



59TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Tallinn, Estonia, 13-14 October 2010

Latest conferences attended by UBC representatives.

- **85th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 9-10 June 2010
(Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC, Deputy Mayor of Kolding)**

The financial difficulties of local and regional authorities weighed heavily on the discussions of members of the Committee of the Regions at its latest plenary session. CoR members met in Brussels to discuss financial regulation with EU Commissioner Michel Barnier to reiterate their concerns regarding the Europe 2020 strategy and whether its goal of reducing poverty will be achieved. Commissioner Barnier was seeking local and regional support for new European financial market rules, put forward by the European Commission in recent days.

One of the other topics at the session was the European heritage label. Europe is planning to better promote its heritage through a new label. The Committee of the Regions' message is clear: since the financial management of these sites falls mainly to the local and regional authorities, it is incomprehensible that the current Commission proposals foresee no role for them in this process. The new label is expected to come into force no later than 2012. Its aim is to showcase sites that symbolise European integration. The Commission's proposals draw on a project launched in 2006 by several countries, without the involvement of the European institutions. Thus, in the new framework, Member States would pre-select sites to be awarded the label by a European panel.

During the meeting, there were also the following items:

- Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2009-2010: potential Candidate Countries
- The interconnection of business registers
- The role of urban regeneration in the future of urban development in Europe
- Draft resolution on the Broad economic guidelines and employment guidelines 2010
- Draft resolution on Stronger involvement of local and regional authorities in the Europe 2020 strategy
- European Citizens' initiative
- EU and international biodiversity policy beyond 2010
- Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean
- Local and regional cooperation to protect the rights of the child in the European Union



- **CECICN meeting with the European Commission, DG Regional policy representatives 16. June 2010 (Krista Taipale, Turku-Southwest Finland European Office, Ola Nord, City of Malmö EU-office)**

Participants:

David Sweet, advisor to Director General Dirk Ahner, European Commission, DG Regional policy

Mr. Wladyslaw Piskorz Head of Unit of Urban development and territorial cohesion

Caridad Gonzalez de la Vega , unit of territorial cooperation

Jean-Marc Venineaux, unit of territorial cooperation

Belen Mendonza – Secretary General for CECICN

Hans Günter Clev – Director for MOT

Jean Rubio – Project manager for MOT

Xoán Vázquez Mao – Secretary General for RIET

Cláudia Antunes – Director for Eixo Atlántico

Emilio D’Alessio – Secretary General of Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities

Anna Almirall i Carné - Urban Development Programmes - Environmental Metropolitan Agency representing Medcities

Mr Ola Nord, head Office for City of Malmö EU office, representing UBC

Ms Krista TAIPALE - Head of office for TURKU-Southwest Finland European Office – representing Union of Baltic Cities

David Sweet, a special advisor for Director General Dirk Ahner, opened the meeting by welcoming all Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks representatives to the meeting. He stressed the importance of collaboration between DG Regio and different networks representing cities and regions. According to Sweet, DG Regio is aiming at more coherent and strategic collaboration with various networks. Sweet also stressed the need for working on a grass root level – “we should focus in our work beyond regulation, to concrete work done – and to be done - on the regions and cities”. David Sweet also mentioned the trend related to macro-regions. The role of the cities is crucial when linking the municipalities more strongly to macro-level collaboration. Sweet put a special emphasis to the fact that CECICN have members covering also all the future macro regions that are under elaboration.

Władysław Piskorz, Head of Unit, at the European Commission Regional Policy DG stressed the importance of the urban dimension as a whole. He stressed especially current economical challenges related to future cohesion policy 2014 onwards. Due to the financial crisis – and its implications to the budgetary framework for next EU programming period – extremely good arguments and added value is needed in order to keep funding level on the same level or close to the same than during on going period. In this framework, the value of this kind of networks, like CECIN, is remarkable.



Mr Piskorz gave also some information concerning the preparation of future cohesion policy: 5th Cohesion report – including already some suggestion for future cohesion policy will be adopted in October 2010. Structural funds regulations will be given in spring/early summer 2011 – after the financial regulations are published.

Belen Mendoza highlighted the aims, organization and added value of CECICN-network. Taking account the fact that CECICN represents so big number of cities in Europe, it is very useful tool for the commission– for instance, in providing information of best practices and arguments for the importance of urban policy.

CECICN network contains expertise both transregional, transnational and crossborder collaboration. It can serve as a facilitator between commission and municipalities. It can be used when measuring the real impact of EU-urban policy on field – as well as when evaluating the coordination of EU-policies: on national and regional levels. Mendoza stressed the good experiences of Urbact and Urban audit.

