

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

1 October 2005 (Turku) – 28 September 2007 (Pärnu)

Introduction

Since the VIII General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, held in Turku on 29 September – 2 October 2005, the Union has further consolidated its network, launched new projects and political initiatives, organised a number of conferences, seminars and events. One of the main strategic aims of the UBC in the reported period was to transform the political, economic and financial potential that is connected with EU enlargement into reality. As a result, the European dimension has dominated the UBC activities. The Union expressed opinions and statements on the EU policies concerning the Baltic Sea region. UBC followed the development of EU funding programmes for the period 2007-2013 within the new Cohesion Policy. UBC was actively lobbying for introduction of an instrument enabling cross-border cooperation across the maritime borders of the Baltic Sea. The Union also contributed to the European Maritime Policy consultation process, preparing its own position paper.

The Union developed existing contacts with other Baltic and European organisations and institutions i.e. European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, 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, Eurocities, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities and others.

Examples of policy issues raised by UBC

Cross-border cooperation and Cohesion Policy

At the UBC's initiative, the major Baltic Sea organisations namely B7 Baltic Islands Network, BSSSC (Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation), CPMR-BSC (Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe – Baltic Sea Commission) and UBC signed the joint statement on the objective 3 of the new cohesion policy 2007–2013 - European Territorial Cooperation. The statement emphasized the fact that the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region may be severely harmed if the limit of 150 km for maritime border had been introduced. The statement was sent to the European Commission and Baltic Sea States' governments.

The signatories considered the maximum distance of 150 km of maritime border to obtain funding for cross-border projects as counter-productive to the idea of strengthening the territorial cooperation. Therefore, the above mentioned organisations objected to it expecting from the European Commission a more flexible approach which should take into account existing cooperation in various fields between the partners on both sides of maritime border as well as historical, social, cultural and economical factors which justify cooperation across larger distance than proposed by the Commission.

Nevertheless, the European Commission indented to introduce 150 km threshold for the cross-border strand and suggested in its reply to the joint statement that multilateral maritime cooperation would make more sense under the transnational strand.

As a response to the Commission's suggestion, UBC, B7 and BSSSC signed in April 2006 the second joint statement on the new European Cohesion Policy 3rd objective – the European Territorial Cooperation still opposing the limit of 150 km and focusing on the proposed thematic areas of the transnational strand as not satisfying for municipal and regional fields of responsibility. The 2nd joint statement was sent out to the EU institutions and to the Baltic Sea states' governments.

Whereas the cooperation areas of the cross-border strand were suitable for the local competences, the main responsibility of the thematic areas stated in the transnational part of the programme lies first of all at the national level and in some cases at the regional one. Thus, the municipal cooperation, so essential as far as the principle of subsidiarity is concerned, could be significantly harmed and constrained.

The signatories of the 2nd joint statement, therefore, stipulated that the theme areas of transnational cooperation should be increased to comprise essential municipal and regional development issues, namely: development of entrepreneurship/SME, tourism, culture, environment, transport, energy, water and sewage treatment, solid waste management, urban planning, human resource development (training).

The efforts of UBC and other Baltic Sea organisations had brought fruits - a Cross-border Cooperation Programme for the Southern Baltic 2007-2013 has been established. The first call for projects is expected in the beginning of 2008. The approach of the European Commission concerning the 150 km has not changed but the solution was Bornholm which is located less than 150 kilometres from Sweden and Poland. The overall goal of the programme is "Strengthening the sustainable development of the South Baltic Area through increasing its competitiveness potential and promoting integration among people and institutions".

Swedish regions of Blekinge, Kalmar, Kronoberg (20%) and Skåne, Polish Voivodships Pomorskie, Zachodniopomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie (a part) and Danish Bornholm will cooperate within several priorities:

- innovations, entrepreneurship, labour market
- tourism (products, infrastructure)
- cultural, social and youth links
- risk management, safety

Maritime Policy

UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper

The UBC Presidium expressed an opinion that there was a need for some structure within UBC which would deal with the issues of transport / logistic corridors in the Baltic Sea area. As a result, the Executive Board decided to create a logistics task force to be responsible for preparing the UBC policies on the transportation (logistic) corridors system in the BSR, chaired by the Port of Turku.

The maritime transport is one of the crucial development factors for the Baltic Sea Region. Since the EU enlargement in 2004, the growth in maritime sector has been even more significant. The cargo volumes as well as passenger traffic have been constantly increasing. The rapid changes bring positive impulse for economic development of the whole region, however, the growth of maritime industry is

also a challenge as far as environment and safety are concerned. The UBC has been aware that all the problems and difficulties of the Baltic Sea transport cannot be tackled without the integrated approach. Therefore, the UBC logistics task force prepared the Maritime Logistics Policy Paper which is a uniform policy that covers the entire scope of maritime logistics in the BSR including matters such as the development of transport and infrastructure, safety and the environment and logistics information technology in the region.

The basic aim of this document is to ensure the sustainability as well as the competitiveness of the maritime transport sector of the Baltic Sea Region. It tries to define and highlight the most important areas for development in maritime logistics in the region. It offers also common guidelines for UBC member cities on how to deal with the maritime logistics issues. The first recommendation of the UBC Policy Paper - a need to promote co-operation and co-ordination between different regions in planning and developing transport infrastructure and more specifically transport corridors including new priority projects such as Motorways of the Sea – seems to be especially significant as far as the European maritime transport policy and the Cohesion Policy are concerned. Without regional and pan-European co-operation all actions undertaken at the local level only will be inefficient. Although the sustainable Baltic Sea transport depends to a great extent on local and regional stakeholders, it has to be regarded as part of large-scale European project.

The UBC document stresses also a need for harmonisation of transport infrastructure and standardisation of cargo equipment to facilitate intermodal transports. The UBC member cities should at the same time support the development of port-hinterland connections development and encourage public private partnerships in investments in port and port-hinterland infrastructure. The question of harmonisation of costs and common approach to maritime fees should also be taken into consideration to make the maritime transport more efficient and economically reasonable. Developing research applied to maritime transport, creation of an open flow information, guarantee optimum safety of transport and care for environment are the other important matters raised by the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper which are in accordance with the major current priorities of the European Union expressed in Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies and new Cohesion Policy.

The UBC Maritime Logistics Policy is a basis of a common position towards the EU Maritime Policy.

UBC position paper on EU Maritime Policy

At the Executive Board meeting in St.Petersburg on 9-10 June 2006 the Board decided to adopt the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper which was sent out to the other European organisations and institutions and to the ministers of transport of the Baltic Sea countries. In the replies of President Barroso and Commissioner Borg, the UBC was strongly encouraged to contribute to the Green Paper on future European maritime policy.

