

Activity Report 1997 - 1999

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

12-13 September 1997 (Gdańsk) - 24-25 September 1999 (Stockholm)

Introduction

Since the 4th General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, held in Gdańsk on 12-13 September 1997, the Union has grown up. The number of Union's members has reached the figure 92.

The new members are:

Bützow, Cēsis, Chojnice, Espoo, Greifswald, Jēkabpils, Jõhvi, Jurmala, Koszalin, Landskrona, Malbork, Pruszcz Gdński, Reda, Sestroretsk, Silkeborg, Sillamäe, Tønsberg, Vordingborg.

During mentioned period the Union initiated a number of challenging projects and initiatives. The Union developed existing contacts (and established the new ones) with other Baltic and European organisations and institutions i.e. European Commission, Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, Baltic Sea Tourism Commission and others.

The Executives of the Union during this two-year period:

Mr Anders Engström, President (Kalmar)

Mr Michael Bouteiller, Vice-President (Lübeck)

Mr Bartłomiej Sochanski, Vice-President (Szczecin)

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General (Gdańsk)

The Executive Board of the Union during this two-year period:

Aalborg Denmark

Bergen Norway

Gdańsk Poland

Kaliningrad Russia

Klaipėda Lithuania

Pärnu Estonia

Rēzekne Latvia

Rostock Germany

Stockholm Sweden

Turku Finland

The Executive Board Meetings:

Seven Executive Board Meetings took place during the reporting period between Gdansk and Stockholm General Conferences:

19th Meeting - Aalborg, 28-29 November 1997

20th Meeting - Kalmar, 27-28 March 1998

21st Meeting - Klaipėda, 26-27 June 1998

22nd Meeting - Szczecin, 16-17 October 1998

23rd Meeting - Pori, 5-6 March 1999

24th Meeting - Tartu, 28 June 1999

25th Meeting - Stockholm, 23 September 1999

The Executive Board played an important and stimulating role in the progress of UBC activities. The Board considered and approved a number of projects and initiatives submitted by the Commissions, the Presidium, the Project Manager, the Secretariat and the Member Cities. The Union projects, activities, events and other actions launched during the described period are outlined in this report.

UBC Secretariat

The Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat since UBC creation has been located in and financed by the City of Gdańsk. The Union has been very satisfied with the work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat provides daily service to the Union and its Member Cities. All financial matters have been handled properly.

The Union would like to officially thank the City of Gdańsk and the Secretariat for their remarkable contribution to the UBC work over the past years.

UBC Commissions

Three new UBC Commissions have been established: Commission on Business Cooperation in September 1997, Commission on Education in June 1998 and Commission on Urban Planning in October 1998.

The UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission: Lead Cities:

Commission on Business Cooperation Gdynia, Gdańsk, Stockholm

Commission on Communication Kalmar, Riga

Commission on Culture Szczecin, Visby

Commission on Education Kärddla, Norrtälje

Commission on Environment Aarhus, Turku

Commission on Health & Social Affairs Rostock, Lübeck

Commission on Sport Gdynia, Karlskrona

Commission on Tourism Kalmar, Rēzekne

Commission on Transportation Gdańsk, Kaliningrad

Commission on Urban Planning Helsinki, Malmo, Umeå

The Commissions oversee Union activities in each of the respective areas. Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions within the reporting period are briefly described below.

I. Commission on Business Cooperation

The Commission is chaired by Mr Maciej Brzeski, Gdynia and Mr Zbigniew Czepułkowski, Gdańsk.

The Commission on Business Cooperation was established during the IV UBC General Conference in Gdańsk in September 1997, following the initiative of the city of Stockholm. The first annual meeting of the Commission took place in Stockholm on 13-14 March 1998. The goals and organisational matters were discussed during the first meeting.

The second meeting of the Commission was held in Gdańsk and Gdynia on 12-13 February 1999. The meeting raised great interest since 56 participants attended it from 22 cities from 7 Baltic countries. The meeting elected chairmen of the Commission for one-year period. During two days, representatives of local authorities, trade offices and other institutions promoting business made presentations on topics concerned with business cooperation. The participants approved the plan to publish a UBC statistical leaflet (*UBC Facts & Figures* or alike) to promote and inform on the organisation.

