

**MINUTES FROM THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**Kaunas, Lithuania, 10-12 February 2006**

The 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 10-12 February 2006 in the city of Kaunas, Lithuania, upon the invitation of Mr Arvydas Garbaravicius, the Mayor of Kaunas. 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 Bødker Andersen, the President of the Union. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the hosts of the meeting for inviting the UBC Executive Board to Kaunas. Mr Arvydas Garbaravicius, the Mayor of Kaunas, heartily welcomed all participants. 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 Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå, UBC 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, and Mr Vytautas Juodagalvis, City Councillor of Kaunas, were elected to check the minutes.

**3. Presentation of the City of Kaunas.**

Mr Vygintas Grinis, Head of the Development Programme Management Division of Kaunas City, presented the plan of development of the city.

Kaunas, with nearly 400 thousand inhabitants, is the second largest city of Lithuania. It is situated on the valley of the confluence of the two biggest rivers of Lithuania – the Nemunas and Neris. First mentioned in the 11th century, it is not only a city of old traditions, but also a large centre of business and industry. For many years it has been known as the city of trade, culture and sports. Kaunas played an important role as the provisional capital of Lithuania during the inter-war period. Hundreds of years of cultural heritage are preserved in the historical and architectural monuments, museums, theatres, art galleries and churches. Life at Kaunas is dynamic, here there are various cultural events taking place annually - the International Classical Music Festival of Pažaislis, “Kaunas Jazz” festival etc. One of the most significant cultural events of Kaunas – the Birthday of the City – is celebrated on May 20. Kaunas – often referred to as the “Heart of Lithuania” – is always full of young people as there are about 60 thousand students. The city has more universities than any other city in Lithuania.

**4. New EU Cohesion Policy – territorial cooperation.**

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, reminded that a year ago, on the UBC’s initiative, the major Baltic Sea organisations namely B7, BSSSC, CPMR-BSC and UBC sent the joint statement to the European Commission on the objective 3 of the new cohesion policy from 2007 – 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 EC replied - in the letter from the Director in DG General Regional Policy Mr Ronald Hall – that the Commission intends to introduce 150 km threshold for the cross-border strand and that multilateral maritime cooperation would make more sense under the transnational strand.

At the meeting in Chojnice the Board stressed that proposed areas for cooperation within the transnational strand have very little to do with the tasks of the local authorities. The proposed topics lie within the competence of state and regional authorities. It is necessary to complement these areas with: development of entrepreneurship/SME, tourism, culture, environment, transport, energy, water and sewage treatment, solid waste management, urban planning, human resource development (training), otherwise the cities will not be able to cooperate in the fields they are responsible for and interested in. In Chojnice the Board supported the idea of producing the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint statement on the European Territorial Cooperation together with other Baltic Sea organisations.

In autumn 2006 the Baltic Sea organisations also signed a general joint position paper on the EU cohesion policy 2007-2013 (attached).

#### Decision:

The Board decided to send the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint statement on the European Territorial Cooperation to the EU institutions and to the Baltic Sea governments. The statement is attached to the minutes.

## **5. UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper.**

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director of the Communication and External Affairs, Turku, recalled that the UBC Board Meeting held in Brussels in May 2004 decided to set up the UBC Logistics Task Force. The Task Force was open for all member cities and it was chaired by Mr Christian Ramberg, Director of the Port of Turku. There were organised several seminars and expert meetings in order to prepare the draft of the UBC maritime logistics policy paper (attached). The work of the Task Force has been continuing after the General Conference in Turku.

The Board decided to send the draft of the UBC maritime logistics policy paper to the member cities for comments.

Moreover, Mr Lohikoski raised another issue which might be relevant in the follow-up of the Logistics Task Force. He reported that the European Commission is preparing now the European Maritime Policy Paper. The working policy group, established to work on the green paper, consists of seven Commissioners representing seven different areas – industry and enterprises, transport, environment, regional policy, fisheries and maritime affairs, research and energy. All these issues are to be taken into account. After formulating this policy the consultation process will start. All stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment this policy. According to Mr Lohikoski, the UBC should ensure that the voice of the Baltic cities will be heard as far as European maritime policy is concerned. The city of Turku is going to organise the conference to kick-off the discussion on the EU green paper on maritime policy.

