



Comments to the Task Force proposal on Commissions' consolidation

I. City of Kemi / sent by Jukka Vilén

City of Kemi supports the restructuring process of the commissions.

We share the idea of task force to make fewer but stronger and more active commissions.

For small cities, like we are, it could be vital to share and have new ideas how to make ourselves more attractive for new people and new business.

Also the idea of smart city and how to do simple everyday task more clever and more productive would be very interesting.

In Kemi we have discussed of the possibility that UBC would offer more possibilities for civil servants to learn good practices from each other.

Jukka Vilén

Director of City Office

2. Business & Tourism Commission / sent by Wolfgang Schmidt

The aim of the UBC Business & Tourism Commission is to provide a platform for policy development in the fields of economic recovery, long term economic development and employment. The commission supports UBC member cities in identifying challenges in the light of the increasing globalization and jointly elaborates long term strategies for growth and competitiveness. It links professionals from across the Baltic Sea Region and provides services that drive growth and effectiveness for their members.

The work of the commission is based on the UBC Strategy 2010 to 2015 and draws on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan (EUSBSR). In 2014 the commission works along 4 complementary thematic strands: Talent Attraction, Smart Cities, Knowledge Society, Tourism and Marketing.

The steering committee of the UBC Business & Tourism Commission comments the draft proposal for the future of UBC commission's structure dated 24 September 2014 as follows:

1. The chosen way is generally supported and the Task Force has made good suggestions.
2. The planned restructuring is not an appropriate instrument for cost savings.
3. To ensure that the process of restructuring can be carried out successfully and the work of the Business & Tourism Commission and its ongoing projects can be continued seamlessly, the elected members of the steering committee and the chairman remain in office for the period 2015 to 2017. The steering committee is open for new members.
4. The main working fields of the commission must be visible through a self-explaining name both to internal and external persons. Therefore the new name of the commission is "Economic cities" or "Urban Business".
5. The Executive Board appoints a responsible contact person for each commission.
6. For the efficient functioning a permanent secretariat for one or more commissions is established. It has the following tasks:



- General administration works.
 - Information exchange, coordination of documents flow between the commission's members as well as the commission and the UBC General Secretariat.
 - Coordination of the commission's meetings.
 - Preparing of documents/reports incl. financial statements and action plan in cooperation with the chairman, the steering committee and the contact person of the Executive Board.
 - Publication of statements, invitations etc. in the UBC Bulletin and on the website.
 - Coordination of the UBC website in the Commission's section.
 - Other tasks commissioned by the Chairman.
7. The permanent secretariat is taken over either by a member city or the General Secretariat.
8. The Executive Board carries out a workshop with the chairpersons of all commissions in spring 2015. For 2015 to 2017 guidelines, strategic and work goals, projects, UBC funding and EU funding possibilities for all commissions should be worked out.

Wolfgang Schmidt (Chairman), Kiel, Germany

Waldemar Sypiański (Vice Chairman), Ustka, Poland

Tomasz Czuczak, Koszalin, Poland

Jesper Vestergård Hansen, Kolding, Denmark

Lukas Georg Wedemeyer, Kristiansand, Norway

3. City of Örebro / sent by Carinne Lancereau

UBC new Commissions' structure

After the reception of the new proposal made by the UBC Task Force and sent to the members on the 24 of September 2014, the municipality of Örebro agrees on the new structure of the Commissions which will be reduced to 7 instead of 12.

Planning cities

Sustainable cities

Safe cities

Youthful cities

Smart and Prospering cities

Cultural cities

Inclusive and healthy cities

But we are willing to lift up some important points for the work of the new organisation:

It is important that the new Commissions concentrate on exchange of knowledge and practical work in workshops.

It is important to focus on the building of projects with European funds.

How will the new Commissions be driven? It is important for the cities involved to have information about what is expected before joining a meeting to make the discussions and work more alive.

Carinne Lancereau

International Coordinator

City Administration Office



4. Local Safety Commission / Sent by Leszek Walczak

With reference to Report and Proposal by the UBC Task Force for new organization and structure of the UBC Commissions, the current Commission on Local Safety fully supports submitted ideas of commissions new structure and their main tasks. We would like to propose to add in the section on "SAFE CITIES" 2-nd point, 1-st sentence "control and manage" i.e.:

"Issues of interest could be linked to the whole cycle of civil protection – prevention, preparedness, **control and manage**, response and restoration."

The cycle of civil protection that local governments are responsible, should also consist of control and manage of all elements of the main components of local safety.

