

Union of the Baltic Cities 26 years (1991-2017)

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UBC ORGANS

UBC Commissions - projects, initiatives, events

General Conferences

There were 14 General Conferences organized in:

Gdańsk (19–20 September 1991)
 Kalmar (22–24 May 1992)
 Svetlogorsk (24–25 September 1993)
 Aarhus (8–9 December 1995)
 Gdańsk (12–13 September 1997)
 Stockholm (24-25 September 1999)
 Rostock (12–13 October 2001)
 Klaipėda (17–19 October 2003)
 Turku (29 September–2 October 2005)
 Pärnu (27–28 September 2007)
 Kristiansand (23–26 September 2009)
 Liepāja (5–6 October 2011)
 Mariehamn (1-4 October 2013)
 Gdynia (27–30 October 2015)
 Växjö (24–27 October 2017)

UBC Presidium

Presidents:

Anders Engström, Mayor of Kalmar
 Per Bødker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding

Vice-Presidents

Michael Bouteiller, Mayor of Lübeck

Vjacheslav Shcherbakov, Vice-governor of St. Petersburg
Andris Teikmanis, Mayor of Riga
Jaak Tamm, Mayor of Tallinn
Bartłomiej Sochański, Mayor of Szczecin
Armas Lahoniitty, Mayor of Turku
Eugenijus Gentvilas, Mayor of Klaipėda
Arno Pöker, Mayor of Rostock
Liisa Pakosta, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn
Gundars Bojars, Mayor of Riga
Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå
Aleksi Randell, Mayor of Turku
Laine Jänes, Mayor of Tartu
Jarkko Virtanen, Deputy Mayor of Turku
Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare
Andres Jaadla, Mayor of Rakvere
Taavi Aas, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn
Ando Kiviberg, Mayor of Viljandi

Executive Board

There were 80 Executive Board meetings in 56 cities. The Executive Board members were as follows:

Aalborg, Denmark
Aarhus, Denmark
Baltiysk, Russia
Bergen, Norway
Elva, Estonia
Gdańsk, Poland
Gdynia, Poland
Jyväskylä, Finland
Kaliningrad, Russia
Kärdla, Estonia
Kaunas, Lithuania
Keila, Estonia
Kemi, Finland
Klaipėda, Lithuania
Kotka, Finland
Kristiansand, Norway
Kronstadt, Russia
Kuressaare, Estonia
Lahti, Finland
Liepāja, Latvia
Lübeck, Germany
Næstved, Denmark
Panevėžys, Lithuania
Pärnu, Estonia

Pori, Finland
Rēzekne, Latvia
Riga, Latvia
Rostock, Germany
Šiauliai, Lithuania
St. Petersburg, Russia
Stockholm, Sweden
Sundsvall, Sweden
Tallinn, Estonia
Tartu, Estonia
Turku, Finland
Vaasa, Finland
Växjö, Sweden
Võru, Estonia

Board of Audit

Bartłomiej Sochański, City Councillor, Szczecin
Silvia Löbner, Head of Auditing Department, Wismar
Kim Roessel, Head of International Affairs Department, Copenhagen
Alfredas Lankauskas, City Councillor, Šiauliai
Ewa Back, Councillor, Västernorrland
Marta Chełkowska, Director of Tourism Department, Pomorskie Voivodship
Jukka Vilen, City Director, Kemi
Roger Kaliff, Chairman of the City Council, Kalmar

Secretariat

The UBC Secretariat has been located in Gdańsk, Poland since the foundation of the UBC in 1991.
Piotr Krzyżanowski and Paweł Żaboklicki have been the Secretaries General.

Commissions

1992-1993

Commission on Cultural Affairs
Commission on Environmental Protection
Commission on Telecommunication
Commission on Transportation
Commission on Social Affairs

1993-2011

Commission on Culture
Commission on Environment
Commission on Social Affairs (later Health and Social Affairs)
Commission on Telecommunication (later Communication)
Commission on Transportation

Commission on Sport (since 1995)
Commission on Tourism (since 1995)
Commission on Business Cooperation (since 1997)
Commission on Urban Planning (since 1998)
Commission on Education (since 1998)
Commission on Information Society
Commission on Youth Issues (since 2005, previously Network on Youth Issues established in 2003)
Commission on Energy (since 2006)
Commission on Gender Equality (since 2007, previously Women's Network)
Commission on Local Safety (since 2011, previously Local Safety & Public Order Working Group established in 2009)

Since 2015

Cultural Cities Commission
Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission
Planning Cities Commission
Safe Cities Commission
Smart and Prospering Cities Commission
Sustainable Cities Commission
Youthful Cities Commission
Working Group on Gender Equality

UBC STRATEGIES

To ensure the UBC goals and aims correspond with the changing political, economic and social circumstances in the region and in Europe, the UBC elaborated and implemented its strategies: 1999, 2003, 2010-2015, 2016-2021.

All documents underline the significant role of the local level in the regional and European development. The UBC has always been described as an organization that promotes and strengthens co-operation and exchange of experience among the cities in the Baltic Sea Region, takes care of common interests of the local authorities in the region, and acts on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and international bodies.

The UBC Strategy 2010-2015 was adopted at X UBC General Conference in Kristiansand, on 25 September 2009. Strengthening member cities' participation, energizing and streamlining the UBC commissions' work, working out the communication and marketing strategy and expert exchange programme have been the main tasks set for the Union by its new Strategy. Also, the evaluation of cooperation with other Baltic organisations and defining the key partners have been the Strategy goal.

New Commissions

The most significant outcome of this Strategy was the consolidation of the UBC Commissions. The goal of the new structure was to make UBC serve even better the interests of its members, as well as to ensure that UBC's voice is heard and interests taken into account in European decision-making.

Instead of twelve, there are now seven new Commissions: Cultural Cities, Inclusive and Healthy Cities, Planning Cities, Safe Cities, Smart and Prospering Cities, Sustainable Cities and Youthful Cities. There is also the Working Group on Gender Equality which acts horizontally.

UBC in Brussels

The UBC has been seeking the opportunities to strengthen the UBC position in Brussels in order to have a greater impact on EU decision-making processes. As many UBC member cities had their representations in Brussels, the need of their coordination to have a one but strong voice became obvious. The aim of the UBC's presence in Brussels was to lobby the cities' interests and Union's initiatives in Brussels more effectively, to increase UBC visibility among European institutions and to influence EU policies which had an impact on local authorities and to inform the member cities about EU funding opportunities, policies, initiatives and events.

More information in the separate point below 'UBC in Brussels'.

Task force on UBC development

At the meeting held on 17 June 2011 in Karlstad, the Executive Board decided to create the Task Force to go through UBC key documents i.e. Statute, Strategy, Internal Regulations, having in mind further development of the organization. The objective of the Task Force was to strengthen the organization by evaluating all relevant dimensions of the work and proposing changes when needed.

The Task Force was invited to find the ways and means to ensure that the UBC serves also in the future interests of its members in the best possible way.

The Task Force consisted of one city representative from each member state: Kärddla, Oskarshamn, Kristiansand, Næstved, Šiauliai, Jyväskylä, Gdańsk, Liepāja, Rostock, St. Petersburg. The Board nominated Strategy Coordinator as the chair of the Task Force.

At the Board meeting in Umeå on 8 March 2013 the report of the TF was presented. Its first part concentrated on the improvements needed in practical working methods. The second part gave recommendations for changes in UBC Statute and UBC Internal Regulations. The report was sent out to all UBC member cities for comments.

At the meeting in Kiel, 20 June 2013, the Board discussed in detail the Task Force report. Based on TF findings the Board worked out proposals of amendments in the Statute which were adopted at the General Conference in Mariehamn.

Evaluation criteria of the Commissions' work

To energize the UBC Commissions' work and optimize the use of resources, the common criteria for evaluation of their work have been formulated and presented at the Board meeting in Brussels 14 February 2012, finally adopted in Rakvere in May 2012. The UBC Commissions have been invited to submit the requested information to the secretariat. The amount of financial support to commissions in 2013 was based on this evaluation.

UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy

The UBC Strategy 2010-2015 was aimed at rising public profile of UBC. The new marketing and communication strategy, prepared by Tendensor AB, defined the goals, target groups, main stakeholders, messages to be communicated, channels to be used etc.

The strategy's goal was to help the organization to foster an efficient exchange and to make its voice heard in the BSR, Europe and beyond.

More information in the separate point below 'UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy'.

Guidelines for cooperation between UBC and Business Sector

At the Board meeting in Brussels, the guidelines for cooperation between UBC and Business Sector were approved.

The Business Sector has become more important as the role of business in generating employment and wealth through development has increasingly been recognized. The purpose of cooperation between the UBC and the Business Sector is to:

- promote the goals of UBC through cooperation with the Business Sector,
- ensure a more coordinated and strategic approach to business and industry,
- define the goals of cooperation with the Business Sector,
- minimize the risks to the UBC relations with the Business Sector,
- establish a transparent framework for relationship between the UBC and the Business Sector.

Cooperation with Baltic Sea organisations

Point 7 of the Strategy "Systematic cooperation with partners in BSR, on European level and internationally" called for more intensive and effective cooperation with the strategic partners in the region. UBC has been cooperating inter alia with Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Baltic Development Forum (BDF), Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet), Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR BSC) and others.

Baltic Development Forum is a business oriented Danish organisation with extensive international cooperation. The UBC representatives met with BDF several times to discuss areas of cooperation.

UBC and BDF has developed a project application for a "Baltic Urban Forum for Smart Cities". The aim is to establish a network for medium sized towns and cities to facilitate dialogue, experience sharing, learning and joint action on green technologies and innovations in urban areas.

Helle Bechgaard, Vice Chair of BDF, took part in the 67th UBC Board meeting in Kiel on 20 June 2013 where she presented the BDF-UBC areas of cooperation and highlighted the BDF recent activities. Also, BDF and former UBC Commission on Business have been actively cooperating. The Commission was the BDF partner in the so-called Baltic Business Arena, a matchmaking event for SME's organised as part of the BDF Summit.