Mr Piskorz reminded that the Commission has always proposed a much larger budget allocation for Cohesion policy that is finally adopted by the Council. In this economical situation pressure to cut the budget is even stronger. Therefore, Piskorz asked the members of CECICN to take actively part to the discussion on future cohesion policy – and provide good practical examples of its added value. It was also taken up by the commission that reliable and tangible criteria to evaluate added value of cohesion policy is partly missing, posing a challenge for effective argumentation. Thus project examples, qualitative and quantitative are sought after to showcase the use of structural funds, and all CECICN members are invited to send in and share their experiences. It was also stressed that it is important to lobby on Members states and on national level, by network members.

Jean-Marc Venineaux, DG REGIO, took up the Baltic Sea region and its role as a first macroregional development area. He stressed that there are a lot of expectations towards its implementation, but also reminded that successful macroregional development needs always favourable preconditions, such as common problems of an interregional nature. According to him, one possible option for strengthening the role of cities on EU-level would be to increase the urban dimension in all transnational and transregional programmes in the forthcoming programme period.

Hans Günter Clev gave some good examples of cooperation within the EGTC that the Commission agreed should be highlighted better.

Xoán Vázquez Mao in particular, ended the meeting by talking about the hopes on behalf of CECICN to remain in close contact with the European Commission and to be part of the shaping of the future of cohesion policy and the future of structural funds.

Krista Taipale, Turku-Southwest Finland European Office

Ola Nord, City of Malmö EU-office



- **“Greening our blue border” 2010 Annual meeting & conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 16-18 June 2010 (Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President of UBC, Deputy Mayor of Turku)**

The first day of the conference was devoted to the topics:

- Investing in the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence: A Green Economy
- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Tourism: Exploring Uncharted Territory

Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, representing 13 million Americans and Canadians, committed to adopt and expand green municipal practices aimed at protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, through the launch of the Green CiTTS program.

The Green CiTTS (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program has four objectives:

- To Protect Water Resources and Coastal Areas
- To Promote LowCarbon Energy Generation and Consumption
- To Adopt Green Land Use and Building Design, and
- To Encourage Green Economic Development

An important aspect of the Green CiTTS program is the promotion and adoption of green technologies to support this effort and the creation of green jobs to stimulate local and regional economies.

The Cities Initiative also announced the results from its Water Conservation Framework, now in its third year, and its Pharmaceuticals Framework, launched last year.

On the second day of the conference Mr Jarkko Virtanen, UBC Vice-President and the Deputy Mayor of Turku made a presentation introducing UBC and the city of Turku. Two other subjects were also discussed: 1) Invaders of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River: Asian Carp, Algae and Ballast Water, 2) The Cities Initiative Action: Advancing the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence.

At the meeting also the new authorities were elected and the city of Bayfield, Wisconsin received the fourth annual Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award. The Wege award is given to a community with a population of less than 100,000 as seed money for a Great Lakes St. Lawrence project that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects and that can be used as a best practice in other communities.



- **Conference of Euroregion Baltic Stakeholders, Elbląg, 17-18 June 2010 (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)**

On 17 and 18 June the stakeholders of Euroregion Baltic met in Elbląg in order to continue the process of reviewing the cooperation, as recommended earlier in the road map adopted by the Council.

Around 60 local and regional representatives discussed the results of the cooperation so far, as well as the challenges related to its future work.

On the first day the panel discussion concerned questions: What have been key successes of the ERB cooperation so far? What weaknesses have we identified in the ERB cooperation to date? What has been the added value of the ERB cooperation? It was stressed that ERB had been a successful cooperation platform, which has resulted in effective lobbying towards the EU and national level, joint strategic projects (based on the Joint Development Programme), improved intercultural dialogue benefiting European integration, youth cooperation (and its formal inclusion in ERB structures), as well as the attraction of financial instruments (in particular South Baltic). ERB has become a recognizable brand name and is today considered an important and reliable partner in discussions and consultations in the European Union.

Two parallel workshops concentrated on the following questions: Is there a role for ERB to play in the BSR cooperation? If so, what should be our major tasks? How can we make ERB an integral part of the work in the member regions? What role can ERB play in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region? What strategic joint initiatives do we need to undertake?

On the second day of the conference Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General made a presentation about UBC. There was also made a short documentary of the Youth In Action project "Small Steps, Big Progress". A big part of the second day was a panel discussion on reviewing institutional capacities of Euroregion Baltic and reviewing financial capacities of this Euroregion.

- **Seminar "Network of harbour cities: Sceneries, strategies and ideas for the re-planning of the Italia France Maritime Operational Programme, Florence, Italy, 22 June 2010 (Wolfgang Schmidt, Chairman Commission on Business Cooperation, Kiel)**

On request of the Association of Municipalities of the North Tyrrhenian Sea, the chairman of the UBC Commission on Business Cooperation, Wolfgang Schmidt, took part in the INNOVATION WORKSHOP of this network.



