

MINUTES OF THE 53RD MEETING OF THE UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD
VÄXJÖ, SWEDEN, 29 OCTOBER 2008

The 53rd meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 29 October 2008 in Växjö, Sweden upon the invitation of Mr Bo Frank, Mayor of Växjö. The meeting consisted of the closed session attended by the members of Executive Board and the open session attended by the Board members, commissions' leaders, delegates of member cities and invited guests. The list of participants is attached to the minutes.

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

The meeting was opened by Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union, Mayor of Kolding. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the hosts of the meeting for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold the meeting in Växjö. The meeting adopted the agenda attached to this report.

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

Ms Marketta Mäkinen, Director of International Relations City of Jyväskylä, and Mr Anders Engström, UBC Honorary President City of Kalmar, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

3. Welcome by the City of Växjö. Presentation of the city.

Mr Nils Posse, Lord Mayor of Växjö, heartily welcomed the participants in the greenest city in Europe. Mr Posse made a presentation introducing the city of Växjö.

Växjö is a combination of peaceful small town, university town and centre of entertainment – a strong regional centre in the middle of the south of Sweden. 80 000 people live in Växjö and within a radius of 100 kilometres live 1, 2 million people. The east, west and south coasts are within easy reach. The geographical location, in combination with excellent education opportunities, a favourable business climate and a rich variety of experiences to be enjoyed, makes Växjö perfectly situated in a number of different ways. Business life is rich and diverse – 7 000 companies in a dynamic mixture of sizes and industries. Major international companies collaborate with smaller entrepreneurs. A successful environmental project is being run in Växjö in order to achieve a sustainable and fossil fuel free city. Växjö has been described by the international media as “The Greenest City in Europe”. It is the 30 % reduction of emissions of greenhouse gasses, per capita, that has echoed around the world. But Växjö is green in many other respects too, for example, there are many fine parks and green areas to be enjoyed in the city.

4. Application for membership from Ustka, Poland and Porvoo, Finland.

Mr Marcus Henricson, Mayor of Porvoo, presented the city of Porvoo.

The town of Porvoo was founded in 1346. Porvoo, situated 50 km east of Helsinki, has almost 48 000 inhabitants and an area of 654 km², water areas 1105 km². Porvoo is a bilingual town with about 32% of the inhabitants speaking Swedish as their mother tongue. Main projects in Porvoo right now are the Skaftkärr and the Campus-projects.

- Skaftkärr, an energy efficient residential 400 hectare big area situated 2.5-5 km from the centre of Porvoo, will be completed in 2010. The area will include approximately 1000 building lots for 4000 – 8000 inhabitants, mainly one family houses but also some apartment buildings and terraced houses, service buildings, green areas etc. Goals: To create a residential area, which will function as a national and international pilot project regarding energy efficient planning, to create guidance for an energy efficient city planning process, to create a living lab, where a continuing improvement of energy efficiency is the goal and to develop new business models for municipal energy companies, the models will fit in the low energy and energy building concept.
- Porvoo Campus. The projected Porvoo Campus is an education centre for research, development and innovation. The Campus will be situated near the Art Factory, west of the river and will be completed in 2010. The goal is to create a functionally diverse area west of the Porvoonjoki river, where all the functions together form an ecosystem with a potential for innovation. The area combines education, research, art, culture and business.

Decision:

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

5. Process of creation of the new EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

During the meeting in Kuressaare on 5 June 2008, the Board authorized the city of Turku in cooperation with the Brussels Antenna to prepare the draft of the UBC position paper on the new Baltic Sea Strategy.

Prof. Esko Antola, Director of the Centrum Balticum, Turku, presented the schedule of the Strategy creation process containing several thematic and general events and his suggestions concerning the UBC work on its position paper on the Strategy. The draft UBC contribution to the Baltic Sea Strategy of the European Union is attached to the minutes.