Also in St.Petersburg, the Board authorised the city of Turku to start the work on UBC contribution to the Green Paper on EU Maritime Policy on the basis of the UBC Policy on Maritime Logistics. The city of Turku organised in summer 2006 the first Baltic Sea consultation conference on the Green Paper with the Commissioner Joe Borg. At the beginning of June 2007, on the occasion of Turku days in St. Petersburg, there was a seminar about the maritime policy. It was the first consultation between the European Commission and Russia authorities on maritime policy.

The UBC position paper on EU Maritime Policy stresses the necessity of formulating the coherent maritime policy towards all sea areas within the EU. Having a rich experience, the Union offers a platform

for cooperation with non-EU actors since our membership covers cities from non-EU regions as well. These links should be fully exploited in drafting the maritime policy.

The UBC document, moreover, emphasizes the multilevel character of this policy. While the EU institutions and governments of the EU members shall define, monitor and put the policy into practice, the cities and regions are places where it is to be implemented. Consequently, the division of labour in the maritime policy must follow the logic of subsidiarity. Regions and cities, having the best knowledge and particular expertise of the conditions of maritime regions under their administration, shall have the main responsibility to ensure that the common policy is put into concrete actions. This justifies the need of cities' participation in the policy formulation phase.

Additionally, the Union wants to attract the EU Commission's attention to the sustainability of the maritime policy. The UBC is of the opinion that sustainable economy, preservation of maritime heritage as well as security of the seas are key elements of the maritime policy.

The success of the EU-wide policy depends on its effective implementation which should be regionalized and based on the broad cooperation of stakeholders at all levels.

The UBC position paper on EU Maritime Policy was introduced at the Executive Board meeting in Gävle 9 March 2007. In April 2007 the Secretary General has sent the UBC contribution to the Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Joe Borg and to the European Commission Maritime Policy Task Force. UBC should come back to this item when the European Commission has prepared the White Paper on the EU Maritime Policy.

UBC Antenna Office in Brussels

During the meetings in Chojnice (June 2005) and Kaunas (February 2006), the Executive Board discussed how to strengthen the UBC position in Brussels in order to have a greater impact on EU decision-making processes. As many UBC member cities have had their representations in Brussels, the need of their coordination to have a one but strong voice became obvious. The city of Stockholm within the Stockholm Region Office offered to function as UBC antenna office in Brussels.

On 6 December 2006 the official inauguration of the UBC Representation in Brussels took place. The Antenna Office has been concentrating its work and efforts on strengthening UBC's presence in the European institutional dialogue and debate. Promotion and lobbying the interests of the UBC member cities and the whole region have been the focal activities of the Brussels' office. The UBC Antenna Office hosted by the Stockholm Region Office offers administrative support desk, Internet and contact list databases in relation to thematic areas linked to UBC priorities, promotion of the UBC in numerous publications, such as a thematic newsletter, in Internet and by the communication policy. Another important task is the policy monitoring and lobbying actions in collaboration with UBC representatives. Additionally, events, meetings and seminars are to be organised by the UBC Brussels' office. Last but not least, assistance in EU-policy and monitoring of EU-funding has been provided in order to keep all UBC members up-dated on relevant initiatives, programmes and policies. The Antenna Office is, moreover, a working space for the UBC members which are welcome to use it when staying in Brussels whenever needed. It is equipped in computer, Internet, telephone, library, etc.

Energy matter

During the 45th Board meeting in Kaunas, the city of Oskarshamn submitted the proposal of establishing new UBC Commission responsible for energy. Among the main objectives of proposed commission there were: renewable energy, possibilities of increasing the efficiency, exchanging best practices, knowledge, education, information. Oskarshamn's proposal to establish a new commission was supported by Kalmar, Kolding, Pärnu. The Board, during its 47th meeting held in Gdynia, in October 2006, decided to create the Commission on Energy with Oskarshamn as lead city. The Commission on Energy is open for all member cities and intends to coordinate its work with other UBC commissions.

The goals of the newly established Commission are as follows:

- To boil down the EU-level and national level energy issues to a local level.
- To raise awareness about projects and to take practical use from experience exchanges in projects within the UBC network.
- Promote municipalities to use great examples to get more energy efficient.
- To bring science and university knowledge closer to the municipal/local level.

The Commission's work focuses on reduction of greenhouse gases, energy efficiency programmes, higher self sufficiency and local energy production.

Statement against trafficking

The UBC Board, during its meeting in Kaunas, signed the Statement against trafficking upon the initiative of the city of Umeå. The UBC Statement defines trafficking as a trade of human beings for sexual exploitation closely connected with national prostitution. The trade with women and children is not only an affront to human dignity but also an infringement of international human rights regulations. The UBC Statement stipulates therefore to recognize the trafficking as a serious problem to be solved both at political and social level as the trafficked women and children made to prostitution are the victims of crime and deserve for the support from the society. The document, sent to all UBC members, commits the cities to undertake all possible efforts to prevent this problem.

UNITAR-UBC memorandum of understanding

The representatives of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) were present at the UBC General Conference in Turku. UNITAR provides training in various fields inter alia in the field of environment. UNITAR has established the decentralized cooperation programme, which is a hub for information, communication and training between United Nations agencies and local actors, such as local authorities, public and private companies, civil society and academia.

After the General Conference in Turku UNITAR proposed UBC to sign a memorandum of understanding (cooperation agreement) as a follow-up. The memorandum of understanding includes several types of actions. On one hand UNITAR would assist our member cities in human resources development. On the other hand the know-how and experience of UBC member cities could be used in other countries, not only in Europe. As a follow-up, the city of Tallinn offered to host the UNITAR centre in the Baltic Sea region. The centre has been opened in 2006.

Transformation of the Gender Equality Network into the Commission with Umeå as a lead city

During the 47th Board meeting in Gdynia, city of Turku informed that NGO Femina Aboensis, Turku, is no longer capable to lead the Gender Equality Network. UBC Vice-President Mrs Marie-Louise Rönnmark stressed it was very important for UBC to go on with the work promoting the gender equality.

At the Board meeting in Gävle, Mrs Rönnmark on behalf of the city of Umeå, presented the concept for continuation of UBC work in the field of gender equality. The proposal included also transformation of the network into the UBC Commission of Gender Equality. The aim of the commission would be securing the gender perspective in policies of the cities, especially in the areas of combating prostitution and trafficking, the labour market, social and urban planning. The Board decided to transform the UBC Network on Gender Equality into the Commission on Gender Equality with Umeå as the lead city.

