

## **XIV UBC General Conference Växjö, Sweden, 24-27.10.2017**

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Statutory General Conference of the UBC*

Dear UBC members and friends.

My bi annual report will refer to the written report, that you have found on the UBC web site – and read carefully 😊

Therefore, I shall not read it loudly, but make some comments on matters, that I find important and that maybe characterize the last two years in general.

First of all: It has been a very busy period to all parts of our organization, And all parts of the UBC have been contributing.

Visibility is important if not crucial to any enterprise – and maybe especially to political bodies, if they want to be heard and seen. The Board decided to face lift to all of the media, we make use of. The result was a new UBC logo, a new web page, newsletter make up and the same to the social media. I think, we can be satisfied with the result.

The commissions have contributed to policy making not only in the Baltic Sea Region, but also in an international context.

Sustainability has been a key item – and will be so in the years to come. In the member cities, in cooperation with the UN on the defined goals; together with “water people” having a reunion parallel to our General Conference – and a lot more, that you can read about or hear from the members of that commission. But mentioned shall be the cooperation with the EUSBSR, where it has received flagship status for the two projects: iWater and IWAMA. Mentioned shall also be the CDP, the CBSS – Baltic Sea2030 Action plan.

So can you inform yourself of a high activity plan in the Cultural Cities Commission, having discussed Cultures of Sustainability – Connections between culture, education and new technologies – just to mention some of their activities.

Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission is one of the newer commissions in our family. Discussions have been on Open Spaces – of refugee influx as well as participation in the UBC Conference Preparatory meeting in Rostock – addressing migration issues in Europe – subject to the conference

in March in Rostock (that by the way will invite to the next conference on that subject in March next Year – and thank you for that Roland).

Planning commission have had a number of conferences amongst these Rediscovering water in the cities – and “from a growing to a great city”. Again the Planning commission have offered their expertise to member cities asking for answers to special planning challenges.

Safe Cities Commission – also a fairly new branch on the tree – has participated in a joint Commission meeting between Sustainable Cities, Safe Cities and Cultural Cities Commissions to discuss how to produce sustainable events from small scale events – and the outcome: A collaboration in developing “Sustainable event Management Guidebook”. We shall be looking forward to that publication. But also more “natural” topics for that Commission, such as police, civil protection and crises management has been on the agenda. Please make note of the Project CASCADE. I shall not reveal what it is all about – ask commission members, please. Apart from that the Commission work regularly with the CBSS and The EUSBSR on security matters.

Smart and prosperous Cities Commission has been active on more topics. Creative ports seem to be obvious in our region. But also ports must adapt to new times and demands – and a positive cooperation with the private sector can make the necessary innovation to make not only the port but the region it serves more competitive. The cooperation partners for this commission are the Baltic Development Forum, Goethe Institut, Swedish Institute, STRING and INTA International Urban Development Association.

Youthful Cities Commission has taken another approach to their work – understandably enough. Youth Leisure time has been one topic – New Cultures of education – focusing on different connection between culture, education and new technologies another. Life online another theme for discussion. Participation in other for a has led to a conference together with the BSSSC and ERB – discussion the youth participation in decision making. Important questions to be discussed – and important initiatives to be taken for the future leadership in our cities.

Gender Equality is not a Commission but at working group – meaning, that the Working Group can work horizontally – also in dealing with Commission matters that might evoke a Gender Equality aspect. The Working Group will work on the idea of the conference regarding immigrants and refugees to be held in Rostock March 2018

This has just been a brief description of some of the work, that has been done to the benefit of the UBC cities in the Commissions alone or in cooperation with other organizations.

Please refer to the written material, that gives a much more detailed description of the activities. And please do remember: the more you participate – the more you get for the salary. And the more pieces of good advice you get – for free.

And now to the secretariat and its activities.

The Baltic Cities Bulletin still exists. Many good stories from all around the Baltic sea from the top of the Baltic to Cities in the south – and from St. Petersburg to Bergen.

Covering the life, development and challenges of cities in our part of Europe.

And you can still find the bulletins on the UBC web.

The Board decided earlier to make a survey of the work of the secretariat and the service given to the member cities. For that reason the well accepted Consultant Company KPMG, Turku Branch, was chosen.

The report was released just before the Board meeting in Berlin in June, and the Board decided that comments and suggestions should be forwarded to the President at latest on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. The comments – be it from the members or the staff – was thereafter distributed to the Presidium for comments. The KPMG company has made some corrections due to factual misunderstandings. At the Board meeting yesterday the report was once again discussed, and it shall now be up to the new Board for the next two years to deal with the recommendations – and of course respect the fact, that the city of Gdansk are the employers of the staff as well as offering office and equipment. What I am saying, is, that if alterations should be decided – they have to be negotiated with the city of Gdansk before they can be implemented.

I should like to end my biannual report thanking my colleagues in the Presidium and Board as well as our observers, being helpful in daily matters. Also thanks to our Board of Audit – looking over our shoulders, and rightly so, but always constructive in suggestion solutions. Thank you also to all our cooperating bodies. It is my belief, that the more we cooperate – the more we can accomplish. We need not to do the same work twice – and our voices are better listened to.

Thank you to the members of the secretariat. Not the biggest, but definitely great.

And last, but not least:

Thank you to all the member cities for supporting the fantastic idea of a prosperous, democratic and peaceful Baltic Sea Area- and to the member cities hosting our board meeting. Always interesting programs telling a lot of Baltic stories as well.

Thank you for your patience

I shall try to answer questions to the best of my ability