



# UBC strategy





Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to present you the new Strategy of the Union of the Baltic Cities adopted at the VII UBC General Conference held in Klaipėda, Lithuania, on 17–18 October 2003.

The new Strategy reflects the new exciting period which we are now entering. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland are joining forces with Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden in the European Union. The Baltic Sea Region becomes almost an inland sea of the European Union.

In the near future we will have free movement of labour, capital and goods across the Baltic Sea. The national legislations in fundamental matters will be based on a common European legal foundation. We will live in a common area based on democracy, freedom and human rights, area with stable economic and political system. Such stability combined with qualified labour force and good educational system will certainly boost the economic development in the whole region. UBC will make every effort to make this development sustainable, taking into account also social and environmental dimension.

Our region possesses strong resources – natural, human, institutional, cultural and financial. The cities of the Baltic Sea region and their representative – UBC – will actively utilise all these capacities for the advantage of the citizens living in Baltic cities.

UBC statutory goal is to promote cooperation and exchange of experience among the cities in the Baltic Sea area, and to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region.

This new Strategy is to be a tool and guideline which will help UBC to fulfil effectively its goals and tasks for the benefit of its member cities and the whole region.

Per Bødker Andersen  
President of UBC



# UBC STRATEGY

## The Origins of UBC

The Baltic Sea Region is a significant European Region, with unique qualities. The beauty of the Baltic Sea and the nature, the historical heritage and the varied culture of the countries surrounding the Sea create opportunities that can give the citizens a good base for a good life.

The probably strictest section of the Iron Curtain in Europe divided the Baltic Sea into two totally separated systems. The consequence of the collapse and the need for establishing new contacts after fifty years of useless division was a huge challenge.

The cities in the Baltic Sea Region responded by seeking contact and establishing UBC in 1991. Since then, UBC has grown from 32 to more than 100 member cities, and has also celebrated its tenth anniversary.

The co-operation was very wide. Specialists and interested politicians gathered in some of the UBC Commissions and Networks. UBC is therefore a very decentralized network organisation with a very wide array of activities – just like our members, cities from the Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea is vulnerable and unique in its ecology as being by far the largest brackish water reservoir in the world. The Baltic Sea is shared among the UBC members, and the environmental concern about our common sea is demonstrated in many environmental activities in the UBC network.

The Baltic Sea Region is considered by many as one of the most promising regions in Europe in terms of stable economic, political and environmental development. One reason for this is another specific Baltic Sea Region

characteristic: The intense co-operation at all levels and at numerous fields. UBC was the first large sub-national Baltic Sea Region co-operation organisation, and was soon followed by others. One of the corner-stones of the Baltic Sea Region Co-operation is the close co-operation between BSR organisations at all levels, like CBSS, BSSSC and CPMR/BSC.

The aim of UBC was from the beginning to be a meeting place for cities in the Baltic Sea Region, to carry out activities together and to be a tool to express the views, problems and political aims of cities. Thus we can provide a platform for cities to reach common goals and aims for the benefit of the citizens.



# Why City Co-operation?

## Common History

Cities emerged as meeting points for people. The roots of cities lie in trade, defense, industry and administration. They were often located in focal points of communication.

Many of the European cities are older than the countries where they are located. Also the reason for being has changed, often several times, during history. This is true also for many cities and towns in the Baltic Sea Region. Today the majority of the citizens live in cities. Most human activities, both good and bad, take place in cities.

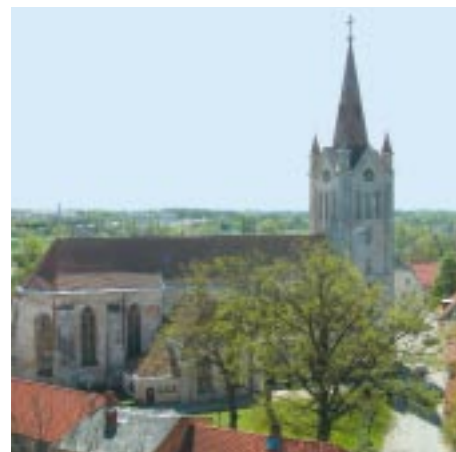
## Common Role

Local authorities in a democratic system are the main arenas for local democracy and citizen's participation. Democratically elected persons constitute the political leadership of cities.