Leszek Walczak
Commission on Local Safety
Chairman

5. City of Lahti / sent by Kari Porra

First I like to thank the Executive board and Task Force for the planning work done! The main target to reduce the amount of individual commissions seems to be well implemented in the draft. Also the thematic approach in the proposed new commission's task contents is in general quite succeeded .

In some cases anyhow we see that task force could have gone ever further. For example should the commission for city planning be included in the com. of Sustainable Cities. Spatial planning in the cities is nowadays a very vital tool in making our cities more sustainable and the talents and knowhow of those specialists would be better in common use when integrated into more comprehensive part of the organization.

What comes to the proposed tasks in individual commissions in detail we see that the whole climate change problematic including Climate adaptation should be included in the work of Commission of the Sustainable Cities. Of course for example extreme weather events and such issues have implications in the rescue work but they are only small details in the complexity of the climate change risks and preventing them.

At least the name "Planning cities" is too generic because planning work of cities is nowadays done in every city sector and department . More right term should be for example "Planning city space".

WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION ON THE NEW STRUCTURE?

If we understood right it is a meaning to make the decision of the new commission structure in the Executive board. We consider that the board is too limited group to decide on such an elementary change in UBC and so we suggest that the final decision would be made in the next UBC General Meeting .

SOME GENERAL AND OTHERWISE OPERATIONAL REMARKS

When we reduce the total amount of commissions there is a risk that those commissions left will have more and more work burden. So in the same time it is very important to make changes that ensure the resources of individual secretariats. Bigger share of the total expenditures of the UBC should be allocated directly to the work of commissions.



Is there any possibilities to enlarge the commitment and participation of the host cities of commissions? Also the possibilities to improve the co-operation between different committees and the collaboration between them and executive board should be studied and promoted. What measures could be used in networking UBC member cities in each Baltic Country? To improve national collaboration between members could also give some extra resources.

And last: because of recent experiences we suggest that UBC secretariat should pay much more attention in preparing the meetings. For example last general meeting in Marienhamn was in many ways quite a mess.

Kari Porra
Director
City of Lahti, Lahti Region Environmental Services

6. City of Umeå / sent by Charlotte Lundkvist

Comments on the future UBC Commission Structure from the City of Umeå and the Gender Commission.

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

We appreciate the ambition to develop UBC to a more modern and well-functioning network. It is important that the UBC commissions show a stronger and direct engagement in the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) through concrete activities. It is important that UBC, being the largest network representing local level in the BSR, act as a strategic speaking partner in the EUSBSR structure: lobby for democratically representation of local level and a stronger role of the local level in the macro-region, promote multi-level governance. This work must be done by more UBC members than only the UBC strategy coordinator – i.e. Steering committee, Secretariat and member cities.

Umeå presented at the 69th Steering committee in Tampere a slide show on *The UBC and the Baltic Sea Strategy*. And the presentation shows the local level is under represented in EUSBSR Cooperation and the national lever is over represented in both leadership and implementation of activities.



Table 2: Repartition of flagship leading actors according to the level by country

	Pan Baltic/ International grouping	National actors						Total
		National level	Regional level	Local level	Research institutes/ Universities	Businesses	NGOs	
PA Agri	8	2*	0	0	4	3	2	19
PA Bio	2	0*	0	0	0*	0	0	2
PA Crime	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
PA Culture	8	1	1	2	0	3	2	17
PA Education	4	9	1	0	0	0	1	15*
PA Energy	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	9
PA Secure	4	10	0	0	0	0	0	14
PA Ship	2	1*	0	0	2	0	0	5
PA Safe	1	4	1	3	0	0	0	9
PA SME	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	6
PA Tourism	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	7
PA Transport	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
PA Hazards	2	1*	0	0	2	0	0	5
PA Health	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	6
PA Internal Market	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
PA Nutri	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
PA Inno	3	4	1	0	2	0	0	10

The UBC network can play an important role for it's member cities though support in both capacity building and project marketing for highlighting the local expertis and best practices. A joint UBC network can stronger lobby for the regions special demands and as well be a platform for the municipalities that want to be involved in the EUSBSR cooperation. The strength of the UBC is that it's the only network that is not only composed of capital cities and the only city network that already has structurally adapted to the EUSBSR. Therefore is the UBC commissions most suitable actor for lobby for a stronger role of the local level in the whole macro-region and represent the capacities of its members.

