of the Baltic Sea States and have an official observer status in this intergovernmental organisation. During the open session of the Executive Board meeting in Riga, the chairman of CBSS Committee of Senior Officials Ambassador Jozef Wiejacz presented the priorities of the new CBSS Presidency (Poland) and informed about current CBSS initiatives and activities. Mr Wiejacz stressed that Council of the Baltic Sea States highly appreciates the practical and political work carried out by the UBC. CBSS representatives participate regularly in the UBC meetings which shows that the Council recognises the UBC role in the Baltic Sea region. Presentation of Mr Wiejacz is enclosed to the minutes.

Mr Armas Lahoniitty, UBC Vice-President warmly thanked Ambassador Wiejacz for attending the UBC Board meeting and invited the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials to hold a meeting in Turku in connection with the VIII UBC General Conference. Mr Lahoniitty also confirmed the UBC invitation to organise the coordination meeting between the major Baltic Sea organisations in 2005 in conjunction with the General Conference in Turku.

4. Brief information from the meeting of Commissions/Networks Leaders.

Mr Guldbbrand Skjonberg, co-Chairman of the Commission on Environment, reported from the meeting of the chairmen and coordinators of the UBC Commissions and Networks held on the previous day. The meeting's aim was to exchange information and strengthen the coordination between the UBC working bodies. The report of Mr Skjonberg is attached to the minutes.

Referring to Mr Skjonberg's report Vice-President Arno Pöker expressed an opinion that the content, working methods and functioning of the UBC Commissions should be analysed and, if needed, redefined during the preparatory process to the forthcoming UBC General Conference in Turku 2005. Mr Armas Lahoniitty, as chairman of the meeting, informed the participants that the Executive Board, during its session on the previous day, had also discussed this issue and agreed on it.

5. Activity reports from the Commissions and Networks.

The following representatives of the UBC Commissions and Networks submitted the annual activity reports since the General Conference in Klaipeda October 2003. The reports are attached to the minutes.

Commission on Business Cooperation – Lennart Gaardmark
Commission on Culture – Slawomir Szafranski
Commission on Education – Kurt Pettersson
Commission on Environment – Guldbrand Skjonberg
Commission on Health & Social Affairs – Karin Wohlgemuth
Commission on Sport – Beata Legowska
Commission on Tourism – Armands Muiznieks
Commission on Transportation – Lisa Sundell
Commission on Urban Planning – Lars-Goran Bostrom
Women’s Network – Lillian Westerberg
Network on Youth Issues – Sara Persson
Women’s Network – Loreta Stelbiene

The Commissions on Information Society was not represented but provided the written report.

The Board took note of the reports. The Board praised the Commissions and Networks for the vast range of projects, activities and events carried out in last 12 months and encouraged them to continue their important work.

Vice-President Armas Lahoniitty expressed his thanks to all participants for the good meeting and to the City of Riga for its warm hospitality and closed the 41st Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen
President

Mr Armas Lahoniitty
Co-Chairman

Mr Gundars Bojars
Co-Chairman /Adjuster

Mr Christopher Odmann
Adjuster

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki
Secretary