## **6. Proposal from Oskarshamn to establish the UBC Commission on Energy.**

Mr Stefan Windh, Chairman of International Committee of the city of Oskarshamn and Mr Bengt Karlsson, Headmaster of NOVA, presented the background for the initiative to establish the UBC Commission on Energy. The main objectives of proposed commission will be i.a.: renewable energy, possibilities of increasing the efficiency, exchanging best practices, knowledge, education, information. The proposal is attached to the minutes.

Mr Windh admitted that this idea should be at first discussed with UBC Commissions on Transportation and on Environment to avoid overlapping competences. After such meeting the more detailed proposal will be submitted to the member cities in order to involve at least three cities to form the commission, as required. The city of Oskarshamn, moreover, is planning to invite the UBC member cities interested in the Commission on Energy to the annual energy symposium that takes place in November 2006 in Oskarshamn.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski suggested devoting one of the Board Meeting to the energy topic. Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark added that the energy is one of the new key words in the future European policy so it should be also included in the UBC activities.

The Board authorised Oskarshamn to send out the proposal to the UBC member cities.

## **7. Information from the working group on UBC further development.**

At the Executive Board meeting in Luleå, 5 March 2005, the Board authorised the President to create a working group (WG) on UBC further development. The President appointed the following persons to the WG: Mikko Lohikoski (Turku, chair), Lillian Westerberg (Stockholm), Ingemann Olsen (Kolding), Ina Sidlauskiene (Klaipeda), Paweł Żaboklicki (UBC SG).

Mr Lohikoski presented the results of the latest meeting of the working group and its recommendations. Mr Lohikoski reminded that at the meeting in Chojnice in June 2005, the Board expressed an opinion that it is important to ensure a more effective UBC presence in Brussels. UBC should utilise the existing representations of UBC member cities there. Many member cities are represented in Brussels but they are not coordinated to speak on behalf of the UBC. In Chojnice Mrs Lillian Westerberg proposed that Stockholm Office in Brussels could officially represent UBC in Brussels if delegated.

The WG suggested that, the city of Stockholm within the Stockholm Region Office could function as an official UBC antenna in Brussels. The WG also recommended establishing the Steering Group consisting of the representatives of the member cities in Brussels which should closely cooperate with the UBC Secretariat. Mr Lohikoski added that there should be a meeting organised soon in Brussels so that this issue could be finalised at the next Board meeting in June.

## **8. Membership fees paid in 2005.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki presented the membership fees paid in 2005, the table is attached to the minutes. All member cities paid the fee except Baltijsk and St.Petersburg (+satellites). Secretary General informed that the few days before the Board meeting in Kaunas the city of St. Petersburg promised to pay the fees within nearest days.

Decision:

The Board commissioned the cities of Baltijsk and St.Petersburg to make the overdue payments latest by the end of February 2006.

**9. UBC budget for 2006.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki provided the Board members with the proposal of the budget for 2006; the document is attached to the minutes. The income consists of the membership fees and of the budget reserve from 2005. Secretary General reminded that according to the decision of the General Conference, the fees for “eastern” cities are to be raised 5% annually, so the discount for “eastern” cities will be 55% in 2006. In 2005 the discount was 60%. The budget includes the raise for the commissions’ activities up to 9000 euro per commission.

Decision:

The Board adopted the budget for 2006.

**10. UBC Action Plan 2006-2007.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki presented the proposal of the UBC action plan for 2006-2007 which refers to the: UBC strategy, action plan 2004-2005, resolution from the General Conference in Turku, action plans of the commissions.

Mr Żaboklicki presented the frame of the action plan underlining that the AP includes guidelines and priorities for the UBC organs i.e. Executive Board, Presidium, Secretariat, Commissions.