UBC and Spatial planning

Well-established partnerships between the city, the university and the business community have been one way for Umeå to combine its forces and work steadily on various joint development projects. The desire to collaborate has also been reflected in the ambition to work in networks regionally, nationally and internationally to enhance Umeå's function as a regional centre. The UBC network can be a good platform for developing Smart Cities around the Baltic Sea. A good way of doing that is trough implementing the Aalborg charters from 2008 in the UBC member Cities and strengthen the commissions on planning and environmental issues is needed.

Summary

The City of Umeå will participate in the work of building The UBC stronger and think that it's wise to getting closer to the EUSBSR. After the setting of the commissions it will be important to set up goals for the future coming work for the re-organized commissions.



The City of Umeå is Chair of the Gender Equality Commission and we don't agree with the proposal of a Special Rapporteur on Gender Equality.

The City of Umeå have received comments from other member cities on the proposal from the task force on the consolidation of the commissions. The following is a joint statement from the Gender Equality commission.

Statements

In the preface of the report “Women and men in the union of the Baltic cities 2013” the President and vice president of the UBC clearly states that gender equality is a fundamental link to build safe, democratic and prosperous cities, and an essential part of sustainable development.

Further, the EUSBSR states that “Equality between men and women is a core value of the European Union. At the same time, economic and business benefits can be gained from enhancing gender equality. In order to achieve the objectives of the EUSBSR the contribution and talents of both women and men should be fully used”

An active commission

The gender equality commission has in the last couple of years had a number of joint seminars, exchanges and produced reports that are useful for all cities in the network and has to our knowledge been one of the most productive commissions in relation to our size. We find, as we have also pointed out a number of times in the process of consolidating the commission, that it is crucial that the Gender equality Commission continues to have the status and full strength of a UBC commission. The Gender Commission is an important network and a possible project partner in the work of implementing the EUSBSR.

To take away the gender equality commission is i.e. to take away discussion on prostitution and trafficking, men's violence to women, economic inequality between women and men, participation in the work force etc. in the entire UBC – network.

A special rapporteur is not enough

To have a special rapporteur on gender equality will mean nothing for the work on gender equality and issues on gender mainstreaming. The gender equality commission has the knowledge on working with gender equality and the understanding of the keys that it holds to sustainable and prosperous cities. To exclude gender equality from all the actual work of the commissions shows a lack of knowledge as it will be easy for the commissions to disregard the special rapporteur if the mandate is not connected to goals and sanctions for the commissions. To have a special rapporteur on gender equality is inadequate and an empty gesture since it will in no way mean that the work of the remaining commissions will be gender mainstreamed and it takes away the possibility for the gender equality commission to have exchanges with organizations outside the UBC network such as CEMR and EIGE. It will also be impossible for the exchanges and seminars that have been held in the cities hosting the meetings of the gender equality commission. The Gender Commission is a good network and project partner in the work of implementing the EUSBSR. UBC provides the local platforms.



Summary

A rapporteur on gender equality will not strengthen the work with gender equality within the UBC and the BSR. The gender equality commission has an important role in the BSR when it comes to collaboration between countries and cities working with gender equality and it furthers the work with GE both within the UBC- network and in the Baltic Sea Region.

Marie-Louise Rönmark, Mayor of Umeå and vice president of the UBC

Charlotte Lundkvist, chair of the gender equality commission

Linda Gustafsson, coordinator of the gender equality commission

7. City of Aarhus / sent by Niels-Peter Mohr

The Steering group of the Commission on Urban Planning have read the proposal by the UBC Task Force on the future UBC Commission structure.

The steering group find the proposal fine. We can continue our way of working and we see very good possibilities to co-operate with all other commissions as well as the Executive Board.

Niels-Peter Mohr

Head of Comprehensive Planning

Chairman of The Commission on Urban Planning, UBC

9. Environment Commission / sent by Björn Grönholm

To the UBC Task Force on Commission consolidation:

The proposal made by the Task Force is in line with the focus, activity and work of the UBC next UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016 – 2021 where environment, energy and smart urban mobility all are central focus areas and also much interlinked. There are also other themes mentioned in the proposal by the Task Force, so cooperation with the other future Commissions will also be needed in future.

An important task for the future Commissions will be to invite and share the responsibilities between UBC member cities as the future Commission will cope with broad themes and concepts. This will also be important for committing UBC cities to the concrete activities of UBC.

We are also open to further discuss the consolidation and involvement of several themes.

Björn Grönholm

Head of Secretariat of the Commission on Environment