

Conference Report

The III General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 8-9 December 1995 in Aarhus, Denmark, upon the invitation of the authorities of the city of Aarhus.

The Conference was attended by representatives of 46 Member Cities, as well as invited guests from international organizations, ministries and other Baltic cities.

The first day of the Conference was devoted to the problems of Unemployment and Social Affairs in the Baltic Sea region. The second day - The General Assembly - was devoted to internal UBC issues.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

SPEECH OF WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

The III General Conference was opened by Mr Anders Engström, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Mr Olaf P. Christensen, Deputy Mayor of the City of Aarhus, gave the welcome speech to all participants.

PLENARY SESSION

During the first day of the Conference the following persons submitted presentations related to the head theme of the Conference - Unemployment and Social Affair within the Baltic Sea region:

Mr Leif Christian Hansen, Head of the Secretariat for International Cooperation in the Ministry of Labour of Denmark, described in his presentation the status and perspectives of the employment policy in Denmark. Mr Hansen stressed that the development of the welfare society is closely associated with the appropriate labour market policy.

Mr Adam Gwara, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Poland, characterized social and employment problems related to the transition from state to market economy, with Poland as an example.

Mrs Janet Horsley, Expert to the European Commission, DG V, introduced the Conference with the social and employment perspectives in the cooperation between the EU and Eastern Europe. Mrs Horsley underlined that although creation of jobs must be at the forefront of European policies, a high level of social protection needs to be maintained at the same time.

Mrs Lis Petersen, Alderman for Social Affairs in Aarhus, submitted the presentation describing the potential role of the cities in creation of social and employment policy, with city of Aarhus as an example.

Mr Arno Pöker, Mayor of the City of Rostock, stressed in his speech the need to employ to a larger extent the EU development programmes into the work of the UBC Commission on Social Affairs.

Mr Algirdas Premenckas, Head of Economic and Social Development Department, on behalf of Mr Vytenis Zabukas, Deputy Mayor of Klaipėda, characterized the perspectives in the cooperation among cities on social and employment policy.

Mr Gudmundur Stefánsson, Chairman of the Nordic Council Social Committee, described the cooperation on the social field between the Nordic countries as well as Nordic Council's relations in question with the European Union and the Baltic countries.

Mr Carl-Einar Jorgensen, Chairman of the Social-Hansa, delivered speech introducing Social-Hansa activities and describing potentials of joint cooperation with the UBC.

Succeeding the above speeches, representatives of 7 member cities submitted presentations describing initiatives undertaken with the aim to improve social and employment conditions in those cities:

- Ms Vibeke Jensen, Deputy Head of Employment Office, Aarhus
- Mr Audun Oiestad, Municipality Director, Bergen
- Mr Ryszard Klim, Member of the City Council, Elbląg
- Mr Piotr Świdorski, Vice-Director, Employment Office, Gdańsk
- Mrs Eila Onniselkä, Education Planner, Employment Unit, Helsinki
- Mrs Agneta Hammerin, Head of Social Welfare Department, Kalmar
- Mr Viktors Buls, Assistant Chief, Foreign Relations Department, Riga

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union, expressed his gratitude to all speakers who gave their addresses during the first day, emphasizing their great contribution to the Conference.

The meeting adopted the Agenda of the General Assembly.

REPORT ON UBC ACTIVITIES

Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union, briefly presented the Report on UBC activities within the period October'93 - December'95.

The Assembly adopted the Report.

ELECTIONS AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TWO VICE-PRESIDENTS

The General Conference anonymously reelected Mr Anders Engström, Mayor of Kalmar, as a President of the Union and Mr Michael Bouteiller, Mayor of Lübeck, as a Vice-President, for the next two-year period. Mr Jaak Tamm, Mayor of Tallinn, was elected as a second Vice-President.

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The following cities were elected as members of UBC Executive Board for the next two-year period: Aarhus (Denmark), Bergen (Norway), Gdańsk (Poland), Kaliningrad (Russia), Kaunas (Lithuania), Pärnu (Estonia), Riga (Latvia), Rostock (Germany), Stockholm (Sweden), Turku (Finland).