UBC Executives during this two-year period

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President, Mayor of Kolding

Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, First Vice-President, Mayor of Umeå

Mr Aleksi Randell, Vice-President, Chairman of the City Board of Turku

Ms Laine Jänes, Vice-President, Mayor of Tartu

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, Gdańsk

Executive Board during this two-year period

Næstved	Denmark
Kaliningrad	Russia
Gdańsk	Poland
Kristiansand	Norway
Pärnu	Estonia
Liepāja	Latvia
Rostock	Germany
Kaunas	Lithuania
Vaasa	Finland
Stockholm	Sweden

Executive Board Meetings

Six Executive Board Meetings took place during the reporting period between Turku and Pärnu General Conferences:

45th Executive Board meeting, Kaunas, 10-12 February 2006

46th Executive Board meeting, St. Petersburg - Kronstadt, 9-10 June 2006

47th Executive Board meeting, Gdynia, 19-20 October 2006

48th Executive Board meeting, Gävle, 8-11 March 2007

49th Executive Board meeting, Jēkabpils, 15 June 2007

50th Executive Board meeting, Pärnu, 26 September 2007

The Executive Board played meaningful role in the development of UBC activities. The Board considered and endorsed a number of actions, initiatives and projects submitted by the Presidium, Commissions and Member Cities. The projects, initiatives, activities, events and other actions carried out by UBC during the described period are outlined in this report.

Board of Audit during this two-year period

Ms Marta Chełkowska, Łeba

Ms Silvia Löbner, Wismar

Ms Ewa Back, Sundsvall

UBC Secretariat

The Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat is located in the City of Gdańsk at the residence of the City Council. The Secretariat provides daily service to the UBC and its members. The Union has been satisfied with the work performed by the Secretariat. The financial matters have been handled properly as confirmed by the auditor. The Union would like to express its thanks to the City of Gdańsk for its contribution to the UBC over the past years.

UBC Commissions

In the reported period the UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission:

Commission on Business Cooperation

Commission on Culture

Commission on Education

Commission on Energy

Commission on Environment

Commission on Health & Social Affairs

Commission on Information Society

Commission on Sport

Commission on Tourism

Commission on Transportation

Commission on Urban Planning

Commission on Youth Issues

Gender Equality Network/

Commission on Gender Equality (since 48th Board Meeting)

EU-coordinators Network (since 48th Board Meeting)

Lead Cities:

Kaunas, Turku

Vaasa, Visby

Kärdla, Norrtälje

Oskarshamn

Turku, Nacka

Rostock

St.Petersburg, Tampere

Gdynia, Karlskrona

Koszalin

Gdynia, Örebro

Helsinki, Riga

Kalmar

Turku (Femina Aboensis)

Umeå

Rostock

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 concisely described below.

I. Commission on Business Cooperation

In 2006 the Commission was chaired by Mr Kalle Euro, Turku, and in 2007 by the city of Narva.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Business Cooperation is located in Kaunas, Lithuania.

The meeting of the Commission on Business Cooperation was held in Turku on June 14 – 16, 2006 and the representatives from the cities of Turku, Tampere, Kaunas, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Gdańsk, Tallinn, Viljandi, Vordingborg, Kolding and Næstved were present. On the 14th of June they participated in the seminars, workshops and other events of the European Day of Entrepreneur. It was an international event closely connected with the work of the Commission on Business Cooperation.

During the meeting, the European Day of Entrepreneur was opened by the introductory speech of Mr. Kalle Euro, the Director of Business Development of Turku Area Development Centre. There was the Environmental Protection B2B Meeting, Seminar on Innovations and Cultures in Entrepreneurship, Sea Tech Workshop and Networking and Discussion Forum developing EDE into co-operation involving the Baltic Sea Region. The Feedback Session closed the event. The sitting of the UBC Business Commission was held on the next day and Mr. Kalle Euro, the Director of Business Development of Turku Area Development Centre, chaired it.

All the participants had an opportunity to exchange their opinions regarding the presentation and discussed about other relevant things. The Head of the Development Programs Management Division of City Development Department of Kaunas City Municipality Mr. Vygintas Grinis presented the project of the science park “Technopolis”, the construction of which is planned in Kaunas. Mr. Uffe Nielsen, the director of Næstved-Egnens Udviklingsselskab A/S presented the activities of this organization. The primary mission of this organization is to promote the business development of the Næstved region.

Afterwards there was a selection of the host city for the year 2008. Two cities from Denmark (Næstved and Vordingborg) had kindly offered themselves and were elected as the possible hosts for the UBC Business Commission meeting in the year 2008. The position of the chairmanship for the Commission on Business Cooperation is assigned to Narva, a city in Estonia, where the meeting is going to be held at the end of the year 2007.

II. Commission on Culture

In 2005-2007 the Commission was chaired by Ms Tarja Hautamäki, Vaasa.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Culture is located in Visby, Sweden.

The Board of the Commission on Culture had a separate meeting in connection with the Session in St. Petersburg in 2005. The Board decided, among other things, to move its secretariat from Szczecin to Visby for the years 2006-2007, to accept a proposed Action Plan 2006-2007 and the idea of the Chairperson Tarja Hautamäki to establish a cultural prize.

The 8th Annual Session was successfully realized by Izvara museum in Cooperation with the city of St. Petersburg on 6 – 9 December 2005 with a focus on the theme “The Role and Value of the Museums in the Modern World”. The Commission on Culture presented a report about this Session in the UBC Bulletin 1/2006, a publication based on the various speeches that was produced by St. Petersburg, printed and distributed with support from the Commission on Culture.

The Board of the Commission met in Umeå on 21-22 April 2006, with support from the secretary Georg Gyllenfjell, Visby. The Board discussed the publication about the Session in St. Petersburg, the rules of election of members to the Board, its budget, plans for the future and other matters.

The Board of the Commission on Culture met in Vaasa on 23 November 2006. According to the minutes of the meeting, the city of Cēsis was the first to receive the UBC Cultural Prize that is established by the Commission. The Board planned future activities, the election of a new Board etc.

The Annual Session of 2006 was also held in Vaasa on 24-25 November 2006 on the theme “Cultural Festivals as Strengtheners of Local Identity” with 11 lecturers and also parallel group works, discussions, etc. The session gathered 40 participants. All countries around the Baltic Sea except Denmark were represented. The Participants could also experience some of the great Wildlife Vaasa Film Festival during these days.