Also, the cooperation with the BDF will result in the joint workshop “Digital Top of Europe” at the XIV General Conference in Växjö on 25 October 2017.

Examples of cooperation with other organisations are described further in this report.

UBC Strategy 2016-2021 was adopted at the UBC General Conference in Gdynia 29 October 2016.

The new Strategy framework defines why UBC is needed and why it should work regionally, how to continue renewal process, etc. Effective, proactive, representative UBC is needed to promote cooperation and exchange of experiences in different ways; defend and promote the interests of the cities, especially small and medium size ones; promote cities as drivers for smart and sustainable growth.

Among the tasks there was an effective functioning of the organization’s structures, by strengthening the capacity of Union’s organs, improving expertise in key policy areas (e.g. youth unemployment, migration); optimising the role of the secretariat. Another task was to improve UBC communication, visibility and outreach by the renewal of the logo, bulletin and website.

UBC COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING STRATEGY

The point no. 8 of the UBC Strategy 2010-2015, adopted at the X General Conference in Kristiansand, concerned rising public profile of UBC. It was decided new marketing and communication strategy shall be prepared to define the future actions, goals, target groups, stakeholders, channels for communication, etc.

At the Board meeting in Lahti in March 2011 the Task Force on communication and marketing was set up with Kristiansand and Kiel as coordinators. Tendensor AB, a Sweden-based consultancy, was hired to analyze the collected data and assist to elaborate the professional marketing strategy.

The strategy was presented and adopted at the Board meeting in Brussels on 14 February 2012. The Strategy was to help the organization to foster an efficient exchange and to make its voice heard in the BSR, Europe and beyond. The document defined the marketing and communication strategy of the UBC - goals, target groups, main stakeholders, messages to be communicated, channels to be used etc.

According to the Strategy the main goals of UBC communications and marketing are:

- Internal communications: Support the internal exchange and diffusion of ideas, inspiration and best practice within the UBC network of cities.
- Brand building: Establish UBC as a credible, future-oriented and relevant, leading Baltic Sea Region network, and a preferred partner in thematic issues that relate to e.g. urban development and city planning, sustainable cities, competitiveness of cities, social cohesiveness and integration etc.
- Lobbying: Help the UBC member cities to further their policy-advocacy goals vis-à-vis national government and the EU by leveraging its role as a major northern European network of more than 100 member cities.

- Marketing the BSR: Promote and market the Baltic Sea Region as a dynamic, competitive, prosperous and safe region.

The task force on implementing the strategy was set up to make concrete recommendations for strategy implementation. 14 participants from member cities, commissions, board of audit, secretariat took part in the meeting of the task force held in Gdańsk in April 2012 and discussed the ways of strategy implementation.

Communication Manager / Network

The Executive Board at the meeting in Turku, 2 June 2014, decided to engage the communication specialist to improve communication within UBC. Ms Irene Pendolin was engaged.

Plan of Action for UBC Communications and Marketing 2014–2015 included developing UBC website, possibility of creating UBC intranet – internal website, strengthening the UBC brand among internal and external stakeholders, being active in social media, renewing UBC logo, visualities, typography, appointing people responsible for communications from the commissions and the member cities.

UBC Communications Network was established in January 2015 with aim to share best practices and tools and provide a network for consultation and cooperation.

At the meeting in Rostock on 16 March 2016, the Board approved a new UBC logo.

On 15-16 April 2015 the Communications Seminar for representatives of the new commissions, cities' communication experts and other stakeholders was held in Turku. One of the issues discussed was the UBC website. The new UBC website was launched on 3 June 2016. The website was designed by advertising agency KMG from Turku.

Among the novelties there are:

- Carousel slides - UBC's top news and contents we wish to highlight
- "New at UBC" – changing newsfeed – news and events from the UBC and member cities
- "Lifts" – more static information, e.g. how to join the UBC and the work being done in the commissions
- "Footer" (at the bottom of all pages) – UBC's contact information and links.

The Baltic Cities Bulletin has also been renewed according to the new visual look of the UBC and other applications, e.g. new general brochure, new PowerPoint templates and roll-ups were produced.

The new UBC e-newsletter was launched on 3 March 2017. UBC is also present on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The UBC has been involved in the process of elaboration and implementation of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region since the beginning. The organization delivered several statements in 2008 and 2012 (also together with other Baltic organizations: BSSSC, B7, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Baltic Development Forum and Euroregion Baltic) focusing on the cities' role in the Strategy implementation

and governance. Cities are the closest political actors representing the interests of the citizens. This gives them a special role in the future strategy.

Since the EUSBSR objectives have been included in all INTERREG programmes in the BSR in 2014-2020, the UBC Executive Board at its meeting in Tampere on 18 March 2014 discussed the draft Operational Programme for 2014-2020 calling for more attention to the local level and better correlation between EUSBSR and the BSR Programme. UBC statement on the Operational Programme of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 was submitted to the Programme authorities on 28 March 2014.

The members cities and Commissions have been playing a vital role in the flagship projects, e.g. Sustainable Cities Commission has been a lead partner in project IWAMA, which has around 40 partners around the BSR, iWater, PRESTO and PURE projects, and a project partner in the BSR Innoship project. The Safe Cities Commission was a leader of CIFOSA (Citizens for Safety) project financed by EUSBSR Seed Money Facility.

The UBC representatives have been taking part in the EUSBSR forums. Since the Stockholm Forum in 2016, the UBC has been organizing its seminars during the Strategy Forums:

- At the 7th EUSBSR Annual Forum in Stockholm on 8–9 November 2016, the UBC co-organised two seminars:
 - "Cities and regions: Drivers or bystanders in Baltic Sea cooperation?"
The Cities and Regions seminar, held on 9 November, focused on cities and regions as key players in the Baltic Sea Cooperation. The panel, consisting of representatives from UBC cities, BSSSC and Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, agreed that the Baltic Sea Region shares the same problems but also solutions and that the wishful thinking and strategies should be transformed to concrete things that we can show e.g. for the youth.
Organisers: UBC and Land Brandenburg.
 - "Nothing about us without us – Sustainable and green future and prosperity, growth and jobs from a youth perspective".
The seminar, organized on 8 November, focused on involving in the discussion young people and politicians from local and regional level and so including a bottom up perspective on the Baltic Sea Region Vision 2030.
Organisers: BSSSC, UBC, Euroregion Baltic.
- At the 8th EUSBSR Annual Forum with the theme "Connectivity" in Berlin on 13–14 June 2017, the UBC co-organised altogether four seminars and back-to-back meetings before and during the Forum:
 - Youth Conference 2017
The Baltic Sea Region Youth Conference "Nothing about us without us" was held in connection with the EUSBSR Annual Forum on 12–13 June, preparing and supporting the youth seminar during EUSBSR Forum "Nothing about us without us – making it work!". The seminar and the Youth Conference were both organised together by UBC, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) and Euroregion Baltic (ERB).

The Youth Conference gathered almost 50 participants and focused on sharing good practices on youth involvement and empowerment at local and regional level in the BSR and on discussing different approaches to active youth involvement in all ten Baltic Sea countries. The programme included group work as well as presentations and discussions on good examples of youth participation from the BSR countries.

- Youth seminar “Nothing about us without us – making it work!”

The main topic was how to include young people in decision-making which raised energetic discussions on themes of democracy, political change and independence. In conclusion, young people should have genuine possibilities to affect their lives in their communities and be important partners in policy implementation – but young people themselves should also be active in participating in decision-making and working for a positive political and societal change.

- First Participation Day of the EUSBSR (see below)

- Smart water sector seminar

IWAMA as a EUSBSR flagship project together with Policy Area Nutri Coordinators organized a seminar “Smart water sector” that focused on capacity building and cross-border cooperation approaching them as contributing factors for the successful technology transfer in the water sector.

The seminar consisted of expert presentations and a discussion round among the panelists. Various groups working in the water field joined the session: from European level organizations to national knowledge centres and specific water companies and associations. Invited speakers provided various perspectives on the importance of the capacity development in water sector.

Horizontal Action “Capacity”

Since 2016, UBC has been one of the coordinators of the Horizontal Action (HA) “Capacity”. The other coordinators are the Baltic Sea NGO Network and the Swedish Institute.

A key factor of success for the EUSBSR is the integrated and coordinated governance of the Baltic Sea region, between sectors of society as well as between regional and local authorities, business, academia, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in the respective countries.

There are two tasks of this Horizontal Action. One of them is capacity building of people who work with the Strategy, helping them to acquire skills and knowledge how to work in the international cooperation. It’s made through funding the leadership programmes, mostly through the Swedish Institute. Many UBC representatives have already participated in such programmes.

The second task is promotion of involvement in the Strategy. The HA wants to promote, assist and mobilize participation of cities and regions, business, universities and all non-governmental actors in the Baltic Sea Strategy. The more society is involved the better. It’s planned to have one workshop during the UBC General Conference in Växjö devoted to this issue.

- Participation Day

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Horizontal Action Capacity and its coordinators, together with the states of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, organized the Participation Day on 13 June 2017, back-to-back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Berlin.

The event's aim was to enhance role of local actors and bottom-up approaches in the shaping of policy processes and practical implementation of Baltic Sea cooperation.

With around 70 participants from municipalities, civil society organisations and businesses, the Participation Day in Berlin concentrated on sustainable tourism development, education, research, employability and integration of refugees, involvement and cooperation as well as communications and networking. Highlights were to have local actors presenting project ideas, receiving feedback from Policy Area Coordinators and meeting potential partners. In Berlin, three Policy Areas/Horizontal Actions were present: education, tourism and capacity building.

- Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Programme 'Unboxing the Sandbox'

The Baltic Executive Programme "Unboxing the Sandbox" is a new leadership programme designed to help organisations unlock the full potential of transnational cooperation. The programme is initiated and funded by the Swedish Institute as part of its work with EUSBSR Horizontal Action Capacity. Development and recruitment has taken place together with the Norden Association, the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and the Union of the Baltic Cities.

The programme targets the local and regional level in the BSR; in particular senior elected officials (politicians) and the head of administrations (administrators), representing the strategic level of "owners", with the position to redesign existing governance structure that has endorsed the "sandboxing" of transnational cooperation. The "owners" – municipalities and regions – should have a better insight and overview of the projects, as this will give them a bigger influence on the projects and will contribute to the long lasting outcomes.

A result of this cooperation is that more than 15 UBC members enrolled in the pilot three module programme together with an equal number of representatives from regional bodies in the eight EU-member countries in the BSR. The first module took place in Warsaw (22–24 February 2016), the second in Riga (11–13 April 2016) and the final module took place in Tallinn (13–14 June 2016).

OBSERVER STATUS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

UBC was granted the observer status with Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) in 1993, Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) in 1994, Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 2004, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area (BSPC).

UBC has the strategic partner status in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). UBC has cooperation agreements with Eurocities and the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC). UBC has mutual membership with the Energy Cities.

UBC has links of cooperation with numerous Baltic and European organizations inter alia: Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Baltic Development Forum, Nordic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Baltic Sea Chamber of Commerce Association, B7 Baltic Islands Network, Baltic 21, Euroregion Baltic, VASAB, ICLEI, CECICN, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns, Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

COOPERATION WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (COR)

In 2004 UBC was granted with an observer status to the Committee of the Regions. Through the participation in the Committee of the Regions Plenary Sessions UBC has a chance to influence the work and policies of this important European Union institution. UBC President participates at CoR Plenary Sessions.

On 11 December 2008, UBC, BSSSC, and B7 signed a Declaration of common interest with Committee of the Regions for the years 2008-2011.

On 5 June 2012 the renewed declaration was signed for the years 2012-2015. The declaration of common interest set frames for cooperation between the CoR and five Baltic Sea organisations: BSSSC, B7 Islands, Euroregion Baltic, Euroregion Pomerania, UBC.

The declaration highlighted the following issues:

- Involvement of expertise in selected areas of interest of the Committee of the Regions
- Dialogue between the European Commission and the Associations of Regional and Local Authorities
- Participation in conferences and other activities organised respectively
- Joint activities in the field of communication and the mutual publicity of key events
- Joint efforts to strengthen regional participation in the Northern Dimension
- The development and realization of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region towards Europe 2020 Strategy: A common objective
- Regional response to economic crisis

BALTIC SEA ALLIANCE

The BSA initiative was launched in October 1996. BSA was an Internet based platform for cooperation and communication between Baltic organisations. The core of BSA consisted of three organizations i.e. UBC, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation and Baltic Chamber of Commerce Association.

UBC took responsibility for the server, the domain address and the development of the homepage. BSSSC was developing a "Partner Search Forum" and BCCA worked with the material for a marketing campaign.

COOPERATION WITH HELSINKI COMMISSION HELCOM

In 1992, in Helsinki, Ministers of Environmental Protection from Baltic States adopted The Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP). It was also adopted by countries lying within Baltic Sea catchment area: Belarus, Ukraine, Czech and Slovak Republics and financial institutions: World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Nordic Investment Bank, Nordic Environment Finance Corporation. The Program was the international environmental management framework for the long-term restoration of the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea. A Programme Implementation Task Force (PITF) coordinated the implementation of the JCP.

At the High Level Conference on Resource Mobilization in Gdańsk, 24-25.03.1993, the UBC President A. Engström declared Union readiness to take a responsibility for programme of expertise transfer through twin-city arrangements. In 1993 the UBC was officially nominated as a Lead Party in the implementation of the 2nd JCP element Institutional Strengthening and Human Resource Development.

Commission on Environment elaborated a comprehensive action plan with different elements under overall heading "Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme". The main target of proposed actions were the cities in the south-east countries of Baltic region, where environmental actions were most needed. The Commission decided to utilize twin-city model as organizational model for project implementation.

The Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme contained two main elements:

A. Project on Institutional Strengthening

The overall aim of this element was upgrading the expertise and capabilities of municipal institutions and enterprises and was realized through series of educational activities: seminars, conferences, training etc.

B. Baltic Municipal Environmental Audit (BMEA)

It was implemented jointly by the cities of Turku and Helsinki in Finland and Tallinn in Estonia. The aim was to develop a model for conducting environmental audits in Baltic cities. UBC used twin city model for project implementation.

SEMINARS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REFORM IN BALTIC STATES

The project involved five largest cities in Lithuania and four cities in Sweden. It started in 1995 with grant from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), and got additional grant from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALA).

The purpose of the project was to build long-lasting contacts between the Public Transport authorities in the Swedish and Lithuanian cities, and to support the change of public transport organization to sustainable and efficient system.

The project carried out a number of study visits and seminars in 1995-1996 in Lithuania and Sweden, which dealt with local and practical questions in connection with the transition of the responsibility of Public Transport from state to local level.

The Swedish government allocated 38,5 million SEK for upgrading public transport in cities in Lithuania and in Latvia.

UBC SOCIAL CHARTER

In 1999 Michael Bouteiller, former Vice-President of the UBC, made a draft of the social charter but it was not developed at that time. In March 2001, at the 30th meeting in Cesis, the Executive Board decided to create a working group led by the City of Rostock to prepare the draft of the UBC Social Charter by 25 May 2001. The Board authorized the city of Rostock, to appoint, together with the Presidium, other members of the group.

At the 31st Executive Board meeting in Malbork, June 2001, the Working group presented the first draft of the Charter. The Charter includes the social goals for the UBC and its member cities.

Charter shall be treated by the member cities as a guideline and it is up to each city to follow the UBC Social Charter.

The draft was sent for comments to the UBC member cities, which shared their opinions. The UBC Social Charter was adopted at the 6th UBC General Conference in Rostock in October 2001.

The Commission on Health and Social Affairs (H&SA) was authorized to make a working plan on Social Charter implementation in member cities. The Board accepted the plan.

The Charter was presented at some conferences, for example at the Baltic Sea Women's Conference 'WoMen and Democracy', 13-14 February 2003 in Tallinn.

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE IN BALTIC CITIES AWARD

In 1999 at the meeting in Lübeck, the Commission on Environment proposed to grant the UBC Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award. The intention with this award was to encourage member cities to develop their administration and services in innovative ways for the good of the whole municipality and its citizens.

The cities which were granted Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award:

- Tartu, 1999
- Gdańsk, 2001
- Cēsis, 2003
- Kaunas, 2005

- Växjö, 2007
- Umeå, 2009

BALTIC AGENDA 21 PROCESS

Baltic 21 (Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region) process was launched by the Baltic Ministers of Environment in Saltsjobaden, Sweden, in 1996. The Baltic 21 process was carried out by the CBSS Senior Officials Group (SOG) of which UBC was an official member. Since the beginning UBC took active part in this process. In the final Baltic 21 document the UBC is defined as one of the implementing organizations of the whole programme with a lead party responsibility over Joint Action 4: City Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Cities and Communities.

In 1998, Commission on Environment conducted LA21 Survey in UBC member cities. The survey produced basic knowledge about the stage of the LA21 work in the cities. Obtained information has been used in the planning of UBC LA21 work. See more in point UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme.

UBC AGENDA 21 / SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PROGRAMME

UBC Statute and Strategies define sustainable development to be one of the strategic objectives of the Union. For the implementation of this objective, General Conference in Klaipėda 2003, adopted Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004–2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities worked out by the Commission on Environment. The programme activities targeted five thematic 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 Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 1998, 2001, 2004/2005, 2006/2007 and 2009 were completed. Results of the surveys 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.

UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010–2015 was approved in the General Conference in Kristiansand, September 2009. This programme was created to face such challenges, as the poor state of the Baltic Sea, inefficient energy consumption and large energy dependency, climate change, ageing society, financial crisis. It focused on four sustainability processes, namely Awareness and Commitment, Management and Leadership, Management of Resources, Quality of Life.

UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 was adopted by the XIII UBC General Conference in October 2015 in Gdynia. The purpose of the programme is to guide the network towards development of a smart and sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

A number of projects have been implemented to reach the goals of the Programmes, e.g. SAIL, EMAS Peer Review Project, LVRAC, New Hansa of Sustainable Ports and Cities, PURE – Project on Urban Reduction of Eutrophication, NEW BRIDGES – Strengthening of Quality of Life through Improved Management of Urban-Rural Interaction, Solutions local, together, Alliance of Baltic Cities (ABC), Managing Urban Europe – 25. The majority of these projects gained the EU financial support from the European Regional Development Fund or specific EU programmes (e.g. LIFE).

STATEMENT AGAINST TRAFFICKING

The UBC Board, during its 45th meeting in Kaunas, February 2006, 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.

UBC MEMBER CITIES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (UBC-EU) PROJECT

The purpose of the UBC-EU project was to prepare the cities in the Baltic Sea Region for the EU expansion in the region. The project concerned such areas as: city administration, education, social sphere, labour market, environment etc.

The project steering group consisted of ten cities (Copenhagen, Kalmar, Tampere, Tallinn, Liepāja, Panevėžys, Kaliningrad, Szczecin, Rostock and Kristiansand) with Szczecin and Copenhagen as lead cities.

The group was responsible for project preparation and implementation including the assurance of project financing from external sources. The cities from applicant countries also took the obligation to disseminate the project experiences to all member cities in their countries.

Two seminars were carried out and a conference, open for all cities, took place in November 1997 in Tallinn. It was attended by 200 participants from over 30 member cities. One of the issues discussed at the UBC-EU conference was the document "Towards an urban agenda in the EU" published by the European Commission".

