

REPORTS ON UBC ACTIVITIES

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Union of the Baltic Cities activities 1991-2011

Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC

Building on the past

The end of the Cold War was a major breakthrough not only in relations between the countries in the BSR, but also between the cities. For over 45 years the Baltic Sea Region was divided into the democratic West and Soviet East. After the Iron curtain collapsed, those contrasting worlds had to face the clash of cultures, economies and mentalities. It turned out that the cooperation and exchange of experiences were the best ways to diminish the existing gaps. The Union of the Baltic Cities was a response to the needs of cities eager to share and get knowledge. The diversity was not an obstacle but an asset.

Referring to the traditional links binding the Baltic cities in terms of trade, culture and tourism, 32 cities from 9 Baltic countries decided to create the UBC. Since the beginning the number of member cities has tripled.

The goals and cooperation areas have been evolving and extending to be adapted to the political and economic situation in the region and in Europe. The primary goal was to deal with the barriers between Western and Eastern Baltic cities and to contribute to the sustainable development of the whole region. Promotion of democracy and good governance were the first main tasks of UBC. Communication was a challenge, as well.

Initiated in 1995, UBC-EU Information Project was aimed at preparing the Baltic cities for the EU expansion in the BSR. The EU enlargement in 2004 caused significant changes in the new member states creating at the same time a new geopolitical situation in the BSR. New financing possibilities for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have created a great opportunity to even up the differences in economies and to improve the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. Also, Russian UBC member cities have been affected by the EU enlargement. Close co-operation with them has been especially significant to avoid arising new gaps and dividing lines.

One of the main strategic aims of the UBC has been from that moment to transform the political, economic and financial potential that is connected with EU enlargement into reality.

European dimension of the UBC activities has been even strengthened when the European Commission started its work on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the first EU macro-regional policy. According to the new UBC Strategy 2010-2015 adopted by the X General Conference in Kristiansand, UBC and its member cities want to be active participants in the governance structure of the Strategy, as well as in implementation of its Action Plan and relevant flagship projects. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is our key framework for the coming years.

How has the Union used its potential? How has it contributed to the regional development? What has been accomplished during 20 years?

UBC on the European arena

The Union has been aiming to be present in the European debate since the beginning, however, a clear EU dimension has been dominating since 2004 when Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined the EU.

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. The joint UBC - Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) statement signifying the need of a dialogue instead of a one-way communication proved that acting together make the UBC 's voice stronger in Brussels. The first dialogue meeting was organized by President Romano Prodi in May 2004 in Brussels.

The Union expressed opinions and statements on the EU policies concerning the region. Following the development of EU funding programmes for the period 2007-2013 within the new Cohesion Policy, UBC with other Baltic organizations were successfully lobbying for introduction of an financial instrument enabling cross-border cooperation across the maritime borders of the Baltic Sea wider than 150 km.

Moreover, the Union significantly contributed to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. It is now involved in the implementation of several projects listed in the EUSBSR Action Plan as flagships.

The UBC voiced its opinions also on other EU policies, e.g. EU Maritime Policy, emphasizing the local perspective in the European policies.

Recently, the UBC with BSSSC and B7 Baltic Sea Islands Network, presented a joint position paper on the European Union budget for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 emphasizing the fact that the EU Strategy for the BSR needs to be backed up financially.

Towards a model sustainable region

Undoubtedly, the Union has been a frontrunner in promoting the sustainable development understood as balanced democratic, economic, environmental and social development that enables the current generation to live meaningful and healthy lives without compromising the possibility of future generations to do the same.

The commitment to face and solve the problems inherited from the past decades expressed in 1991 at the Founding Conference laid a solid foundation for continuous works for the sustainable future of the cities, and the region and outlined the cooperation between different stakeholders.

The UBC Commission on Environment with the complementary work of other UBC Commissions has been aiming to put the idea of sustainable development into practice.

UBC Agenda 21 and Sustainability Action Programmes list the best practices and actions needed to find good practical and efficient solutions to the challenges and problems the member cities have been facing. Numerous projects have been implemented to reach the goals of the Action 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 overwhelming majority of these projects gained the EU financial support from the European Regional Development Fund or specific EU programmes (e.g. LIFE).

Progress has been monitored through Sustainability Surveys that have been carried out since 1998. The surveys show how the integration of sustainable development issues is progressing in the cities in the BSR.

Practical examples of sustainable practices complemented with suitable tools have been put together into one database available for all UBC member cities at www.ubcwheel.eu.

The UBC has also referred to the climate change threats calling its members for actions to minimize its harmful effects. The UBC Resolution on Climate Change was accepted at the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu 2007. Additionally, when the European Commission started the Europe-wide consultations on preventing climate change consequences and adapting to the new conditions, the Union responded that the climate protection needed first of all the commitment of municipalities and their inhabitants.

UBC Commissions: transfer of know-how, cultural exchange, social security, problem solving

The UBC Commissions have been working to achieve the sustainability goals and to provide constant cultural exchange, transfer of best practices and experiences. Through their work various cities' needs and expectations are met, either concerning culture, business or tourism.

Initially, the Commissions' meetings and seminars, festivals (e.g. initiatives of the Commission on Culture - Festival of the Baltic Cities, art festivals), competitions and publications were invaluable in making the cities better known and more familiar with their rich history, culture and heritage. As time went by, the Commissions, still promoting the cities in terms of culture or tourism, became very useful, multi-dimensional expertise platforms for the cities.

The outcome of the Commissions' work have also been an expression of discourses held in the region, e.g. regarding the social security or gender mainstreaming.