The Festival of the Baltic Cities was held for the first time in St. Petersburg on 15-18 June 2006. The chairperson of the Commission on Culture was invited to the organizing committee of the festival. Board member Olga Cherkasova was representing the Commission on Culture in the opening panel and in the closing round-table discussion of the festival. The Commission on Culture and the organizers of the festival discuss different ways to co-operate in the future. The second chairperson Olov Gibson participated in a meeting during the Festival in Kaunas in May 2007 with representatives from various cities and from the Baltic International Festival Center in St. Petersburg – see www.baltichouse.spb.ru

The Catalogue of Cultural Institutions, presented on www.ubc.net was updated by the Secretariat of the Commission. From 2006 it has been completed with a new network of cultural institutions around the Lake Victoria, in order to stimulate contacts with and within the sister organisation of UBC: Lake Victoria Regional and Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC).

The Board of the Commission met in Visby on 3 May 2007 to plan its election of a new Board and one of the workshop named “Culture as a driving force for municipal development” in Pärnu 27-30 September 2007. It also proposed to the next Board themes for the future Annual Working Session: Youth Culture, Libraries, Culture Education, Cultural Tourism and Underground Culture. There were discussed budget matters etc.

The 10th Working Session in Visby on 4-5 May 2007 “European means for cultural cooperation” had 8 lecturers, among them representatives from Ars Baltica, Les Rencontres, Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish National Council of Cultural Affairs. The Session attracted 45 participants all together, which also discussed in groups how to apply for funding from the EU cultural programme Culture 2007 and others.

III. Commission on Education

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

Secretariat

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

In 2006 and 2007 there were a number of opportunities to participate in projects and activities of the Commission on Education. The commission had planned meetings, teachers’ workshop in Norrtälje, research school in Norrtälje, conference in Tallinn, photo competition and practical training for students. The commission on Education achieved external funding for the projects and activities.

1. Meeting in Tallinn January 2006

Commission on Education had an Annual Meeting on 27th January 2006 in Tallinn in School Kullo. 28 participants from Latvia, Finland, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Estonia were present at the meeting.

The Director of Tallinn School of Extracurricular Activities "Kullo", Mr. Urmas Uska, welcomed the Commission on Education in Kullo. That year it was a 65 anniversary of education of Extracurricular Activities in Estonia. On 8-10 April it was celebrated with international conference and gala concert in Tallinn. The title of the conference was „Non-Formal Education – Asset for Youth and Society“. The speech themes were 1. Aspects of non-formal learning today; 2. Compulsory education and non-formal learning; 3. Challenge for local authorities and 4. Asset for youth and society.

2. "Activities for school children after school time", international conference and concert in April in Tallinn. Hobby education in Estonia – 65!

On April 8th-9th the conference "Hobby education – added value for youth and society" took place and related topics were discussed in Kanutiaia Youth House in Tallinn (Estonia). International organisations like UBC, European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth (EAICY), International Movement for Leisure in Science and Technology (MILSET) and the European Network for the Promotion of Youth Leisure and Voluntary Activities and Recognition of Youth Non-formal and Informal Learning were presented during the conference.

3. Erken Laboratory Research School 2006 and 2007

The Research School was organised for students of the age of 17-19 at the Erken Laboratory, located at the countryside of Norrtälje. In 2006 and 2007 there were students from: Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Western Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. The main objective of the Research School is to let the students work with scientific questions and to do research. All students lived together and worked together at the laboratory.

4. Photo competition in 2006

Commission on Education of UBC and Kärda Town Government organized from 15 February to 30 September 2006 a Youth Photo competition of UBC, where 13-16 years old young people from the UBC area participated. An aim of the photo competition was to develop youth virtuosity and skills and promote a hobby education through international prism. It was made by photos, which described friendship between young people and their action / hobby's. Every participant could send to the competition max. 5 photos that were taken in 2006. There were sent 55 photos from 15 participants. Later on there was presented the exhibition of those photos in the city of Norrtälje.

IV. Commission on Environment

The Commission is chaired by Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku and Mr Guldbrand Skjönberg, Nacka.

Secretariat

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

The environmental work of the UBC is organized at the Commission on Environment. UBC is also running a large cross-sectoral action programme on sustainable development, the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities.

Implementation of the Agenda 21 Action Programme of UBC

The secretariat has been actively working as the Agenda 21 Secretariat for the implementation of the cross-sectoral Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities (approved in the General Conference in Klaipėda 2003). The program is being implemented under the supervision of the Executive Board. Based on contributions of several UBC commissions and networks, the implementation has proceeded extremely well and the programme is most likely reaching a high concrete impact on the ground, at UBC member cities. The programme activities target five thematic focus areas: Good governance and sustainable urban management, Sustainable use of energy and resources, Good living environment and nature protection, Sustainable economy and transport, and Social integration and health.

The first programme assessment, the Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2004/2005 has been completed with the answering rate of 73% .The second programme assessment, the second survey Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2006/2007 has been undertaken with 71% answering rate. Results of this survey show that a lot of development steps have been taken among the UBC member cities and our Baltic Sea region is therefore clearly one of the forerunner regions globally.

Actions

The commission has achieved a lot in different policy, networking, capacity-building and information activities. The basic activities of the Commission on Environment have included several thematic seminar/workshop-type meetings. These were during the reporting period organised in Lübeck Germany, in May 2006 and in Liepāja in February 2007. In connection to the Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2006/2007 the personnel of the Environmental Commission was in contact with all UBC member cities in order to check up contact information and possibility for participation in the survey.

The commission has continued the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award scheme and has developed further UBC's good practice work. The website has been regularly updated and contact databases maintained. During 2006 and 2007 much emphasis has been allocated to strengthen the Communication strategy of Commission on Environment as an important element of improved quality of UBC services and the network as such. Also a so called Knowledge Management Database is under construction to better serve and collect information, data, good practises etc. from projects, meetings and UBC member cities.

Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin has been developed and thematic editions on Air Quality Management (2005), Aalborg Commitments in Action (2006) and Practical Tools and Methods for cities (2007) have been published.

In line with the working principles of the UBC, the Commission on Environment has also contributed strongly to Baltic Sea Regional and European policy co-operation processes on cities' environmental governance and sustainable urban development.

Some of the main projects:

Managing Urban Europe -25 (MUE-25), Developing cities' environmental managements systems to address the whole functional urban area. Partners: EnvCom, ICLEI, UNEP etc (altogether 24 partners, inc. 15 cities), 2005-08. 2.9 MEUR - DG Environment, Finnish Ministry of Environment + other funders.

SUSTAINMENT (Integrated solutions for the sustainability management in the Baltic Cities), Partners: EnvCom, Baltic University programme, 12 partner cities in the Baltic Sea Region, 2006-2007. 1.4 MEUR – BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood programme, TACIS, Finnish Ministry of Environment

BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation and Planning). BUSTRIP - Developing sustainable urban transport planning. Partners: EnvCom, TransCom, Chalmers Technical University, 14 Baltic Cities, 2005-2007. 3.1 MEUR - BSR INTERREG III B and Finnish Ministry of Environment.