II. Commission on Communication

The Commission is chaired by Mr Lars Malmberg, Kalmar and Mr Viktors Buls, Riga.

The Commission on Communication was initially started to handle the problems of the lack of telecommunication facilities and similar services in the Baltic Sea region. Different

solutions were tested but there was a problem to find one common solution. This was finally solved when Internet came as the solution. The Commission has since provided UBC with the server and a webmaster in Kalmar.

From the discussion of the UBC homepage the scope was widened to take into account the connections to other major organisations in our area. The project "Baltic Sea Alliance (BSA)" started two years ago and with a lot of efforts from the three partners (UBC, BSSSC and BCCA) we have now found a solution that we all can agree on. A prospect is worked out at the moment where UBC takes responsibility for the server, the domain address and the development of the homepage. BSSSC is developing a "Partner Search Forum" and BCCA is working with the material for a marketing campaign. The Commission has also been involved in some training courses concerning the homepage and use of Internet.

III. Commission on Culture

The Commission is chaired by Mr Sławomir Szafrąński, Szczecin and Mr Olov Gibson, Visby.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Culture is located in Szczecin, Poland.

Baltic Ikonopress

Baltic Ikonopress was the contemporary art exhibition of works recommended by the art magazines from Baltic Sea countries. The exhibition took place at the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle and Contemporary Art Gallery in the National Museum in Szczecin, in September-October 1997.

Music Festivals

The Festival of Chamber Music for soloists, ensembles and chamber choirs was held in Gdynia in October 1997.

International Choir Festival was held in Szczecin in May 1998. 32 choirs were invited to the Choir Forum. The main theme of the Forum was: "Choir Music in the UBC Cities - problems and possibilities"..

Off-theatre Days

In August 1998 Klaipėda invited 50 actors and producers from small troupes of alternative theatres in UBC towns. All guests have shown their performances and also a joint performance was organised.

Working Session

The 3rd Session of the Commission on Culture was held in Kalmar on 27-29 May 1999. The Commissions discussed the proposals of new projects related to art education, cultural and historical heritage of the Baltic region, art and culture in the Internet etc. During the Session, the Steering Committee of the Commission was elected consisting of the representatives of 5

cities: Bergen, Helsinki, Klaipėda, Szczecin, Visby. The Committee's role is to develop the future structure, status and the ways of functioning of the Commission on Culture.

MARE ARTICUM

The idea of MARE ARTICUM art magazine was proposed by the Commission in 1996. MARE ARTICUM developed the net of associated editors which now consists of 14 persons representing nine Baltic countries. Since 1997 four following numbers of the magazine appeared presenting the Baltic art scene and the most interesting phenomena in the Baltic contemporary art. In 1998-99 MARE ARTICUM editorial board organised public promotions of the magazine in the following cities: Gdańsk, St. Petersburg, Visby, Riga. MARE ARTICUM was also invited to hold a seminar on the question of "Baltic Identity" within the programme of European Capital of Culture - Stockholm'98.

IV. Commission on Education

The Commission is chaired by Mr Kurt Pettersson, Norrtälje and Mr Ivo Eesmaa, Kärđla.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Education is located in Kärđla, Estonia.

The Commission on Education was established in June 1998. The first meeting of the Commission was held in Norrtälje, Sweden, in November 1998. The meeting elected the chairmen of the Commission and decided that the secretariat will be located in Kärđla. More than 20 cities from 8 Baltic countries attended the first meeting of the Commission. The participants represented various organisations and levels within the field of education.

The workshops of the meeting were organised in three themes - namely: Exchange of pupils, students and teachers; Adult education; Information on educational targets. The Commission concluded that more information on the: education systems in Baltic countries, adult education and vocational training, is needed - preferably through the Internet.. More meetings were also suggested, where not only politicians and managers of educational institutions participate, but also experts, teachers and students in different fields, in order to formulate specific aims of collaboration within the Commission. The workshop also set up an aim to stimulate one, at least or more schools in each city to take initiatives to collaborate with other schools within the network. After the workshops the participants shared their experiences from working with EU-programmes and projects.