Local authorities also employ various specialists in order to carry out the municipal tasks: Teachers, administrative and technical staff, and others. Cities are important employers.

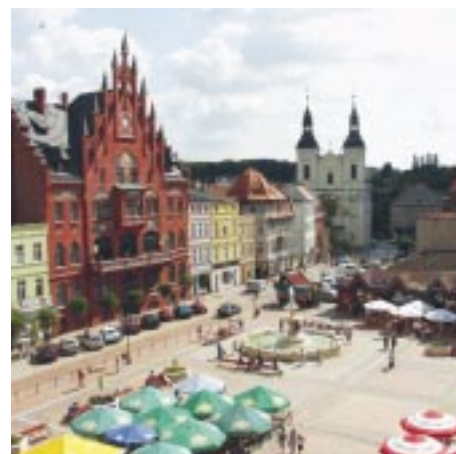
All over the world, the main aim of the political and administrative body in cities in democratic countries is to cater for the wellbeing of its citizens and for future generations by providing necessary basic services and utilities for all its citizens. This aim is similar for all democratic cities,



regardless of size, location, wealth or importance.

Almost all citizens have daily close contact with some of the city activities, by sending their children to school, driving on municipal streets or using some utilities, like drinking water or dispose of waste. The local authority administration and political leadership therefore has close contacts with the everyday life of the citizens by providing services and utilities to the public and by planning for the future generations through spatial, strategic, environmental and economic planning and development. This general description is true for local authorities in democracies all over the world, regardless of size, importance, location or wealth.

With this background, it is natural for city political leadership and management to meet and share experiences with other cities, and to act together to reach





common goals. It has also become clear that this need for co-operation stretches beyond national borders. Cities can learn and benefit from its neighbours across the borders and across the sea and reach common goals with increased co-operation.

### Common Destiny

The enlargement of the European Union in our region is a new challenge for UBC, as the Baltic Sea will become almost an inland sea of the European Union. In a foreseeable future there will be free movement of goods, capital and people, and there will be a common legal base for co-operation, trade and development across this formerly strictly divided sea.

The UBC member cities will face a new and promising future with new possibilities. UBC will be an important tool for the member cities to find benefits for this new geopolitical situation.

### Common Values

The cities of the Baltic Sea Region share some basic common values which are corner stones of the sense of togetherness. The UBC Agenda 21 Action Program and the UBC Social Charter have been adopted at UBC General Conferences.



Elbląg  
Elva

Gävle  
Gdańsk  
Gdynia

Greifswald  
Helsinki  
Jõhvi  
Jūrmala



### UBC Agenda 21 Action Program

Baltic Cities share a strong commitment to sustainable development. They want the current human generation to live meaningful and healthy lives without compromising the right of future generations to do the same. In order to reach this goal, they strongly promote balanced democratic, economic, environmental and social development.

Almost all UBC member cities implement their own local sustainable development programs. Since 2000, the UBC has been implementing its own Agenda 21 Action Program to support its members. This work has been very successful and the UBC has become the most important source of sustainability models and good practices to its members.

Following this great success, and building especially on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, the UBC is now committing to a new Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. This programme is designed to support the implemen-



tation of the UBC strategy. The emphasis is on implementation of strategic sustainable development actions.

These actions will address:

- ↳ 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.

### UBC Social Charter

The UBC Social Charter, adopted at the General Conference in Rostock 2001, expresses the commitment of the UBC member cities to:

- ↳ support its citizens in case of sickness, old age, unemployment and homelessness
- ↳ protect and support its children and youth
- ↳ to implement policies for the aged, handicapped and chronically ill citizens
- ↳ to introduce local prevention programmes against trafficking of women and children
- ↳ to organise, improve, develop and evaluate policies on gender equality.