The UBC Social Charter, adopted at VI UBC General Conference in Rostock in 2001, reflects the social practices in the Baltic cities. The Charter offered a conceptual framework providing the basis for the development of the sustainable societies. It was prepared by the UBC Commission on Health & Social Affairs to stimulate the cities to incorporate the social dimension into their policies and strategies. Social campaigns (e.g. 'Without limits', 'Always Active') promoting integration through sports activities among youth, the disabled, elderly people have been the domain of the Commission on Sport.

The Commission on Gender Equality has been aiming at better recognition of the gender equality problems, and lobbying for inclusion of the gender perspective into the EU Strategy for the BSR.

The Union has also been supporting the involvement of the youth into the local democracy. Transforming the Network on Youth Issues into the Commission gave a new impetus for the young leaders who have been coming up with many ideas and projects, e.g. EU co-funded "Different History, Common Future".

Sustainable urban areas have been the main interest of the Commission on Urban Planning which seminars always meet with a great interest of the city planners and architects. Its successful ABC Alliance of Baltic Cities project with 27 cities participating resulted in steady contacts between partners, proposals on how to deal with the city planning problems of today and tomorrow.

Sustainability in tourism has been in focus of the Commission on Tourism's activities. Its successful Baltic Welcome Center and Ancientimes projects promoted Baltic cities and their heritage as attractive and accessible tourist destinations.

Another area of interests covered by the Union is education. The Commission on Education supports

and organizes the exchange between pupils and students among UBC members. Its flagship project is Erken Laboratory Research School addressed to the students aged 16-20.

International cooperation

The Union has been establishing and developing contacts with other Baltic and European organizations and institutions i.e. European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and others.

The cooperation with other Baltic organizations is very important to avoid overlapping and to strengthen one Baltic voice on the EU arena.

Also, in 2010 UBC has become a member of the Conference of European Cross-Border and Interregional Cities Network (CECICN) created by six organisations: Iberian Network of Cross-border Entities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, MedCities, Mission Operationelle Transfrontaliere, Union of the Baltic Cities, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities.

Heading for the future

There are many people working for the UBC who remember how the cooperation looked like at the beginning. Formal obstacles or limited means of communication did not dampen their enthusiasm. Quite the opposite, difficulties motivated to even harder work. The UBC made a long way from being the open door for cities cut off from the international West-East contacts for over 45 years to the strong powerful organization, representing over 100 members on the regional and European levels.

Creating a network of cities keen on working together despite differences and competition has been an unquestionable success.

The future will bring new challenges and opportunities. Being responsive to the changing political, social and economic conditions, the UBC wants to be a meeting place for people, a forum for exchange of ideas, contacts and experiences between the member cities and other partners, a source of inspiration and dialogue. Its aim for the coming years would also be to empower its position as a respected and recognized partner in the Baltic Sea Region cooperation, promoting the interests of the cities and the region.

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES
October 2009 – September 2011**

Introduction

At the X General Conference in Kristiansand, Norway, 24-25 September 2009, Union of the Baltic Cities adopted its new Strategy 2010-2015. Since then, UBC has been working to face the tasks listed in the Strategy to make the organization more recognized and efficient. The UBC Strategy task forces on communication / marketing and expert exchange were established.

The UBC further consolidated its network, launched new projects and political initiatives, organized a number of conferences, seminars and events. The new Commission on Local Safety has been created.

One of the main strategic aims of the UBC in the reported period was to be present in the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region process. UBC voiced its opinion that the success of the Strategy lies not in Brussels but in the region. The role of the cities is crucial. UBC has been involved in the implementation of several projects listed in the EUSBSR action plan as flagships.

UBC kept promoting the influence and involvement of citizens, especially young persons and gender equality.

The Union developed existing contacts with other Baltic and European organizations and institutions i.e. European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and others.

The UBC together with BSSSC and B7 presented 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 needs to be backed up financially.

Moreover, the Union became a co-founder of the Conference of European Cross-Border and Interregional Cities Network (CECICN) established on 23 April 2010 in Santiago de Compostela to advocate the interests of the cities, border-regions and interregional territories.

Examples of policy issues handled by UBC

- *EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*

On 10 June 2009 the communication of the European Commission concerning the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region was launched accompanied by the Action Plan containing a list of flagship projects. The Strategy focuses on four thematic areas to make the Baltic Sea Region: an environmentally sustainable place; a prosperous place; an attractive place; a safe and secure place.

The UBC took part in the consultation process contributing with the statements. Also, the UBC commissions provided their opinions and suggestions.

The UBC Executive Board discussed and adopted the first position paper concerning the development of EU Baltic Sea Strategy at its meeting in Växjö in October 2008. At the same meeting the Board decided to request UBC commissions to complement the position paper with the sectoral inputs.

The main focus for the UBC was the governance in the region. The members of the UBC play a key role in the governance of the region and the future shall further enhance their role. Cities are the closest political actors representing the interests of the citizens. This gives them a special role in the EU strategy. The UBC position paper was submitted to DG Regio in November 2008.

In addition, the UBC and other Baltic organizations, namely BSSSC, B7, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Baltic Development Forum and Euroregion Baltic, prepared also the joint statement on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which was passed to the EU Commission. UBC, CPMR-BSC and Euroregion Baltic discussed this document at the working meeting organized in Växjö.

The key task of the UBC Executive Board has been to fully engage itself in the new, emerging cooperation structure in the Baltic Sea region and to find a central place for local authorities in the implementation of the EU Strategy for BSR.

