

Comments on Task Force Final report February 25, 2013 regarding UBC Development

The city of Växjö, Sweden hereby wants to give its comments from decision on the city board 2013-05-21 § 263

1. UBC working methods

Board

It is obvious and necessary that the UBC Board continuously and clearly justifies its existence and to what benefit cities shall be and become members. This is of greater importance than building up relations with other international organizations. Cities are often by their various reasons, already members of several of these. We want to strongly underline the importance of Board meetings to be better prepared, more structured and focused and that the protocols are focused to the actual decisions. The Presidium must this be a more active participant. To reduce meeting times they should primarily deal with internal and corporate affairs. Open thematic workshops should be subordinate. However, the commissions' work must be a running Board issue. It must of course also be the case that both countries' representatives on the Board proactively presents current issues and events in the Board as to give current returns to their local colleagues about the decision of the Board.

Presidium

The presidium must be more cohesive and take greater shared responsibility for the work of the Board. A clear division of labour has to be developed between the president and vice Presidents.

General Secretariat

The City of Gdansk has for many years been the host and funder of the Secretariat. It is not shown that resources have been strengthened over the years. Mostly, they have been managing the work of the Board and produced UBC Bulletin. There are strong reasons to steer up office work and also reasons to integrate strategy coordination in the Secretariat, as well as the increased demands on marketing and communications. The Organization, however, has a financial problem to develop this. Competition between municipalities to take on these tasks is the next to non-existent. We get the skills we are prepared to pay for. The Task Force proposals in eight points are important to grab.

Commissions

The Working Group's proposals in seven points is in line with the municipality's earlier comments. However, we would like to further point out that the number of commissions must be reduced and that cooperation between them must be increased. They must also have requirements to better use EU funds in its business.

The General Conference

The Task Force proposals in six points are interesting but not obviously simple. In order to get politicians involved, the Organization's work must be developed and made more interesting and valuable to the municipalities. For the Conference's best, this is more important than to engage external partners. There should be a sufficient number of qualified people and interesting local subjects amongst all the current member cities to fill the agenda of the general conference. Moreover, it is high time to take hold of the planned annual forums if the municipality shall find reasons to remain as a member. English is the language of the organization and resources for interpreters at meetings should not be necessary.

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure and nomination of candidates for the Board has been an issue that has long been discussed. Today, there is no control of how nominations shall be done and it can be either quiet and stormy. The principle that each Member municipality can nominate candidate is obvious, but how the nominee must bring their campaign for the elections in the general conference is unclear. Any nomination Committee that initializes or prepares the election does not exist. The city sees it as evident to establish a special Board of Election/Nomination Committee preparing elections. This will ensure that it really comes forth candidates for the various posts and, not least, to ensure that it becomes a good gender balance among the nominees. Important task is also to ensure that the member cities in each country have a functioning and democratic order to appoint a member of the Board. Furthermore, we propose a way of increased rotation of the Board by limitation of eligibility to be elected to three consecutive terms, i.e. a maximum of six years.

The Vision

The city would like to highlight the importance of UBC having clear tasks and targets as reflected in the long-term strategy. Because a new strategy shall be decided by the general conference 2015 this year's general conference in Mariehamn must give a mission and appoint a working group to prepare the UBC Strategy 2016-2020.

Communication and marketing

Good contact lists is important to disseminate essential information and reach politicians and officials in member cities. All information should be given in English to keep down costs. The ability to implement the strategy for communication and marketing requires redistribution of budget or new opportunities for funding.

2. Recommendations for change to the UBC Statutes

Article 1 The city has no comments on the proposed changes.

Article 2 The city has no comments on the proposed changes, but believes that the UBC must first consolidate their own organization before we engage too much in cooperation with different networks.

Article 3 UBC has its base in 10 countries. Only in these countries cities will be able to be members. Thus, there shall be no associated members. If UBC chooses to take in more countries in their organization cities from here can also join as full members. Association, company or institution will be able to become a partner with UBC for some time at i.e. a project, whether it involves substantial financial or other advantage for UBC. The article must be changed according to our views. The Board's rules for when any city should be able to be excluded should be clarified and applied more rigorously.

Article 4 The city is proposing that the article adds a new paragraph on nomination, *o. The Nominating Committee*. It can consist of three persons and shall have the General Secretariat as the administrative support.

Article 5 The city is recommending a time limit so that the president and vice-Presidents can be elected at a maximum of three consecutive terms in Office. Even the Board representative should like vice hold office for a maximum of three periods.

Article 6-9A The city has no comments on the proposed changes.

New article 10 The city is proposing that the statutes are added to a new article about the Nominating Committee and nomination of candidates. The General Conference shall appoint a group of three people to prepare for elections to the Presidium, Board and Audit. The General Secretariat shall be the administrative support.

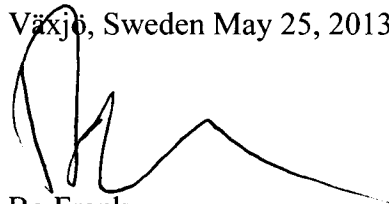
3. Recommendations concerning the UBCs internal rules

The city is favorable to the proposed changes in the internal rules with some comments.

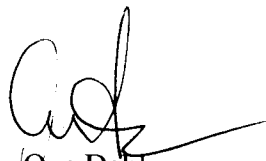
Point 2.1 A Board representatives from cities are supposed to be held by politicians. However, it has been shown that it is often represented by a civil servant. It is unclear to what right they can make proposals to the Board as well as to participate in the decisions. Because there's never been any clarified call for attendance at meetings it has also never made clear what right they currently represent their city. It is necessary to clarify whether and how a civil servant can represent their city at the meetings of the Board and, if they can be included in order to constitute a quorum.

Point 2.3 Certain decisions of the general conference require approval from specific number of member cities. It is then important that the Conference clearly clarifies who represents each city and it also becomes clear that enough cities are present to enable a decision to be taken. It should be the Secretary-General's task to ensure that this supervision is carried out. The Nominating Committee's mandate shall be included in the internal rules and the Board shall not give any recommendations on candidates.

Växjö, Sweden May 25, 2013



Bo Frank
Mayor



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