

**MINUTES OF THE 79<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
Berlin, Germany, 15 June 2017**

**1. Opening of the meeting by UBC President and adoption of the agenda. Election of two persons who, together with the President, will check the minutes.**

The Executive Board meeting was opened by Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the European Commission Representation in Berlin for hosting the Board meeting in its premises. The Board adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes. Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö and Karin Wohlgemuth, City of Rostock, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

Hans Dostert, Political Section at the Representation of the European Commission in Germany, welcomed the Board meeting participants and shortly presented the institution's profile.

The European Commission's representation in Germany has been headquartered in Berlin since September 1999. The office is located in the European House at Pariser Platz. In Berlin, the Commission Representation maintains contact with the Bundestag, the Federal Council and the Federal Government, operates an active press work and communicates with the general public.

The Berlin office is responsible for ten federal states: Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia. The office consists of three operational departments: the Communications Department, the Political Department, of which Hans Dostert is a representative, and the Press Department. An administrative department ensures smooth internal procedures.

Hans Dostert informed also about the exhibition Erlebnis Europa (Experience Europe). Set up at the initiative of the European Parliament in cooperation with the European Commission, EUROPA EXPERIENCE offers the possibility to find out more about European politics.

**2. UBC involvement in the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Berlin, Youth Conference and Seminar 'Nothing about us without us', 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Marie-Louise Rönmark and Youthful Cities Commission co-Chair Carsten Adamsen.**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) entitled "Connectivity" was held in Berlin on 13–14 June 2017. UBC co-organised four seminars and back-to-back meetings before and during the Strategy Forum: Youth Conference as well as a youth seminar "Nothing about us without us", EUSBSR Participation Day, and seminar on Smart water sector.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Marie-Louise Rönmark informed, that both Youth conference and Youth seminar were met with a great interest and youth involvement. In her opinion the role of the cities was not exposed enough in the EUSBSR Forum speakers. However, the UBC was mentioned several times. Irene Pendolin and Mikko Lohikoski informed that Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland, referred to UBC in his

speech as a good example of practical nature of regional cooperation. UBC was visible at the Berlin EUSBSR Forum.

Carsten Adamsen informed the Youth Conference gathered almost 50 participants from 10 countries. It focused on sharing good practices on youth involvement and empowerment at local and regional level in the BSR and on discussing different approaches to active youth involvement in all ten Baltic Sea countries. The programme included group work as well as presentations and discussions on good examples of youth participation from the BSR countries.

Also the seminar "Nothing about us without us – making it work!" gathered a large audience in the EUSBSR Annual Forum on 13 June. The main topic was how to include young people in decision-making which raised energetic discussions on themes of democracy, political change and independence.

The seminar and the Youth Conference were both organised together by UBC, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) and Euroregion Baltic (ERB).

Paweł Żaboklicki added the seminar was a follow-up of the meeting organized at the 7<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Forum in Stockholm on 8 November 2016. The work will be continued and will result in a joint Baltic Sea organisations workshop on youth issues at the UBC General Conference in Växjö on 26 October 2017.

Jaana Simula, informed about another EUSBSR workshop – "Culture as a driving force for sustainability". Its participants discussed how the cultural and creative sectors can contribute to achieving the global sustainability & climate goals 2030. Jaana is a participant in the project: Culturability BSR – Culture for Sustainable Development which is one of the Flagships under the EU Action Plan for the Baltic Sea Region.

Mikko Lohikoski informed, EUSBSR Horizontal Action Capacity coordinators: UBC, Baltic Sea NGO Network and the Swedish Institute, together with the states of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, organised for the first time a EUSBSR Participation Day on 13 June, back-to-back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum. It was inspired by the success of three Danube Participation Days and served as a pilot project for following editions, in Tallinn 2018 and beyond. With around 60 participants from different sectors, including NGOs and businesses, the Participation Day in Berlin concentrated on sustainable tourism development, education, research, employability and integration of refugees, involvement and cooperation as well as communications and networking.

Björn Grönholm informed, that on 13 June the Commission held the EUSBSR Forum seminar "The Baltic Sea Needs Smart Water Sector - Capacity Building and Cross-border Cooperation for Successful Technology Transfer".

The Sustainable Cities Commission is a lead partner of EUSBSR flagship project IWAMA which has around 40 partners around the BSR. Another project – iWater with 8 cities involved also gained the EUSBSR flagship status. It develops guidelines and tools for Integrated Storm Water Management (ISWM) and introduces good storm water management practices into urban planning processes.

Mikko Lohikoski informed, that at the next EUSBSR Forum in Tallinn, the Participation Day will also be organized to include local level stakeholders. That has been already discussed with the Estonian Foreign Office who will be a host of the forum. Also UBC, through HA Capacity, will be responsible for organisation of the Networking Village in Tallinn. Lohikoski suggested involving also the youth.

EUSBSR Forum in 2019 will be organized in Gdańsk. The Secretary General informed that the Pomeranian Marshall's Office will be most likely responsible for the organisation of the EUSBSR Forum in Gdańsk. Paweł Żaboklicki added that the Office proposed the UBC the cooperation role, as yet unofficially. Mikko Lohikoski suggested that the Executive Board could write an official proposal to the Polish government informing the UBC is ready to be a priority partner in the Gdańsk Forum.

### **3. XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö, 24-27 October 2017.**

#### **"Leadership for the future – Cities as leaders for glocal sustainable development"**

The draft programme proposal is attached.

Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö, assured the preparations to the General Conference had been progressing and encouraged to the active participation in the event. He also informed about the latest success of the city who gained the European Green Leaf Award 2018.

The Board went through the latest programme of the conference.

1. Welcome

2. Confirmed speakers

Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC

Bo Frank, Lord Mayor of Växjö

Paweł Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdańsk

Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja

Alessandro Cenderello, Managing Partner for EU Institutions, Ernst & Young

Lena Ek, Senior Advisor, Sustainable Seas Foundation, Former Minister of Environment, Sweden, President of Södra

Jørgen Kristiansen, Deputy Mayor of Kristiansand

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, 1st Vice President of the Committee of the Regions

Jyrki Myllyvirta, Mayor of Lahti

Pärtel-Peeter Pere, CEO, Future Place Leadership

Wolfgang Röttgers, Councillor, Kiel

Peter Schenk, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

Anne Stenros, Design Director, Helsinki

Rasa Šnapštienė, Deputy Mayor of Kaunas

Carina Svensson, Chair of the Environmental Council, Association Chairman of VA SYD, Councillor, City of Malmö

Alan AtKisson, Author and Senior Sustainability Consultant (moderator)

John Lauritzen, Councillor, Næstved, noticed there is a number of high level speakers. It would be important that they provided short precise speeches. In order to show practical work at the local level, he proposed to invite Michael Elgaard from Resource City, Naestved, to speak about their initiatives for recycling and upcycling – a good contribution to the local sustainable development.

Per Schöldberg informed the various forms of communication will be offered by the GC Task Force to avoid monotony.

Marie-Louise Rönmark raised the question of gender balance among the speakers.

Björn Grönholm, Sustainable Cities Commission, informed that Ms Kyra Appleby, Head of CDP's Cities Programme, London, accepted an invitation to speak at the General Conference.

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed the GC Task Force will make a proposal of allocation of the speakers. Some speakers will address plenary sessions and some parallel workshops.

Karin Wohlgemuth proposed to include a workshop of the UBC Refugees Task Force in order to discuss the basic discussion lines and themes of the below mentioned follow-up conference to be held in 2018. President Andersen responded there was no time to reformulate the programme but the organizers should try to find a way to refer to this topic.

### 3. Meetings of the UBC Commissions, 24 October 2017

#### 4. Parallel sessions

1. Communications Workshop.
2. State of the Youth Guarantee in the Baltic Sea Region: Current Situation and a Road Map for the Future. TF on Youth Employment and Well-Being
3. HA Capacity (including training)
4. Glocal developments in the maritime economy: cross-border cooperation. Interreg funding for glocal development in the maritime economy. Interreg South Baltic
5. Interactive meetings with technical experts and specialized civil servants of the city of Växjö.
6. Baltic Water Excellence Forum
7. Sustainable Development Goals in local & regional setting. Euroregion Baltic, CPMR BSC, Karlstad, Växjö. Followed by: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. CDP. Sustainable Cities Commission.
8. UBC-BDF Digital Top of Europe.
9. Baltic Sea cities as leaders of comprehensive cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea region. WiseEuropa Institute.
10. Data collection principles for civil protection prevention activities. Together we can. Safe Cities Commission.
11. Baltic Sea organisations (UBC, BSSSC, ERB, CBSS, etc) working together on youth issues in the Baltic Sea Region.
12. Gender mainstreaming and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men at the Local Level. WG on Gender Equality.
13. Culture – key to sustainable leadership. Culturability - cultural planning meets sustainability. Cultural Cities Commission.
14. Euro Velo No 10 cycling route as an opportunity to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region tourism brand, through the cities cooperation. Marshall Office of Pomorskie Voivodship.