At the 10th General Conference in Kristiansand it was decided that member cities and commissions should send proposals which flagship projects they would like to join. The Executive Board at its 57th meeting in Naestved, on 17 February 2010, decided to select four flagship projects and partners representing UBC, as follows:

5.1 “Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research” with Umeå as a UBC representative;

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region recognizes the climate problem by calling for a Baltic Sea Region-wide climate change adaptation strategy, which should provide a framework to strengthen cooperation and information sharing within the region and help to create a coherent set of adaptation policies and actions from the transnational to the local level. The BALTADAPT project implemented within this flagship seeks to achieve the following results - improved knowledge base and the action plan providing the operational basis for implementing the BSR-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and influencing policies, programmes and regulations.

8.1 “Promote young entrepreneurs” with the Commissions on Education and Business Cooperation as UBC representatives;

Cooperation between education and business sectors is important to create sustainable growth. A joint initiative should be developed to focus on encouraging young entrepreneurship, as well as promoting and making financial resources available for developing young entrepreneurs’ mobility and for cross border networks for young entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region.

8.4 “Make the Baltic Sea an Eco-efficient region” with the Commission on Environment as a UBC representative;

EcoRegion project implemented within the flagship 8.4 aims at developing the Baltic Sea Region into the world’s first EcoRegion, where economical growth goes hand in hand with environmental integrity and social justice.

11.1 “Complete the agreed priority transport infrastructures” with Liepāja as a UBC representative;

The Baltic Sea Region is facing an increasing trade in a longer perspective, both within, into and from the Baltic Sea. This development has to be coped with an appropriate infrastructure and an efficient transport system. Bottlenecks must be avoided to facilitate the internal market mechanisms and to improve the territorial cohesion. By addressing improved accessibility and disparities between the member-states in the region the flagship can help improving the competitiveness of the BSR.

At the 59th meeting in Tallinn, on 13 October 2010, this list was complemented with two more projects, namely 5.3 “Create a network of sustainable cities and villages” and the project InnoShip within the flagship “To become a model region for clean shipping” under the priority 4. UBC has been represented in those projects by the Commission on Environment.

Apart from UBC representatives appointed by the Board, also a number of UBC member cities participated in conferences and seminars organised within the frame of implementation of mentioned flagships.

On 14-15 October 2010 the first Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region was held in Tallinn. President Andersen was a keynote speaker at the plenary session on 15 October, and Mikko Jokinen, chairman of the Commission on Environment was a speaker at the workshop. UBC significant presence in the Forum proved that it is a recognized important and equal partner in the Baltic Sea Strategy.

- UBC Strategy 2010-15

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.

A questionnaire connected with the Communication & Marketing Strategy and Exchange Programme was circulated among the member cities by the Strategy coordinator on 1 December 2010. Several cities responded with concrete proposals and indicated their willingness to participate in the task forces.

Task forces on Communication & Marketing Strategy and Expert Exchange were established on 10 March 2011 in Lahti. The meeting of task forces was attended by the representatives of Gdynia, Kemi, Kiel, Kristiansand, Narva, Tampere, Tartu, Turku.

Kiel and Kristiansand were elected as leaders of Communication & Marketing Strategy task force and Jyväskylä and Gdynia as leaders of Expert Exchange task force.

It has been decided to engage professional consulting company Tendensor AB to help to elaborate the UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy.

The research has been being done both within the UBC member cities and among external stakeholders in three different steps, namely web survey among the UBC members and management, 15-20 “expert interviews” with stakeholders in national governments, other BSR organisations and the EU, and desk research.

Tendensor has been responsible to work out the draft strategy and the action plan, containing a suggested communication and marketing platform (including elements such as overall strategic direction and positioning, core values, messages, definition of prioritized stakeholders, communication channels and target groups) by the 11th General Conference in Liepāja.

As far as the expert exchange is concerned, it was decided to start with two parallel processes: to search for the funding opportunities and to work out the programme on expert exchange on the basis of the UBC cities experience. That would mean also defining the needs of the cities. Jyväskylä presented a feasibility study on EU funding possibilities of expert exchange.

The UBC has been working in the reported period to strengthen the cooperation with other Baltic organizations, namely BaltMet and Baltic Development Forum. Several discussions have been held to set the main goals and fields of common activities.

To fulfill the goal of strengthening member city participation in UBC activities, the new political platform of the local authorities, the Baltic Sea urban forum, has been discussed. This event is planned to be organized next year.

- ***Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional Cities Networks***

UBC was co-founder of the new international network Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional Cities Networks (CECICN). CECICN was established on 23 April 2010 in Santiago de Compostela.

Other partners in the new network are: MOT - Mission Operationelle Transfrontaliere, with President Michel Delebarre, former President of the Committee of the Regions, CAAC - Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, Medcities, RIET - Red Iberica de Entidades Transfronterizas.

The promotion of space for discussion on interregional and cross-border cooperation, the role of the cross-border and peripheral organizations in the European cohesion policies, development of strategies which stimulate cross-border and interregional cooperation at the European level, are among the objectives of the Conference.

The network has been aiming to get prepared for the period 2014+ in the EU and to provide cities, border-regions and interregional territories with a stronger voice and higher visibility in the context of the cohesion policies at an European scale, to stimulate cross-border and interregional cooperation and to foster the consolidation process of the EU.

In March 2011 CECICN forwarded a letter to Michel Barnier, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services. It focused on two essential objectives to be integrated in the next programming period 2014-2020, namely: development of border territories and Europe without borders as reality.

In May 2011 CECICN contributed to the 5th Report on Cohesion. As cities are key players in cohesion policy in all its aspects (economic, social and territorial) three essential areas are to be examined: the close relationship that binds citizens and cities, the challenge of a greater coherence and concentration of programs and measures and the need for a better understanding between the different levels involved.