1. Process

- dates back to December 2007 European Council meeting

- Mandate to the Commission: “Without prejudice to the integrated maritime policy, the European Council invites the Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region at the latest by June 2009. This strategy should inter alia help to address the urgent environmental challenges related to the Baltic Sea. The Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

- Stakeholder conferences:

- Stockholm, September 30, 2008
- Gdańsk, November 14, 2008
- Copenhagen, November 30 – December 2, 2008
- Helsinki, December 9, 2008
- Rostock, February 5.-6. 2009

- The next step for the UBC: before Christmas, after Helsinki to get views to the Commission to be reflected in Rostock, last step after Rostock

2. Strategy vs. Action Plan

Strategy has the priority, Action Plan followed by the Strategy. The aim to accept strategy and Action Plan together in June, (not necessarily realistic).

Strategy is the means by which objectives are consciously pursued and obtained over time. Action Plan: steps that must be taken, or activities that must be performed well, for a strategy to succeed.

3. What the Baltic Sea Strategy is?

- Part of regionalization in the EU, mega-regions emerge as a consequent of enlargement and differentiated integration. Danube, Visegrad similar regions, Baltic Sea Strategy a pilot
- internal EU strategy, not strategy of the region in EU
- no new instruments promised
- external dimension emerging, originally Northern Dimension but concept now wider

4. Challenges to the UBC

- crucial moment for the UBC, option to take ownership!
- political commitment by the Member States needed, UBC must encourage the governments to take the commitment
- strategy calls for a new governance in the region: from vertical multilevel governance to horizontal fused governance, cities in key role, attention to new actors (business community, civil society)
- after influencing the strategy, the delivery becomes crucial, the strategy must include instruments and procedures of accountability

- focus on modifying the existing EU instruments to the needs of the region, put pressure to governments and EU institutions
- avoid building a Christmas Tree model, aim at focused and concerted action!

Mr Per Bødker Andersen suggested that the Board should work out the timetable and follow the deadlines in preparing the response on the EU Strategy. By 5 November the UBC position on the Strategy should be ready and by 1 December the UBC Commissions shall present their contribution containing the project proposals.

Mr Andersen informed that the UBC and other Baltic organizations, namely BSSSC, B7, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Baltic Development Forum and Euroregion Baltic, prepared also the joint statement on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which will be passed to the EU Commission. UBC, CPMR-BSC and Euroregion Baltic discussed this document at the working meeting organised on 28 October in Växjö. The joint statement is attached to the minutes.

Mr Anders Engström asked if it is possible to include also the action plan to the strategy. Mr Antola reminded that the action plan will follow the strategy. What might be an advantage, is the implementation plan, as the implementation phase concerns especially the local level.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, Chairman of the Commission on Environment, referring to the Joint Position Paper on the EU Strategy for the BSR, asked who was representing UBC in the common platform in the field of energy and climate formed in February 2008. Mr Stefan Windh, Chairman of the Commission Energy, confirmed its participation in the common platform's work emphasizing the significance of the sectoral approach in creation of the strategy.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Director Communication and External Affairs Turku, suggested that it might be a good idea to involve also the Belarusian cities in the Strategy, as in fact they also have an impact on the state of the Baltic Sea.

Mr Jarkko Virtanen, Deputy Mayor of Turku, was of the opinion that the UBC may be a key player on certain fields. He suggested signing the joint position paper to show that the UBC is willing to cooperate. However, in his opinion, it is essential to prepare the UBC's own position which would be a sign in Brussels that the Union is ready to take the leadership in the implementation process. Implementation could be also extended to other countries indirectly connected to the Baltic Sea Region, like Belarus or Ukraine.

The fact that the UBC cooperation may be a good example on how the EU Strategy would be implemented was strongly emphasized by Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark, UBC Vice-President, Umeå. It seems to be crucial to clearly present what the Union is doing.

