

**MINUTES FROM THE 42ND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
Luleå, Sweden, 5 March 2005**

The 42nd meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on the 5th of March 2005 in the City of Luleå, Sweden, upon the invitation of Mr Karl Petersen, Mayor of Luleå. 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 Per Boedker Andersen, the President of the Union. Mr Andersen expressed his thanks to the hosts of the meeting for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold the meeting in Lulea.

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 Christopher Ödmann from Stockholm and Mr Maciej Lisicki from Gdansk were elected to check the minutes.

3. VIII UBC General Conference in Turku, 29 September – 2 October 2005.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, on behalf of the Mayor of Turku Mr Armas Lahoniitty, informed about the status of preparations and the programme of the VIII UBC General Conference to be held in Turku on 29 September – 2 October 2005.

At the last Executive Board meeting in Riga, the Board decided that a theme of the General Conference shall be devoted to the transportation / logistic corridors in the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Lohikoski proposed to broaden the theme of the conference. Apart the logistic corridors the conference could also address the following issues: EU budget and its implications for the BSR, good governance, competitiveness, good neighbourhood policies, human contacts in the BSR etc under the general theme: "Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda."

Mr Lohikoski also informed that during the General Conference the following events would also take place:

- Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
- Coordination meeting of Baltic Sea organisations
- seminar of Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association

The Board accepted the proposal. The preliminary programme of the conference is attached to the minutes.

Mr Lohikoski proposed to start the conference already on Thursday afternoon, in order to give more time to the keynote speakers.

Mr Maciej Lisicki expressed an opinion it would be better to open the conference on Friday morning as usual, because some delegates may arrive on Thursday late evening and they would miss the opening.

Mr Lohikoski commented that such a change may be problematic due to the extent of the programme. He proposed that the Board meeting would be postponed to Friday morning.

The Board decided that the host city Turku reviews the programme in the light of the discussion, and commissioned the host to send out invitations to the keynote speakers as soon as possible.

The last day of the General Conference (Saturday) would be devoted to the internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finances, etc.

4-5. Report from the UBC task force on logistics. Logistic corridors in the Baltic Sea Region – overview, missing links, EU funding.

Mr Christian Ramberg, Director of the Port of Turku, chairman of the UBC Logistics Task Force, reported about the activities of the task force and outlined the present situation of the logistic corridors in the BSR.

The new UBC Logistics Task Force was created by the Executive Board in May 2004. It is open to all interested member cities. Its tasks include the preparation of the next UBC General Conference in Turku, where transport and logistics issues will be one of the key items. The last meeting of the task force was held in Brussels on 23 November 2004 in connection with the conference “Baltic Sea Region – Perspective 2010”.

The task force emphasises that improved transport and logistical connections, including Motorways of the Sea, have become critically important prerequisites for development and competitiveness of our countries, regions and cities. This applies especially to the Baltic Sea Region, one of the most dynamic regions of Europe. Modern port and land transportation infrastructure coordinated with maritime transport is crucial for the development of the BSR.

The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for 26-27 May 2005 in Turku. The Board encourages all member cities to participate in the work of the task force. The full report of the UBC logistics task force is attached to the minutes.

6. Maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region (150 km). Joint statement of Baltic Sea organisations on new cohesion policy (territorial cooperation). Reply from the European Commission.

At the initiative of the Union of the Baltic Cities, the major Baltic Sea Organisations namely: Baltic Sea Seven Islands (B7), Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe- Baltic Sea Commission (CPMR-BSC), Union of the Baltic Cities, decided to send to the European Commission the attached joint statement on the objective 3 of the reformed cohesion policy from 2007 – namely the European Territorial Cooperation. The statement emphasizes the fact that the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region may be severely harmed if the limit of 150 km for maritime border is introduced.

The undersigned Baltic Sea organisations consider that the maximum distance of 150 km of maritime border - to be eligible to obtain funding for cross-border projects – is counter-creative to the idea of strengthening the territorial cooperation and therefore we object to it. Our opinion is that in case of the Baltic Sea Region such distance can not be set definitely. We expect from the European Commission a more flexible approach taking into account (1) existing cooperation in various fields between the partners on both sides of maritime border and (2) historical, social, cultural and economical factors which justify cooperation across larger distance than mentioned above.

The European Commission replied in two letters. The first letter informs that President Barroso passed the statement to the DG Regional Policy. In the second EC reply, the Director of European Commission Directorate-General Regional Policy Mr Ronald Hall informs that the Commission do not share the point of view of four major Baltic Sea organisations and the EC plans to introduce mentioned above limit of 150 km. The statement and two replies from the European Commission are attached to the minutes.