One of the aims for 2011-2012 is to prepare a White Paper on Territorial Cooperation, involving the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions, at different stages of the process.

During the 1st half of 2012, CECICN plans to organise a European Conference on Territorial Cooperation foreseen to be a part of the program of the future Danish EU Presidency. The conference will be the opportunity to present the White Paper and to launch a debate with stakeholders, in the presence of Commissioner Hahn, DG Regio and other EU institutions. UBC offered assistance in conference organization.

UBC Executive Board during the 61st meeting in Karlstad appointed Wolfgang Schmidt, Kiel and Ingemann Olsen, Kolding to represent UBC in the work and meetings of CECICN.

- Joint position paper on the European Union budget for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

BSSSC, B7 and 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 needs to be backed up financially. The financial support needs to be substantial in order to ensure a joint and coordinated approach to the development of the Baltic Sea Region.

UBC Executives during two-year period

Per Bødker Andersen, President, Deputy Mayor of Kolding
Marie-Louise Rönmark, First Vice-President, Mayor of Umeå
Urve Tiidus, Vice-President, Mayor of Kuressaare
Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President, Deputy Mayor of Turku
Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, Gdańsk

Executive Board during two-year period

Næstved	Denmark
Kärdla	Estonia
Jyväskylä	Finland
Rostock	Germany
Liepāja	Latvia
Panevėžys	Lithuania
Kristiansand	Norway
Gdańsk	Poland
St. Petersburg	Russia
Växjö	Sweden

Executive Board Meetings

Six Executive Board meetings took place during the reporting period between Kristiansand and Liepāja General Conferences:

57th Executive Board meeting, Næstved, 17 February 2010
58th Executive Board meeting, Trelleborg, 4-5 June 2010
59th Executive Board meeting, Tallinn, 13-14 October 2010
60th Executive Board meeting, Lahti, 11 March 2011
61st Executive Board meeting, Karlstad, 17 June 2011
62nd Executive Board meeting, Liepāja, 4 October 2011

The Executive Board played meaningful role in the development of UBC activities. The Board considered and endorsed a number of actions, initiatives and projects submitted by the Presidium,

Commissions and Member Cities. The projects, initiatives, activities, events and other actions carried out by UBC during the described period are outlined in this report.

Board of Audit during two-year period

Ewa Back, Councillor, Västernorrland
Marta Chełkowska, Director of Tourism Department, Pomorskie Voivodship
Jukka Vilen, City Director, Kemi

UBC Secretariat

Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat is located in the City of Gdańsk at the residence of the City Council. The Secretariat provides daily service to the UBC and its members. The Union has been satisfied with the work performed by the Secretariat. The financial matters have been handled properly as confirmed by the auditor. The Union would like to express its thanks to the City of Gdańsk for its contribution to the UBC.

UBC Commissions

In the reported period the UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission:	Lead Cities:
Commission on Business Cooperation	Kiel, Kolding
Commission on Culture	Vaasa
Commission on Education	Kärdla, Norrtälje
Commission on Energy	Oskarshamn
Commission on Environment	Turku
Commission on Gender Equality	Umeå
Commission on Health & Social Affairs	Elbląg
Commission on Local Safety	Gdańsk
Commission on Sport	Gdynia, Karlskrona
Commission on Tourism	Koszalin, Szczecin
Commission on Transportation	Gdynia
Commission on Urban Planning	Helsinki
Commission on Youth Issues	Tallinn

Commissions oversee Union activities in each of the respective areas. Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions within the reporting period are concisely described below.

Commission on Business Cooperation

In 2010 the Commission was chaired by the city of Kiel, whereas the city of Kolding held the chairmanship in 2011. At the 60th meeting in Lahti, 11 March 2011, the Executive Board decided to merge the Commission on Business Cooperation and the Commission on Information Society.

Meetings

The first meeting was held in Kolding in February 2010. It was decided, that the main focus of the Commission's work shall be on the topics: marketing BSR, science parks and reactivation of the commission.

BizCom is working with the Flagship Project “Promote with young entrepreneurs”. The kick-off meeting held on 20 May 2010 in Copenhagen was attended.

On 22 June 2010, upon the request of the Association of Municipalities of North Tyrrhenian Sea, the BizCom chairman held a presentation on the work of the UBC and the Business Commission.

In September 2010, the chairman attended the meeting of the Commission on Education in Tallinn. The work of BizCom was presented and possible fields of cooperation were discussed.

A second commission’s meeting was held in November 2010 in the science park Sophia Antipolis in southern France.

At the spring 2011 meeting in Kolding it was decided, that the main focus of the commission’s work for 2011 should be on the topic science parks.

At the UBC XI General Conference in Liepāja 5-7th October 2011 the commission was organizing a workshop “How to strengthen economic attractiveness of cities”.

Projects

BalMet Promo

BizCom has become a partner of the EU Funding Project “BaltMet Promo” and is member of the policy making group. In this aspect, two meetings were attended. BaltMet Promo pilots joint marketing of the BSR in 2010-2012 with a budget of 2,8 MEUR, co-financed by the Baltic Sea Region Programme. The project is coordinated by the city of Helsinki. The project aligns horizontal activities of the EU Strategy for the BSR related to the identity building and marketing of the region.

Round Table – Subsidised Jobs in Europe

The city of Tallinn and BizCom organised a joint roundtable on “Subsidised jobs in Europe – ideology, legislation and practise” on 29 April 2010 in Tallinn. The purpose of this meeting was to collect expertise about emergency measures to fight unemployment in different European cities.

Workshop: The network of the harbours cities

Upon the request of the Association of Municipalities of the North Tyrrhenian Sea, the Commission’s Chairman hold a presentation about the work of the UBC and the Business Commission.