Mr Andersen pointed out that the national level cannot be omitted in the creation of the EU Strategy. Mr Virtanen added that each level has its own "playground" and works within its

competences. As Mr Antola noticed, the cities' and organisations' role is to ensure that the governments are politically committed to the Strategy process. He also emphasized that the cities need to be involved in the national policy.

Ms Rönmark paid attention to the necessity of transparency at all levels and sectors where the Strategy is created. She emphasized that all stakeholders should be aware of the actions taken at all levels to avoid overlapping or contradictions.

Interdependence of the local and national policies is a fact and, according to the UBC President, all levels should respect each other.

Mr Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja, noticed that the problems appear when there is lack of information flow between all levels involved. Many cities do not know the positions of their national authorities on the Strategy which have already been prepared in several Baltic countries. Therefore, the transparency is essential. Mr Ansins suggested that cities should start negotiations with the national governments to ensure their interests are included into the Strategy.

Mr Vladislav Balsky, St. Petersburg, mentioned that the CBSS governmental platform could be a proper forum to exchange the knowledge and opinions on the Strategy.

Mr Roland Methling, Mayor of Rostock, agreed that the national law may constrain the cities' actions. However, he said that there is still a lot to do within the competences and responsibilities of the cities, e.g. the ports owned by the cities could sign agreements which would lead to the reductions in pollution generated by ships moored in the ports. The ships which discharge their waste into the sea would not be admitted in the ports.

Environmental perspective was presented by Mr Jokinen who appealed for in-depth analysis of EU programmes supporting agriculture in Europe in order to find all inaccuracies and discrepancies between them and the environmental goals in the future EU Strategy for BSR.

Mr Anders Franzen, Växjö, added that we might be fed up with the strategies and suggested concentrating on the actions. He was also wondering if the timetable proposed is realistic and suggested that we would need more time.

Mr Rönmark concluded with remark that we should be proactive and discuss all burning questions concerning our cities. Referring to the theme no. 4 of the Strategy, Safety and security in the BSR, she submitted the proposal to include the gender perspective into the Strategy. The EU document should also pay attention to the problem of human trafficking and prostitution.

**6. Report from the UBC Task Force to follow the EU Maritime Policy.
New Baltic Cities Bulletin ‘Cities towards the new European Maritime Policy’.**

Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, reminded that at the meeting in Brussels the Board decided to establish a task force, open to all member cities, to follow the new EU Maritime Policy. At that meeting it was also decided that the city of Turku would take the responsibility to coordinate this activity.

Mr Lohikoski informed the Board members that there was no meeting of the task force. The cities are taking the maritime issues seriously which the latest Baltic Cities Bulletin proves. Nevertheless, they are still welcome to submit their opinions on the maritime policy.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, asked the task force if there will be another statement of UBC on the future EU maritime policy (Blue Book) apart from the already submitted position paper on the Green Paper.

Mr Esko Antola, Director of the Centrum Balticum, said that it would be better to focus on the interplay between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the maritime policy. In his opinion, it is too late to produce another statement. He suggested that the UBC could include opinion on the maritime policy into the position paper on the EU Strategy.

In addition, Mr Żaboklicki presented the latest issue of the Bulletin entitled “Cities towards the new European maritime policy”. 25 cities submitted the articles on the port investments, new projects connected with the environment, tourism, etc. The Bulletin clearly shows the great interest the UBC cities have in the maritime issues.

Mr Żaboklicki also mentioned about the next spring edition of the Bulletin which is planned to be devoted to the EU Strategy. He encouraged the cities to contribute to this publication.

7. X General Conference in Kristiansand 23-27 September 2009.

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, reminded that during the Board meeting in Kuressaare on 5 June 2008, the Board decided to establish a task force responsible for the preparation of the General Conference.

The task force: Jan Björinge (Umeå), Jan Odegaard, Jørgen Kristiansen (Kristiansand), and Paweł Żaboklicki (UBC Secretariat) held the meeting on 28 October in Växjö.