V. Commission on Environment

The Commission is chaired by Mr Carl Nielsen, Aarhus and Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Environment is located in Turku, Finland.

Baltic 21 - Agenda 21 for the BSR

Baltic 21 is an initiative for sustainable development in the BSR taken by the Prime Ministers in 1996. Since the beginning UBC has taken active part in this process. In the final Baltic 21 document the UBC is defined as one of the implementing organisations of the whole programme with a lead party responsibility over Joint Action 4: City Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Cities and Communities.

Baltic LA 21 - Health and Sustainable Cities Conference

On 3-5 September 1998, 400 people from 27 countries all over the world gathered to Turku for the first regional conference of the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign. Most of the participants were from the BSR and almost half of all participants came from Russia, the Baltic States and Poland. The conference focused on the implementation of Baltic 21 at the local level and brought into focus the health aspect in local sustainable development. The Commission Secretariat organised the conference in cooperation with other partners.

LA21 Work within the UBC

In 1998, the Commission conducted a LA21 Survey in UBC member cities. This survey produced basic knowledge about the stage of the LA21 work in all the UBC member cities, and this information has been used in the planning of UBC's LA21 work. In 1998 and 1999, UBC LA21 Action Program was developed in three meetings (Nacka, Lubeck, Sillamae) dedicated to this purpose, and to exchange of experiences. Altogether almost 80 persons participated in these meetings. On the basis of the results of the meetings, the Commission prepared a LA21 Action Plan proposal for the UBC.

Municipal Environmental Auditing

The Commission developed in a two-year pilot-project (1996-1997) a model for municipal environmental auditing in the Baltic cities (MEA). The model was first tested in the pilot audit in Tallinn, financed by the EU LIFE Program. Since 1997, the model has been available to be used in all interested cities. All the necessary manuals, formulas and other tools are translated into English, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Russian, and they are available from the commission secretariat. The Commission coordinates the audits and also helps the member cities to find funding. In 1998, funding was received from the Nordic Council of Ministers towards further MEAs. This funding enabled the Commission to start two new MEAs in Klaipėda and Panevėžys, and later in 1999 two more will be started. Moreover the city of Pärnu has conducted MEA, as well as the Environmental Departments of Turku and Pori.

Programme on Institutional Strengthening

In 1996-1998, the Commission carried out a training program consisting of five events, where approx. 400 environmental specialists and decision-makers were trained. The programme was supported financially by the Nordic Minister Council. In February 1998 a seminar on contaminated soils was arranged in Birstonas, Lithuania. 110 persons representing cities, universities, companies and various organisations took part in the event. During the seminar different methods for cleaning contaminated soils were presented and discussed.

SAIL Project

Spreading Awareness to foster the Implementation of Local Agenda 21 around the Baltic Sea is the complete title of this project, which was prepared by the Commission on Environment in 1998 together with ICLEI. The goal is to create a basic set of LA21 briefing materials in Estonian, Latvia, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian, and to consolidate the work on LA21 in these countries. During 1999, the SAIL-Project arranged 5 workshops on LA21 in 5 mentioned countries.

HELCOM PITF

The UBC has a position of an observer organisation in Helcom PITF. The UBC was present at Helcom PITF meetings. One of the meetings in May 1998 was organised in Turku.

Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award

Since 1997, the UBC Commission has been discussing about the possibility to establish an environmental award scheme within the UBC. In January 1999 at its meeting in Lübeck, the commission decided to run the Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award scheme for the first time in 1999. The intention with this award is to encourage member cities to develop their administration and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens.

Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin

In 1997 four issues were published, in 1998 two issues, as well as in 1999. All editions have received a good amount of environmental articles and news from the member cities. The bulletin has made a considerable contribution to exchange of experiences, spreading of information and to discussion on environmental cooperation in the BSR.

VI. Commission on Health & Social Affairs

The Commission is chaired by Mr Ulrich Bauermeister, Rostock.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Health & Social Affairs is located in Rostock.

Labour Market Project ROLAST 1998-99

The project involves the cities and labour offices from Rostock, Landskrona and Storstrom. The aim of the project was to compare unemployment policies, adult education systems and their connections to business sector. The list of bottle-neck professions have been elaborated by each partner and distributed to other partners in order to mobilise such labour to work in other countries. Next step was to organise and offer help (training, language, accommodation etc) to certain professional groups in participating cities. The jobs are offered in databases of the labour offices. Another aim of the project was to create the new job-profiles according to demands of the industry.