Collaboration in EU-projects

Business Kolding is an active partner in the Baltic Supply project, which purpose is to strengthen the trade between the Baltic countries.

The commission is a network partner in the “User-Driven Innovation Project”. Its aim is to gain improved knowledge through active participation and to ensure that information is available for the UBC member cities.

Commission on Culture

Commission’s Board members in the reported period: chair Tarja Hautamäki Vaasa, Agrita Ozola Tukums, Olga Cherkasova St. Petersburg, Kim Dawartz Naestved, Björn F. Holmvik Bergen, Charlotte Lundkvist Umeå. Maarit Keto-Seppälä Turku was the commission secretary. The Board of the commission met in Tallinn 22-24 April 2010, Umeå 22-23 October 2010 and Vilnius 14-16 April 2011.

Activities

The Commission on Culture (CoC) organized two annual meetings, namely the 13th Annual Working Session in Turku entitled “The Cultural Dimension of Baltic Cooperation – Developing Creative Industries”, held on 22-25 September 2009; and the 14th Annual Working Session in Umeå on “The Role of Culture in City planning” held on 22-23 October 2010.

The Festival of the Baltic Cities was held in St. Petersburg 11-13 June 2010. The city of Turku hosted the festival 13-19 May 2011 during the performing arts month. In connection with the festival an idea café on a theme of European Capital of Culture was held on 14th May in Turku City Theatre.

The UBC Cultural Prize has been granted by the UBC Commission on Culture since 2006. 2010 edition theme was “Multicultural dialogue”. The prize of the year 2010 was given to Liepāja City Culture Department for the Maritime Festival.

CoC has been cooperating with Bridging Ages network as a partner. The Bridging Ages network organized the conference “Applied Cultural Heritage, how telling past at historic site benefits society”, on 17-19 November 2010 in Kalmar. CoC supported the participation of the representatives of UBC member cities. Bridging Ages conference Using Time Travel to Explore the Turning Points in History as a theme was organized 3-5 June 2011 in Tallinn.

CoC supported the international project of arts “Muses of the Sea” which was dedicated to the International Day of Music 1st October 2011. The project was initiated by the Klaipėda State Musical Theatre.

In 2010 a series of workshops and meetings for planning a Baltic Creative Management project were held in Umeå 1-4 September, in Tallinn 12-14 October, and in Jyväskylä 30 November – 1 December. Umeå is the leading city of the project and responsible for planning process.

Contacts with Les Rencontres, Ars Baltica, Assembly of European Regions, Bridging Ages and other international networks on culture were developed and kept alive.

Commission on Education

Commission was chaired by Kurt Pettersson, Norrtälje. Secretariat was located in Kärddla.

Activities

Research for education in UBC, Spring-Summer 2010

The goal of the research was to collect information about the education system in UBC countries. The research comprises an overview of EU and national policy of education.

Environmental project for youth, 2010

EduCom worked out 5 parts of the environmental youth project - coast survey, informative text reading, tests/quizzes, essays, drawing. A computer system was tested in different countries, which have joined the youth program.

Nature school network

In spring 2010 network of nature schools and centers successfully applied for the support from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Commission plans to arrange three, one week long, pedagogical courses for teachers during three years. Course material, in the shape of a pedagogical handbook, will be constructed and distributed to partner institutions and participants.

Erken Laboratory Research School, 7 June – 3 July 2010 and 13 June – 9 July 2011, Sweden

The goal of the research school, addressed to the students aged 17-19, was to enhance the cultural exchange between the young people in the region and to increase the interest in higher education and natural sciences.

Summer university for teachers

The summer university for 24 young teachers in natural sciences was held at the Erken Laboratory during two weeks in August 2010 with the topic “Lakes as pedagogical tools in education”.

Promote young entrepreneurs

Representative of EduCom participated in the kick-off meeting for priority area 8 of the EU Strategy for BSR held on 20 May 2010 in Copenhagen.

Annual Meeting of EduCom, 27–28 September 2010, Tallinn

Commission made an overview of educational research, nature school network, the environmental project and the flagship project “Promote young entrepreneurs”.

EDEN4YOU – Entrepreneurship Development through European Network for Youngsters & Women. The project was prepared in the beginning of 2011. It targets particularly young and female entrepreneurs, to be involved in a new dynamic employment model where they can have leading roles.

Comenius Regio

An application to the Comenius regio program was granted in July 2011 and the bilateral project between Norrtälje and Tallinn on outdoor teaching and nature as a pedagogical tool will run for two years from 1 August 2011.

Commission on Energy

Commission was chaired by Stefan Windh, Oskarshamn. Secretariat of the Commission was located in Oskarshamn.

Meetings

The Energy Commission held a joint meeting with the Commissions on Environment and Transport in Gdynia, Poland, during the spring of 2010. In 2011 a joint meeting was held in Turku 2 January together with the Commissions on Environment and Education. The Energy Commission participated

in the Executive Board meeting in Tallinn, 13-14 October 2010.

Cooperation with other organizations

Joint Energy and Climate Platform of the BSR Organisations

The work of the platform was a preparatory policy work prior to the UN Climate Conference, COP 15, held in Copenhagen in December 2009. The JECP finalized its guiding principles and goals for the ongoing cooperation in a communiqué.

Baltic Development Forum

The Energy Commission participated in the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Vilnius, 1-2 June 2010 and was also a participant in the Networking Village of the Summit.