Mr Jan Odegaard and Mr Jørgen Kristiansen presented the venue of the next UBC General Conference which will be held in Kristiansand on 23-27 September 2009. The venue has 10 meeting rooms of different capacities. The biggest Caledonian Hall may contain 430 persons.

The task force concluded that the theme of the X UBC General Conference could be “The role of the cities in implementing the new Baltic Sea Strategy”. Cities will be key players in implementation of the EU strategy. The task force suggested organizing four thematic workshops which correspond to the main objectives of the EU Strategy:

W.1 to improve the environmental state of the Baltic Sea Region

Responsible for preparation: Moderator UBC Com on Environment (Turku) and Com on Energy (Oskarshamn)

W.2 to make the Region a more prosperous place by supporting balanced economic development

Responsible for preparation: Moderator: Com on Information Society (Tampere/St.Petersburg) in cooperation with Com on Business Cooperation (Kaunas)

W.3 to make the Baltic Sea Region a more accessible and attractive

Responsible for preparation: Moderator Com on Tourism (Koszalin). Support: Com on Transport (Gdynia), Com on Urban Planning (Helsinki), Com on Youth Issues (Kalmar), Com on Culture (Vaasa), Com on Sport (Gdynia)

W.4 to make the Baltic Sea Region a safer and more secure place

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

Mr Żaboklicki emphasized that one of the most crucial tasks would be to invite interesting and charismatic speakers and appealed to the Board members to make all efforts to attract them to Kristiansand.

As the UBC GC will be organized before the UN climate summit in Copenhagen, to be held on 30 November to 11 December 2009, it was suggested that the GC could refer to this summit. Mr Per Bødker Andersen admitted that it would be too late to contribute to the meeting in Copenhagen but he urged the UBC Commissions to work practically also in relation to the climate summit.

Ms Marie-Louise Rönmark suggested that the UBC ideas and position towards the EU Strategy should be spread out at various conferences all year long.

Mr Mikko Lohikoski agreed that the EU Strategy is a good theme of the conference as it is now the crucial theme of the UBC's work. He also added that a special attention should be

paid to the Strategy's implementation and concrete cities' actions. Mr Lohikoski called, moreover, for the interesting speakers, also from e.g. business where there are many people active in the field of environment and climate change.

Mr Gunars Ansins was also of the opinion that the UBC should involve authorities on various fields, e.g. safety and culture and business.

Mr Andersen concluded that it would be a good idea not to talk what should be done but how we do it. The UBC President supported also Ms Rönmark's idea to report back from the conferences at which the speakers represent and talk on behalf of UBC and on the topics discussed during this meeting.

Decision:

The Board agreed that the main theme of the forthcoming X UBC General Conference in Kristiansand would be "The role of the cities in implementing the new Baltic Sea Strategy". The Board authorised the UBC commissions to start the preparatory work on mentioned above conference workshops.

8. Updating of the UBC Strategy.

The present UBC Strategy was adopted during the VII General Conference in Klaipėda, Lithuania, on 17-19 October 2003.

Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, said that the UBC should develop its internal strategy hand in hand with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The UBC Strategy shall be renewed and adapted to the conditions created by the EU Strategy to make the implementation at the local level possible. He recommended that the proposals of changes in the UBC Strategy shall be discussed at the next Board meetings and adopted during the General Conference in Kristiansand.

The Board decided to follow the above schedule.

9. Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.

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

- IACP Conference - Cities and Ports innovating for an inter-dependent future, Stockholm 23 – 27 June 2008 (Mikko Lohikoski, Director, City of Turku)
- 17th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), Visby, Sweden, 1-2 September 2008 (Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare, UBC Vice-President)

- 16th Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) Conference in Kaunas, 17-19 September 2008 (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)
- 10th Plenary Session of Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, Durres, 26-27 September 2008 (Maciej Lisicki, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk)
- First European Municipalities Meeting, Cáceres, 29-30 September 2008 (Anna Sośnicka, UBC Secretariat)
- Baltic Sea Strategy Stakeholder Conference, Stockholm, 30 September 2008 (Dr Esko Antola, Director of Centrum Balticum, Turku)
- 76nd Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, 8-9 October 2008 (Per Bødker Andersen, UBC President, Mayor of Kolding)
- 3rd Meeting of the BSPC Climate and Energy Working Group, Copenhagen, 20-21 October 2008 (Stefan Windh, Chairman of the UBC Commission on Energy)
- INTA32 World Urban Development Congress, 27-28 October 2008, Riga, Latvia (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)

The Board took note of the information. Reports from the conferences are attached to the minutes.