UBC-EU COORDINATOR

In 1996 the UBC engaged Juhan Janusson for the post of the UBC Project Manager, and since 1999 as UBC-EU Coordinator. His main tasks were elaboration and managing projects, for example UBC-EU project, investigation of existing European funds and programmes to look for funding for proposed projects, education of politicians, specialists and officials from member cities, establishment of UBC website. Mr Janusson also supported the UBC President in political issues, drafting e.g. conferences' resolutions, UBC positions, letters to the European Commission.

The salary of the Project Manager was covered by SIDA (Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency). The city of Kalmar provided the Project Manager with an office, telephone, fax etc. UBC covered his travel, hotel and conference costs. In 2001 he was engaged as project leader in UBC-LVRLAC cooperation project on consultation basis.

EU COORDINATORS NETWORK

In 1997 the city of Pärnu put forward the idea of building a network of EU coordinators in UBC member cities. The UBC-EU project carried out in 1996-1997 clearly showed the need for information on EU for local authorities.

The EU Coordinators Network was one of the outcomes of the UBC-EU project. The background to the project was the process of integration between the European Union and the transition countries in the Baltic Sea Region. In order to meet this challenge several cities installed EU coordinators in their staff. As the EU coordinators constituted an entirely new profession in local authorities, there was a great need to create a network in order to exchange information, experiences and know-how as regards project generation and funds raising for its implementation.

The EU Coordinators Network spread information about the EU funds and programs, supported the development of new projects, assisted with the preparation of applications to the EU and facilitated contacts with EU representatives. The network helped to find partners for new joint projects.

Meetings and seminars of the Network: Kalmar (June 1999), Tartu (January 2000), Vilnius (May 2000), Jēkabpils (September 2000), Kotka, (May 2001), Brussels (June 2001).

The lead cities of the Network were: Kalmar, Aalborg, and Rostock.

UBC-LVRLAC COOPERATION PROJECT

In 1999 Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) launched a project to help the cities from Lake Victoria region in Africa to strengthen their network. Within the frames of the project, SIDA covered the trip of President Engström and Chair of Commission on Environment Mikko Jokinen to Uganda and Kenya. UBC delegation had several meetings with the authorities of cities situated in the Lake Victoria region. President Engström signed a "Partnership Document" between UBC and Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation. SIDA asked if UBC could help to establish the secretariat of LVRLAC, providing necessary know-how. SIDA offered to cover all related expenses.

In 2000, Secretary General and UBC-EU Coordinator worked out the document indicating the areas of cooperation between UBC and LVRLAC. The document was signed in Uganda by the Presidents of both organizations.

All project costs were covered by SIDA. SIDA's remuneration for the UBC EU Coordinator's work within the project was transferred to the UBC budget.

The project duration was 3 years and the budget was 1.000.000 SEK per year. UBC acted as consultant in the project.

The project consisted of few sub-projects:

1. Study tour by LVRLAC to Baltic Sea Region. The study tour took place in April 2001. 15 high-level city decision makers from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania from LVRLAC visited Stockholm/Nacka, Turku, Kalmar and Gdańsk/Gdynia. The study tour concentrated on environmental protection issues. The group also visited UBC Secretariat in Gdańsk and Secretariats of the Commissions on Environment (Turku) and Sport (Gdynia) in order to learn about UBC structure and activities.

2. Functional internal communication. The overall purpose was to connect local authorities with Internet and supply Internet training. Magnus Ryden, Kalmar, visited Uganda, in order to prepare the basis for the communication and internet system to be used by LVRLAC.

3. Functional Secretariat. The aim was to assist LVRLAC to build up a local authorities network secretariat, located in Entebbe, Uganda. UBC transferred the knowledge about the work and tasks of the UBC secretariat. UBC also employed Christian Rietz for the project who worked at the LVRLAC Secretariat in Entebbe, Uganda.

4. Environment Pedagogic Centres (EPC). The purpose was to establish EPCs in the Lake Victoria region. Such centres are meeting places for nature, culture and new environment friendly technique. The first Center was opened in Kisumu, Kenya. UBC Project Leader was Guldbrand Skjönberg, co-chairman of UBC Commission on Environment.

5. Support for LVRLAC Women's Network. In February 2001 a seminar attended by women from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and delegates of UBC Women's Network, was organized. The UBC Project Leader was former UBC Women's Network Chair Hjördis Höglund.

Four representatives of the LVRLAC, among them the President and the Secretary General, took part in the VI UBC General Conference in Rostock, October 2001.

The 2nd phase of the project was taken over by the Commission on Environment – to give new dimension – environmental and sustainable one to the project.

UBC INTERREG III B INITIATIVE

In 2000 the UBC President Anders Engström set up a working group to work out a programme for cooperation between local and regional authorities in the Baltic Sea Region. The group prepared the document describing the initiative titled "BSIC - Baltic Subnational Initiative for Cooperation". The programme, to be financed by Interreg III strand B consisted of a bundle of projects, managed in the BSR. The proposed project sizes varied between 50.000 and 200.000 EUR.

This initiative was taken because in 2000 the main problem for cooperation on local level between east and west in the Baltic Sea Region was the lack of funding opportunities for multinational projects. In 1998 the European Commission terminated programmes funding such projects i.e. BSPF programme.

UBC sent out a questionnaire to all member cities asking cities to list the potential projects that could be funded within the programme. About 60 project proposals were received. President Engström asked all Board members to send a letter to the ministries responsible for Interreg III or Phare CBC in each country informing about UBC initiative and asking to secure finances (from Interreg III B / Phare CBC budgets) for projects to be carried out within UBC initiative.

The UBC President took up the matter at CBSS meetings as well as in Brussels. "The voices from the BSR" were heard in Brussels. In October 2000 the European Commission adopted a document named "Phare 2000 review - Strengthening Preparations For Membership" prepared by Gunther Verheugen, EU Commissioner on Enlargement.

Mr Verheugen introduced two possibilities for small and medium sized cooperation projects between local and regional authorities. The first was connected to Interreg III B, and the second was a new twinning scheme. In the BSR, accession countries participation in the Interreg III B projects was to be financed by Phare. Also the maritime borders in the BSR were eligible for funding.

NORTHERN DIMENSION ACTION PLAN

In 2001-2003 Council of the Baltic Sea States coordinated the work among BSR actors of creating the 2nd Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-06.

In 2001 CBSS Committee of Senior Officials sent a letter to major Baltic organizations asking for the list of concrete projects which would comply with the EU Northern Dimension policy. CBSS wanted to compile the list of proposed projects and send it to the European Commission.

Following this request a questionnaire was sent to the UBC Commissions and member cities asking for concrete project proposals. The large number of projects was proposed and the list of projects was forwarded to CBSS. In January 2002, UBC was invited to the special CBSS CSO session in Brussels, devoted to the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan. UBC submitted statement at the meeting. UBC was one of organizations which assisted CBSS in compiling the list of priorities and project.

Later on UBC actively contributed with opinions both when the draft document was created as well as giving opinions on the EU document on the Northern Dimension.

UBC ANTENNA OFFICE IN BRUSSELS

In 2005 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 had their representations in Brussels, the need of their coordination to have a one but strong voice became obvious. The city of Stockholm in the framework of the Stockholm Region Office offered to function as UBC antenna office in Brussels. The aim was to lobby the UBC cities' interests and Union's initiatives in Brussels more effectively, to increase UBC visibility among European institutions and to influence EU policies which had an impact on local authorities and to inform the member cities about EU funding opportunities, policies, initiatives and events.

On 6 December 2006 the official inauguration of the UBC Representation in Brussels took place. The UBC Antenna Office hosted by the Stockholm Region Office offered administrative support desk for the UBC members who could use it when staying in Brussels. The Antenna offered also contact list databases in relation to thematic areas linked to UBC priorities, promotion of the UBC in publications, such as a thematic newsletter, on the internet and by the communication policy.

Among the activities of the Antenna there were:

- information on major policy issues to be discussed by the EC in 2007
- proposal from UBC EU-coordinators Network (led by EiZ Rostock) on corporate participation of UBC member cities in the Open Days in Brussels in 2009
- information about Baltic cities & regions contribution to the process of creation the new EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- preparing the draft of the UBC position paper on the new Baltic Sea Strategy

STATEMENT ON DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

At the General Conference in Klaipėda, 18 October 2003, UBC adopted the resolution appealing to the European Commission for regular consultations with local authorities associations, on EC policies which affect local authorities.

In January 2004 Commissioner Michel Barnier sent a letter to UBC informing that on 19 December 2003 the Commission adopted a communication on "Dialogue with associations of regional and local authorities on the formulation of EU policy". In this communication the EC proposed to give the regional and local representatives an opportunity of expressing their views – via their associations – during annual hearings which would concentrate on the Commission's annual work programme, and the major policy initiatives that have a significant regional and local impact.

UBC and Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) sent a joint statement to the European Commission expressing their views on proposed consultation procedures. In the statement we stressed that a genuine dialogue can only be established if all various partners have the possibility not only to react to but also to initiate subjects for discussion. It is essential that regional and local authorities are able to obtain information and exchange points of view before decisions are taken.

UBC and CAAC also underlined to the Commission that not only the national organizations should be heard in this dialogue (which is stated in the draft of the new EU treaty) but also organizations like ours. Both organizations also welcomed an opportunity to meet the Commission on regular basis and at the same time we expressed our opinion that organizations should not only be informed about EU policies but also should be given an opportunity to influence these policies.

The UBC - CAAC reaction was noted in Brussels. Director General of Regional Policy replied in a letter that annual meetings "will offer the opportunity to the associations to inform the Commission about the expectations of their members concerning the development of EU policies". The joint UBC-CAAC statement proved that acting together make our voice stronger in Brussels.

