

Conference Report

The IV General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities titled the "*Baltic Sea Cooperation Forum*" was held on 12-13 September 1997 in Gdańsk, Poland, at the invitation of the Mayor of Gdańsk. The Conference was an official part of Gdańsk 1000-Anniversary celebrations.

The Conference was attended by 250 participants - representatives of 63 Member Cities, as well as invited guests from international organisations, ministries and other Baltic cities.

The first day of the Conference was devoted to the cooperation between Baltic Sea organisations and institutions. The second day was devoted to internal UBC issues such as reports, elections etc.

FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1997

WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESSES

Mr Tomasz Posadzki, Mayor of the City of Gdańsk, warmly welcomed all participants in Gdańsk at the IV UBC General Conference.

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

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

The following keynote speakers representing governmental level as well as all major Baltic organisations introduced existing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region on different levels.

Mr Dariusz Rosati, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

Mr Pierre Schori, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden

Mrs Monika Wulf-Mathies, Commissioner for Regional Policies, European Commission

Mr Dan Nielsen, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials, Council of the Baltic Sea States

Mr Olof Salmen, President of the Nordic Council

Mr Knud Andersen, Speaker of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation

Mr Hannu Tapiola, President of the Baltic Sea Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe.

Mr Wolf-Rüdiger Janzen, President of the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association

PANEL DISCUSSION

Leaders of mentioned above Baltic organisations and institutions discussed the ways to enhance the multilateral cooperation and presented their views on Baltic Sea Region

development prospects in relation with the forthcoming European Union enlargement. Following the proposal of UBC President Mr Anders Engstrom the major Baltic organisations agreed to hold annual meetings in order to work out joint projects and discuss Baltic strategic issues.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

The following workshops were held parallelly during the first day of the conference:

W.1 Agenda 21 - Local, Regional and Governmental cooperation.

W.2 European Union in the Baltic Sea Region today and tomorrow -a challenge for Baltic Cities.

W.3 Local self-government in the Baltic Sea Region - tendencies and obstacles.

W.4 Baltic Sea Actors - ways and tools for cooperation and coordination.

SATURDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1997

COMMISSIONS MEETINGS

All UBC Commissions held the working meetings to discuss reports from the last period and action plans for the next 2 year period. After the meetings the chairmen of the Commissions submitted reports to the assembly.

REPORT AND STRATEGY OF UBC ACTIVITIES

Mr Anders Engström, the President of the Union, submitted the Report on UBC activities within the period December'95 - September'97.

The Conference adopted the Report.

Subsequently Mr Engström presented the Strategy of UBC activities 1998-1999 and informed that the Executive Board recommended the General Conference to adopt the document. Ms Hjördis Höglund (Sundsvall) and Ms Barbro Sundback (Mariehamn) stressed that the importance of greater women involvement in the UBC work should also be reflected in the Strategy. After discussion the Conference adopted the document including mentioned above proposal. At the same time the Conference authorised the Executive Board to work out the Policy of the Union of the Baltic Cities, having as a basis adopted Strategy.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, the Secretary General of the Union, submitted the auditor's report on UBC accounts made by licensed auditing office, stating that all Union's financial transactions and records within the period 1995-1996 have been handled properly.

Furthermore, the Secretary presented the proposal for UBC budget for the financial period 1998-1999. UBC incomes are based on membership annual fees depending on the size of member city.

The Conference took note of the auditor's report and approved the level of membership fees and the budget for the financial period 1998-1999.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

AMENDMENTS IN UBC STATUTE

Mr Anders Engström submitted to the General Conference the amendments to UBC Statute proposed by the Executive Board.

The Conference decided to accept proposed amendments in the UBC Statute.

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TWO VICE-PRESIDENTS

The General Conference elected:

Mr Anders Engström, Mayor of Kalmar

as President of the Union

and

Mr Michael Bouteiller, Mayor of Lübeck

Mr Bartłomiej Sochański, Mayor of Szczecin

as Vice-Presidents of the Union for the next two-year period.

LOCATION OF UBC SECRETARIAT

Following the offer of the Mayor of Gdańsk, Mr Tomasz Posadzki, the Conference decided to maintain the location of the UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk in the "Green Gate" for the next six-year period 1998-2003.

TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

Following the proposal of the Mayor of Stockholm, Mr Mats Hulth, the General Conference decided to hold its Vth Meeting in the City of Stockholm, in the year 1999.

OTHER MATTERS

Following the decision of the Executive Board, the General Conference decided to approve the creation of 8th UBC working Commission on Business Cooperation and encouraged all member cities to actively participate in the Commission work.

President Engström informed that on September 11, the Executive Board on its 18th meeting, accepted 7 new Cities as UBC Members. During the Conference another city (Norrtälje, Sweden) was accepted. The number of Union Members reached the figure **78**.

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

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