LVRLAC – UBC co-operation, facilitating sustainable development in the Lake Victoria Region through Local Authority Action. Phase I and II, and a new phase III started, - Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency.

V. Commission on Energy

The City of Oskarshamn got the approval from the UBC Executive Board to establish the Energy Commission in October 2006.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Energy is located in Oskarshamn, Sweden.

Competence Board and the Energy Research Program

The Energy Commission got national funding from the Swedish Energy Agency “To develop an energy programme distinguished by energy efficiency and reduced emissions by greenhouse gases in the Union of Baltic Cities” The research programme was produced by a Competence Board. This Board presented a report on spring 2007 and the Energy Commission now have a strategic program with concrete project ideas to present for the UBC Cities.

The work during spring 2007 has mainly consisted of developing and gaining approval for the project ideas of the Competence Board. An international reference group has been established in the Energy Commission and they have contributed with good examples on how to work with energy efficiency measures and decreased emissions of greenhouse gases.

Commission Meeting 2006 in Oskarshamn, Sweden

The very first commission meeting was held in Oskarshamn November 2006. Member cities represented there were Örebro, Kotka, Mariehamn, Tartu, Võru, Jelgava, Turku, Gdańsk, Kolding and Oskarshamn. “What is the most important energy related issue that should be the focus of the UBC Energy commission?” This was the most essential issue for the Energy Meeting and everyone got to discuss this during the group sessions. The delegates gathered around three focus areas for the Energy Board to proceed working with: energy efficiency, reduction of green house emissions and a strive for higher local self-reliance. A board for the commission was appointed at the meeting.

Commission Board Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden

The first Board Meeting had focus on Action Plan and strategies for the future. There was also a proposal that the Board of the UBC Energy Commission proposes the UBC Executive Board to apply for the Energie Cités network. This proposal was accepted by the Executive Board and UBC is now affiliated member of the Energie-Cités.

Commission Board Meeting in Mariehamn, Åland, Finland

The City of Mariehamn hosted a Board Meeting, June 2007.

The meeting had focus on planning for the General Conference, projects in pipeline and communication strategies and tools in the projects and in the overall work of the commission.

VI. Commission on Gender Equality

The UBC Executive Board at the 48th meeting in Gävle, 9 March 2007, decided to transform the UBC Network on Gender Equality to the UBC Commission on Gender Equality with Umeå as the lead city.

Activities

Most activities have been done over e-mail. At first all members of the earlier UBC Network on Gender Equality were informed that the network had been transformed to a Commission. Members of the network were also asked to reply if they still were interested in continue being contact persons and members of the new Commission. An e-mail was also sent to all contact persons in UBC to inform them about the new commission and to ask them to be a part in it. The mail also invited old and new members to meet in Pärnu at the IX UBC General Conference, 27-28 September 2007. About 10 persons from different member cities replied, and were interest in being contact person in the Commission on Gender Equality. Some of them also planned to meet in Pärnu. The commission has recently become a commission and will therefore start (in Pärnu) to create a board and working-groups.

March - September 2007

- E- mail lists have been updated
- Development of the website
- Annual meeting in Pärnu in September 2007
- Umeå, as lead city, will have an exhibition during the Pärnu conference
- Start to create a board and working-groups

VII. Commission on Health & Social Affairs

The Commission on Health & Social Affairs is led by the City of Rostock, Germany.

Meetings:

In Rostock in August 2006, it was discussed how and into which direction the Commission's work could be impelled. As a result it was planned the Workshop on 'Migration in Baltic Cities – Problems, Possibilities, Perspectives' and Annual Commission's Meeting in Rostock on 05 – 07 October, 2006. Within this meeting migration experts from five countries around the Baltic Sea got together. Additionally, representatives of foreigners' assessment council, municipal administration bodies and citizens' initiatives followed the invitation. In co-operation with the University of Rostock the participants won a general overview of migration in the Baltic Sea Region and exchanged their experiences concerning the treatment of immigrants.

The Board / Project group, now consisting of members from Kristiansand, Karlskrona, Gdynia and Rostock met for conversations on 13 April 2007 in Copenhagen. The group reinforced the wish to continue working on the theme of xenophobia. Furthermore, the theme of the next commission's meeting was precise: 'Combating poverty and social exclusion of children, in a holistic approach focussing as well on their families'

Workshop on 'Combating poverty and social exclusion of children and their families' and Annual Commission's Meeting in Kristiansand on 15 – 17 May, 2007.

Poverty and social exclusion of children and their families are among those problems that seem to be very out of place in European societies with annual sky-rocketing GDPs. Yet, despite several action plans and resolutions of numerous states, organisations and communities, they remain unsolved.

The 12 participants from 9 cities agreed, that it would be necessary to identify existing data about the child wellbeing in UBC cities and, if they are not satisfactory, to plan some measurement projects which should show the children's situation. This could be a way to establish milestones for the development of policies to improve children's lives in UBC cities. The Workshop will be followed by a publication of all statements still in 2007.

The participants decided to design a project structure in order to be ready to apply for funding in 2008.

Visited Conferences:

5th UNDP Forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty's (WACAP), Valencia, 29-31 March, 2006. More than 1,000 participants attended this Forum as representatives from central and local governments, Parliaments, International Organizations, NGOs and academic world. The 5th Forum started the dialogue between the United Nations agencies gathered by UNDP on the matter on local governance and urban development, and cities associations coordinated by United Cities and Local Governments to mobilize all these actors around UNDP in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

VIII. Commission on Information Society

The Commission on Information Society is chaired by Mr Evgeny Tsivirko, St. Petersburg and coordinated by Mr Esa Kokkonen, Tampere.

The 4th IS COM meeting “*Contribution of the cities in creating the common information space of the Baltic Sea Region*” in St. Petersburg on 26-28 October 2005

The overall objective of the meeting was to encourage and activate UBC member cities to participate and contribute to the information society related cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and Europe wide, and to the IS COM activities. New initiatives for the IS COM projects – by using an IS COM project “Challenge of eCitizen” as an example – were also discussed. The meeting was organized in connection with a meeting of Senior Officials on Information Society of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (SOIS of CBSS). The meeting gathered around 20 representatives of UBC member cities.

Implementation of an IS COM project *Challenge of eCitizen*

An Interreg III C project “*Challenge of eCitizen: Promoting eGovernment Actions in European Cities*”, prepared and coordinated by the Baltic Institute of Finland in the framework of the IS COM, was launched in January 2005. Several UBC member cities participate in the project, as well as the cities of Sheffield, Bologna and Trento. This three-year project is designed to support innovative on-going local eGovernment actions and strategies.