Survey on the social state of elderly citizens in Baltic Cities 1999

17 UBC member cities from 8 countries took part in the survey. The result will be published with financial means of regional funds for the International Year of Senior Citizens. The survey may help in initiating further common projects, partnerships and exchange of best practices in mentioned field.

Cooperation with WHO

In November 1998 the Commission established cooperation links with WHO Regional Centres in Copenhagen in Turku. WHO offered to provide political commitment and support to cities' health policy, sustainable campaigns, Healthy Cities programmes, information about main policies, events and common projects and is ready to provide experiences in form of lectures, seminars or written statements as well as training and capacity building.

Bulletin

Since May 1998 the Commission published three issues of the bulletin devoted to health and social problems in Baltic cities.

Applications

The Commission submitted an application to ECOS-Ouverture for the project "Baltic Cities Tourism", 1998-2001, budget 1,25 million ECU. The aim of the project is to develop strategies and instruments of city tourism marketing. The application was accepted by DG XVI. The project will start in the end of 1999. The Commission also submitted an application to EU DAPHNE Program 1999 for the project "Prevention of women trafficking for the purpose of prostitution".

VII. Commission on Sport

The Commission on Sport is chaired by Mr Władysław Kozakiewicz, Gdynia.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Sport is located in Gdynia, Poland.

In May 1998 the Commission on Sport held a meeting in Šiauliai, Lithuania. The meeting discussed the rules of organisation and participation in sport events organised within the UBC Commission on Sport and the ways of communication among the member cities.

In 1998 the annual meeting of the Commission took place on 18-20 June in Gdynia. During the meeting the cities presented their calendars of international sport events. Some of them were proposed to be supported financially by the Commission and held under the UBC auspices. The meeting programme included a presentation on the other sources of financing the sport events, such as European programmes. It was proposed during the meeting that the Commission on Sport leaflet would be published. The idea met with approval and the leaflet has already been published.

VIII. Commission on Tourism

The Commission on Tourism is chaired by Mr Kyrre Dahl, Kalmar.

The latest meeting of the Commission on tourism was held in Riga on 28 August 1999. The Commission has agreed that tourism education at different levels is the most important task for the Commission, in particular:

- *Local politicians* - to increase the understanding about questions concerning tourism and the value of the tourist industry
- *Tourism responsible* - to secure the quality of the tourist service within the Baltic Sea region
- *Trainee activity*

The meeting decided that a maximum of two projects should be initially carried on and the Commission meeting should be carried out twice a year. The chairman of the Commission was authorised to contact the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC) in Norrköping in order to develop a cooperation.

IX. Commission on Transportation

The Commission on Transportation is chaired by Prof. Maciej T. Krzyżanowski, Gdańsk.

In November 1998 in Gdańsk, the Commission on Transportation together with the Maritime Institute of Gdańsk organised an International Conference on Logistics and Distribution Centres in the BSR. The printed Report of the Conference was mailed to all UBC Members and distributed during the Executive Board Meeting in Pori, 5-6 March 1999.

In June 1999 the Commission co-financed the international seminar "Ports and short sea shipping - a Baltic Seminar" organised by the University of Turku and Centre of Maritime Studies. Representative of the Commission contributed to the conference with the presentation titled "Baltic Short Sea Shipping - Structure, Tendencies, and Future

X. Commission on Urban Planning

The Commission on Urban Planning is chaired by Mr Jussi Kautto, Helsinki.

The Commission on Urban Planning was established in October 1998. The Steering Committee of the Commission on Urban Planning comprises of Helsinki, Malmö and Umeå.

In March 1999 the Steering Committee made a colourful brochure introducing the purpose and future activities of the Commission. In February 1999 the Steering Committee gave a recommendation of several persons from eastern member to be sponsored at the 23rd annual conference of the International Urban Association (INTA) held in Lyon, France, in June 1999.