LOCATION OF UBC SECRETARIAT

The Meeting decided to maintain the location of the UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk for the next two-year period.

TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

The General Assembly welcomed the proposal of the Mayor of the City of Gdańsk, Mr Tomasz Posadzki, to organize the IV UBC General Conference in Gdańsk, in association with the 1000th Anniversary of the City of Gdańsk in 1997. It was decided that the next General Conference in Gdańsk would take place on 12-13 September 1997.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, the Secretary General of the Union, presented the Financial Report on UBC incomes and expenditure in 1993 and 1994.

Additionally Mr Żaboklicki submitted the auditor's report on UBC accounts made by licensed auditing office, stating that all Union's financial transactions and records within the mentioned period have been handled properly.

Furthermore, the Secretary submitted the estimation of the Union's budget for 1996 made on prerequisite, that UBC incomes and expenditure in 1996 would be comparable to the ones in 1994 and 1995.

The Assembly approved the financial documents.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

The General Conference decided to maintain the membership fee in 1996 on unchanged level, i.e. 2.000 USD/year per member city. Analogously to previous years the Secretariat was commissioned to collect the membership fees from member cities.

Mr Anders Engström put forward a proposal to discuss new membership fee system related to the number of the city inhabitants. The new system will avoid the situation when large agglomerations and small towns pay the same fee. It will also make possible to strengthen

UBC work in general, to intensify activities of the Commissions and to implement more projects.

The Assembly authorized the Union's Executive Board to prepare and decide upon the new UBC membership fee system since 1997.

CREATION OF NEW UBC COMMISSIONS

In accordance with the Article 5.8 of the UBC Statute, in 1995 the new UBC Working Commissions have been proposed to be established, namely:

- The Commission on Sport - proposed by the city of Gdynia and Karlskrona at the 11th UBC Executive Board Meeting in Vilnius,
- The Commission on Tourism - proposed by the city of Kalmar and Rēzekne at the 12th UBC Executive Board Meeting in Gdynia.

The General Conference approved "ex tunc" the creation of the new commissions.

Moreover, following the proposal from the Commission on Telecommunication, the Conference decided to change its name into the Commission on Communication, having in mind Commission's aim to broaden its activities.

REPORTS AND ACTIONS PLANS FROM THE COMMISSIONS

Following the Commissions working meetings in groups, the chairmen of the Commissions submitted Reports and Actions Plans regarding Commission's activities, as follows:

- The Commission on Culture - chairman Mr Sławomir Szafrński from Szczecin
- The Commission on Environment - chairman Mr Mikko Jokinen from Turku
- The Commission on Social Affairs - chairman Dr. Ulrich Bauermeister from Rostock
- The Commission on Communication - chairman Mr Lars Malmborg from Kalmar
- The Commission on Transportation - chairman Prof. Maciej Krzyżanowski from Gdańsk
- The Commission on Sport - chairman Mr Zdzisław Urola from Gdynia
- The Commission on Tourism - chairman Mr Leif Nilsson from Kalmar

The Assembly approved submitted reports.

PROGRAMME OF UBC ACTIVITIES 1996-1997

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, the Secretary General of the Union, presented the Programme of UBC activities 1996-1997, based on the Commissions Action Plans.

The Conference approved the document.

CONFERENCE STATEMENTS

Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union, proposed the following statements to be officially adopted by the III UBC General Conference in Aarhus:

I. The Role of the Cities in the Baltic Sea Policy - addressed to the European Union with the aim to influence the EU Baltic Sea policy.

II. The UBC Statement on Local Self-Government - addressed to the national governments of Baltic countries to strengthen the role of the local self-governments.

The Conference unanimously adopted the Statements

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union, expressed his thanks to all participants, speakers, guests and hosts in particular, for their outstanding contribution to the success of the III the General Conference.