The eCitizen project has been in very active implementation stage between October 2005 and September 2007. Pilot services have been developed and implemented in the partner cities, and good eGovernment practices have been exchanged and benchmarked between the partners. Study tours to partner cities have been organized as follows: Sheffield in November 2005, Bologna and Trento in December 2005, St. Petersburg in October 2006, Turku in December 2006, Odense in March 2007 and Tartu in September 2007. The following two highly interesting studies introducing top European eGovernment expertise from the Baltic Sea region and UBC member cities were published in spring 2006: The city of Tartu prepared and published a study on public mobile services, and the city of Tampere released a study on smart card applications in European cities.

The 5th IS COM meeting in Tartu on 30 March – 1 April 2006

A joint IS COM and eCitizen steering committee meeting was hosted by the city of Tartu between 30 March and 1 April 2006. In the IS COM meeting, internationally renowned Estonian eGovernment policies and practices were introduced, and used as an inspiration for the elaboration of new IS COM project ideas. More than 10 UBC member cities were represented in the meeting, as well as eCitizen partner cities. IBM and Enion companies sponsored the IS COM meeting in Tartu.

IS COM seminar in Brussels on 6 March 2007 - “*New programming period 2007–2013 - New information society cooperation opportunities for Baltic cities*”

IS COM organized a seminar called “*New programming period 2007–2013 - New information society cooperation opportunities for Baltic cities*” in the premises of Finland’s Permanent Representation in Brussels on 6 March 2007. The seminar was successful and gathered over 50 representatives of the different organizations from Russia, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany.

The main goal of the seminar was to bring together representatives of UBC member cities to discuss new EU financing opportunities for European cooperation on information society development, and to present an outlook on the recent development of IS performance in Russia, especially in St. Petersburg.

IX. Commission on Sport

The Commission on Sport is chaired by Ms Beata Łęgowska, Gdynia and Ms Camilla Brunsberg, Karlskrona as Vice Chairperson.

Secretariat

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

Annual Meetings

1. Gdynia (Poland) 04-06.05.2006 – *Active Living*

The 2006 UBC Commission on Sport Annual Meeting entitled “*Active Living*” gathered representatives of 17 cities from 11 countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and Belarus. The meeting consisted of two thematic blocks: the first one was devoted to multifunctional sports arenas. There were presentations of sports arenas in the cities of Gdynia (Poland), Rostock (Germany), Karlskrona (Sweden), Gladsaxe near Copenhagen (Denmark). The presentations consisted in demonstrating a management system of sports facilities as well as ways of promoting sport among inhabitants of all age groups from the a/m cities.

The second block dealt with best practices connected with active living programmes – "Cities on the Move". This part of the Annual Meeting was prepared in cooperation with the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.

2. Karlskrona (Sweden) 19-21.04.2007 – Sport – a Healthy Alternative

The 2007 UBC Commission on Sport Annual Meeting entitled "Sport – a Healthy Alternative" gathered representatives of 8 cities from 7 countries: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden. With sport as a healthy alternative being the main subject of this year's meeting, Karlskrona speakers (among whom there was a Sweden's Governmental Drug Coordinator) presented ways of preventing unhealthy and addictive lifestyles (such as drug addiction, doping), whereas in the second part of the meeting speakers from Turku (Finland) and local ones from Karlskrona focused on methods of promoting healthy habits. Additionally, meeting participants had an opportunity to see the implementation of healthy lifestyle policies in practice, and thus visited the Karlskrona Indoor Athletic Arena and Telenor Arena Karlskrona.

Grant sessions

1. "Cities on the Move" Grants allocated by UBC Commission on Sport in 2006

In the year 2006 the UBC Commission on Sport allocated grants of total amount of 5 000 EUR. By allocating the grants the UBC Commission on Sport awarded those projects which allowed people (especially sedentary ones) to keep fit all the year round (first of all during autumn/winter season) as well as to encourage people of all age groups to be active all the year round and to develop their active living habits. As usual the Commission's grants were addressed exclusively to UBC member cities.

2. "Always Active" Grants allocated by UBC Commission on Sport in 2007

In the year 2007 the UBC Commission on Sport allocated grants of total amount of 5 000 EUR. "Always Active" grants were awarded for those projects which encouraged elderly people to keep physically active and increased their functional capacity as well as promoted sport as a way of preventing various illnesses. As usual the Commission's grants were addressed exclusively to UBC member cities.

Initiatives of the commission:

1. UBC Commission on Sport Website

The UBC Commission on Sport regularly updates its website so that it contains topical information about the Commission, its actions and undertakings.

2. UBC Commission on Sport Leaflet

The UBC Commission on Sport published an updated leaflet presenting the Commission's activity as well as produced promotional gadgets.

X. Commission on Tourism

The Commission on Tourism is chaired by Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski, Koszalin.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Tourism is located in Koszalin, Poland.

The Commission has focused on information exchange, education and promotion of tourism all around the Baltic Sea Region. There were numerous articles and newsletters provided by CoT secretariat in Koszalin to the UBC Bulletin last two years.

Meetings

- The first one was held on the 5th of May 2006 in Koszalin. The meeting was attended by the representatives of member cities of UBC, as well as the tourist organizations from Estonia, Russia, Germany and Poland - in general 14 persons. Guests of the CoT were the representatives of associations

„ACE Uckermark”, „Speed”, “Europa-Zentrum-Brandenburg-Berlin (EZBB) des Regionalen Förderverein e.V.” and „The Baltic Companionship Poland-Scandinavia”, as well as the Local Tourist Organization. The object of the meeting was to discuss the action program of the Commission for upcoming years 2006-2007, as well as presentation of two international projects. There was also a brainstorming session devoted to the question: „what about the tourism in Baltic Sea Region after the summer season?”

- On 21-24 March 2007 a working meeting of the Commission on Tourism was held in Palanga, Lithuania. The meeting was dedicated to summing up of the subsequent Commission work period and presentation of the projects scheduled for accomplishment this year. In total, 8 delegates of UBC member cities from 4 countries – Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland participated in the meeting. Based on the presentations being made, the following issues were proposed to be discussed – how to identify the best attractions of given town/city, how to prepare the local tourist product based on those attractions, how to promote the product and how to assess effectiveness of the action taken.