Examples of other UBC activities and projects

UBC Drawing Competition

In October 1998 UBC announced the art competition titled "*The Children of the Baltic*". The idea of the competition came from the UBC Task Force for Communication. The Project was coordinated by Ms Ewa Depka, Gdynia. The aim of the competition was to promote UBC goals, structure and activities among inhabitants of our cities, especially children. The

competition raised much interest among member cities. 236 works from 25 cities from 8 countries were sent to the competition. The jury awarded and chose 8 prizes and 2 distinctions. After the competition, the poster featuring three of the participating pictures with a sea theme was printed. The awarded works can be admired at our Virtual Gallery at the UBC home page www.ubc.net.

EU Coordinators Network

The purpose of the project is to shape a network of EU coordinators in the UBC member cities. The network tries to facilitate the efficient dissemination of EU related matters between the cities. The EU coordinators share experiences and know-how as regards project generation and fund raising for its implementation. The network helps to find partners for new joint projects. In June 1999 the EU Coordinators from UBC member cities met in Kalmar, Sweden.

UBC Women's Network

The aim of UBC Women's Network is to involve women from member cities in UBC activities and projects and to solve women's problems such as unemployment, wage discrimination, lack of equal opportunities etc. The Network is chaired by Ms Hjördis Höglund, Sundsvall. Within the reported period the Women's Network representatives actively participated in several seminars and conferences devoted to women's problems.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

The major focus of the Baltic Cities Bulletin is directed to information about the work of the Union and the actions of the member cities. Besides, more emphasis is placed on covering some specific fields of general interest, which are presented as main themes for each issue. The bulletin is printed in 5000 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities as well as a number of organisations and institutions. The bulletin is available on the Internet at www.ubc.net. In 1997 three issues have been published: *UBC and Information Society*, *UBC Cities in Cooperation with the EU*, *Cooperation around the Baltic Sea*. In 1998 two issues: *Baltic Cities Business Cooperation*, *Education in Baltic Cities*. In 1999 till August two issues:

Local Agenda 21 in Baltic Cities, *EU Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region - the Role of Cities*, (third issue *Tourism in Baltic Cities* is to be published in November).

Major international conferences attended by UBC representatives

6th Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the BSR, Gdańsk, 15-16 September 1997

Major Baltic Rim Cities Conference, Turku, 18-19 September 1997

European Investment Bank Forum 1997, Stockholm, 23-24 October 1997

5th BSSSC Conference, Gdańsk, 27-28 October 1997

International Black Sea Club Assembly Meeting, Izmit, 1-2 Nov. 1997

CBSS CSO meeting, Copenhagen, 25 February 1998

Conference of Baltic Ministers of Industry and Economics, Gdańsk, 20 March 1998

Baltic Sea Youth Minister Conference, Visby, 5-6 June 1998

18th International Hanseatic Days, Visby, 11-14 June 1998

Baltic Meeting Point, Uppsala, 15-16 June 1998

CBSS Ministerial Session, Nyborg, 22 June 1998

ACOPS / CEMR Conference, Lisbon, 28 June - 1 July 1998

7th Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the BSR, Lübeck, 7-8 September 1998

Transfrontier Cooperation around the Baltic Sea, Klaipėda, 1-2 October 1998

ACOPS / CEMR Conference, Brest, 15-17 October 1998

6th BSSSC Conference, Roskilde, 22-23 October 1998

General Assembly of CPMR BSC, Oulu, 19-20 November 1998

Urban Forum, Vienna, 26 November 1998

Baltic Youth Conference, Stockholm, 8 December 1998

CBSS CSO Meeting, Kaliningrad, 17-18 February 1999

CBSS CSO Meeting , Brussels, 23 March 1999

CE Conference on Transfrontier Cooperation in the BSR, Kaliningrad, 24-25 March 1999

Conference on Regional Transport Integration, Klaipėda, 15-16 April 1999

CLRAE Conference on Local and Reg. Coop. in BSR, Kaunas, 21-23 April 1999

CBSS Ministerial Session, Palanga, 14-15 June 1999

6th Plenary Session of CLRAE, Strasbourg, 15-17 June 1999

Major Baltic Rim Cities Conference, Helsinki, 22-23 June 1999

Observer status

The Union has official observer status with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the BSR, the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE).