



Proposal of the Task Force adopted by the Executive Board at the 71st meeting held in Växjö on 29 October 2014.

Future UBC Commission structure

Starting points and reasoning:

To create a new structure for UBC building on following considerations:

- Mariehamn GC resolution obliging the Board to reshape structure (5-7 Commissions, starting to function as of 1.1.2015);
- Proposals made by Member Cities and Commissions;
- Keeping the healthy and functioning parts – i.e. Commissions which are properly functioning and attract enough Member City participation - basically intact, unless they agree to a merger/modification;
- other themes to merge with “like-minded” or “nearby” ones into thematic areas that make functional sense, taking into account their mutual contacts organizationally or content wise, expressed interest in working with each other, proposals by or interest expressed by Member Cities, and opportunities created for example by the EUSBSR, new Baltic Sea Region Programme and the Europe 2020 strategies, as well as linked funding instruments. The intention is to create Commissions that “make sense” thematically and operationally;
- To secure that the future Commissions will be viable and enjoy participation by the Member Cities, the final confirmation to founding of new Commissions to be given only after ensuring that there is sufficient interest by Member Cities to participate in their work – not only on paper (see Recommendations by the Task Force on UBC Further Development, confirmed by the Executive Board). The Task Force emphasizes the importance of continuing the economic support to the Commissions as they form crucial basis for the UBC work and Member Cities participation.
- New Commissions should be able to work more efficiently in developing concrete projects (for example linked to EUSBSR Action Plan) and to apply funding for their implementation. However, those commissions which successfully work through peer group review method (for example City Planning) should be encouraged to continue doing so. Expectations towards the respective commissions should be made clear (peer-group approach, project approach, see page 6).
- The dimensions and themes of smart development, which have been by the EUSBSR seed-money facility supported “BUF Smart City” project. should be stronger introduced into Commission work where relevant;
- Commission activities should support a few overarching strategic goals defined by the UBC Congress/Board, in implementing the forthcoming new UBC Strategy to be adopted by the Gdynia General Conference in 2015.



- In addition to the new Commissions, the Board should create possibilities to establish more flexible ways to address themes of interest (appointment of Rapporteurs, setting up of working groups/task forces for limited time and specific task etc). When doing this, overlapping and unnecessary bureaucracy should be avoided. The decisions concerning appointment of a Board member as go-between between the Board and Commissions must be implemented and taken into account.

The Task Force recommends that the names of the new Commissions, which are not necessarily built strictly on existing ones, should indicate a common pattern. New Commission names would refer better to the content, instead of sector etc.

Proposed new Commissions

Accordingly the Task Force proposes to the Executive Board that the future Commissions will be:

1. Planning Cities

- integrated planning for sustainable, inclusive, attractive and prospering cities, work through peer review exchanges (basically following existing model)
(Comment: Proposals concerning merger of this Commission with some others would create complications for several reasons, not least the method of work. For example the proposed Commission on Safe Cities has real possibilities to develop successful projects within the EUSBSR. Both Commissions, which work now successfully, have also opposed merger, which might endanger this. However, joint meetings between Commissions should be encouraged on for ex. how planning can increase safety in cities).

2. Sustainable cities

- environment, energy, smart urban mobility etc.
(Comment: Environment and Energy have a tradition of close cooperation and are thematically very close. Several of the Env. Com. projects have dealt with issues of sustainable transportation. In October, the Commissions Transportation and Environment organize, together with Gdynia, a seminar on Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning).

3. Safe cities

- Civil protection issues already on the agenda and those included within the EUSBSR Priority Area Secure on Protection from emergencies and accidents on land.
- Issues of interest could be linked to the whole cycle of civil protection – prevention, preparedness, response and restoration. It could build on EU Civil protection Mechanism. Themes range from climate change related issues – extreme weather events, natural and technological disasters, health threats as well as man-made disasters (i.e. prevention of



football-related violence), everyday accidents etc. How to anticipate and prevent “accidents from just happening”.

- It includes a strong dimension of learning from each other by developing joint approaches and cross-city learning processes, and also includes a good option to develop an European-funded project.

4. Youthful cities

- This Commission is promoting the interests of the young people. It will work on issues including combating youth exclusion, drop out of schools, ensuring that voice and interests of young people taken into account in decision making – in cities, UBC as well as elsewhere - promoting youth exchange and youth cooperation in BSR, etc.

These proposed (1-4) Commissions are in the main based to existing patters, as they have proven to be active and viable, with broad member city participation.

In addition, there are themes/issues which are of key interest for Member Cities, even if the current Commissions have not yet been able to find a way to function in a satisfactory manner or to engage intended Member City interest. These are linked first and foremost to economic development; health/social issues, as well as the broad field of culture, which all offer much scope for cooperation and also for projects/outside funding.

5. Smart and prospering cities

- business development, employment and entrepreneurship, co-creation with businesses and researchers/universities, procurement policies, improving links between education and labour market, smart citizens and smart governance, etc.; attractiveness for workforce (talent attraction and retention), businesses and visitors.

(Comment: Tourism has already merged with the Business Commission, it is a major field of economic activity. Education could be linked also with other topics, but here we see that the link to labour market issues would be of special interest for the Member Cities).

6. Cultural cities

The Baltic Sea Region has an outstandingly diverse and attractive cultural life and a cultural heritage of great value. Cities are the pearls in this. Culture is a vital element of urban life, a perquisite for innovativeness and prosperity. To make the most of these assets it is essential to give a higher profile to BSR culture and creativity and to promote the BSR as a common cultural region. The EUSBSR Priority Area Culture includes a number of potential issues of interest for this Commission, linked to attractiveness, creativity, cultural heritage incl. maritime heritage, etc. There are a number of European Capitals of Culture and other prominent cultural cities around the Baltic Sea Region, whose experience should be mobilized.



(Comment: Culture was included recently in the EUSBSR Action Plan. It has generated great interest, not only in Poland and Germany (Schleswig-Holstein) which are coordinating it. In Turku/June 2014/ the session on the “Soft power of the BSR” attracted great interest and brought new participants from the cultural sector, into this cooperation. In this way, it is a good complement to other, more business and technical –related issues).

7. Inclusive and healthy cities

- smart social and health services and new solutions, social cohesion and inclusiveness, diversity, equality, healthy habits including sport, etc.

(Comment: Health and social issues consume often more than half of city budgets. These costs tend to grow due to aging population. On the other hand, smart solutions offer innovative ways to improve quality of services at reasonable cost. Cooperation with companies developing such solutions could be envisaged. This Commission could choose some of these topical issues as its focus for the coming period to ensure interest by Member Cities).

Flexible methods

The Board could consider appointing a Special Rapporteur on Gender issues/equality issues who has a mandate to discuss with Commissions and Member Cities, other interested organizations about issues related to gender and equality. He/she reports directly to the Executive Board.

The Board should seek – after Växjö – the opinion among Member Cities if there is interest to set up Task Forces on EUSBSR and larger-scale transport issues (Integrated Maritime Strategy/Blue Growth plus TEN-T transport corridors) If there is not enough interest, a Rapporteur on these issues could be beneficial. Alternatively, a Rapporteur on these issues could be beneficial.

After Växjö

Commissions consist of experts nominated by member cities. UBC should ensure the proper functioning of new Committees by requiring a minimum level of participation in their work. The Task Force proposes that a Commission must include representatives from Member Cities in at least three countries, preferably at least 5-7 cities.

After Växjö, the President should write to Member Cities and inform them about the new Commission structure. He should invite Cities to nominate a representative to each Commission they are going to participate in during the period 2015-2017. At the same time, their proposals about possible office holders in Commissions as well as possible specific themes to be included in the Plan of Action of the Commission will be invited.



Only those Commissions which receive sufficient participation from Member Cities will be established.

While emphasizing the primary importance of having as many cities as possible participating in the Commission work the Executive Board, dialogue with the members of new Commissions, shall strive to achieve a geographic etc. balance what comes to the host countries, office holders etc.

In addition, the Executive Board should start drafting guidelines for the work of Commissions. These guidelines should include certain expectations/activity level aims to each Commission, since these vary from Commission to Commission (peer-group approach, project approach etc). This process could include a joint meeting with the office holders of the new Commissions (Spring 2015).

In addition, the Board should consider ways and means how to help new Commissions to develop project funding applications. One way to promote this is to organize a meeting of interested Member Cities with concerned EUSBSR Priority Area Coordinators. Furthermore, a seed-money fund to incubate project consortia and elaborate project applications should be established. It has also been discussed how to increase the organization's (UBC level and Commissions) project advisory capacity, matching project ideas with EU programs and relevant calls.