Projects

An Interreg III A based project called “**Europa Er-leben, Europa Er-fahren**” in co-operation with Europa-Zentrum-Brandenburg-Berlin (EZBB) des Regionalen Förderverein e.V., ACE Uckermark and the city of Koszalin. The result of this project was the tourist undertaking under the name “**Fotosuch und Quizfahrt**”, which is a kind of contest or rally.

“**Meet the Baltic Sea Region – your homeland**”. The purpose of the contest is to promote knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region which should contribute to growth in tourism intensity in this area. Promotion of the Baltic Sea Region and development of learners’ own interests in it are additional targets. The contest is open to non-academic 15 – 20-year-old youth from schools in states where UBC is active. The topic range of the contest encompasses basic knowledge of geography, nature, history, politics, culture and sports in the Baltic Region states.

“**Baltic Sea Region – Perfect Tourism Zone**”. CoT has worked out and edited the first edition of catalogue of UBC member cities tourist information centres/offices/welcome centres together with member cities description. CoT has financed the catalogue throughout – the advertising, as well as further distribution of the catalogue. The main aim, which has been achieved, was to build the network of tourism information centres from all over of Baltic Sea Region. The result of this project was 5 500 UBC member cities catalogue copies intended for tourists visiting BSR. The catalogue is also aimed at increasing interest in this region among potential tourists.

XI. Commission on Transportation

The Commission on Transportation is chaired by Mr Marcin Wołek, Poland and Ms Carinne Lancereau, Sweden.

Secretariat

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

Annual meetings

Gdynia (Poland) 20th – 21st October 2005

The 2005 Annual Meeting took place on 21st October. The focus of the meeting was on the change of Commission’s chairmanship. It was decided that the leadership would be shared by the cities of Gdynia (Poland), Mr. Marcin Wołek being the Chairman and the city of Örebro (Sweden), Ms Carinne Lancereau being the Vice-Chairperson. The meeting was preceded by a Public Transport Seminar on Trolleybus Systems also held in Gdynia on 20th October and organised in cooperation with CIVITAS TELLUS project. Presentations were given, among others, by Marcel Rommerts representing European Commission, DG TREN, Guido Bruggeman from the European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development. The second part of the seminar included presentations of cities having a long tradition of developing and maintaining trolleybus systems

Gdynia (Poland) 29th September 2006

During the Commission's meeting in Gdynia the TransCom members reviewed recent initiatives, discussed future activities and the choice of the venue for next year's meeting. Apart from organisational matters, the participants were also provided with the information about the progress in the BUSTRIP Project.

The meeting was combined with a seminar devoted to the question of transport system integration in the Baltic Europe as well as intelligent transport systems. Speakers from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, Stockholm, Sweden and Tri-City, Poland presented the experiences of their regions connected with public transport planning and the integration of transport systems. Representatives of European Commission, DG TREN, Göteborg Traffic and Public Transport Authority and University of Gdańsk talked about the deployment and practical benefits of intelligent transport systems in EU.

Initiatives

Transport Questionnaire

Wishing to update the information about the interests of its members as well as to identify transport needs and problems of UBC member cities, the Commission on Transportation sent out a questionnaire to UBC contact persons in June 2006. 28 cities from Denmark (4 cities), Estonia (4 cities), Finland (2 cities), Germany (1 city), Latvia (5 cities), Lithuania (5 cities), Poland (2 cities) and Sweden (5 cities) responded to the questionnaire. It turned out that the responding cities are mostly interested in such issues as traffic safety, pedestrians and cyclists, local public transport, accessibility, mobility management as well as transport planning and methods.

“Sustainable Mobility in the City” – UBC Commission on Transportation Grant Competition

The Commission is involved in actions promoting effective transport solutions aimed at improving life quality of city inhabitants in the Baltic Sea Region. Aware of the importance of sustainable transport issues, the Commission on Transportation decided to support actions dedicated to restricting the use of cars and increasing the use of public transport or other alternative modes of transport. Therefore in 2007 the UBC Commission on Transportation announced a grant competition for UBC member cities. Six cities have sent their applications (Chojnice, Poland; Kaunas, Lithuania; Kiel, Germany; Kristianstad, Sweden; Palanga, Lithuania; Tallinn, Estonia). Among the received applications four best projects have been awarded grants: Kaunas, Kiel, Palanga, Tallinn.

BUSTRIP Project

The UBC Commission on Transportation is one of the core partners of the BUSTRIP Project which was launched in Örebro (Sweden) in December 2005 and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. 12 partners from the Baltic Sea Region participate in the project: Bremen, Gdynia, Göteborg, Kaunas, Kouvola Region, Liepāja, Pärnu, Sundsvall, Tartu, Turku, Vilnius, Örebro. The main aim of BUSTRIP is to initiate, review and implement Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTPs), being guiding documents for all transport planning in the city, and thus systematically move towards sustainable transport. The project will produce a SUTP toolbox of techniques, collecting all learning experiences and best practices from project partners.

XII. Commission on Urban Planning

The Commission on Urban Planning is chaired by Ms Sirpa Kallio, Helsinki.

The main activities of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning (CUP) during the period between October 2005 and September 2007 took place with the ending of the Alliance of Baltic Cities (ABC) project and preparing and providing the cooperation within the CUP after the project. The seminar in Malmö was held October 5th-9th 2005 with 52 colleagues from 8 countries participating. The report from the Malmö seminar became also a Summary Report from all our six common seminars.

In addition to the ABC project activities, the Commission worked for preparing an application of a next project called the Baltic Academy of City Planning. An application to the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) – 8th round – was produced and accepted by all 30 participating cities (including in Russia). Unfortunately the Commission's application was rejected by the Interreg III B Steering committee.

UBC CUP&ABC seminar in Riga, Latvia, April 26th – 29th 2006

The Riga seminar was in the aftermath of the ABC-project. During this seminar one of the most burning questions in urban planning of today was "how to achieve sustainability when working with practical and actual urban planning situations?" The seminar included lectures about sustainability in urban planning context. For three days 36 participants - architects and planners from 8 countries around the Baltic sea discussed issues on long-term architectural development, and they evaluated proposals for the architectural development of the panorama concept for the left bank of the Daugava River. The results of the seminar were integrated in the Daugava River Left Bank Silhouette Concept Project that was submitted for public debate summer 2006.

UBC CUP seminar in Rostock, Germany, September 20th – 23rd, 2006

The Rostock seminar concentrated in Brownfield Regeneration. Some 25 urban planners from 8 countries participated in the seminar. The seminar lectures were about Sustainability in Brownfield Regeneration, and the workshops concentrated on the site of the Rostock Museum and its possibilities to enlarge, on the former "Neptunwerft"-shipyard area and the possibilities to create new use for the old industrial area and on a former fishermen's and leather maker's shore on the river Warnow.