10. Any other business.

Mr Marcus Henricson, Mayor of Porvoo, noticed that the cooperation on business development is not fully exploited in the UBC. He admitted that we kept looking for the new ways of engaging the partners from Belarus or Ukraine, for the new ways of enhancing the cooperation on the business development, and finally, for the new ways of focusing on environmental matters which are the UBC's one of the priorities areas. Mr Henricson suggested that those things could be combined in one vision – the Baltic Sea Region as a global market leader in business sector connected to the maritime environmental matters.

Mr Żaboklicki raised a question asked by the UBC Commission on Urban Planning, whether the paragraph 4.7 (third sentence) of the UBC Internal Regulation shall be still valid. In the opinion of Ms Sirpa Kallio, chair of the UBC UrbanCom, the support mentioned below is not necessary any more.

4.7 Resources should be budgeted only for activities of the Commissions. The following activities should be given priority for use of resources: projects, meetings, seminars, events, publications. *As far as possible the resources should be used to assist the representatives of member cities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia to take part in the activities mentioned.*

Mr Żaboklicki suggested asking the eastern cities for the opinion. The consequences of cutting the resources for participation of the eastern cities in UBC meetings could touch also the Board members. The participation of the representatives of those cities depends very often

on the cost refund for travel or accommodation. Mr Lohikoski added that the Board should discuss it before the General Conference. The Board agreed to send out the query, collect opinions and then discuss this issue and decide by the General Conference in Kristiansand.

11. Next meeting of the Executive Board, Jyväskylä, Finland.

Ms Marketta Mäkinen, Director of International Relations of the city of Jyväskylä, Finland, warmly invited the Board to Jyväskylä, in March 2009. She also made a short presentation of the city. The UBC Board decided to hold the 54th meeting in Jyväskylä. The meeting will be held on 13 March 2009.

OPEN SESSION

Activity reports of the UBC working commissions.

The following representatives of the UBC Commissions submitted the annual activity reports since the General Conference in Pärnu held in September 2007. The reports are attached to the minutes.

Commission on Culture - Ms Tarja Hautamaeki, Chair

Commission on Education - Mr Kurt Pettersson, Chair

Commission on Environment – Mr Björn Grönholm, Head of the Secretariat

Commission on Energy – Mr Stefan Windh, Chair

Commission on Gender Equality – Ms Helene Brewer, Coordinator

Commission on Health & Social – Mr Jan Odegaard on behalf of Ms Hilde Engenes, Chair

Commission on Information Society – Mr Esa Kokkonen, Coordinator

Commission on Sport - Ms Beata Łęgowska, Chair

Commission on Tourism - Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski, Chair

Commission on Transportation – Ms Katarzyna Pragert-Biechowska, Secretariat

Commission on Urban Planning – Ms Sirpa Kallio, Chair

Commission on Youth Issues - Ms Kaia Jäppinen, Chair

Commission on Business Cooperation and EU Coordinators Network were not represented at the meeting and provided the written reports.

The Board appreciated efforts and actions carried out by the Commissions.

Closing of the Meeting.

President Per Bødker Andersen expressed his thanks to all participants for the successful meeting and to the City of Växjö for its warm hospitality and closed the 53rd Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Per Bødker Andersen
Chairman

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary

Mr Anders Engström
Adjuster

Ms Marketta Mäkinen
Adjuster