The first dialogue meeting between the EC and the representatives of local and regional authorities was organized by President Romano Prodi in May 2004 in Brussels. The meeting was attended by 150-200 representatives of the most important European organizations. Mr Prodi made a short statement confirming the European Commission's will to establish a dialogue with local and regional organizations. UBC also participated in the second dialogue meeting held in Brussels in February 2005 at the invitation of CoR President Peter Straub and Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND COHESION POLICY – STATEMENTS

The First Cohesion policy forum in Brussels on 23 February 2004, was organized by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and EUROCITIES. UBC Vice-President Gundars Bojars, Mayor of Riga, represented UBC at the forum. Michel Barnier, Commissioner in charge of Regional Policy and Institutional Reform presented the draft proposal of the EU budget for the period 2007-2013

In December 2004, on the UBC initiative, the major Baltic Sea organizations namely B7 Baltic Islands Network, BSSSC, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and UBC sent the joint statement to the European Commission on the objective 3 of the reformed cohesion policy from 2007 – 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 is introduced. The aforementioned Baltic Sea organizations considered that the maximum distance of 150 km of maritime border - to be eligible to obtain funding for cross-border projects – was counter-productive to the very idea of strengthening the territorial cooperation and therefore they objected to it.

The organizations expected from the European Commission a more flexible approach taking into account existing cooperation in various fields between the partners on both sides of maritime border as well as historical, social, cultural and economic factors which justify cooperation across larger distance than mentioned above.

In January 2005 the EC replied - in the letter from the Director in DG General Regional Policy Ronald Hall – that the Commission intended to introduce 150 km threshold for the cross-border strand and that multilateral maritime cooperation would make more sense under the transnational strand.

In March 2005 the President sent the statement also to all prime ministers of ten Baltic Sea countries. UBC hoped that all Baltic Sea governments would strongly take up this issue during the negotiations on the new cohesion policy 2007-2013. The Executive Board members contacted respective PM's cabinets and ministries in their countries and urged them to raise this problem in Brussels.

During the April 2005 session of the Committee of the Regions UBC Board member Maciej Lisicki spoke to the Commissioner on Regional Policy Danuta Huebner about the 150 km limit for maritime border. Ms Huebner supported UBC statement and promised to take up this issue in the European Commission.

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 lied 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 organizations had brought fruits - a Cross-border Cooperation Programme for the Southern Baltic 2007-2013 was established. The approach of the European Commission concerning the 150 km didn't change but the solution was Bornholm which is located less than 150 km 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".

CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN TRANSPORT & MARITIME POLICY

In 2001 the European Commission presented a White Paper on European transport policy.

In the EU policy on transportation described in the Trans European Network (TEN), the ferry lines, vital for the BSR, were not included. The policy included roads, railways and telecommunications but no ferry lines. In 2002 the government of Finland proposed the initiative called "Baltic Sea Motorways".

In 2002 UBC issued statements on the White Paper and on Trans European Network, in order to get greater EU attention on the BSR transportation problems.

In the beginning of 2004 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. UBC shared the opinion that modern port and land transportation infrastructure coordinated with maritime transport was crucial for further development of the BSR.

The Executive Board decided to create a task force on logistics responsible for preparing the UBC policies on the corridors system in the BSR. The task force was led by Turku and Riga. Christian Ramberg, Director of the Port of Turku, was the Chairman of the task force. Several seminars and expert meetings were organized in order to prepare the draft of the UBC maritime logistics policy paper.

In 2004 UBC received the European Commission's consultation document on "Motorways of the Seas" concept to be financed through the revised Trans-European Network Transport Guidelines (TEN-T).

Transportation and maritime logistics corridors in the BSR was one of the main themes of the UBC General Conference in Turku, 2005. One of the conference forums was devoted to this topic, as well the Baltic Cities Bulletin no 1/2005.

The Task Force on Logistics prepared the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper, which was a uniform policy that covered 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 paper went through the consultation process with the UBC member cities. The UBC Executive Board, at its meeting in St. Petersburg in June 2006, adopted the UBC Maritime Logistics Policy Paper.

The paper was sent out to the other European organizations and institutions and to the ministers of transport of the Baltic Sea countries. In the replies of the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and Commissioner Joe Borg, the UBC was strongly encouraged to contribute to the Green Paper on future European Maritime Policy.

In June 2006 the European Commission published the Green Paper "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas". The Green Paper was prepared by seven Commissioners from seven different areas - industry and enterprises, transport, environment, regional policy, fisheries and maritime affairs, research and energy.

At the 46th UBC Board meeting in St. Petersburg, June 2006, the Board decided to start the work on the UBC contribution to the Green Paper on EU Maritime Policy, on the basis of the UBC Policy on Maritime Logistics. In summer 2006 the first Baltic Sea consultation conference on the Green Paper with the commissioner Joe Borg was organized in Turku. Aleksi Randell, UBC Vice President, made a speech on behalf of UBC at the conference on European Maritime Policy, Kiel, September 2006. In June 2007, at Turku days in St. Petersburg, there was a seminar about the maritime policy. It was the first consultation between the EC and Russia authorities on maritime policy.

The UBC position paper on EU Maritime Policy was introduced at the Board meeting in Gävle in March 2007.

The document stressed the necessity of formulating the coherent maritime policy towards all sea areas within the EU. Having a rich experience, UBC 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, UBC wanted 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.

In April 2007 UBC contribution was sent to the Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Joe Borg and to the EC Maritime Policy Task Force. The European Commission thanked UBC for its valuable contribution.

The European Commission published, on the basis of wide consultation, on 10 October 2007, a paper entitled "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union", also known as the "Blue Book". European Heads of State and Government, in their conclusions of the European Council on 14 December 2007, welcomed the Commissions' proposals, thus giving the birth of a new integrated European Maritime Policy.

UBC Bulletin 2/2008 was devoted to the theme "Cities towards the new European maritime policy". 25 cities submitted the articles on the port investments, new projects connected with the environment, tourism, etc.

UNITAR-UBC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The representatives of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) were present at the VIII UBC General Conference in Turku, 2005. UNITAR provides training in various fields inter alia in the field of environment. UNITAR 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 included 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 was opened in 2006.

RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMENTS ON THE EC GREEN PAPER 'ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN EUROPE - OPTIONS FOR EU ACTION'

UBC Resolution on Climate Change was adopted at the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu 2007. The resolution recognized the importance of cities and local authorities as key players in the Baltic Sea Region in planning and implementing relevant actions to reduce harm and unwished effects of climate change. The resolution stressed that it is possible to combine increased welfare for our citizens and economic progress for our local companies with better energy efficiency and reduced emissions.

UBC encouraged its member cities to take all necessary steps to reduce their harmful contribution to the climate change and to make plans for adaptation to effects that are already foreseen in the cities. UBC shall promote strategies, development projects, partnerships and educational activities to minimize the negative effects of the climate change (floods, storms, infrastructure and water supply problems) and to ensure as friendly and safe environment as it is possible.

In 2007 the European Commission adopted an initial policy paper on climate change "Adapting to climate change in Europe - Options for EU action". The document emphasized the dual challenge to be faced - necessity of substantial cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and the need to adapt to the changing climate conditions.

Together with CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, UBC responded to the EC Green Paper generally acclaiming the initiative. The Union, however, believed that the local authorities are at the forefront when dealing with the consequences of climate change, therefore, it appealed for the local perspective in the EU approach. The UBC urged the Commission to recognize the importance of local and regional authorities and existing regional groupings in developing and delivering climate change adaptation measures, and to recognize the need to provide them with the powers to enable them to develop adaptation strategies. The UBC also proposed that EU should support the local authorities and regions in how they can inform, educate and support their citizens.

As regards the EC proposals, the Union agreed that a swift transition to a low-carbon economy needs to be the top priority on the political agenda. The UBC suggested including the energy production and distribution grids in rural and sub-urban areas in the action plan. Taking the fragile marine environment of the Baltic Sea into account, the UBC called for more firm actions to reduce the pollutants from waste water treatment plants.

Being aware of the complexity of the process, UBC agreed with the Commission's opinion that a "one-size-fits-all" is a non-appropriate approach. The EU should recognize the external dimension and build alliances with partners around the world.

URBAN MOBILITY – CONTRIBUTION TO THE EC GREEN PAPER ON URBAN TRANSPORT MOBILITY PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORT PLANNING (2008)

The European Commission published in 2007 a Green Paper on Urban Mobility (Transport). At the same time the UBC Commissions on Environment & Transportation were implementing a project BUSTRIP promoting the Sustainable Urban Transport Planning methods. UBC decided to contribute to the green paper through this project, recommending Sustainable Urban Transport Planning (SUTP) in

cities across Europe which aimed at improving the state of the urban environment, and reducing urban sprawl, traffic and pollution. The EC communication on the Thematic Strategy for the Urban Environment confirmed the preparation of SUTPs as an important cornerstone in the de-coupling of economic growth and transport growth in cities.

The UBC BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation & Planning) project was one of the first European projects to test, further develop and implement the concept in concrete.

As a follow up the EC Directorate General for Energy and Transport invited UBC to participate in the consultations on the Action Plan, which followed the green paper. UBC sent a reply to the DG TREN with suggestions to the action plan. UBC reply submitted in March 2008 stated inter alia:

- UBC advises to prepare and promote a guide for comprehensive mobility plans for urban areas.
- UBC sees the target of reduced need for transport as a crucial part of sustainable urban mobility development.
- Concerning the Public Transport, UBC observes the need to raise the profile of public transport in Europe, but especially in the new member states.
- It's necessary to promote the clean vehicles through setting standards and by showing a good example. One of the suggested by UBC actions is to act for local production of fuel especially from waste.
- UBC emphasizes the big role of information and awareness rising. There is a need for information of the impact on the environment and society of different mobility choices.

EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY CHARTER

UBC decided to join the European Road Safety Charter (ERSC) and signed the agreement in July 2009. More than 1200 institutions had signed this charter by 2009.

ERSC is an undertaking of Directorate-General for Energy and Transport of the European Commission. The Charter includes 10 general principles referring to road safety prevention measures and a concrete commitment which a signing organization is obliged to fulfil within the consecutive three years. The commitments could include for example road safety campaigns, publication of road safety information, provision of driving courses for employees, elaboration of a road safety plan or improvement of the infrastructure etc.

UBC as a Charter signatory declared within its commitment to perform activities aiming at popularization of the road safety rules among UBC member cities and to strive to raise awareness of all traffic participants. The presentations of the Charter was included in the annual meetings and seminars of the Commission on Transportation. There were also articles in the UBC Baltic Cities Bulletin.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CROSS-BORDER AND INTERREGIONAL CITIES NETWORK (CECICN)

The Conference of European Cross-Border and Interregional Cities Network (CECICN) was established in April 2010 in Santiago de Compostela by six organisations: Iberian Network of Cross-border Entities (RIET), Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, MedCities, Mission Operationelle Transfrontaliere, Union of the Baltic Cities, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities. This European conference gathers now nine cross-border and interregional city networks, representing more than 500 cities in Europe, situated both at internal and external borders of the European Union, which is 37% of the EU population.

One of the main aims of the network is to provide cities, border-regions and interregional territories with a stronger voice and higher visibility in the context of the cohesion policies at the European scale.

In 2011-2013 CECICN concentrated its work on the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. In 2011 it delivered statements on the 2014-2020 programming period and on the Report on Cohesion.

Per Bødker Andersen, President of the UBC was elected CECICN President in March 2012.

On 25-26 June 2012 the Congress on Smart Cooperation was held in A Coruña, Spain. Nearly 400 participants took part in the meeting. UBC was not only one of the main organizers, but was also responsible for carrying out a workshop. The topic was “Cooperation contributing to Smart Growth”.

In 2014 Per Bødker Andersen was unanimously re-elected as the CECICN President. The Political Board has nominated Wolfgang Schmidt, Kiel, Chair of UBC Smart and Prospering Cities Commission as Secretary General of CECICN in 2015-2016.

In 2014 the network handed two position papers (DG REGIO and DG MARKT), visited Territorial and Urban Unit at DG REGIO and participated in public consultations on budget, roaming fees, urban agenda and EU2020 Strategy.

In April 2015, CECICN supported the REPLICATE Project to boost a coherent urban development in Europe in the field of renewable energy and thus contribute towards the ambitious targets fixed by the EU in this area.

For the period 2014-2020 in the EU, the network aims to stimulate cross-border and interregional cooperation and to foster the consolidation process of the EU.

JOINT POSITION PAPER ON THE EUROPEAN UNION BUDGET FOR COHESION POLICY 2014-2020

In 2010, BSSSC, B7 Baltic Sea Islands Network, UBC, prepared a joint position paper on the European Union budget for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 emphasizing the fact that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea needed to be backed up financially. The financial support should be substantial in order to ensure a joint and coordinated approach to the development of the Baltic Sea region. The document underlined the role of the cities and regions as the engines of growth. It pointed out that the EU budget for Interreg cooperation was closely linked with the macro regional strategies and should be given high

consideration over the current budget period. The Interreg programmes give great opportunities to small, medium sized and major actors being active partners in international cooperation.

The organizations called for simplified management and control systems, e.g. instead of having different rules for each single programme, standard solutions should be made available. The paper paid attention to the need to adapt the programme to the new challenges facing Europe, for example climate change, globalisation, demographic changes, and energy challenges. The paper was sent to the EU commissioner for regional policy as well as to the budget commissioner.

POSITION PAPER ON STRUCTURAL FUNDS REGULATIONS 2014-2020

The Board adopted the position paper on structural funds regulations 2014-2020 at its 63rd meeting in Brussels in 2012.

The document welcomed the fact that the Europe 2020 Strategy put a special emphasis on the cities and urban policies, since the role of cities, as regional engines, is crucial for the achievement of 2020 goals. UBC was of the opinion that the urban policies should include cities of all sizes. Also, the UBC stressed a stronger involvement of competent local and regional authorities in shaping and implementing structural programmes. Competent city authorities should be treated as equal partners with the managing authorities when preparing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating the Structural Funds programmes. According to the Union, it was necessary to ensure a real introduction and implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. UBC found the principle of multilevel governance especially important and stressed that city authorities must be involved directly in the process nationally and regionally to define, develop and implement the partnership contracts. This is of utmost importance for effective multi-level governance, efficient use of resources and for ensuring more value for money.

BSR URBAN FORUM FOR SMART CITIES

UBC Board together with Smart City Lab in Tartu and city of Turku took the initiative to prepare a concept for a “Baltic Sea Region Urban Forum for Smart Cities”. It was launched at the UBC General Conference in Mariehamn. The project idea was discussed at the initiative group workshop on 19-20 January 2014 in Tartu, Estonia.

The project received approval and financial support by the Seed Money Facility of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The project aim was to enable urban areas in the Baltic Sea Region to move beyond “pockets of smartness” to become genuinely smart, by establishing a regional platform for capacity building and knowledge exchange. Key challenges identified and addressed included: - How to make a green transition towards smart and sustainable societies? - How to boost innovation and cooperation with the private sector? - How to engage citizens to those processes?

BUF was intended to collect the cities' needs and interests in relation to the challenges that the cities face. The platform would have served as a systematic tool for bringing together cities and countries that share a common issue with existing knowledge, experience and innovations, thereby creating dialogue on consensus-based or ad hoc topics.

TASK FORCE ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND WELL-BEING

UBC General Conference in Mariehamn, 1–4 October in 2013, decided to establish a Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-being.

The first meeting of the TF was held on 17 March 2014 in Tampere. Matti Mäkelä, City of Turku, Chair of the TF, introduced its results at the Board meeting on 18 March in Tampere. It was decided that all the UBC cities involved in the TF would provide an overview on challenges, good practices and innovations/new ideas in their cities/regions on following themes:

- guidance and support
- flexible educational paths
- cooperation between different actors
- participation
- taking special groups into account
- other services that prevent social exclusion

The TF continued its work in Turku on June 2014 and in Karlskrona on October 2014. As a result of these two meetings an interim report of the TF was published. It was divided in three sections:

- statistics from different countries and cities
- where are we now? where will we be tomorrow?
- where the magic happens (true success stories)

The Report showed that in most UBC countries youth unemployment rates have raised during the last years due to the well-known problems in European and global economy. However, there were also many reasons for optimism; for instance, multivocational co-operation, guidance and support and many other services are extremely functional in many UBC cities. These practices are vital in supporting the well-being of youngsters and ensuring the availability of the future's work force when the economy finally turns to better.

By the meeting on 29-30 January 2015 in Riga, 22 experts representing 14 UBC cities contributed to the work providing the answers and solutions to the top 7 questions:

- 1) How to motivate youngsters? Tools and methods
- 2) How to promote social entrepreneurship and social economics?
- 3) How to recognize and validate skills of the youngsters?
- 4) New ways for guidance and support of Immigrant-youngsters that arrived in their teens
- 5) How we can use new technology more efficiently in guidance, support and education?
- 6) Steps from ill-being to well-being and employment
- 7) How we help the system to become more diversity-friendly?

The final work on the report was carried out at the 6th meeting of the Task Force in Espoo, Finland, on 15-16 September 2015.

After 6 meetings, 27 experts from 15 UBC member cities in 6 countries worked out the final report called 'Good, The Bad and The Next Practices'. The report serves as a handbook for professionals and others interested in the topic. It presents concrete suggestions, raises questions to be solved in the future and is a valuable tool to combat youth unemployment and marginalization.

In February 2016 the report was sent out by secretariat to all kind of stakeholders, including respective ministries, EU institutions, international organisations. Publication received very positive responses and proposals of cooperation in this important field.

In March 2017, the TF started a cooperation with the EUSBSR Flagship School to Work (S2W). The Flagship aims to strengthen transnational cooperation between stakeholders in the BSR in the field of education and works in order to prevent early school leaving and to develop new support methods for vulnerable groups of students/youth, specifically NEETs and newly arrived refugees.

The Flagship has created a common platform of understanding and learning, and dissemination of different successful methods to deal with the issues around drop outs and NEETs. Moreover, it arranges study visits and workshops, and supports cooperation and creation of the new joint projects.

The Flagship is coordinated by SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). At the moment there are 57 members from the Baltic Sea Region. UBC TF on Youth Employment and Turku's education division coordinate the Knowledge Platforms of Early School Leaving and Newly Arrived Refugees. Knowledge platform's main idea is to support projects and other development work among the main target group, youth at risk of dropping out from education and labour market. Measures are divided under two titles: Support and Development.

CONFERENCE "IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN REFUGEES CRISIS IN THE CITIES OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION", ROSTOCK, 14-16 MARCH 2016 AND A FOLLOW-UP

Upon the initiative of the city of Rostock and the UBC, the Conference "Impact of the European Refugees Crisis in the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region" was organized in Rostock, on 14-16 March 2016. The conference discussed the role of municipalities, focused on best practices and analysed the needs, challenges and the chances faced by the cities. The conference gathered together around 70 civil servants from the region. The prominent speakers, representing the European and regional organizations, e.g. the Committee of the Regions, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the German Government and the Parliament, as well as the UBC cities, presented their experiences, challenges and also best practices and solutions on how to use the potential that the refugees bring to the cities. Attitude of the host society and its involvement in the reception of refugees, education, labour and co-operation with NGOs seem to be the key elements for good integration.

The UBC adopted a resolution "Refugees - a challenge and a chance for the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region" during the conference. The resolution calls after solidarity between EU countries and states

that the UBC cities take the massive immigration not only as a challenge but also as a chance for further development – all inhabitants contribute to the local well-being.

The UBC Executive Board, that held its meeting on 16 March in Rostock, authorised the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss how UBC could follow the results of the conference on refugees in Rostock and promote exchange of know-how between the member cities in question.

Presidium created a Task Force led by the City of Rostock.

The Task Force met in Kaunas on 6 June 2016. The meeting was attended by representatives of the cities of Rostock, Naestved, Kaunas, Turku, Växjö and the Secretary General.

The proposals of the TF in Kaunas were as follows:

- to have some practical meetings, where cities could share knowledge. Cities are so full of work, but everybody needs this fresh input to see how the others solve the problems
- to have a space on the UBC website to discuss, debate, bring proposals and share ideas
- actions of the Task Force should be seen also by the political levels.

UBC and City of Rostock will hold the follow-up conference on "Integration of War Refugees on our Civil Society - Goal, Challenges, Status, Outlook" on 12-14 March 2018.

After two years Baltic Sea cities will have a chance to discuss what has been achieved in such areas as language and school education, vocational training, access to labour market and health system, reunification of families, integration with local society / prevention of exclusion etc.

UBC AND CDP

At the 76th UBC Executive Board meeting in Kaunas in June 2016 a proposal to sign Memorandum of Understanding between UBC and CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project) was presented.

The cities are advised to take climate change aspects into consideration in their entire decision making, e.g., in urban planning, mobility planning, energy related actions (efficiency, production) and buildings. Many UBC cities indeed efficiently seek to take the leadership in becoming climate-smart, decreasing their greenhouse gas emissions and using renewable energy sources efficiently. CDP strives constantly to build new knowledge and is interested in the Climate Leadership examples of BSR cities. The reporting system of CDP will also benefit from having more BSR cities using it.

The proposed co-operation would – utilizing UBC's network and CDP's reporting system, database and knowledge – produce a state-of-the-art report on strategic Climate work and Leadership in Baltic Sea region cities. This would be prepared for by involving more BSR cities to report for CDP and then by utilizing the analytical tools of CDP registry for studying the strategic leadership and key actions of these cities.

The President signed the memorandum in Stockholm, 9-10 November 2016. The invitations were sent to the cities in February 2017. During the spring-summer 2017, cities have been reporting their findings

to CDP and UBC. So far, the following UBC cities responded: Aarhus, Johvi, Hiiu, Pärnu, Tartu, Lahti, Turku, Espoo, Helsinki, Greifswald, Jelgava, Riga, Šiauliai, Kristiansand, Arendal, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Visby, Malmö, Umeå.

BALTIC CITIES BULLETIN

Since 1996, 43 issues of the Baltic Cities Bulletin have been published.

Each number is devoted to the special theme, e.g. sustainable development, culture, youth and gender issues, safety, etc. The Bulletin has often been a response to the processes or events of the global or European scope, like economic crisis, refugees influx, but also it has corresponded with the regional challenges. Moreover, for the UBC Commissions the Bulletin has been an excellent platform for promoting their areas of interests. At the same time the cities have been offered a great opportunity to share their experiences, present achievements, projects, initiatives, etc.

Moreover, each bulletin brings information on latest UBC meetings and activities, news from the member cities and more.

The Bulletin has been published twice a year. It has been distributed all around the Baltic Sea Region to over 200 Baltic cities and numerous key organizations and institutions, including the EU. Since spring 2017, only online version has been available.

All Bulletins are available at: <http://ubc.net/publications>

UBC COMMISSIONS - PROJECTS, INITIATIVES, EVENTS

Commission on Business Cooperation/ Smart and Prospering Cities Commission

- Economic Statistical Information leaflet
- Technology Parks and Business Incubators 2002
- "How to develop successful technology parks/business incubators" project
- BalMet Promo project 2010-2012
- Creative Ports 2015-
- Exchanges for All 2017

Meetings on e.g.

- "Support of local business" and "e-city" 2002
- "E-dimension: Public and Private partnership" 2003
- "To meet, to learn, to socialize" 2005
- Meetings on implementation and management of Science and Technology Parks 2011-2013
- Talent Attraction Forum 2014
- UBC Baltic Sailing Camp 2014
- Innovation Ecosystems 2016
- Attractive Cities 2016
- From a growing into a great city 2017

Commission on Communication

- Developing Internet solutions for the UBC members

Commission on Culture / Cultural Cities Commission

- The International UBC Art & Culture Festival, Kaliningrad, 1993. Motto: "Unity through rebirth"; Kaliningrad, 1994; Szczecin, 1995.
- Catalogue of cultural institutions in UBC towns
- Calendar of international culture events in UBC towns

Projects:

- Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art
- ArtGenda
- Baltic culture magazine "Mare Articum" 1997-2003
- N.E.W.S. - the contemporary art exhibition 1999-2000
- Metropolis exhibition 2005
- International Choir Festival, 2000
- Cultural Prize 2006-2013
- The Festival of the Baltic cities 2006, 2007, 2008
- Exchange program 2011-13
- Midnordic Culture Days 2014
- Culturability BSR seminars 2014-2017
- Meetings of the EUSBSR PA Culture 2016-2017

Annual meetings / sessions devoted to:

- "Freedom of Expression-Information-Libraries" 1996,
- "Culture Education in Latvia and the Significance of International Collaboration in Music and Art Education" 2002,
- "Museums, Galleries, Artists Run Spaces in the Baltic Cities. Innovative Forms of Social Communication" 2003,
- "The Role and Value of the Museums in the Modern World" 2005,
- "Cultural Festivals as Strengtheners of Local Identity" 2006,
- "European means for cultural cooperation" 2007,
- Cultural Dimension of Baltic Cooperation – Developing Creative Industries 2009;
- Role of Culture in City planning 2010,
- Culture as a tool for social inclusion 2012,
- Cities in transformation – joint meeting with Commission on Urban Planning 2013,
- Cultures of Sustainability in Baltic Cities 2016,
- Connections between culture, education and new technologies 2016,

Commission on Education

Projects

- "Meeting Point of Different Cultures", 2001-2004
- "Summer School for potential researchers in the field of aquatic ecology", 2003-2005

- Erken Laboratory Summer School 2001-2012
- “Youth Democracy project Life, Media and Participation – Youth in the Baltic Sea Region” 2012-2013
- Photo competition "My Friend in My City" 2006, 2008
- Conference "What kind of guidance need the youngsters?" 2007
- “Small Town Inhabitants - Educated or Uneducated People?” competition 2009
- Qualified Vocational Education seminar 2009
- Nature school network 2010
- Youth Week of Entrepreneurship „How an active youngster becomes a young entrepreneur“ 2012
- Research „Youngsters – Young Entrepreneurs?“ 2012
- Electronic handbook for creative industry of young people 2013

Commission on Energy / Sustainable Cities Commission

Projects:

- Joint Energy and Climate Platform of the BSR Organisations (2009)
- Cooperation in the framework of Joint Energy and Climate Platform of the BSR Organisations
- LED – Light in Public Space project 2009-2012
- Other projects: ITEST (Increased Total Efficiency in Sewage Treatment) 2010-2012
- EEMTE (Energy Efficiency in Municipality – Training and Exchange of experience)
- RENSOL (Renewable Energy Solutions) 2011-2014

Meetings, jointly with other commissions:

- The commissions on Energy, Environment, Transport and Urban Planning on “Re-vitalize the city for sustainability”, Halmstad 2012
- The commissions on Energy, Environment and Transport on “Saving energy and the environment through sustainable transport solutions” Tallinn 2013.

Commission on Environment / Sustainable Cities Commission

- Baltic Sustainable Cities Programme (BSCP)
 - Project on Institutional Strengthening
 - Baltic Municipal Environmental Audit (BMEA)
 - Success Factors in Local Environmental Policy for Local Agenda 21 activities and EU Accession in the BSR (SUFA) 2000-2001.
- Baltic 21, Agenda 21 for the BSR
- Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin
- Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 1999-2009
- UBC Local Agenda 21 Program 2000-2002
- Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities.
- UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010-2015, 2016-2021
- Cooperation with CDP

Projects, e.g.

- Environmental Goals for Ships and Ports

- Baltic Municipal Environmental Audit (BMEA)
- SAIL Spreading Awareness to Foster the Implementation of Local Agenda 21 around the Baltic Sea (SAIL), 1999-2000
- EMAS - Peer Review for Cities 2002-2004
- TBestC 2003-2004
- Baltic University Urban Forums 2003-2006
- BUSTRIP 2005-2007
- Managing Urban Europe–25 2005-2008
- LVRLAC
- SUSTAINMENT (Integrated solutions for the sustainability management in the Baltic Cities) 2006-2007
- MATRUSCHKA – Integrated Management System for Russian Cities 2007-2009
- CHAMP – Combating Climate Change 2009-2011
- NEW BRIDGES – Strengthening Quality of Life through improved Management of Urban Rural Interaction 2009-2011
- BaltCICA – Climate Change: Impact, Costs and Adaptation in the Baltic Sea Region 2009-2011
- PURE Phosphorous Reduction in Baltic Cities 2009-2013
- INNOSHIP Project – Sustainable Ports and Cities
- CIVITAS DYN@MO 2012-2016
- IWAMA, Improving Wastewater Management in the Baltic Sea Region, 2016-2019
- iWater, 2015-2018
- CIVITAS Eccentric 2016-2020
- SUMP UP, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, 2016-2020
- Baltic Urban Lab, 2015-2018

Joint meetings and conferences with other UBC Commissions, e.g.:

- “From wasteland and transport corridor to lively city” 2014,
- “Urban streams – rebuilding the waterfront of Daugava River” 2014,
- “Baltic Sea Region advancing towards Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning” 2015,
- “Sustainable Safe Cultural Events”, 2016.

The SCC is involved in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the BSR. SCC has received flagship status for projects PURE, PRESTO, BSR Innoship, IWAMA, iWater.

Commission on Health and Social Affairs / Inclusive and Healthy Cities

- Workshops on Employment Development in the Baltic Region
- Preliminary survey of unemployment situation in UBC member cities
- The EU PACTE Project “Baltic Cities”
- Conference on "Labour Market and Social Policy" in the Baltic Sea Region
- "Growing Europe - Groovy Europe" event
- ECOS-Ouverture project "Baltic City Tourism" 1997-2001
- Baltic Bicycle Ride for Charity 2003
- Labour Market Project ROLAST 1998-99
- Survey on the social state of elderly citizens in Baltic Cities 1999

- Book on the Social State of Elderly Citizens around the Baltic Sea 2000
- UBC Social Charter 2002
- Hanse-Sunshine-Tour 2003

Meetings e.g. on:

- “Senior citizens and the city” 2011,
- “How to meet the demographic challenge; the ageing society” 2011,
- “Social welfare, health promotion and preventive actions in the UBC cities” 2012,
- “Ways to a community based system of social services for vulnerable groups. Social welfare of vulnerable groups in the BSR” 2013,
- "People with disabilities in the era of the twenty-first century" 2014,
- Open Social Spaces idea 2015, 2016,
- Design thinking, 2017
- “Intergenerational City - Challenges in Demography and Opportunities for Sustainable Development” 2017

Commission on Information Society

Meetings devoted to e.g:

- “Contribution of the cities in creating the common information space of the BSR” 2005,
- Seminar on “New programming period 2007–2013 – New information society cooperation opportunities for Baltic cities” 2007.

Projects

- Challenge of eCitizen An Interreg III C project “Challenge of eCitizen: Promoting eGovernment Actions in European Cities” 2005-2007
- eCitizen II - Towards Citizen-centred eGovernment in European Cities and Regions 2007-

Commission on Local Safety / Safe Cities Commission

- Exchange programme Gdańsk Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn 2011-2013
- Safe and Cool competition 2012

Meetings devoted to e.g.

- Elderly and ways to ensure safety for older people 2012,
- Safety traffic on the streets 2012,
- Street violence – prevention and elimination 2013,
- Citizens for safety 2014,
- Safety and security questions in UBC cities 2015,
- Sustainable and safe events 2016,
- Crisis management in emergency situation 2017.

Projects:

- ‘Building urban safety through citizens participation (Citizens for Safety)’ project 2015

- Project CASCADE – Community Safety Action for Supporting Climate Adaptation and Development 2017
- Full membership of UBC Safe Cities Commission in EUSBSR Policy Area Secure Steering Group 2017

Commission on Sport

Sports events under auspices of the Commission, e.g.

- Grand Prix Regatta in windsurfing in Łeba
- Christmas Football Games in Karlskrona

Meetings devoted to different subjects, e.g.:

- “Integration of the disabled through sport” 2002
- “Sport as a rehabilitation tool for integration” 2003
- Education through Sport 2004
- Healthy Lifestyle Through Sport 2005
- Active Living 2006
- Sport – a Healthy Alternative 2007
- International Conference “Always Active” 2009
- Annual Meeting “Sport is Cool” 2010

Projects:

- Annual Calendar of Sports Events
- International art competition “Dreams Without Limits” 2003
- Social Campaigns, eg. “Without Limits” 2002-2003, “Always Active” 2008-2009, “Sport is cool!” 2010-2012
- Grant sessions for projects
 - 2006 “Cities on the Move”
 - 2007 “Always Active”
 - 2008 “Sport for All Generations”
 - 2009 “Active and Fit”
 - 2010,2011,2012 “Sport is Cool”
 - 2012 “Challenge the Water”

Commission on Tourism / Smart and Prospering Cities Commission

Projects:

- EU-LIFE project concerning Curonian Spit and Vistula Spit in Kaliningrad region.
- Baltic Point project in cooperation with the Commission on Social Affairs.
- Training courses within Baltic Tourism Academy, 2001
- Baltic Point project
- Tourism Exchange Programme
- Baltic City Tourism
- Baltic Welcome Center 2001
- Ancientimes (sustainable development of historical & cultural touristic physical sites in the BSR), 2003-2005
- Baltic Sea Cycling
- Baltic Tourism Academy

- Enjoy South Baltic!
- Agora 2.0 2009-2011
- Baltic Culinary Route - enjoy Baltic Cuisine
- "Meet the Baltic Sea Region – your homeland" contest
- "Baltic Sea Region – Perfect Tourism Zone" catalogue, 2006, 2008, 2011/2012

Meetings devoted to, e.g.

- "How to make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive" 2009
- "Place branding in the BSR, Agora 2.0 project and UBC city marketing guidelines" 2010
- "Baltic Sea region identity in the light of the UBC Strategy" 2011

Commission on Transportation / Sustainable Cities Commission

Meetings, conferences:

- Trans European Motorway conference, Gdańsk, 8 June 1993,
- UBC Conference on Actual Problems of the Baltic Sea-Land Transportation Systems, Gdańsk, April 1995,
- European Transport projects seminar / Bicycle workshop
- International Conference on Logistics and Distribution Centres in the BSR, Gdańsk, 1998
- "Worst practice in managing public transport – mistakes we have made for others to avoid" 2002
- Bicycle Seminar 2002
- Mobility Management Seminar 2003
- European Transport Projects 2004
- Bicycle workshop 2004
- "Revitalize the city for sustainability" - Joint seminar 2012

Road Safety Campaign for UBC member cities 2009-2010:

- Road Safety course for children – Autochodzik,
- Competition 2010,
- Brochure "Safe on the road"
- Seminar "What can we do to increase the road safety among children and young people?"

Grant sessions for projects:

- 2007 "Sustainable Mobility in the City"
- 2007 "Road Safety Contest"
- 2011 "Bike to School"
- 2012 "Walk to school"

Projects and initiatives:

- Document on "Short Sea Shipping and Land Transportation Systems in the Baltic Region"
- BUSTRIP project 2005-2007
- Transport Questionnaire 2006
- Survey on transport issues 2011
- European Road Safety Charter

Commission on Urban Planning / Planning Cities Commission

Project

- "ABC - Alliance of Baltic Cities, a city network cooperation for local approaches to regional strategies", 2003-2006

Seminars solving host cities problems, e.g.

- "Public space – problems and possibilities" 2002
- "Developing the historical industrial belt of St.Petersburg and the new masterplan" 2002
- "City Identity" 2007
- "Sustainable and Attractive Cities" 2008
- "Cultural Planning – Urban DNA" 2008
- "Baltic Towers – Contribution to the City and the Community" 2009
- "Edges of the City Centre and Reuse of Traffic Areas" 2010
- "Innovative Districts" 2011
- "Planning the History and Future in Consonance" 2011
- "Re-vitalize the city for sustainability" 2012
- "Building the Inclusive City" 2013
- "Urban streams" 2014
- "Developing sea cost – local and city-wide perspective" 2015
- "New Times – New Dynamics", 2016
- "Rediscovering water in the city: public realm strategies on the waterfront", 2016
- "From a growing to a great city", 2017

Commission on Youth Issues / Youthful Cities Commission

Youth Conferences

- Young Voices of the Baltic Sea Region 2003
- Young and active in the Baltic Sea Region 2005
- Under the Surface 2007
- Bridges over the Sea 2009
- Youth Seminar "Your Lifestyle. Your Choice for Happy Life in Our World" 2011
- Youth for Equality, Equity and Peace 2015
- Migration, participation and leadership 2017

Publications

- Book of Demands 2005
- Book of Possibilities 2008

Projects

- EU - project "Different History – Common Future", 2006-2009
- European Voluntary Service (EVS) promotion seminar, 2008
- Tolerance trip into the Danish-German border region, 2008
- NGO tolerance trip, 2009

- Project “Youth Democracy project Life, Media and Participation – Youth in the Baltic Sea Region”, 2012-2013
- Youth for participation and migration and leadership 2017
- CaSYPoT - Youth for Participation, Migration and Leadership 2016 – 2019

Meetings devoted to different topics, e.g.

- “Supporting youth employment and career in our city” meeting 2010
- “Culture related youth projects in my city” 2011
- “Non-formal learning and gender equality” 2015
- “Youth Leisure Time” 2016
- “New Cultures of Education” 2016
- “Life online” 2016
- “Digital renewal” 2017

Other

- Web-based questionnaire among UBC cities “Mapping existence of youth policies and youth work strategies in UBC member cities” 2010
- Youthful Cities Commission has cooperated with BSSSC and ERB at EUSBSR Forum in Stockholm 2016 (seminar: “Nothing about us without us”), Berlin 2017 (seminar: “Nothing about us without us – making it work!”)

UBC Women’s Network / Commission on Gender Equality / Working Group on Gender Equality

- 1st Conference "The Women and the Labour Market", Kaliningrad, 13-15 May 1993.
- 2nd UBC Women's Conference entitled "Women around the Baltic - our role in Agenda 21", Sundsvall 1995.
- 3rd International UBC Women's Conference, Karlskrona, 1996, in association with the "Women Can" exhibition.

The Network, then Commission and Working Group was included in many UBC activities, participated in many external meetings and conferences, cooperated with other organizations and institutions. Some of the examples:

- EU project "Gender equality in Local Agenda 21" 1999 - 2000. The gender mainstreaming method "3R" was used.
- LIBRA 2003 project
- UBC Women's Network participation in the UBC-LVRLAC project funded by SIDA, with task to create a similar network in Lake Victoria region. In February 2001 a seminar was held in the city of Entebbe, Uganda. 15 women representing cities from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda took part in the seminar. They decided to create the LVRLAC Women's Network and adopted a document stating that "the Women's Network desires to be a strong part of LVRLAC".

Publications:

- Reports “Women and Men in the UBC” 2009, 2013

Conferences:

- “Attractive and Inclusive Cities – Promotion of Equality of Men and Women in Local Life”
Conference, Gdańsk 2017