

UBC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN TRELLEBORG

PROPOSALS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF UBC STRATEGY 2010-2015

The key task of the UBC Executive Board is now to fully engage itself in the new, emerging cooperation structure in the Baltic Sea Region and find a central place for local authorities in the implementation of the EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region and similar practical action programmes. In other words, to implement our own strategy adopted in Kristiansand 2009.

In addition to continued discussion on the EU Strategy which was started in previous Executive Board meeting (Naestved) but needs clarification and further development, these tasks include:

Strengthening member city participation (Strategy, Key tasks, number 2)

- discussion about how to develop the work of statutory organs
- involvement of elected politicians
- ensuring membership and participation of bigger member cities, several of whom have left
- exchange of best practices between cities – systematic data collection, lists of experts and good practices – and how to ensure mutual flow of these, so member cities benefit.
- questionnaire to member cities with the goal to make UBC more functional and attractive in new emerging context.

Many, is not all, of these issues are such that we have to start a preparatory process, as they need time and thinking. For example, conducting the membership survey could be organised in late autumn-wintertime, which requires that we prepare the content and plan to next Executive Board. We may need outside professional assistance in conducting it (relevant university in a member city?)

Concerning Baltic Sea Urban Forum, planned for 2010, with aim of engaging politicians: Can we find a host city? Maybe we could use some existing event relevant for member cities for this. For example, can it be organised back-to-back to the forthcoming first review meeting of EU Strategy implementation – or something similar?

Increasing of UBC membership and partnerships (Strategy, Key task, number 3)

- preparation of arguments and materials for membership drive – based on analysis of what cities actually appreciate. This is linked to the results of the survey, but should be started in parallel to it in order to not lose time.
- discussion on methodology of how to proceed in approaching cities: through National Unions of Local Authorities? Direct letters? Face to face –meetings utilising existing meetings etc?
- redrafting and updating guidelines for sponsorship policy. Planning and implementing sponsorship drive (or “business partnerships”). This must be carefully planned before we launch it.
- Start preparing new Communication and Marketing strategy for UBC. Lengthy process, need to involve professionals from member cities. A task force to be appointed to prepare it.

Energizing and streamlining UBC Commission work (Strategy, Key tasks, number 4)

- A number of commissions have reacted and increased cooperation with other commissions. This should be appreciated.
- the Executive Board should start preparing this issue for its next meeting by inviting Commissions to submit proposals concerning implementation of this task. This should be linked to a request to send their 2011 plans for action to the Executive Board for appraisal. UBC funding should be based on that evaluation, according to Strategy.
- Strategy task 4 should be, well prepared, key issue on the agenda of the first meeting of Steering Board after Trelleborg,

Promoting exchanges between member cities (Strategy, Key tasks, number 5)

- the goal is a more systematic exchange programme between experts to be organised between cities and their various services.
- Take stock of experience gained by cities which already have experience of this. Invite member cities to report about how it is done, their experiences etc.
- a task force/working group to work on this issue: to collect experiences, identify external funding mechanisms and but also internal funding – cities should reserve a small fund for these activities in 2011 budget to start a limited experience. Also a concept to be created about division of costs between sending – receiving city, the person him/herself, possible outside funding etc.
- Medium to long-term goal should be a broadly-based exchange concept, where some structure takes coordinating responsibility (can be an external organisation/body with experience).
- Worth studying if (UBC and cities) can participate in and benefit from planned Youth Centre in BSR (EU Strategy). Experiences in Council of Europe (Strasbourg/Budapest since 70's have been extremely good.

Enhancing UBC Policy formulation and lobbying capacity (Strategy, Key task 6)

- First task to organise presence and work in Brussels: how to make ourselves heard and listened to?
- Propose that President convenes a meeting of UBC member representations in Brussels, with assistance of willing UMB member city representations. Goal: general discussion, evaluation of situation and key tasks; forming of smaller, Brussels-based steering group with a convenor who could attend Executive meetings.
- Another level is influencing National Associations of Local Authorities, as well as national governments.
- Need an updated list of important national decision-makers, organisations etc for our mailing and messages. A system to be devised for this who is responsible (GC, EC members etc)

Systematic cooperation with partners in BSR, Europe (Strategy, Key task 7)

- evaluate and define which are key partners for us and in which issues. They may include BaltMet (has made through City of Helsinki a proposal for closer cooperation), BSSSC, Baltic Development Forum, maybe also Baltic Chamber of Commerce, Baltic Sea Region University Network and similar research networks, and other macro-regional and European organisations.
- after identifying a limited number of key organisations, UBC should have separate working meetings with each one of them about practical cooperation. Maybe with some, we should have formal protocols of cooperation.

Raising of public profile and visibility of UBC (Strategy, Key task 8)

- a task force could be formed. Maybe linked also to the Communications and Marketing Strategy, although this has a wider and partly different focus.

Monitoring of strategy implementation (Strategy, Key task 9)

- Report on strategy implementation should be permanent issue on Executive Board meetings agenda, done by President, strategy coordinator and person/city responsible for specific tasks.

Responsibility for leading/overseeing preparation of above-mentioned Key tasks on behalf of the Executive Board could be assigned to nominated Presidium or Executive Board members. This would be in addition to city experts/commission secretariats who are in charge of the practical preparations, as agreed.

The real test of any strategy lies in its implementation.