Projects

LED – Light in Public Space

Cooperation between 15 partners to investigate the possibilities to convert to LED-lighting in public space from an energy perspective, economical perspective as well as a way to make the cities and municipalities more safe and attractive. Partners from the UBC - Oskarshamn, Kalmar, Wismar, Rostock, Gdynia, Gdańsk and Klaipėda. www.ledlightproject.com

Other projects: ITEST (Increased Total Efficiency in Sewage Treatment), EEMTE (Energy Efficiency in Municipality – Training and Exchange of experience).

Bulletins

The Energy Commission buys a spread in each issue of the UBC Environmental Bulletin. An article was submitted to the general bulletin about the Adobe Connect Pro account.

Commission on Environment

Commission was chaired by Mikko Jokinen, Turku. Secretariat of the Commission on Environment (EnvCom) was located in Turku.

Activities

UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2010–2015 has already committed several projects with a total budget on approximately 10 MEUR. These projects provide framework of action to address the challenges in practice.

During the reporting period the EnvCom has arranged thematic seminar/workshop-type meetings, in Kristiansand September 2009, Gdynia March 2010 and in Turku February 2011. In addition to that, a joint UBC Commission meeting was held in Turku in November 2010.

The UBC EnvCom website has been up-dated and contact databases maintained. UBC good practice database is working to better serve and collect information, data, good practises etc. from projects, meetings and UBC member cities. More than 530 good practice cases are already listed in the database www.ubcwheel.eu.

Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin has continued with thematic editions on “Improving the state of the Baltic Sea” 2/2009, “Sustainable solutions for cities” 1/2010, “Quality of life in Baltic Cities” 2/2010 and “Inspiring local level decisions steer innovative cities” 1/2011.

The biggest single activity during 2011 was the arrangement and hosting of the “Solutions local, together – Nordic Conference on Sustainable Development in the BSR 31.1.–2.2.2011 in Turku, Finland. UBC EnvCom was the conference coordinator.

The commission has represented the UBC at the CBSS-Baltic21, Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), European Sustainable Cities and towns Campaign and at European expert and working groups such as in EMAS revision.

The main focus during the last two year period has been in the implementation of the new EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Projects

CHAMP – Combating Climate Change, LIFE+ funded project including Finland, Germany, Hungary and Italy, 2009 – 2011

BaltCICA – Climate Change: Impact, Costs and Adaptation in the BSR. UBC EnvCom partner in the project. BSR INTERREG IVB programme, 2009 – 2011

NEW BRIDGES – Strengthening Quality of Life through improved Management of Urban Rural Interaction. BSR INTERREG IVB, 12 partners and 13 associated partners, 2009 – 2011

PURE Phosphorous Reduction in Baltic Cities, 7 UBC cities, 11 partners and 18 associated partners, BSR INTERREG IVB programme, 2009 – 2013

INNOSHIP Project – Sustainable Ports and Cities, 6 UBC cities, 19 partners, BSR INTERREG IVB programme, 2010 – 2013

GREENCITY Project together with city of Umeå, Life+ funding

NetCom, strengthening the Covenant of Mayors work and networking, IEE funding

Commission on Gender Equality

Commission on Gender Equality was led by the city of Umeå, Sweden.

Activities

Since the X UBC General Conference in Kristiansand, the Commission on Gender Equality has continued its work to promote and enhance Gender Equality work around the Baltic sea.

The commission has researched experiences of gender equality work in the member cities. The commission has throughout this period worked with networks within the area of gender equality and has been active in meetings and conferences. The commission has also established contact with the European Institute of Gender Equality in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The report on Gender equality in the UBC, was distributed to all cities in the UBC.

There were two meetings organized, in Panevėžys, Lithuania and in Gdańsk, Poland. The Panevėžys meeting was an exchange of knowledge and discussion on gender equality with political representation and municipality officials. The commission also shared best practise from around the region. The

Gdańsk meeting presented a report on the situation in Gdańsk. The meeting was also visited by a representative from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The declaration of Gender Equality from CEMR was one of the topics discussed.

The commission has been working on a campaign with the main idea to raise awareness and create an interest to start discussing these issues. This campaign material will be launched during 2011 and distributed to all member cities.

The commission has been involved and contributed to the UBC Bulletin with specific theme on gender equality. Articles were written on gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming, specific projects working as best practice.

The commission also wrote an application within the area of labour market and creative industries, especially focusing on women's possibilities and career opportunities within these fields. The project name was Gender Equal Labour Market (GELM) and application was within the URBACT-programme. Unfortunately, the project did not gain financing. However, another project, in which one of the UBC cities took part, referred to the same ideas.

Commission on Health and Social Affairs

The city of Elbląg took over the chairmanship in June 2010. Wojciech Drozd has been the commission's Chairman since February 2011.

Meeting in Elbląg, 15-16 September 2011

37 representatives of 13 cities from 4 countries took part in the meeting. The seminar was entitled "Senior citizens and the city". There were 10 lectures delivered by participating cities. This meeting was meant as an exchange of experiences and solutions which work well in practice. The main questions discussed were: how cities care about elderly people, how cities counteract senior citizens' exclusion, how cities can benefit from senior citizens.

Moreover, the commission established contacts with two international organizations operating in the BSR. These are Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) and Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association (BRHCA).

NDPHS is the intergovernmental organization acting on ministerial level, which expert groups create strategies, guidelines and practical solutions of problems connected with public health and social issues on macro level. BRHCA which is also a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the BSR, promotes health conditions in urban areas in BSR and supports WHO programs concerning urban health issues.

At the GC in Liepāja the commission organizes workshop three entitled "How to meet the demographic challenge; the ageing society".

