
Od: "bo" <Bo.Hjalmeffjord@vaxjo.se>

Do: "Per Bødker Andersen" <peba@kolding.dk>, "Pawel Zaboklicki" <pawel.zaboklicki@ubc.net>

DW: "Per Scholdberg Vaxjo" <Per.Scholdberg@vaxjo.se>, "Ronmark Marie-Louise" <marie-louise.ronmark@umea.se>

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Temat: {Spam?} Reflections from web-meeting with Swedish UBC cities 25 May

Dear Per & Pawel,

I had a web-meeting with the Swedish UBC member cities last week. We were 9 cities represented and had active discussions on the UBC cooperation. The meeting was arranged to discuss aspects related to the General Conference. Please find below a few points which summarizes the discussions:

- 1) After having informed about the discussions in the presidium for the General Conference (focus on commissions, potential exhibition, speakers corner et cetera), the group favored the concept. The theme, Building Smart Cities ... was endorsed. After having informed about the "long list" of potential sub-themes, the group suggested that we should try to *"keep the sub-themes as few as possible to make the general conference as focused as possible"*. It was emphasized that it is important to know the themes and sub-themes as soon as possible to attract the technical experts to join the conference.
- 2) On the question regarding the start-up of the new commissions. The group agreed that it seemed that this work had started well. However meetings had been arranged with too short notice, which made it difficult for many to join. Also too many meetings in a short period of time which made it difficult to prioritise. For the future, the group suggested that commissions should try to arrange commission meetings with as long pre-notice as possible to allow for planning and possibility to participate.
- 3) It was a question regarding the connection and contacts between the commissions and the executive board and how to secure this link. Bo replied that the idea is that the board shall assign one board member for each commission as contact point. The meeting liked this idea and emphasized that this link is important.
- 4) It was suggested that the commission work should be more project focused and have a stronger project approach. This could secure that the focus of the work would be aimed towards "real and joint challenges". The project focus would also allow for (much needed) financial resources through EU (and other) funding.
- 5) Another idea to boost the interest for commissions work was to arrange "theme periods". These theme periods could example be 6 monthly and rolling between the commission themes. During the 6 months when a theme was in focus. This particular theme would get

specific attention and resources to perform some specific activities and do some specific information campaigns.

- 6) The role of the secretariat was discussed. The group suggested that the secretariats role “as an engine for commissions work” could be discussed. The secretariat could, for intense have a more important role in match making, project identification and project development. It was proposed that this should be discussed in the executive board and in the general conference.
- 7) While talking about the secretariats role, the issue of the promotion of the “barbeque/cross/rock festival” in Dolina Charlotty was discussed. It was of general opinion that the secretariat had put in far too much time and resources in trying to promote this cultural activity and even had higher priority on this than on promoting the “new UBC”. Some voices were raised if this type of activities should have priority in the UBC work at all. Someone said that “*this campaign may have hampered the credibility of the UBC*”. Swedish cities agreed that reason of being a member in UBC is to cooperate professionally, to find opportunities for knowledge exchange, political dialogue and project work. The fact of giving the impression that the UBC should be an organization with main focus to promote cultural event did not fit with Swedish priorities.
- 8) The group touched on the election procedure of the executive board. Transparency would be of outmost importance. One suggestion to facilitate this could be to have an external conference chair person who could both act as moderator and facilitate the election process. In this way the situation from last general conference would be avoided. A proposal was that we could ask someone from an external cooperation partner (such as an official from the European Commission or other Baltic Sea region based organisation) to take that role.
- 9) Växjö and Umeå said that they both would wish to continue another period in the board. No other member showed interest. Söderhamn who had shown interest earlier, had withdrawn their interest but may remain interested in two years.
- 10) Lastly there were some discussions about Mikko Lohikosis role and questions on the process behind selecting him continuously for specific assignments. It was agreed that he seems to be doing a good job, but emphasized that there may be other persons/cities interested in taking this role from time to time.
- 11) Finally it should be mentioned that Falun has notified that they decided to leave the UBC-network. Örebro also informed that they strongly consider to resign from the UBC-network.

We should consider the relevant points for the coming executive meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Best regards,

Bo Hjälme fjord

Växjö, Sweden