The statement of four organisations was also sent to the Foreign Ministers of 10 Baltic Sea countries along with the letter from the Secretary General asking the ministers to lobby this extremely important for all Baltic Sea countries issue in Brussels.

The Board expressed an opinion that the Baltic Sea region is a very special region where sea connects not divides, and the limit of 150 km shall not be introduced in this region. Instead of setting a stiff distance in kilometres, a more flexible approach must be applied in the BSR. The Board authorised the President to send a letter with the statement to the prime ministers of 10 Baltic Sea countries. The Board members were obliged to make sure that the proper attention will be given to the letter in their countries.

7. Letter from the President on UBC further development.

In December 2004 the President sent out a letter to the member cities and to the commissions asking them to express their views how we can make our own organisation, the Union of the Baltic Cities, even stronger.

In the letter the President noted that last year on the 1st of May we have experienced a significant historical moment - the Baltic Sea Region became almost an inland sea of the European Union. This fact will have a strong positive impact on further development of our region and it must have an impact on the activities of the UBC. The EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region brings new opportunities and challenges to the UBC. In his letter, the President put forward important questions for example: how to promote effectively exchange of experiences between member cities? How to enhance the work of Commissions/networks and mobilise more outside funding? How to ensure, that the concerns of the cities in BSR are listened to at national government level and in Brussels? etc. The President's letter is attached to the minutes.

Mr Christopher Ödmann, Stockholm, informed that politicians and civil servants from 16 Swedish cities met in Stockholm on February 3, 2005 and discussed among others the letter sent out by the President. The conclusions of the Swedish cities are the following:

- it is important that UBC has closer relations with the Brussels Arena; the lobby work towards the EU is the main issue, it will also help the UBC cities to be involved in the EU-projects
- the equality among women and men in the presidium, board and commissions is essential
- more support from the board is needed in order to involve more cities in the commissions
- many of the commissions work effectively, but some are not so active; investigation is needed if some could be incorporated
- nomination issues were also discussed and the Swedish cities proposed Marie-Louise Rönmark, the City of Umeå as a candidate to the Presidium.

Secretary General Pawel Zaboklicki reminded that also the UBC Women's Network has been calling for election of a female UBC Vice-President in the next period.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, informed that a meeting of 7 Finnish UBC member cities on 1.2.2005 in Turku also discussed the letter sent out by the President. The conclusions of the Finnish cities were, among others:

- some commissions work effectively, but there is unevenness in their work,
- there is need to strengthen secretariat and support services for commissions, so that they reach a critical mass and can attract also outside funding,
- UBC lobby work has to be organised in Brussels,
- equality issues are important also UBC work.

Nomination issues were also discussed, and the idea of including a City of Turku representative in the Presidium during the period of 2005-2007 was encouraged by the cities present. Turku would, however, formally address the issue later.

Mr Lohikoski informed that the conclusions are being translated into English and will be provided to the Secretariat for preparations of the Turku General Conference in near future.

The President informed that also the Commission on Urban Planning responded to his letter. The response from the commission includes summary of the work done so far and the directions for future commission development; the letter includes also some general views on UBC development. The commission response is attached to the minutes.

The Board authorised the President to create a small task force which will be responsible to compile the ideas on further UBC development.

8. Proposal from Maardu to create the Commission on Civil Protection.

President Per Boedker Andersen informed that the city of Maardu proposed the establishment of the new UBC Commission on Civil Protection and Prevention from natural and man-made risks.

The city of Maardu is of the opinion that the workshops, seminars, consultations, scientific researches, rescue exercises etc. which would be organised in the frame of the Commission on Civil Protection would contribute to the elaboration of the effective technologies and methods of the Civil Protection Mechanism, which could be used by the cities of the Baltic Sea Region. The new Commission could build the effective patterns of cooperation not only between the municipalities of the UBC, but also with the appropriate national and transactional institutions dealing with civil protection, rescue and fire operations. The city of Maardu asked for 100.000 EUR from UBC for the Commission activities in 2005. The letter from Maardu is attached to the minutes.

The Executive Board decided that before the decision on the new UBC organ dealing with the civil protection can be made by the Board, there is a need to map out which authorities are responsible for dealing with natural and man-made disasters in each of 10 Baltic Sea Countries - municipal, county, regional or state authority. The Board requested the City of Maardu to make this survey and send it to the UBC President.

9. Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.

President Per Boedker Andersen informed that the following persons represented UBC at the international conferences and meetings in the latest months.