The following speakers were invited:

- Demographic development in the Baltic Sea Region – Prof. Peteris Zvidrins, Head of Chair of Statistics and Demography, University of Latvia.
- Primary health care and social care system development to meet the demographic challenge related to ageing – Prof. Arnoldas Jurgutis, International Adviser NDPHS, Klaipeda University
- Promoting health and responding to challenges of ageing society – WHO Healthy Cities – Johanna

Reiman, Executive Director, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association.

Commission on Local Safety

Creation of the Local Safety & Public Order Working Group

Activities of Local Safety & Public Order working group has been initiated by Gdańsk Municipal Guard in October 2009 by sending questionnaires about key issues of local safety among UBC cities. In December 2009 results of the survey were published and presented to each representative together with the information about potential cooperation and an invitation to the first meeting. It took place on 26 March 2010 in Gdańsk and was attended by representatives of nine cities: Botkyrka, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Nacka, Riga, Sopot, Tukums, Tallinn and Vilnius.

The letter of intent has been signed by the representatives of participating cities and lately presented to the UBC authorities at the 58th UBC Executive Board meeting in Trelleborg where it was agreed that the working group should work with aim to improve local security services as well as assure the safety standards and procedures in Baltic cities.

Meetings

The second meeting of Local Safety & Public Order WG took place in Riga on 14 October 2010. The committee has been elected for the two-year period: Leszek Walczak from Municipal Guard of Gdańsk as the chairman, Hans-Ivar Swärd from municipality of Nacka and Andrejs Aronovs from Municipal Guard of Riga as vice-chairmen. Gdańsk has been chosen as a localisation for secretariat of the working group. Representatives from Jelgava, Liepāja, Jūrmala and Panevėžys signed declarations of participation, which has extended has the group up to 13 cities.

At the 3rd meeting held in Vilnius 13–15 April 2011 a logo of working group was approved. Cities presented their know-how on different issues and managing methods in order to increase local safety standards. Two more cities Kaunas and Karlstad joined the WG.

Exchange programme

Based on bilateral agreement between Vilnius and Gdańsk an exchange programme has started. The main goal of this programme is to train city guards or police officers in different cities in order to gain an experience one from another.

Local Safety & Public Order WG participated in other commissions' meetings in order to share experience and know-how.

At the 61st UBC Executive Board meeting in Karlstad, 17 June 2011, cities members of the working group applied to the Board to transform the WG into the Commission on Local Safety. The Board decided to create the Commission.

Commission on Sport

Commission was chaired by Beata Łęgowska, Gdynia, until July 2011. Since then Maja Wagner (Gdynia) has been a new co-chair of the Commission. The chairmanship has been shared with Camilla

Brunsborg, Karlskrona. The Secretariat was located in Gdynia.

Activities

In autumn 2009 the UBC Commission on Sport concluded the social campaign entitled “Always Active” whose objective was to prevent physical mobility restrictions (originating from advanced age) as well as to counteract consequent social exclusion. The campaign was concluded with the grant session. “Active and Fit” grants were awarded to Panevėžys, Koszalin, Ustka, Vilnius.

In 2010 the commission launched the “Sport is cool!” campaign addressed at young people from UBC member cities as well as adults who are professionally in charge of organising sports activities for young people and/or who work in sports departments of city administration, sports clubs and organisations. It will be concluded in autumn 2013.

Within the campaign the commission organized the Annual Meeting “Sport is Cool” which was held on 22-24 April 2010, in cooperation with the City of Tallinn. The idea of promoting sport activities among children and young people was the main subject of the 2010 meeting. In 2010 “Sport is cool” grants were awarded to Tukums, Bergen, Sillamäe, Võru. The grant session “Sport is cool II” was announced in summer 2011, and the deadline for submitting projects is 28 October 2011.

The commission has been cooperating with the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association – WHO collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Health in the BSR, Senior Activity Centre in Gdynia and the Commission on Youth Issues.

The commission regularly updates its website so that it contains topical information about its actions and undertakings.

Commission on Tourism

Commission on Tourism (CoT) was chaired by Ryszard Zdrojewski, Koszalin. Ewa Kurjata, Szczecin, was co-chairperson of the Commission till 2010. Secretariat of the Commission was located in Koszalin.

Meetings

20-23 May 2010, Rakvere. The meeting concentrated on the issues related to the place branding in the BSR, Agora 2.0 project and UBC city marketing guidelines.

17-19 March 2011, Greifswald. The main subject of the meeting was: ”Baltic Sea region identity in the light of the UBC Strategy”. There were 17 participants from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia.

Activities

CoT published the 3rd edition of the catalogue “BSR – Perfect Tourism Zone” in 2011.

Also, a preparatory work has been carried out on a new edition of “Baltic Notes” which will be released under the CoT auspices.

The commission organized two editions of the competition for the best tourist destinations. The main

subject and objectives of the competition has been selection and promotion of the best product, site, event, idea in the field of tourism. The main aim of the competition was to promote the Baltic Sea Region as a tourist destination. The winner of “Tourist hit of 2011 season” will be announced by the end of November 2011.

Projects

AGORA 2.0 project partners meeting in Minsk and Tallinn

Commission on Tourism, together with the Regional Development Agency of Koszalin took part in the Agora 2.0 project partners meetings. The CoT chairman made a presentation about implementation activities connected with WP 4. - Heritage Scouting

ESB! Project partner meeting in Gdańsk

The first project partner meeting took place in Gdańsk on 31.08 - 02.09.2011. “Enjoy South Baltic!” is a cross-border project co-financed from by South Baltic Programme 2007-2013, implemented by partners from Poland, Lithuania, Germany. The aim of the project is to strengthen the image and competitiveness of the South Baltic region defined as the “rising star”.