The UCAT project intends to create a stable association of Municipalities of the North Tyrrhenian Sea, which, through the promotion of joined politics and the exchange of best practices among the centres of the cross border area, is able to improve the quality and the access to the urban public services for citizens and enterprises.

The city networks and the institutional-transnational networks are one of the most remarkable challenges and opportunities of the next European future. To face these challenges the Maritime OP has developed a priority axis which favours the sharing of the relevant resources belonging to the different networks of the area in order to increase the competitiveness of the cross border zone. On the base of these cohesive processes, the cities (true heart of the economic competitiveness and social quality of the cross border system) can promote real politics of common investments aiming to qualify and to promote the growth and the sustainable development of the cross border area UCAT has been developed in order to initiate the establishment of this institutional network able to exploit these opportunities and challenges of development. UCAT will use the project resources to implement the first and decisive processes of cohesion.

More information and contact to this interesting region will be given on request by Wolfgang Schmidt.

Wolfgang Schmidt
Chairman Commission on Business Cooperation

- **The 19th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Mariehamn, Åland Island, 29-31 August 2010 (Vilnis Vitkovskis, Head of Development Department, Liepaja)**

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) is an annual forum for political debate and opinion-building on current and topical issues of the Baltic Sea Region.

The 19th BSPC was convened in Mariehamn, Åland Islands, on 29-31 August 2010. The Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Åland Islands. Some 200 politicians, experts and officials took part in the Conference, which addressed issues such as Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, Impact of Climate Change on the Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea Region, and the Baltic Sea region as an Area of Peace and Security. The Conference was concluded by the unanimous adoption of a Resolution, which is a political tool for directing joint political standpoints and recommendations to the governments of the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the European Union.

The addressed issues are very topical for the Baltic Sea region and the UBC however I would like to voice also several critical notes.

The speakers speaking on the same topic were reiterating each other; even some of the slides of the presentations were identical.



Also the one-sided focus on environmental protection aspects at the conference raises concern. The problems of environmental protection and climate changes were analyzed and dramatized without taking into account the socioeconomic aspects, revitalization of economy and competitiveness of the region. This is one of main conclusions and advise derived from the conference: planning or tackling any issue - environment, transport, health etc - the UBC should be able to assess their mutual impact and interaction.

The 20th BSPPC will be convened in Helsinki, Finland, 28-30 August 2011. Invitations will be issued in early spring 2011.

The participation of the UBC representative in this conference is useful – it provides topical information and opinions on the processes in the Baltic Sea states, it is also excellent opportunity for the communication with leaders of these countries, also researchers and organizations, like BSSSC. As BSPPC is a conference with high reputation I would recommend reviewing a possibility for a UBC representative to address the BSPPC conferences with a speech or presentation.

Vilnis Vitkovskis
15.09.2010

- **International conference "Seaports management models in Poland and Europe", Gdańsk, 13-14 September 2010 (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)**

The aim of the conference was to work out the common conception of decantralizing management of the seaports which have the priority meaning for the maritime economy.

The opening seminar was on the topic “Ports in European Union - history and management transformation”.

The main part of the conference was devoted to the management models in the EU. There were made presentations on:

- Polish system of seaports management – characteristics of harbours activity in Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin and Świnoujście (Polish Chamber Of Maritime Commerce and Sea Ports Authorities)
- State, region and city role in seaports management - French model (Representative of the Port of Le Havre)
- City and region cooperation in planning and financing port development on the example of the German ports (Representatives of the Port of Hamburg Authority and Bremen Ports)



- State and city as shareholders of the management entity on the example of Port of Netherlands and Belgium (Representative of the Port of Rotterdam Authority and Port of Antwerp/Ghent)

On the second day, the debate on optimal model of big Polish seaports management together with presenting possible legal and economic solutions took place after the presentation of the project: „Transfer of knowledge and best practice in the area of seaports management to work on optimal model for Tricity”.

There was also presentation of good practice in the area of self-governments participation in activity of enterprises from the economy sectors formerly being the domain of the State Treasury on the example of the Gdansk Airport and companies responsible for rail transportation.

- **Baltic Sea region flagship project 8.4 "Make the Baltic Sea an Eco-efficient region" Eco-Region conference, Tallinn, 28-30 September 2010 (Maria Persdotter, City of Växjö, Sakari Saarinen, Project Coordinator, Commission on Environment)**

The 5th Conference of the EcoRegion project was organized by the project partner city of Tallinn.

During the Joint Workshop – Regional Sustainable Development Measures, the regional partners presented their progress in implementing sustainable development measures. All regional project partners are involved in the ICLEI training for cyclical management approaches towards sustainable development and will, as part of their strategic region SD programme, implement concrete measures and actions within the EcoRegion project.

Also, exchange with sectors was strengthened. The participants were discussing the promotion of the EcoRegion database. There was also a first brainstorming for defining the structure and content of the project publication "EcoRegion Findings - lessons learned".