UBC CUP seminar in Vilnius, Lithuania, April 19th -21st, 2007

The Vilnius seminar concentrated in two of the most common and interesting questions in urban planning of today: how to create attractive public space and how to achieve involvement and public participation when working with urban planning. The seminar keynote speeches included interesting examples of public participation in urban planning cases, and experiencing public spaces in urban environment. The workshops involved all the 40 participants and concentrated about renewing an old culturally and historically valuable housing area called Zverynas and involving the local inhabitants in the renewal process, as well as creating possibilities of activities on the River Neris bank on the business city side. Public participation and information were seen as vital issues in modern urban planning.

XIII. Commission on Youth Issues

The UBC Commission on Youth Issues is led by the City of Kalmar.

Youth conference in Vilnius, 13-16th of October 2005

In October 2005 the second youth conference took place in Vilnius, Lithuania. Almost 100 youngsters and civil servants/politicians participated. The conference contained of five different workshops: "Youth influence at school", "Youth influence at a city level", "Priorities in life", "Demographic changes" and "Intercultural learning". The youngsters, together with the civil servants were divided into five groups. The groups rotated after each workshop so that each person had the opportunity to participate in every workshop.

Commission meeting in Kalmar, 28-29th of November 2005

The commission meeting in November began with an evaluation of the Vilnius conference and the results. A first draft of the Book of Demands was presented.

As a result of the Network on Youth Issues being "upgraded" to a Commission on Youth Issues the new Commission began the work of an action plan for 2006-07. The working group also looked into issues about core values of the Commission work.

Commission meeting in Kalmar, 21-22th of February 2006

The meeting in February was a continuation of the work in November to establish the new Commission. An action plan for 2006-07 was finalized. It was decided during the meeting that Kalmar will be the coordinator of the Commission for the period 2006-07 and the City of Tallinn will be the co-coordinator with the ambition to become the coordinator after 2007.

The final printed version of Book of Demands from the Vilnius conference was presented and handed out. The Book of Demands was sent to the mayors of all UBC cities in spring 2006 as well as to those that participated in the conference.

Commission meeting in Tallinn, 12-14 May 2006

There were about 30 participants from 15 cities attending the Commission meeting in Tallinn. One of the main points on the agenda was the planning of the next youth conference, planned to take place in Pärnu in 2007.

New website launched www.ubc-youth.org

The Commission's new website was launched in August 2006 www.ubc-youth.org

The aim of the website is to act as the updated source of information about the Commission's meetings and activities as well as a resource where cities can share best practices from their cities related to youth influence issues.

Commission meeting in Liepāja, 7-9 of November 2006

About 30 people attended the Commission meeting in Liepāja, Latvia.

The main topic of the Commission meeting was to plan for the next youth conference in Pärnu in September 2007.

There was also held a workshop on the future and importance of youth NGO's for youth and for society. The Youth was presented as a resource to the society model used in Liepāja where youth are considered as resources to economics, politics and culture.

EU - project "Different History – Common Future"

In spring 2006, the Commission offered UBC cities in the Commission on Youth Issues to join an application to the EU Youth programme. City of Tallinn, City of Liepāja, City of Kalmar, City of Kolding and the UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk are partners in this project. Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth affairs is seen as supportive partner. Our common project, called "Different History – Common Future – Youth as a resource for a sustainable future in the Baltic Sea region", was approved for founding by the EU Commission in November 2006.

Tolerance Trip with youth from Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark and Germany into the German-Danish border region, 29-31 August 2007.

The Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs bared the responsibility for the development of a Tolerance Trip into the German-Danish border region. This will later be used as a model for similar trips with international youth groups from the Baltic Sea countries. The Tolerance Trip brought youth, youth workers and teachers together and foster an atmosphere of intercultural, historical learning. It facilitated processes of experiencing tolerance. The Tolerance Trip is thought to contribute to the campaign "All Different – All Equal" with a defined international action in the Baltic Sea region.

XIV. UBC EU Coordinators Network

The UBC EU Coordinators Network is led by the City of Rostock.

In March 2007 the UBC Executive Board decided to revitalize the EU-Network. The European Integrationcenter Rostock (EIZ), located in Rostock, is now in charge to rebuild the network.

A new program for the UBC-EU-Network was set up by the EIZ this summer and new activities are planed for the next year.

The first task for the EIZ was to discuss with officials and municipal authorities the idea of the network. Aims, tasks and perspectives were mooted preparing the new UBC-EU contact persons to their new duty. These negotiations also set up the principles of the new UBC-EU-Network.

EIZ also designed a new Logo for the UBC-EU-Network. It combines the UBC sign with stars and colours of the official flag of the European Union. In addition to that there is also a new slogan that emphasizes the idea of the network.

Along with that the EIZ started an information campaign that would promote UBC to European institutions, like the European Commission and to local authorities in Germany.

A Network meeting is planned to be held at the end of 2007 in Rostock.

Agenda 21 Action Program

The UBC statute and strategy define sustainable development, with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity, as one of strategic objectives of the UBC. For the implementation of this objective, the General Conference in Klaipėda 2003, adopted the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. The programme activities target five thematic focus areas: Good governance and sustainable urban management; Sustainable use of energy and resources; Good living environment and nature protection; Sustainable economy and transport; Social integration and health. The programme is coordinated by the Commission on Environment. More information about the programme is included in the EnvCom bi-annual report.

UBC website and e-news

The Secretariat maintains the UBC website www.ubc.net which provides useful information on UBC structure, aims, activities and documents. Major links that can be found on the website: organisation, member cities, commissions, events calendar, documentation centre, UBC Bulletin, funding sources, statements, twin cities, photo & art gallery, news from cities, Baltic & European organisations and other. The Secretariat also provides electronic news “UBC e-News” to the member cities about ongoing UBC projects, meetings and activities as well as on the EU related matters.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

The Baltic Cities Bulletin published by the UBC Secretariat provides information about the work of the Union and news from the member cities. Moreover an emphasis is put on covering some specific fields of general interest which are presented as main themes of each issue. The bulletin is printed ca. 6000 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities as well as to the number of Baltic and European organisations and institutions including the EU. The bulletin is available on the internet at <http://www.ubc.net/bulletin/bulletin.html>

In the years 2005-2007 the following issues have been published: BCB1/05 “Logistic Corridors in the Baltic Sea Region”, BCB2/05 “Cities and Competitiveness”, BCB1/06 “Energy in the Baltic Sea Region”, BCB2/06 “Baltic Sea Cities in Brussels”, BCB1/07 “Culture as a driving force for municipal development”.

Per Bødker Andersen
President

Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary General