

Press release 27 October 2017

Växjö, Sweden, 24–27 October 2017

The XIV Union of the Baltic Cities General Conference called for tackling populism and Euroscepticism and adopted a resolution on United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development goals

Nearly 300 high-level politicians, city officials, other experts and youth participated in the XIV Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) General Conference in Växjö, Sweden, on 24–27 October 2017. The conference adopted an appeal “Tackling Rising Populism and Euroscepticism” and “UBC Resolution on United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals”.

The theme of the XIV General Conference was “Leadership for the Future – Cities as Leaders for Global Sustainable Development”. Questions and issues tackled at the conference included leadership and cities pioneering in various fields of life, such as promoting digital start-up ecosystems, as well as preventing youth marginalization and fighting climate change.

The conference also held the 25th Anniversary session of the UBC, founded in 1991 in Gdańsk. In addition, the General Conference featured a strong involvement of over 60 youth representatives from the Baltic Sea Region.

Appeal on Tackling Rising Populism and Euroscepticism

In the face of the fundamental challenges that Europe has to encounter today, such as the rise of populism and nationalism, the UBC General Conference emphasized the Baltic Sea Region cities’ attachment to the European values of freedom, democracy, equality, tolerance, and diversity. This democratic shape must be based on the tripartite separation of powers, strong local government, and independent media and culture.

– We are sharing the crossroads, both in and outside Europe. It is now that we are making vital choices, which will have long-lasting consequences. The question is which road we take: shall we opt for the winding path of values, or rather speed dangerously head first onto the motorway of populism”, states President of the UBC **Per Bødker Andersen**.

As cities and regions, our responsibility is to engage in building Europe of tomorrow that is based on trust and democratic values where the voice of ordinary citizens is taken into account.

– We need international cooperation and exchange more than ever. UBC as the leading city network in Northern Europe is the natural platform for this.

Resolution on UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals

The Union of the Baltic Cities has during its whole existence focused on making the Baltic Sea Region more sustainable, attractive and more resilient to challenges in our environment. Upon the 25th anniversary of the Union of the Baltic Sea Cities, the importance of further mobilizing the potential and co-

operation in achieving common goals is eminent. As outlined in UBC's sustainability action programme 2016–2021 "Stairway towards Sustainable Baltic Cities", cities are the key actors in making a positive change.

The Union of the Baltic Cities commits to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and continues to focus on responding to climate change, in alignment with the Paris Agreement, by implementing and heavily promoting the concepts of green growth, circular economy, industrial symbiosis and sharing economy. UBC's prime target is achieving low-emission and resource-wise Baltic Sea Region through smart city planning, capacity building and sharing of best practices. Simultaneously, the UBC will continue to work for more efficient water treatment and use of water resources.

Top-level speakers across the Baltic Sea Region

The General Conference hosted top-level speakers across the Baltic Sea Region, such as **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, President of the Committee of the Regions, **Lena Ek**, Senior Advisor in Sustainable Seas Foundation and Former Minister of Environment in Sweden, **Peter Schenk**, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy in European Commission, **Krista Kampus**, Senior Adviser/Head of the Baltic 2030 Unit at the Council of the Baltic Sea States, **Anne Stenros**, Design Director in the City of Helsinki, **Alessandro Cenderello**, Managing Partner for EU Institutions at Ernst & Young, **Shirin Reuvers**, Cities Manager at CDP, **Pärtel-Peeter Pere**, CEO and partner at Future Place Leadership, and **Edgar Nazarenus** and **Vincent Weseloh** from Capufaktur.

As speakers and panellists, esteemed Mayors and other representatives from UBC member cities took part in the discussions on leadership and the future of the Baltic Sea Region. Keynote speakers included **Per Schöldberg**, Deputy Mayor of Växjö Municipality, **Piotr Grzelak**, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk, **Jørgen Kristiansen**, Deputy Mayor of Kristiansand, **Gunars Ansins**, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja, **Jaana Simula**, Cultural Chief in the City of Pori, **Wolfgang Röttgers**, Councillor in the City of Kiel, **Mantas Jurgutis**, Member of Kaunas City Council, **Carina Svensson**, Chair of Environmental Board in Malmö, **Jyrki Myllyvirta**, Mayor of Lahti, and **Oliver Rosengren**, Deputy Mayor of Växjö Municipality.

More information:

- UBC Secretariat: info@ubc.net / www.ubc.net
- XIV UBC General Conference website: www.vaxjo.se/ubc
- Videos of the XIV UBC General Conference: www.bit.ly/ubc-youtube

Follow UBC in social media:

- Twitter: www.twitter.com/UBC_BSR
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/UnionoftheBalticCities/
- LinkedIn: [Union of the Baltic Cities \(UBC\)](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Union-of-the-Baltic-Cities-(UBC))
- YouTube, live streaming and videos of the conference: www.bit.ly/ubc-youtube

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Founded in 1991 in Gdańsk, Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) is the leading network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region with around 100 member cities from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. UBC mobilizes the shared potential of its member cities to advance and deliver sustainable, smart and safe urban solutions and quality of life and promotes cities as drivers for smart, sustainable, green and resource-efficient growth. www.ubc.net