

MINUTES OF THE 81ST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Rostock, Germany, 13 March 2018

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 hosts for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold its 81st meeting in the City of Rostock, in connection with the UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens "Sharing the European Dream", 12-14 March 2018. The Board adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes. Karin Wohlgemuth, Rostock and Bo Hjalmebjerg, Växjö, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

2. Welcome by the Mayor of Rostock, presentation of the city.

Roland Methling, Lord Mayor of Rostock, heartily welcomed participants and wished fruitful Executive Board meeting and interesting debates at the Conference on Integration of New Citizens. Rostock is the largest city in the north German state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, it is located by the Warnow river. In 2018 Rostock celebrates 800th Anniversary of the City and in 2019 - 600 years of Rostock University. The Mayor warmly invited UBC member cities to participate in the celebrations of 800th Anniversary of Rostock to be held in 2018.

Franziska Nagorny, Head of the Anniversary Department of the City of Rostock introduced the programme of celebrations. More than 200 different events are planned in five fields of action: culture, sports, urban development & sustainability, international and academic events.

Among the most important cultural events there are two exhibitions: 800 years of Rostock and Scenes – views of Rostock, concert by the Expat Philharmonic Orchestra and Rostock Music-Suite '800 – the Rost(R)ock Suite', which will have its premiere on 1st of September.

The Polarium, a new home for Rostock's polar bears and penguins in the Rostock Zoo, the rebuilding of one of the medieval town gates – the Petri-Gate, the completion of the enlargement of Rostock's big event and concert hall StadtHalle, are among the urban plans connected to the celebrations.

All inhabitants are encouraged to participate in the Glue & Paint-along-Project, in which they will create painted matchboxes as gable houses, and put them in line in summer. The aim is to have 800 m for 800 years of Rostock.

Rostock invites for the 38th International Hanse Days to be held on 21–24 June, with Rostocker big wheel meeting, premiere of the Rostock Jubilee Cantata, birthday fireworks & concerts.

The actual city birthday is celebrated on the 24th of June. 'Rostocker Umgang' – pageant into City Harbour, gala concert 'Karat meets Classic' with ceremonial act and classic music prelude, festival in Rostock City Harbour, free of charge for all, will mark the anniversary.

3. UBC Conference on Integration "Sharing the European Dream", Rostock, 12-14 March 2018, Rostock – practical information from the organisers.

The information was given right before the Executive Board meeting at the opening plenary session of the Conference on Integration.

4. Information from the Commissions/WG concerning planned activities for 2018.

Niels-Peter Mohr, Chair of Planning Cities Commission, Aarhus, informed about the joint meeting of Planning Cities Commission, Smart and Prospering Cities Commission and Interreg JOHANN network which was held from 14th to 17th May in 2017 in Rostock.

Participants were divided into groups and debated in international teams on three perspectives: a) entire city, b) inner city and its "old harbor" and c) "old harbor" with a focus on its small cruise liner area.

Mr Mohr said that another meeting was planned to be held in Oskarshamn during autumn 2017 but unfortunately it was cancelled due to insufficient number of participants.

Niels-Peter Mohr warmly invited all member cities to the next seminar of Planning Cities Commission to be held in Visby in autumn 2018. Mr Mohr asked the Board to encourage the cities to sign up for hosting PCC seminars in the coming years.

President Andersen stressed that it is of cities' interest to invite experienced planners and architects free of charge to re-design and develop particular city districts.

The Board encouraged member cities to consider to host the seminars of the commission.

Carsten Adamsen, Chair of Youthful Cities Commission, Kolding, informed that since 1 January 2018 the City of Kolding had been chairing the commission. The City of Riga has become a vice-chair.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on 20-22 March in Narva. One of the topics to be discussed at the meeting will be 'Involving young people by using modern opportunities'.

The representatives of the commission will also take part in the Fehmarnbelt Days 2018, on 29 May in Malmö. They will participate in the meeting on 'Digitalization from an urban perspective: potentials through city collaboration and regionalization', prepared by the Baltic Development Forum and UBC Smart and Prospering Cities Commission.

Mr Adamsen informed that YCC together with Euroregion Baltic (EB), Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) and Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) applied to prepare a seminar at the EU Strategy for BSR Annual Forum in Tallinn, 4-5 June 2018, as a follow up of joint seminars held at the forums in Stockholm (2016) and Berlin (2017). The headline of the seminars has been 'Nothing about us without us'. Organizations are applying for Erasmus+ funding to be able to bring together approx. 50 youngsters from the region for a 36 hour seminar before the forum.

The Board encouraged member cities to take part in the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Tallinn.
<https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/9th-annual-forum/seminars>

Carsten Adamsen added, that the commission is planning to carry out projects not only in connection with the UBC General Conferences, but also more strategic, long-term projects. Different ideas are being discussed.

President Andersen stressed the importance of cooperation on youth issues with other organizations in the Baltic Sea region.

Mr Adamsen added that there are discussions with BSSSC and CBSS to create a platform, where many tools, solutions and possibilities for cooperation could be found.

Jarosław Józefczyk, Chair of the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission, Gdynia, informed that in 2018 the commission will be active on three levels:

- micro level, which means close bilateral cooperation with Karlstad, Vice-Chair of the commission. In April, delegation of Gdynia (Chair) will have a study tour in Karlstad devoted to domestic violence. It is a follow up of the Karlstad study tour in Gdynia in December 2017.

- middle level. The commission will have an annual meeting open to all members in Karlstad in autumn 2018.

- macro level. The commission will try to find 2-3 concepts how to improve social life in cities, what topics are most vibrant. Systematic research is planned, including online questionnaire. The chart or report on chosen vibrant topic, needed actions and vision will be prepared.

Mantas Jurgutis, Councillor, Kaunas, informed that as of 1 January 2018, Kaunas took over from Pori the leadership of the Cultural Cities Commission. New Chair is revising commission's action plan and will soon announce the details.

5. Supporting Youth Employment and Well-Being: Progress Report.

Matti Mäkelä, Chair of UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being sent a written progress report.

The UBC Board decided in October 2017 to continue the work of the Task Force on youth employment and well-being. Formerly Task Force has suggested that UBC and the member cities should be active in dissemination of the best practices created by member cities and other actors. Moreover, UBC should encourage the implementation of the new projects and other forms of joint development between UBC cities.

During the last two years, the UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being has strengthened the cooperation with the EUSBSR (European Union Baltic Sea Region) Flagship School to Work (S2W). The Flagship aims to strengthen transnational cooperation between stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region 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, which means that their goals are parallel to the ones of the Task Force.

The cooperation has worked well. BSR Integrate Now, a joint ESF project to support the integration of newly arrived refugees, started in Turku, Stockholm and Malmö on March 2017; in April 2017 Task Force and Flagship arranged a study visit to Hamburg and in November to Turku. Moreover, in October a Knowledge Platform S2W was opened. This web-site offers a place to share good practices, learn from the others and join study visits, workshops and find partners for new projects.

Activities in 2018:

- S2W-web-site version 2.0 (www.s2wflagship.eu)
- Dissemination and cooperation workshop in Riga 21.2. (themes: youth guarantee, attractiveness of the VET)
- Study visit to Turku from Gävle 5.-6.3.
- Study visit to Gävle 12.-14.3.
- Sharing the European Dream -conference 12.-14.3. (two workshops: Education and Labour market integration)
- Youth guarantee meeting in Brussels 18.-19.4. (arranged by the Goethe Institute; planning of the joint seminar and other possible activities)
- Seminar and study visit in Stockholm 18.-19.6. (Themes: NEETs, Early school leavers, Refugees/Immigrants)
- planning of the new joint projects and working methods
- finding new partners
- planning the activities of autumn 2018 (study visits, seminars etc.)

The Board took note of important work which has been carried out by the Task Force and invited Mr Mäkelä to inform the Board on new developments in person at the next EBM.

6. Inquiry on cities' needs and interests.

Discussions at the XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö proved that cooperation and exchange is seen as very important by the member cities. The UBC Secretariat asked the cities to answer five questions to get broader knowledge about cities' needs and interests:

1. Is your city open to investments and start-ups? If so, in which sectors?
2. Are companies in your city looking for new markets / partners in the Baltic Sea region ? Do you have an investment agency?
3. Do you wish your cultural (philharmonic, opera etc.) institutions, sport and education institutions, to establish exchange with counterparts in other UBC member cities?
4. Do you need or can you offer expertise in such areas as: civic participation, initiatives for youth, refugees' integration, gender equality, sports, environment, city planning, safety issues, entrepreneurship and other?
5. What expectations towards UBC does your city have?

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki presented the results of the inquiry. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

43 cities have responded so far to the inquiry sent to the UBC cities in November 2017. Some 50 posts have been published on the UBC website and on Facebook.

The cities in our region develop dynamically. According to the responses, the cities support entrepreneurship and start-ups, and are open to investments and collaboration with partners from abroad. Most common sectors where the investments are welcome are: industry, tourism & wellness, energy, ICT, maritime and logistics businesses, sustainability, circular economy, creative businesses.

The companies in the UBC cities are usually open for cooperation in new markets and with new partners from BSR. The cities provide support to businesses e.g. through investments/start-ups agencies, science parks, special economic zones, business incubators, chambers of commerce, local grant programmes for companies.

Most of the respondents are interested in exchange, especially in the fields of culture, youth or sport. In their opinion, staff/teachers exchange would be beneficial (e.g. libraries, art schools and other cultural institutions) but there is a question of funding to be solved. Special attention is put on youth exchange, which is on the top of agenda in many UBC cities.

According to the inquiry results, the cities have a lot to offer and are eager to share their knowledge and experiences, but also to learn from others. The most popular fields mentioned in the survey are: civic participation, youth involvement, city planning, safety, integration, sports, gender equality, social services, entrepreneurship.

Also, the cities had a chance to express their expectations towards the UBC. The responses show the variety of needs. Most often, the respondents want UBC to be a platform for collaboration and development of cities around the Baltic Sea, a forum to find partners for projects and to share best practices, and also an agent that spread the cities' innovative solutions. UBC should be in active dialogue with its member cities to support and facilitate development of the city and its areas. Tangible results from cooperation as well as project initiation, support and development are expected. In the cities' opinion, UBC should encourage member cities to be more involved in its activities.

The cities and city institutions can send their exchange proposals, partner or investor search queries, etc. to the UBC Secretariat at info@ubc.net. The proposals are published on the UBC website and FB profile. They can also be sent out to the UBC member cities.

Decision:

The Board recommends to the member cities to continue using UBC communication channels (website, facebook, newsletter etc) to promote cooperation and exchange in various fields e.g. culture, youth contacts, business development, investments etc.

The Board asked the Commissions/WG to take into account cities' needs and interests expressed in the inquiry.

7. EUSBSR Horizontal Action 'Capacity', activity report and discussion on how to engage cities, regions and other stakeholders in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Information was presented by Mikko Lohikoski, Strategy Coordinator.

Horizontal Action Capacity and Involvement (HA Capacity) was established in 2015 as part of the second revision of the Action Plan accompanying the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). UBC, together with the Swedish Institute and the Baltic Sea NGO Network, is assigned to coordinate the HAC. The Baltic Sea NGO Network appointed the Norden Association in Sweden, and the Union of Baltic Cities appointed the Centrum Balticum Foundation, to fulfil on their behalf obligations as HAC.

Horizontal Action 'Capacity' supports capacity building and involvement of the EUSBSR key stakeholders. The Core Group prepared a work programme for the period 1 June 2018 – 30 August 2020. The programme is divided into three areas of activities, each of them include specific actions:

- Capacity building:

- Organising and funding of development processes (flagships)
- Alignment of policymaking on national level with EUSBSR
- Annual spring meetings with NC's, PAC's and HAC's

- Promotion of involvement and participation:

- Co-organize Strategy Forums (Network Village + Speaker's Corner)
- Participation Day (prior to the Strategy Forums)
- Promotion of involvement and participation

- Coordination and communication:

- Internal and external coordination
- Implementation of the communication plan

The Core Group was called upon to present the work programme for the Interreg Baltic Sea Programme Secretariat in February 2018. The decision to be made late spring 2018.

Decision:

The Board decided to allocate 6540 EUR divided in three parts for 2018, 2019 and 2020 as UBC co-financing.

8. Financial statement 2017, budget 2018.

Secretary General presented the financial report for 2017. Paweł Żaboklicki informed that the income was mostly generated by the membership fees and the assets saved in 2016. The main expenditure were: expenditure of the commissions, services/maintenance, communications, meetings including two Executive Board sessions in Kristiansand and Berlin and the XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö, and consulting. Five annexes are attached to the report: membership fees, expenditure of UBC commissions, contributions to the secretariats, projects with external funding, cities' contributions to the UBC events. The financial report is attached to the minutes.

Subsequently, the Secretary General presented the UBC budget proposal for 2018. He informed that each UBC commission was granted 10.000 EUR as start-up money for activities in 2018. Not more than 40% can be spent by the commission lead city(s) for: secretariat, remunerations (including projects), subcontractors, travel, mailing, office supplies, promotion materials. Any changes in the commission budget require President's approval.

The budget proposal is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board approved the financial report for 2017 and the budget for 2018.

9. Information from the task force on KPMG evaluation report meeting, Copenhagen, 23 February 2018.

Following the UBC Strategy, at the meeting in Kaunas, 7 June 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.

The secretariat received the KPMG report on 12 June 2017. At the meeting in Berlin on 15 June 2017, the Board held an extensive discussion on the report. The Board decided comments to the report should be sent to the President by 15 August 2017. The second version of the KPMG report was delivered to the secretariat on 23 October 2017, on the eve of the Board meeting in Växjö.

The Board in Växjö, 24 October 2017, decided to set up a task force to be chaired by the President. The task force members were to be appointed by the President. The task force shall prepare proposals of recommendations to the Board by September 2018. The Board will decide which recommendations to adopt to strengthen the UBC work.

The first meeting of the task force was held in Copenhagen on 23 February 2018.

The Board discussed in camera the KPMG report and concluded the following:

1: HR questions shall be dealt with by the Presidium.

CVs of the members of the secretariat were presented to the President. They will be available to the Presidium. The President underlined, that the staff of the secretariat is employed by the City of Gdańsk and under Polish law and conditions. There is no written agreement describing the services covered concerning UBC. The Presidium shall take contact to the City of Gdańsk to have this corrected.

2: The task force created in Växjö reported on the work done. It found no examples of unacceptable conduct in the daily work of the secretariat. Discussion of this part of the KPMG report is hereby considered as closed.

3: The task force had discussed and suggested more involvement from the Board Member city of every country – eg. the creation of a “National Coordinator” to strengthen the work between the cities from each country and the secretariat.

Per Schöldberg offered to make a description of this idea to be presented at the next Board meeting.

Points of view from Jørgen Kristiansen – as forwarded per mail – were discussed to be implemented in the future planning and reporting of meetings.

Points of view from Mantas Jurgutis, member of the Presidium, and Marta Chełkowska, member of the Board of Audit shall be considered as well and implemented in the procedures of planning of and reporting from meetings. The interventions are available for all cities.

4: The President suggested to remunerate Mikko Lohikoski for the work done in connection with the General Conference in Växjö, the Strategic planning and other services with 10.000€. The question of authority for payments of this kind had been presented to the Board of Audit. The Board of Audit pointed out, that the decision was to be made in the Executive Board – and that it should be defined beforehand, what the payment should cover. The same opinion was presented by Karin Wohlgemuth. The Executive Board took note of this for future situations.

10. Next UBC Executive Board meetings.

10.1 82nd UBC Executive Board meeting.

Proposal:

In conjunction with the 9th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the BSR, Tallinn, 4-5 June 2018.
<https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/9th-annual-forum>

The Board authorised the Presidium to propose the date and place of the meeting.

10.2 83rd UBC Executive Board meeting.

Smart and Prospering Cities Commission put forward an idea to organise the Executive Board meeting in Metropole Region Nice.

The office of Christian Estrosi, Mayor of Nice and President of the Metropole Region Nice has declared the willingness to support a possible EBM in Nice in 2018. For a formal invitation by Mayor Estrosi, a written request of interest from the UBC Presidium was asked for. This letter should include a description of the UBC, an overview of the members of the board and the focal points of the planned visit.

Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur

Established in 2012, as France’s first metropolis the Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur is home to 538,000 inhabitants. The Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur is France’s number 1 tourist destination after Paris. For some time now, its economy has largely been based on services with high added value. The metropolis has also positioned itself as a key international centre of economic attractiveness, business and decision-making in the Mediterranean area, Europe, and on an international level. Over 800 foreign-owned companies, accounting for more than 13,000 jobs, have located to the Nice basin and the Plaine du Var area.

City of Nice

The first city in Europe to have rolled out an array of services based on Mobile Near Field Communication, Nice can count itself among the tight circle of connected 21st century cities, and is aiming to become one of the world leaders in digital projects applied regionally: many experiments are currently underway across the area, spearheaded by world leaders (Cisco, IBM,

Orange, ErDF, Schneider Electric etc.) around the concept of the smart city, as well as e-health and silver economy.

The eco valley

The Plaine du Var's Eco-Vallée is listed as a 'national interest operation', and is set to position the Côte d'Azur as an international leader in the fields of cleantech and sustainable development.

Science Park Sophia Antipolis

Sophia Antipolis was founded in 1969 by Senator Pierre Laffitte, and was based on a strong concept: cross-fertilisation between researchers, professors and companies. Having become a world reference in terms of innovation, today the park is home to 2,230 companies who employ 36,300 people representing 63 different nationalities, alongside 4500 researchers and 5500 students. Located 20 km from the Nice international airport, the Sophia Antipolis Park is an exceptional site spread across 2400 hectares, ideally balanced between the sea and the mountains. Two thirds of the science and technology park's surface are green spaces where employees can enjoy running, walking, tennis and sophia-antipolis-logogolf to relax and replenish their energy levels.

The members of the Board would have the opportunity to get to know one of Europe's most dynamic economic and scientific regions and meet relevant stakeholders. Science Park Sophia Antipolis is still considered a role model for the successful cooperation of the region, economy and science.

Smart and Prospering Cities Commission is ready to support organisation of this EBM.

The Board also discussed that, instead in Nice the EBM could be held in Brussels in order to strengthen the cooperation with the EU institutions, politicians, city offices etc.

11. Any other business.

No further questions have been raised.

Per Bødker Andersen
Chairperson

Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary

Karin Wohlgemuth
Adjuster

Bo Hjälmeffjord
Adjuster

The documents are available at:

<http://ubc.net/document-categories/executive-board-meeting-documents/81st-executive-board-meeting-rostock-13-march>