15. Urbanization, Mobilities and Immigration as a driver of urbanization in the Baltic Sea Cities. URMI project.

5. Report on UBC activities , UBC President
  6. Status of the implementation of UBC Strategy 2016 – 2021
  7. Discussion
  8. Auditor’s Report
- Auditor’s Report is attached.

9. Board of Audit Report

Information to the Board:

Board of Audit inspected UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk on 17 May 2017. Board of Audit report is under preparation.

10. Absolving the Presidium, Executive Board, Secretary

11. Membership Fees 2018-2019

President Andersen informed about the proposal to equalise fees for ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ cities. Currently ‘eastern’ cities have 30% discount.

Expected UBC income from membership fees in 2017: 224 625,00 €

10% rise for ‘eastern’ cities: 12 765 €

20% rise: 24 270 €

30% rise: 35 775 €

Proposal 1

Raise of 10 % per year in the next three years

Proposal 2

Raise of 10 % per period between General Conferences

Decision:

After discussion the Board recommended to level the membership fees for all member cities starting from 2018.

12. Executive Board in the next period

Proposal:

Board member cities to consult member cities in each country and submit a candidate city to the General Conference.

Piotr Grzelak, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk, called for more geographical equality in the Presidium and Executive Board to keep a balance between the North and South Baltic Sea Region. At the 74<sup>th</sup> UBC Board meeting before the XIII General Conference in Gdynia, Gdynia, 27 October 2015, the Polish members of the UBC made a proposal that the city hosting the UBC Secretariat should have a seat in the Executive Board outside the national quota. The Executive Board recommended to the General Conference in

Gdynia that the city hosting the Secretariat should be granted an observer status in the Board. According to the city of Gdańsk, the observer status is not enough, and it would like to have a real voice in the Executive Board.

President Andersen admitted it was difficult to find a gender and geographical balance, though the attempts had been always made. The Gdańsk proposal would require some changes in the Statute. He also underlined the UBC should be independent from the cities' particular interests.

Jørgen Kristiansen, Deputy Mayor of Kristiansand, agreed this question should be taken into consideration if there is a written proposal with justification. That would make the process transparent.

Board member cities are asked to consult member cities in each country and submit a candidate city to the General Conference.

13. President and Vice-Presidents in the next period

14. Board of Audit in the next period

15. Auditor in the next period

So far UBC was audited by the licensed auditing company BILANS from Gdańsk. Price for audit 2015-2016 ca. 880 eur.

16. Venue of the XV UBC General Conference in autumn 2019

Invitation from the Mayor of the City of Kaunas is attached.

#### **4. Proposal to appoint an Executive Board member to each Commission to follow their work.**

Following the decision taken at the EBM in Kemi, 25 February 2015 and the report of the UBC Task Force on Development, the Board assigned the following members as Commissions' liaisons:

Cultural Cities – Kaunas

Gender Equality WG – to be discussed by the Presidium

Inclusive & Healthy Cities - Gdynia

Planning Cities - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Marie-Louise Rönmark

Safe Cities - Liepāja

Smart & Prospering Cities - Kristiansand

Sustainable Cities – Vice-President Jarkko Virtanen or Lahti (to be discussed)

Youthful Cities – Växjö

\* To be revised after elections at the General Conference in Växjö on 26.10.2017.

Irene Pendolin suggested there could be also a Board member representative responsible for communications.

#### **5. UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being: new co-operation and other executed and planned activities of 2017.**

Matti Mäkela, Chair of the UBC TF on Youth Employment and Well-Being, informed about the EUSBSR flagship cooperation and future plans.

UBC TF on Youth Employment and Well-Being has started a cooperation with the EUSBSR Flagship School to Work (S2W). The Flagship aims to strengthen transnational cooperation between stakeholders in the BSR in the field of education and works in order to prevent early school leaving and to develop new support methods for vulnerable groups of students/youth, specifically NEETs and newly arrived refugees. The Flagship has created a common platform of understanding and learning, and dissemination of different successful methods to deal with the issues around drop outs and NEETs. Moreover, it arranges study visits and workshops, and supports cooperation and creation of the new joint projects. This means that Flagship goals are parallel to the goals set by the UBC Board meeting in Kaunas last year to the Task Force; co-operation within the UBC, joint projects, surveys, workshops and seminars. Cooperation can also support the work of the Task Force on Refugees and Youthful Cities Commission. Coordinator Inta Simanska introduced the flagship at the last Board meeting in Kristiansand.

Activities of Spring 2017:

- BSR Integrate Now, a joint ESF project to support the integration of newly arrived refugees, started in Turku, Stockholm and Malmö on March
- Study visit to Hamburg 27-28.4.
- Workshop in Berlin during the BSR Annual Forum 13.6.
- Flagship kick-off seminar in Stockholm 19.6.
- Planning of other new projects and other forms of co-operation

Planned activities: Fall 2017

- Study visit and workshop in Turku (October)
- Seminar in Tartu (November)
- Workshop in Växjö about Youth Guarantee (proposed)?
- Planning of other new projects and other forms of co-operation
- Dissemination and marketing of Knowledge Platforms (including collection and dissemination of the best practices)

Flagship is coordinated by SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). At the moment there are 57 members from the Baltic Sea Region. UBC TF on Youth Employment and City of Turku's education division coordinate the Knowledge Platforms of Early School Leaving and Newly Arrived Refugees. Knowledge platform's main idea is to support projects and other development work among the main target group, youth at risk of dropping out from education and labour market. Measures are divided under two titles: Support and Development.

The Board took note of the report and encouraged member cities to participate in the work. Presentation of Mr Mäkela is attached to the minutes.

## **6. Proposal from the Mayor of Rostock - conference on integration of war refugees.**

Karin Wohlgemuth, city of Rostock, reminded that in March 2016 city of Rostock hosted the UBC Conference "*The Impact of the European Refugees Crisis in the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region*". This

successful conference discussed the role of municipalities, focused on best practices and analysed the needs, challenges and the chances faced by the cities in connection with the influx of the refugees.

Ms Wohlgemuth put forward a proposal of the Mayor of Rostock Roland Methling to hold the follow-up conference on *"Integration of War Refugees on our Civil Society - Goal, Challenges, Status, Outlook"* on 12-14 March 2018.

Baltic Sea cities would have a chance to discuss what has been achieved in such areas as language and school education, vocational training, access to labour market and health system, reunification of families, integration with local society / prevention of exclusion etc.

According to UNHCR there is over 5 million registered refugees from Syria (almost 3 mln in Turkey) and 6.5 million internally displaced persons. So over half of the population has been forced from their homes due to bombardment and persecution.

The Board members welcomed the Rostock initiative. Jørgen Kristiansen, city of Kristiansand, found the last year conference very interesting and needed.

Mikko Lohikoski suggested that the scope of the proposed conference should be broadened to include not only war refugees, but also other migrants, as the question of integration into the new societies concerns them all.

President Andersen and Per Schöldberg focused on the political aspects of integration. Formally, the national level is in charge of accepting the newcomers, but the cities in fact are those who have to find their own ways to face the challenge. A dialogue with the states is needed.

The question about the support in content creation met with a positive response of the Cultural Cities and Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commissions, Gender Equality WG, cities of Turku, Næstved, Umeå. Also, the youth involvement would be possible.

The proposal is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board accepted the proposal of the Mayor of Rostock to jointly organise the follow-up conference on refugees and migrants integration in March 2018.

## **7. Proposal how to take care of new member cities (Rostock).**

Karin Wohlgemuth informed that at the meeting of the German UBC member cities in Bergen auf Rügen on 24 March 2017 the proposal concerning guidelines how to take care of new UBC member cities was outlined. It contained the following suggestions:

- New members should be guided closely, perhaps by a mentor city, for a certain time (eg for the first 2 years) helping them to get a first tangible outcome sooner



- Especially for new members there should be a short and clear description of 'who we are' and 'what could they achieve (better) by being a member'
- Attention to new members should be given actively and not only 'on request'
- To get or keep members, presentations in local parliament sessions are considered as very helpful
- Representatives of new member cities should have the chance of looking into all entities of UBC, watching, living and taking part from the beginning during the first two years. This could happen by inviting their representatives to the Executive Board meetings as guests (without voting rights), as well as by inviting them directly to all Commissions meetings of interest in order to draw them into collaboration. Another way could be to offer being the host of such a meeting.

The proposal is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board decided to accept the proposal from the meeting of German member cities concerning guidelines how to take care of new member cities. The secretariat was authorised to edit and publish the guidelines.

#### **8. Any questions raised by the Commissions/WG.**

Björn Grönholm, Sustainable Cities Commission, reminded about the UBC cooperation with the CDP. Its aim is to increase the number of Baltic Sea Region cities using systematic reporting of their climate change related actions. 7 UBC cities have reported so far.

Hanna Maidell, WG on Gender Equality, confirmed the Group intends to organize the seminar at the General Conference in Växjö devoted to the CEMR European Charter for Equality of Women and Men at the Local Level. The Charter was the theme of the conference organised by the Group in Gdańsk on 11 April and the WG decided to continue the work on it. Also the cooperation with the CEMR goes on. The Working Group plans to invite Mr Ibon Uribe, Mayor of Galdakao, chair of the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality, as a speaker of the workshop.

Jaana Simula, Cultural Cities Commission, informed the BSR Cultural Planning project received Interreg BSR seed money. The project will try to create a tool enabling the cooperation between citizens and authorities on inclusive and sustainable development of a city public space. Partners in the project are: City of Pori (lead), NCM Latvia Office, Municipal Agency Riga City Architect's Office, Danish Culture Institute in Latvia, Pomorskie Region Poland and LaimikisLt Lithuania.

Also, the Baltic Sea Cultural City 2020 was taken up by Jaana Simula. The focus is on sustainable culture. UBC Cultural Cities Commission is working on the matter together with City of Kiel.

Ms Simula added that CBSS had chosen Anna Enemark as the Senoir Adviser for Culture and Education. Enemark starts working on 4 September.

#### **9. Information on communications and marketing issues, Communications Manager.**

Irene Pendolin informed about the marketing of the General Conference in Växjö. City of Växjö produced the roll-up promoting the conference, launched the website and opened the conference registration. The first special GC newsletter was sent out on 8 June and it will be continued until November. The social media campaign will start after holidays, in the mid-August. The speakers will be presented. A group of youngsters will be involved to make the videos and participate in the Instagram competition entitled "Young leadership".

Ms Pendolin informed about the Communication seminar where the youth will be treated as equal partners. She underlined the UBC's way of involving the youngsters had brought many positive results which was noticed at the EUSBSR Forum and it should be continued.

Communications Manager encouraged to visit the UBC website for more information and actively follow the UBC at Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

#### **10. Evaluation of UBC by external auditing company KPMG Finland.**

Following the UBC Strategy, at the meeting in Kaunas, 7.06.2016, the Board had a throughout discussion on organization of the UBC work, regulations, procedures and secretariat. The Board stressed that all entities should undergo a periodical evaluation and decided to engage an external consulting company to check the internal procedures within the UBC in order to optimize performance. The President decided to appoint KPMG Finland to perform the evaluation.

KPMG Finland delivered a preliminary version of the report which was recently distributed to all Board members who are asked for comments. The discussion of the report will follow during in the next session(s) .

Decision:

The Board decided comments to the report should be sent to the President by 15 August 2017.

#### **11. New issue of Baltic Cities Bulletin.**

The new Baltic Cities Bulletin entitled "Sustainable and climate-smart Baltic Sea Region cities" was published online in April 2017. It gives the floor to the cities who successfully work with the sustainability and climate change matters. The stories present the ideas, solutions and best practices on how the cities act for more smart, sustainable and safe future, how they are prepared for the challenges that the climate change brings.

The Bulletin is available online:

<http://ubc.net/publications> and

[https://issuu.com/unionofthebalticcities/docs/pdfsam\\_merge\\_6595d1c3d6a2d0](https://issuu.com/unionofthebalticcities/docs/pdfsam_merge_6595d1c3d6a2d0)

#### **12. Any other business.**

Per Schöldberg asked if a substitute to the Board meeting could be nominated if the city representative could not participate.

Secretary General informed point 2.1 of the UBC Internal Regulations states that “Member City elected to the Executive Board nominates its mayor or his/her representative to the Executive Board. Additionally, each Member City appoints a substitute – preferably from the city board or city council – to serve as an alternative representative in case the ordinary representative is not able to attend”.

**13. Next 80<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting.**

The next 80<sup>th</sup> UBC Board meeting will be held during the XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö on 24 October 2017.

Per Bødker Andersen  
Chairperson

Paweł Żaboklicki  
Secretary

Per Schöldberg  
Adjuster

Karin Wohlgemuth  
Adjuster

The meeting documents are available at: <http://ubc.net/document-categories/executive-board-meeting-documents/79th-ubc-executive-board-meeting-berlin-15>