- Council of Europe Conference "Adriatic Euroregion, a Contribution to European Integration", Termoli, 8-9 November 2004 (Vytautas Juodagalvis, UBC Board Member)
- General Conference of EUROCITIES, Vienna, 10-13 November 2004 (Gundars Bojars, UBC Vice-President)

- Conference on "Baltic Sea Region - Perspectives 2010", Brussels, 23 November 2004 (Per Boedker Andersen, President)
- Conference "Baltic Metropolises - Major Poles of Innovation", Berlin, 10-11 February 2005 (Arno Poeker, UBC Vice-President)
- Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 23-24 February 2005 (Gunars Ansins, Member of UBC Board)
- CPMR-BSC Conference on Democratic Role of the Regions, Riga, 24-25 February 2005 (Gundars Bojars, UBC Vice-President)
- HELCOM Conference on Maritime Safety and Response Issues, Helsinki, 1 March 2005 (ComEnv representative)

The written information about mentioned conferences is attached to the minutes.

As regards the Baltic Metropolises, the Board authorised Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, to take a contact with the city of Helsinki to discuss coordination of actions between UBC and metropolises.

10. UBC input to the EU policy on sustainable urban development.

The Commission on Environment has sent a report on UBC input in European policy-design on Sustainable Urban Development during Autumn 2004.

During the reporting period, the UBC has been involved in two important processes: (1) the preparation of the Thematic Urban Strategy of the 6th Environmental Action Programme of the European Union, and (2) the Aalborg Commitments and European Networking on the Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign. The full report is attached to the minutes.

The Board took note of the report and expressed its support towards the ideas presented on the development of European policies and supported measures addressing cities and towns.

The Board authorised the President to decide (after consultation with the Commission on Environment) whether UBC should become a part of the new Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign / Pan-European network (if created). The Board delegated the President to sign any necessary documents on the occasion of possible legal founding of the Campaign.

11. UBC/LVRLAC project-update.

President Andersen reminded that the goal of the project is to transfer the know-how and experience obtained by the UBC to the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Association (LVRLAC). The project is sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The report on the latest project progress is attached to the minutes.

Mr Maciej Lisicki, Gdansk, reported from the LVRLAC General Assembly in Bukoba, Tanzania, where he gave an official address to the assembly on behalf of the UBC President.

Mr Anders Engstrom, Kalmar, informed he has recently presented the project to the King and Queen of Sweden at the meeting in SIDA in February.

12. Any other business.

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki informed that the city of Luebeck, on behalf of the 5 German cities (5 German cities met in Buetzow on 17.02.2005), put forward the following questions to the Board:

- What is the opinion of the Board as regards the election of female for the UBC Vice-President?

As described in the point 7 of the minutes, Board members considered that the composition of the Presidium should be balanced, and take into account also the gender issue. However, the election is in the hands of the official delegates at the General Conference.

- Is it possible for Mr Arno Poeker to represent UBC externally while he no longer serves as the Mayor of Rostock?

President Andersen reminded that at the General Conference in Klaipeda in October 2003, Mr Arno Poeker was personally elected as UBC Vice-President for a two-year period. The Board confirmed that Mr Poeker remains the UBC Vice-President till the next GC, and until then is authorised to represent UBC externally.

- Is it possible to reactivate the UBC EU-Coordinators Network?

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki reminded that some two years ago, the City of Aalborg who was leading the Network for several years, announced that it was not possible for them to continue to lead the Network. Since then the EU-related information is provided to the cities via UBC e-news. Last year the Board discussed the question how to revitalise the Network, but there was no city ready to take over the leadership from Aalborg. Mr Zaboklicki added that Luebeck informed that unfortunately it has no human resources to take over the leadership in the Network.

The Board commissioned the Secretariat to ask the city of Luebeck whether one of remaining 4 German cities is interested to take over the leadership in the Network.

13. Next meeting of the Executive Board

President Andersen presented an invitation from the Mayor of the City of Chojnice Mr Arseniusz Finster to hold the next Executive Board meeting in Chojnice, Poland.

Decision:

The Board accepted the invitation from the Mayor of Chojnice and decided to hold its 43rd meeting in the City of Chojnice on 3-5 June 2005. After the Board meeting it was decided to move the meeting one week forward, so the final date is **10-12 June 2005**.

14. Closing of the Meeting.

President Per Boedker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the fruitful meeting and to the City of Lulea for its warm hospitality and closed the 42nd Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki
Secretary

Mr Christopher Ödmann
Adjuster

Mr Maciej Lisicki
Adjuster