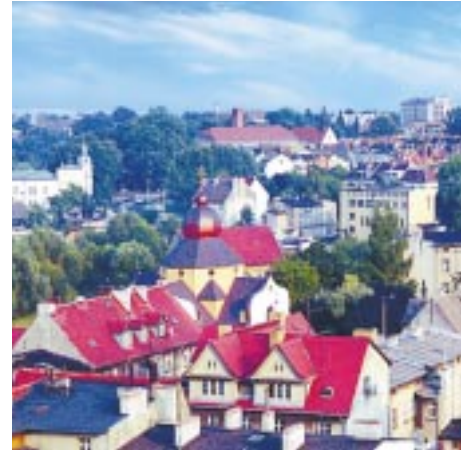
The implementation of the UBC Social Charter lays in the hands of the UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs. A lot has been done to promote the document in the Baltic Sea Region and within UBC itself. Based on translations into all UBC languages, the cities and Commissions started the process of discussion of the document as such and how to measure the achievements in a comparable way. Next step has to be to



Kalmar

Karlstad  
Käröla





the Baltic Sea shall flourish supported by a good infrastructure at sea, in ports, on land and by electronic means.

Our region possesses strong resources: natural, human, institutional, cultural and financial capital. It will be able to renew and increase the capital for the interests of present and future generations.

Overall cooperation between the New European Union, Russia and the adjoining areas must develop and barriers impeding it must be diminished.

They are developed in an innovative way, including new models of citizen-authority dialogue, public-private partnerships and in cooperation with civil society organisations. Our voice shall be listened at when and where decisions affecting the BSR cities are made.

The cities of the Baltic Sea Region, and their representative, UBC, will actively contribute, enforce and utilise all these capacities for the benefit of the citizens of the member cities and the generations to come.



lead this discussion to a manageable result and to prepare guidelines for Baltic Cities how to achieve / represent their social standards. The Commission will report regularly to the Executive Board which is monitoring the process.

**Vision – The Baltic Sea Region By 2010**

We want to see a dynamic, democratic and stable European Baltic Sea Region in a successful economic, political, social and environmental development process. The economic, cultural and personal connections across borders and across

We want our citizens to live in secure cities with viable local economies, just, peaceful and tolerant communities, and eco-efficiency, united by a clean Baltic Sea.

The highly skilful and active people of the region will make it one of the leading centres of capacity and excellence in the world. As a result, the North of Europe will occupy an increasingly important role in our continent and globally.

Local government and its activities will be a crucial dimension to achieve this vision.







**UBC wants to be**

- ↳ a strong voice on regional and European affairs affecting the members, promoting their views especially towards national governments and the European Union
- ↳ a meeting place for exchange of ideas and contacts between the member cities
- ↳ a framework for the members to facilitate, carry out and disseminate co-operation projects and activities that are of interest to the cities
- ↳ a source and a tool for inspiration, increased awareness, networking, benchmarking and partnerships
- ↳ a key partner in the Baltic Sea Region co-operation, promoting our region together with other organizations and authorities
- ↳ a part of the European co-operation, promoting local authority voice and opinions, together with other European organizations and networks.

**Mission – The role of UBC**

Union of the Baltic Cities is a representative organization of the member cities in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.



It is a voluntary, proactive network mobilizing the shared potential of the cities for mutual interests and goals.

**UBC shall be a spokesman for its members in Baltic Sea Region issues and promote the Region in Europe and in the World.**

The UBC members benefit from a strong Baltic Sea Region with a clear voice and clear policies. We also want to increase and intensify co-operation with CBSS, BSSSC, CPMR/BSC and other BSR organisations.



**UBC shall be a Platform for Baltic Sea Region Cities to Meet and Work Together.**

UBC activities bring people from all BSR countries to meet and to do things together. Most of the practical co-operation between the members is carried out in some of the ten UBC Commissions. UBC brings added value to the city policies and sector administrations by offering the facilities that networking brings. UBC is also a platform for numerous co-operation projects at different fields. UBC thus actively contributes to improvement



Kristianstad

Kronshtadt  
Kuressaare  
Liepāja





**UBC shall promote Local Level Governance in Europe and in the Baltic Sea Region.**

Most human activity in Europe takes place in cities. The local level governance, with its close contacts to its citizens, can be one of the most important channels to carry out various European, regional and national policies, provided resources are provided for this. UBC shall actively seek contact and co-operate with other actors in this field.



of the human and institutional capital of its members.

**UBC shall support Sustainable Development.**

Sustainable development – balanced democratic, economic, environmental and social development – is and has always been part of the basic purpose of the Union of the Baltic Cities. Through the UBC Agenda 21 Action Program the process towards a sustainable future for the UBC cities will be put into action.