Political priorities for the Board and the Presidium in the forthcoming period: strengthening of UBC as an organisation for local level cooperation in the Baltic Sea region; utilisation of the EU enlargement and influencing the EU policies (regional, cohesion, environmental, transportation etc) for the benefit of the BSR; further deepening of cooperation with Baltic and European organisations; implementation of Agenda 21 in the BSR; promotion of local authorities’ interests in the EU Northern Dimension policy. The full text of the action plan is attached to the minutes.

The Board members expressed few remarks to be included in the action plan. The Board authorised the secretariat to include mentioned remarks in the document. The Board adopted the action plan 2006-2007.

**11. UNITAR-UBC memorandum of understanding.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki reminded that representatives of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR, [www.unitar.org](http://www.unitar.org)) were present at the UBC General Conference in Turku. UNITAR provides training in various fields inter alia in the field of environment. UNITAR has established the decentralized cooperation programme, which is a hub for information, communication and training between United Nations agencies and local actors, such as local authorities, public and private companies, civil society and academia.

After the General Conference in Turku UNITAR proposed UBC to sign a memorandum of understanding (cooperation agreement) as a follow-up. The text of the memorandum is attached to the minutes.

The memorandum of understanding includes several types of actions. On one hand UNITAR would assist our member cities in human resources development. On the other hand the know-how and experience of UBC member cities could be used in other countries, not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world, for instance in Africa – in Lake Victoria Region which the UBC cooperates with. The text of memorandum proposed by UNITAR was adjusted by the UBC Commission on Environment secretariat.

Mr Risto Veivo, Head of EnvCom secretariat in Turku, informed that the City of Tallinn offered to host the UNITAR centre in the Baltic Sea region.

Decision:

The Board authorised the President to sign the memorandum of understanding with UNITAR.

**12. Information on the EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.**

Mr Risto Veivo informed that Commission on Environment has continued its active contributions to the consultations on European policy-design on sustainable urban development. He stressed it is very important that the cities are recognised in this process as actors. The cities are key implementers of the EU environmental legislation.

The main objective of the Strategy is the promotion of integrated planning and management approaches for European cities. This should lead to better implementation of existing EU environment policies and legislation at the cities. The brief report on EU thematic strategy on the urban environment is attached to the minutes.

The Board took note of the report.

**13. Request from EMPEX London.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed that UBC has been asked to take the honorary patronage over the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Emerging Markets Property Exhibition to be held in London on 26-28 June 2006.

EMPEX exhibition is dedicated to the European emerging real estate markets, i.a. Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. The aim of the exhibition is not only to present the participants but also to involve them into numerous workshops and seminars. This may be a great opportunity for the investors to discuss the economic characteristics, investment capabilities and level of real estate development in participating cities and for local authorities to find solutions and advices how to gain the investors. More information is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board decided to give the UBC honorary patronage to the event and encouraged the member cities to participate in EMPEX.

#### **14. Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.**

President Andersen informed that below UBC representatives represented UBC at the following international conferences:

- 6th VASAB Ministerial Conference, Gdańsk, 19 September 2005 (Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General)
- 7th BDF Summit in Stockholm, 16-18 October 2005 (Lillian Westerberg, Stockholm, Mikko Lohikoski, Turku)
- BSSSC Conference, Szczecin, 20-22 October 2005 (Anna Nowak, Vice-Mayor of Szczecin)
- 3rd Structured Dialogue meeting between the EC and associations of local & regional authorities, Brussels, 17 November 2005 (Marie-Louise Rönmark, UBC 1st Vice-President, Mayor of Umeå)
- Adriatic – Baltic Workshop, Ancona, 18-19 November 2005 (Maciej Lisicki, Councillor, Gdańsk)
- 20th Eurocities Annual General Meeting, Lyon, 19-20 November 2005 (Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General)
- Depollution Initiative - High Level Meeting, Barcelona, 19 December 2005 (Adolfas Balutis, Deputy Mayor of Kaunas)
- COR conference “Communicating Europe - Going Local”, 25 January 2006 (Krista Taipale-Salminen, Turku EU Office in Brussels)
- “CONVERNET” project final meeting, Potsdam, 30-31 January 2006 (Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock)

The Board took note of the information. The written information is attached to the minutes.

#### **15. Baltic Cities Bulletin *Cities & Competitiveness in the BSR.***

Secretary General informed that the recent issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin was devoted to the theme: Cities and Competitiveness. The opening story was written by Mr Carl Cederschiöld, former Mayor of Stockholm who presented the Stockholm experience also during the UBC General Conference in Turku. In the bulletin nearly 30 member cities presented their ways of being competitive.

As usual the BCB included the UBC Today section which presented the information on latest UBC meetings and activities i.a. the report and photos from the VIII General Conference in Turku. The bulletin was printed in 5500 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities and to some 1000 European institutions.

#### **16. Any other business.**

##### **16.1 Statement against trafficking.**

Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark submitted the proposal of statement against trafficking of women and children and appealed to the Board to adopt the document. According to the statement, trafficking of women and children is nowadays an increasingly important problem. The document is aiming at undertaking all possible efforts and measures to prevent the trafficking.

##### Decision:

The Board decided to adopt the statement against trafficking. The document is attached to the minutes.

## **16.2 International conference LITTORAL 2006.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed the Board that UBC was requested to support the international conference LITTORAL 2006 to be organised in Gdańsk on 18-20 September 2006; a letter from the organisers is attached to the minutes.

LITTORAL is a biennial multi-disciplinary international conference which attracts scientists and researchers who are interested in the sea coast-related issues. This year's conference is the first to be organised at the Baltic Sea, in Gdańsk – at Gdańsk University of Technology.

The key topic of LITTORAL 2006 is “Coastal Innovations and Initiatives”. The organisers are of the opinion that the development of science and technology cannot proceed in academic circles only. Therefore they would like to invite representatives of local authorities from coastal towns, districts and regions to take active part in the conference.

### Decision:

The Board decided to support the international conference LITTORAL 2006.

**16.3** Mr Christopher Ödmann, City Councillor of Stockholm, reported that the EU Commission-DG Health and Consumer Protection would like to see more initiatives from the Baltic Sea region. He informed that the city of Stockholm took an initiative in the area of consumer projects.

He also asked about the co-operation with the Belarusian cities. Mr Risto Veivo said that there was one project led by the Baltic University which involved one Belarusian city as a partner. Mr Mikko Lohikoski added that there is a Network of Universities led by University of Turku which included three universities from Belarus.

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed that the UBC observer cities from Belarus (Grodno, Slonim) are not very active – the city authorities receive information about UBC projects and meetings but they do not participate. Mr Zaboklicki reminded that according to the decision of the Board made few years ago, UBC should invite not only authorities (which are not democratically elected) but also representatives of democratic opposition.

## **16.4 Application for membership from Järvenpää, Finland.**

President Andersen informed the Board about the application for UBC membership submitted by the city of Järvenpää, Finland. The application is attached to the minutes.

Mrs Leena Ritala, Manager of EU and International Affairs, on behalf of the Mayor of Järvenpää asked the Board to accept Järvenpää as UBC member. Mrs Ritala briefly introduced the city.

### Decision:

The Board decided to accept Järvenpää as member of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished Järvenpää a successful cooperation with other UBC member cities.

**17. Next meeting of the Executive Board – proposals from Gdynia, Kronshtadt, Voru.**

President Andersen informed about the invitations from the cities of Gdynia, Kronshtadt-St.Petersburg and Voru to host the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Decision:

The Board decided to hold its 46<sup>th</sup> meeting in Kronshtadt-St. Petersburg on 10-11 June 2006.  
The Board also decided to hold its autumn session in Gdynia.

**18. Closing of the Meeting.**

President Per Bødker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the successful meeting and to the City of Kaunas for its warm hospitality and closed the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen  
Chairman

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki  
Secretary

Ms Marie-Louise Rönmark  
Adjuster

Mr Vytautas Juodagalvis  
Adjuster