During the policy session, the sectoral partners analyzed joint initiatives. A discussion on policy input from EcoRegion to a handful of relevant policy events held in autumn 2010 and spring 2011 took place.

During the region to region session, the regional partners focused on future cooperation.

All participants were invited to a study tour to the new Tallinn biofuel Cogeneration Heat and Power Plant.



- **86th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 4-6 October 2010 (Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC, Deputy Mayor of Kolding)**

Environment, climate action and macro-regions EU policy were at the top of the CoR's agenda during its 86th Plenary Session.

The CoR is of the opinion that involving local and regional authorities in drawing up environment policy would guarantee better implementation. One of the key demands in the CoR opinion is for the creation of 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP), which the Committee believes would be a key pillar of the EU2020 Strategy.

The CoR believes that more should be done to highlight the many examples from across the EU of local and regional authorities taking the lead on environmental protection where national authorities fail to act. For example, signatories of the Covenant of Mayors pledge to go further than national governments in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and the CoR suggests extending the concept to areas such as biodiversity or waste recycling.

The CoR called also for general guidelines for "Macro-Regions". The Baltic strategy introduced the concept of "Macro-Regions" into European policy and many other regions want to follow this example.

Also, the Committee urged all sub-national governments to invest more in the fight against climate change. In its Resolution on the Cancun Climate Summit adopted during the Plenary Session, the CoR appealed to regions and local authorities to sign local climate action pacts setting out concrete measures in the fight against climate change. The appeal was followed by the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on climate action signed by CoR President Mercedes Bresso and Elizabeth B. Kautz, President of the United States Conference of Mayors.

The memorandum strives to accelerate local measures on both sides of the Atlantic to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, to promote renewable energy sources and sustainable urban mobility, as well as to change citizens' behaviour.

- **18th BSSSC Annual Conference, Tallinn, 13 October 2010 (Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC, Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General)**

The 18th BSSSC Annual Conference took place in Tallinn, Estonia, from 12 to 14 October 2010.

The conference put the focus on activities and improvements related to the field of qualification. The event offered the opportunity to learn and discuss about the chances, challenges and changes of the Baltic Sea Region towards a knowledge-based society.

The conference showed that qualification is increasingly becoming a key factor that determines the future economic and social development of regions. The Baltic Sea Region



needs to move faster towards a knowledge society to ensure the continued wellbeing of its people in the light of challenges posed by demographic trends and globalisation. This work has already started.

BSSSC and its partner regions agreed to a resolution with guidelines which will direct the implementation process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. It contains essential approaches to enhance the education and the labour market in the regions.

The BSSSC Annual Conference was enriched by two side events: the BSSSC Youth Event on 11-12 October with 50 young people from all around the Baltic Sea and the Project Idea Café organized by the Baltic Sea Region Programme. The Project Idea Café is a creative meeting place for sharing project ideas and finding project partners.

- **First Annual Forum on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Tallinn, 14-15 October 2010 (attended by the UBC Executive Board)**

14-15 October 2010 the first Annual Forum was held in Tallinn for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The objective of the Annual Forum was to meet the stakeholders after one year of implementation of the strategy and have a constructive dialogue on the results and successes, as well as areas that needs improvement. The Forum included a presentation and discussion of the first draft implementation report, as well as updates on the various Priority Areas included in the Strategy.

Around 560 stakeholders attended the event representing national governments, local and regional administrations, private sector representatives, NGOs, and various experts. The overall conclusion of the event was that the Strategy is actively addressing the relevant problems and potentials of the region. Implementation structure with 15 Priority Areas, Actions and Flagship Projects is seen as an innovative, flexible and good way of working. Concerns were raised in relation to:

- still problematic alignment of funding,
- too much distance from grassroots regional input;
- the need for more involvement of the private sector.

The importance of a sustained political momentum was also underlined. The discussions during the Annual Forum will be reflected in the work plan of the Strategy for 2011 were especially the problematic areas will be given even more attention.

Opening speeches were delivered by Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of Estonia; Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for Regional Policy, European Commission, Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions and Eva Srejber, Vice-president of the European Investment Bank

Five parallel workshops concerned IV pillars and horizontal actions.



There was also a discussion in four thematic groups:

- Knowledge management
- Maritime policy
- Promoting contacts between partners in the whole Baltic Sea Region
- Green growth

UBC President, Per Bødker Andersen, had a speech at the plenary discussion together with Erik Bergkvist, President, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) Baltic Sea Commission and Anne-Christine Brusendorf, Executive Secretary of HELCOM.

Mikko Jokinen, Chairman of UBC Commission on Environment, Environmental Director, City of Turku, was a speaker at the thematic group “Promoting contacts between partners in the whole Baltic Sea Region”.