**UBC shall be Watchdog regarding EU Policies that affect Cities in the BSR.**

The European Union policies have a great impact on our member cities. UBC shall vigilantly investigate EU policies in order to secure that they are in the interest of its members.

**UBC shall seek co-operation partners all over Europe and globally.**

We want to share experiences and increase co-operation with European Institutions, like Committee of Regions, and other European cities or Regional cities networks and organisations.



**UBC shall Provide Information and Promote Awareness Rising.**

UBC shall implement an information policy towards its members that is of benefit for them as Baltic Sea Region cities. All information channels can be utilised: New electronic information tools, traditional media, like the Baltic Cities Bulletin and other printed matter, and various meetings and conferences are examples of this.



**How we work**

UBC is a highly decentralised network of cities and provides numerous platforms for meetings between politicians, officials and specialists from cities of all sizes from all countries.

The highest level of UBC is the bi-annual **General Conference**, which is an important occasion for city leaders to meet and discuss.

Between the General Conferences, the political work is carried out through the



Nykøbing  
Nyköping  
Örebro

**Executive Board**, consisting of one city from each BSR country. The Board convenes about three times each year. The **UBC President** and the **UBC Presidium**, with three vice-presidents, are the executive organs of UBC.

UBC decentralized structure is coordinated by the **UBC Secretariat**, located to Gdańsk, Poland. The Secretariat is led by the **UBC Secretary General**.

The main practical work is carried out through the ten **UBC Commissions** and the **UBC Networks**. They work very



differently and independently, and the main link between them is the UBC Cities network itself. They have numerous activities in their respective fields ranging from music festivals and sports events to concrete projects and training seminars.

The **Baltic Sea Environmental Award** is bi-annually given to the UBC member city which has shown the best results regarding Agenda 21-activities.

But even an energetic and innovative commission without active member cities and partners is like a bicycle without



Palanga  
Panevėžys



wheels, so the devotion of the cities is necessary to keep these vehicles on the right track and moving.

## Aims of the Commissions and Networks:

### Business Cooperation

The Commission aims to:

- ↳ exchange experiences and information within the field of business and trade,
- ↳ promote contacts between the business communities.

### Culture

The Commission intends to enrich cultural life of the citizens living in the area of the Baltic Sea. The Commission's aim is to stimulate and coordinate culture and art projects, events and co-operation especially among UBC members to foster contacts and develop joint cultural projects.

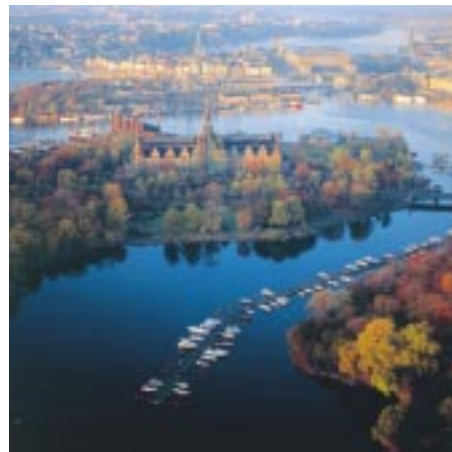
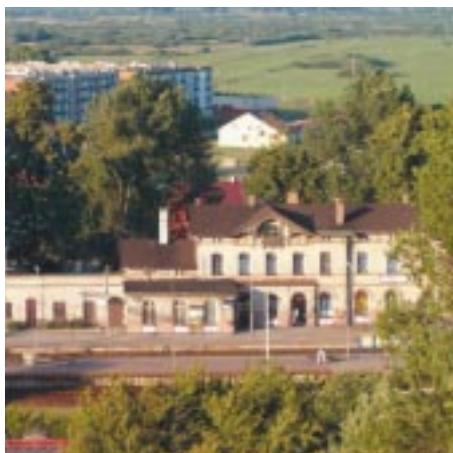
### Education

The aim of this Commission is:

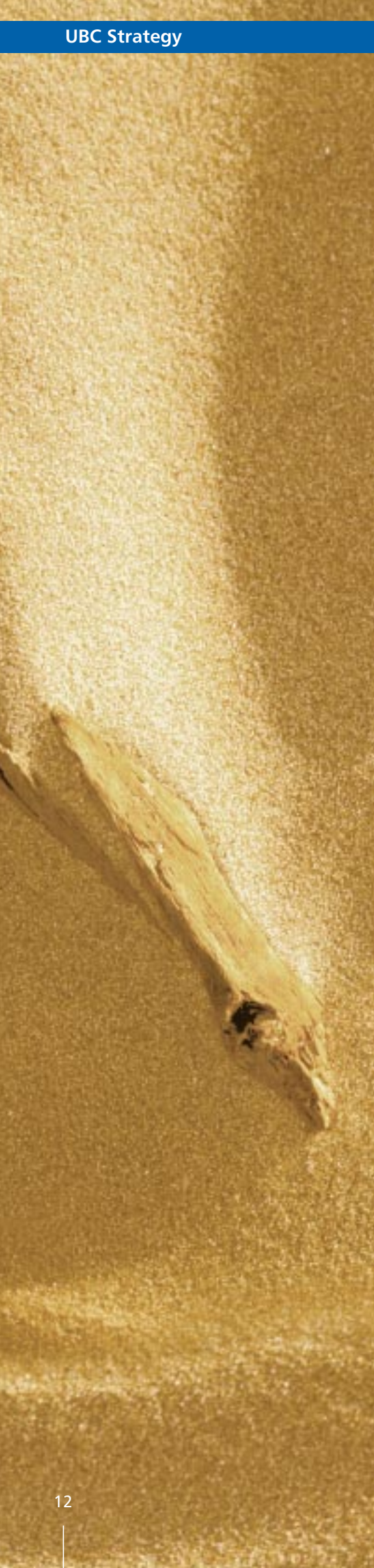
- ↳ to offer the member cities good possibilities for exchange of experiences,
- ↳ to bring up new initiatives for joint EU-projects on competence improvement.

## Environment

The aim of the Commission on Environment is to serve the cities in sustainable development and environmental management. This is part of the main goal of the UBC, which is to contribute to democratic, social, economic and environmentally friendly development in the Baltic Sea Region.







### Health and Social Affairs

The Commission aims:

- ↳ at enhancing awareness on health and social affairs in general and specifically concerning unemployed, elderly, handicapped, chronically ill persons, youth, children, migrants, and other specific groups
- ↳ at offering a platform for discussions and exchange of information
- ↳ to promote and support projects between UBC members and also non-UBC partners
- ↳ to establish links to similar networks in other geographical areas
- ↳ to steer the process of discussion of the UBC Social Charter within and outside UBC and the implementation in UBC cities
- ↳ to co-operate with all the other UBC Commissions and Networks.

### Information Society

The UBC Commission on Information Society aims at promoting and accelerating development of information society in the UBC member cities by facilitating exchange and dissemination of experiences, information, best practices and successful applications of technical innovations acquired in local information society activities. The goal is to enhance knowledge and capacities of the local authorities responsible for information society issues to design, develop and manage innovative information society policies and activities.

The activities of the UBC Commission on Information Society will follow and support the guidelines, strategies and general objectives set out in eEurope, eRussia, Northern eDimension and various national e-initiatives promoting



the Information Society development in the Baltic Sea Region.

### Sport

The Commission on Sport approaches a number of sport-related issues with a special emphasis laid on integration of UBC youth and the disabled through sporting events.

The Commission's objectives are:

- ↳ to create and improve a network for international cooperation in the field of sport
- ↳ to organize and promote sporting events focused on the youth, the disabled and gender equality
- ↳ to promote exchange of experience and information among sports clubs and societies
- ↳ to support financially sporting events in UBC member cities.

### Tourism

The goals of the Commission are:

- ↳ to increase the value and understanding about questions concerning tourism in the political system
- ↳ to build up a network of people working in the field of tourism





- ↳ to develop activities in exchange
- ↳ to focus on education (Baltic Tourism Academy)
- ↳ to be a helpful hand in initiating EU-projects and eventually strengthen the projects by using UBC as a tool
- ↳ to inform the member cities about possibilities and other international networks dealing with the same kind of questions and to cooperate with them.

### Transportation

Municipal Traffic Planning is in the focus of the activities of the UBC Commission on Transportation. It was traditionally planning of infrastructure for cars and public transport, but it has gradually become obvious that traffic can also be seen as an expression of human behavior and issues connected to that have become increasingly important. The commission would like to enable representatives at all levels of UBC member cities to:

- ↳ exchange ideas and experience
- ↳ transfer know-how
- ↳ develop transnational projects in the field of Urban Transport.



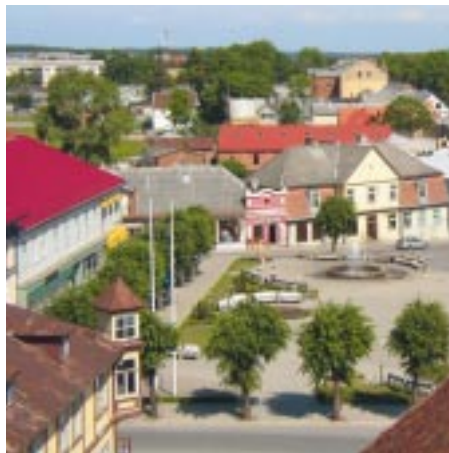
Tallinn  
Tampere



### Urban Planning

The Commission on Urban Planning aims to increase the awareness of the issues facing urban planning, construction and architecture among UBC member cities. To support these aims, the Commission has created a network of town planners, master planners, regional planners, architects, civil engineers and other professionals committed to improving the quality of life in the Baltic Sea cities. Commission goals:

- ↳ Better quality of life in Baltic cities
- ↳ Positive economic development by



Tartu  
Tukums  
Turku

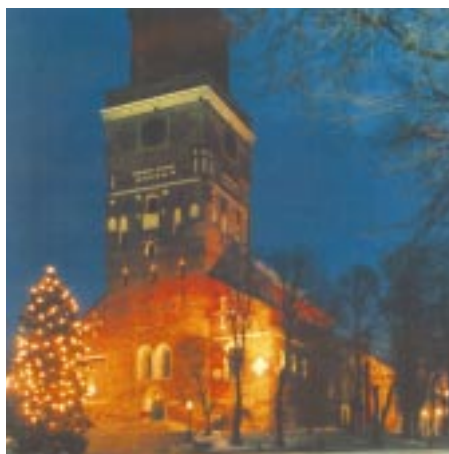


initiating dialogue between city residents, the private sector and the public sector

- ↳ Sustainable development in Baltic cities and regions
- ↳ Planning and construction that reflects the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the cities is a tool to achieve these goals.



Vaasa  
Viljandi  
Visby





**Women’s Network**

Democratic Development cannot be achieved without gender equality. Society needs all competences, skills and creativity from the whole population.

Therefore, UBC Women’s Network should:

- ↳ promote implementation of common standards on equal opportunities, rights, freedoms and responsibilities
- ↳ promote policies to help member cities to develop municipal equality plans
- ↳ promote standards and norms for



municipalities for combating violence against women and trafficking in human beings

- ↳ promote gender mainstreaming and encourage development of gender disaggregate statistics, indicators, gender budgeting, education and training in UBC member cities.

**Network on Youth Issues**

To work towards youth participation and youth exchange will be a benefit on several levels; for the organization of UBC, for every participating city, and for every participating young person.

Main aims for the network are:

- ↳ Dialogue – the network on Youth issues should work to facilitate a dialogue between the UBC and youth living in the member cities
- ↳ Influence – this should be done in order to include young people’s opinions and let young people’s important issues influence the agenda of the UBC
- ↳ Co-operation – the Network should also promote youth co-operation in



the Baltic sea region and work towards youth involvement, youth exchange and youth participation in the UBC member cities.

Actions:

- ↳ Create a working group and a youth contact net within the Network on youth issues
- ↳ Lobby towards nomination of a youth contact officer in every UBC member city
- ↳ Work towards a conference on local youth actions within UBC member cities in 2005
- ↳ Co-operate with the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth affairs in getting an overview of the activities of the local organisations in UBC member cities
- ↳ Monitor the agenda and documents of the UBC from a Youth point of view
- ↳ Call upon the UBC Executive Board to meet young people in the region during the UBC meetings.



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