“Collection of Good Practices on Sustainable Tourism”, within the frame of the project EcoRegion (Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013) led by Greifswald University. The EcoRegion project has the ambition to identify practices that might be relevant for potential users of the EcoRegion good practice database.

Commission on Transportation

Commission on Transportation was chaired by Zygmunt Zmuda-Trzebiatowski, Gdynia, until June 2011. The chairmanship was taken over by Andrzej Bień, Gdynia. The Secretariat was located in Gdynia.

Joint meeting

UBC Commissions on Energy, Environment and Transportation joint meeting was held in Gdynia on 18-19 March 2010. It was focused on sustainable solutions for combating climate change in the BSR. The meeting analysed and discussed challenges of climate change from these three viewpoints.

Road Safety Campaign

Since 2009 the UBC has been a signatory of the European Road Safety Charter. The commission carries out a Road Safety Campaign for UBC member cities. The aim of this campaign is to raise awareness of all traffic participants: pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. It includes the following initiatives: Road Safety course for children – Autochodziki, Competition 2010, Brochure “Safe on the road”. Also, the seminar “What can we do to increase the road safety among children and young people?” was held within the campaign on 21-22.10.2010 in Gdynia.

One of the commitments to European Road Safety Charter is to write articles on road safety in the Baltic Cities Bulletin. Articles in 4 BCB issues have been published.

Bike to School Grant Competition 2011

In September 2011 the commission announced a grant competition entitled “Bike to School”. Each of the awarded projects will receive a grant of 1,000 EUR. The deadline for sending applications is 14 October 2011.

Survey

The commission has sent out a survey on transport issues. It was prepared on the basis of the EU document: “White Paper 2011. Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system”. 17 cities answered the questionnaire, the analysis of the results will be presented during the General Conference in Liepāja and the commission meeting in Riga.

Commission on Urban Planning

Commission on Urban Planning (CUP) was chaired by Sirpa Kallio, Helsinki. After the Tartu seminar in September 2011 Niels-Peter Mohr, Aarhus, was appointed as the new CUP chairman.

Activities

Seminar in Tampere, 14 - 17 April 2010

The Tampere seminar theme “Edges of the City Centre and Reuse of Traffic Areas” concentrated on an acute question in many cities, namely increasing the density of city centres and avoiding urban sprawl. Also climate change and sustainability in urban planning were taken into account in the seminar programme.

Seminar in Šiauliai, 7- 9 October 2010

One of the aims of the seminar “Visions for an Attractive City and City Centre” was to find ways to increase the attractiveness of the city and to discuss how urban planning could help the city to keep its present inhabitants and possibly even increase the number of population.

Seminar in Växjö, 11 - 13 April 2011

CUP had its 23rd seminar “Innovative Districts” in Växjö. The participants visited the wooden multi-storey housing complex on the waterfront of Trummen Lake. There were also lots of other interesting practical solutions to see for planners working with the questions of sustainable urban development.

Seminar in Tartu, 19-21 September 2011

The 24th CUP seminar “Planning the History and Future in Consonance” was held in Tartu in September 2011. Tartu is often considered as the intellectual and cultural hub of Estonia, especially since it is home to Estonia’s oldest university from 1632. The historical elements of Tartu make it a very attractive city for residents, students and tourists, but the pressure to attract business life is also considerable like all over the BSR. How to combine the historical features with modern commercial needs combining the values of the old and bringing new ideas, was the theme of the seminar.

Commission on Youth Issues

The Commission was chaired by the city of Tallinn. Since April 2011 the chairman of the Commission has been Mihhail Kõlvart, deputy mayor of Tallinn. The vice-chair city is Liepāja, represented by the Vice-Chairman of Liepāja City Council Gunars Ansins. Secretariat of the commission was located in

the city of Tallinn, Sports and Youth Department.

Meetings

Liepāja 10-12 June 2010. Commission on Sport was also represented. Main topic for sharing best practices was the general youth policy planning and youth work in the cities. Youth Conference 2011 was discussed.

Rostock 26 -28 October 2010. The main topic was “Supporting youth employment and career in our city”. Overview of the questionnaire, carried out on Commission’s web-page regarding youth policy and youth work strategies in UBC cities, was given.

Turku 25-27 April 2011. The main topic was “Culture related youth projects in my city”. Two new projects were introduced by Animare Project Management.

Other activities

The commission’s representatives participated in the UBC Commission on Sport meeting on 22-24 April 2010 in Tallinn. The YouthCom representative participated in Yc³ (Youth Cross-border Cooperation and Communication Summit) to discuss possible co-operation. Event took place in Karlskrona on 23-24 July 2010.

In 2010, the commission carried out a web-based questionnaire among UBC cities “Mapping existence of youth policies and youth work strategies in UBC member cities”. Results were published also in the UBC Bulletin “Baltic Cities” 2/2010. Commission has been actively informing about its work in the UBC bulletin regularly.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

The Baltic Cities Bulletin published by the UBC Secretariat provides information about the work of the Union and news from the member cities. Moreover, an emphasis is put on covering some specific fields of general interest which are presented as main themes of each issue. The bulletin is printed ca. 6000 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities as well as to the number of Baltic and European organisations and institutions including the EU. The bulletin is available on the internet at <http://www.ubc.net/publications>

In the last period the following issues have been published: “Beyond the crisis - cities’ ideas for recovery”, “The Baltic Sea Region as a tourist destination area”, “Gender Equality in the Baltic Sea Cities”, “Building on the past, heading for the future”.

Two editions of UBC Cities Events Calendar were issued - 2010 and 2011. The UBC website has been updated regularly. The Union established its profile on Facebook: www.facebook.com/unionofthebalticcities.