

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

November 2017 – October 2019

Activities carried out by UBC in the period November 2017 – October 2019

- **UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens in Rostock, 12-14 March 2018**

Being a follow-up of the conference on the impact of the European refugee crisis in the Baltic cities, organized in Rostock in March 2016, the UBC Conference on Integration "Sharing the European Dream" addressed the questions of the role of migration in the cities development. 78 participants from the Baltic Sea Region tried to answer the questions: How should our cities be in twenty years?

How to master the integration of new citizens as full members of the society? How to live, work and learn together to share the European dream? How should our cities be in twenty years? How to master the integration of new citizens as full members of the society? How to live, work and learn together to share the European dream?

During eight workshops, using modern analytical methods and equipped with the lessons of the past, the participants from the Baltic Sea region including migrants worked out new concepts. The conference was accompanied by examples of various cultural influences the newcomers bring to our cities.

The Conference participants had also a chance to listen to the Expat Philharmonic Orchestra from Rostock and to co-create a Ship of Tolerance project.

- **EUSBSR**

The Union of the Baltic Cities has been actively involved in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. UBC is one of three coordinators, together with the Swedish Institute and Norden Association representing the Baltic Sea NGO Network, of the HA Capacity. The UBC Sustainable Cities Commission and Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-being have been running the EUSBSR flagship projects.

The following Commission's projects have EUSBSR Flagship status:

- iWater project (Lead Partner, City of Riga). Flagship status from HA Climate
- IWAMA project (Lead Partner, City of Turku/UBC SCC). Flagship status from PA Nutri
- BSR Water project (Lead Partner, City of Turku/UBC SCC). Flagship status from PA Nutri
- Cascade project (Lead Partner, City of Turku). Flagship status from HA Climate
- School to Work /S2W (co-ordinated by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions/ SALAR and UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-being). Flagship status from PA Education

In addition several events with EUSBSR HA Climate, PA Nutri, PA Hazard and HA Neighbours in spring and autumn 2018 and winter and spring 2019 were organized.

- **EUSBSR Fora**

The UBC actively took part in the EUSBSR Annual Fora in Tallinn, 4-5 June 2018 and in Gdańsk, 12-13 June 2019.

- Youth Conference 2018 and Seminar "Nothing about us without us", Tallinn, 2-4 June 2018

At the EU Strategy for BSR Forum in Tallinn, on 4 June the Youthful Cities Commission co-organised together with Council of Baltic Sea States, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation and Euroregion Baltic the third edition of the seminar "Nothing about us without us" – with a focus on digital tools to raise participation of youth. This was a follow-up of the previous seminars in Stockholm and Berlin.

On 2-3 June a preparation workshop was held with around 30 youth from the Baltic Sea region. They discussed different digital tools and prepared for the strategy seminar.

- The Baltic Youth Camp, Gdańsk, 8-11 June 2019

On 8-11 June 2019 over 100 young people aged 18-25 attended the Baltic Youth Camp in Gdańsk. The camp elaborated the Youth Declaration that was presented to important stakeholders and politicians at the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Annual Forum where this year's topic was "Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region".

During these four days the youth participated in seminars, workshops and presentations related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Topics such as waste management, forestry, marine life and education were discussed.

The Youth Declaration contains 10 proposals that are both feasible and realistic in terms of implementation. The proposals contain different projects that are generated and planned by the participants of the Youth Camp.

The event was co-organized by the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) together with the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) and the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre (BSCC) in Gdansk, with support of PA Culture.

- Stakeholder seminar – Regions and Municipalities involvement in the EUSBSR, Gdańsk, 11 June 2019

The Stakeholder seminar – Regions and Municipalities involvement in the EUSBSR took place on 11 June 2019. The seminar was moderated by Ms Bettina Rafaelsen, external consultant to the European Commission/DG Regio, responsible for the review reports of the ongoing revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

Politicians and civil servants from cities and regions around the Baltic Sea shared their views and input to the work of the Policy Areas and Horizontal Areas as well as on the governance of the EUSBSR.

- Easing the way for migrants, seminar, Gdańsk, 13 June 2019

The seminar focused on integration of migrants as a case study illustrating the need for learning between macro-regional strategies. Increasing numbers of migrants constitute a challenge to countries. At the same time, many countries struggle with demographic changes such as an ageing population leading to a deficit of skilled workers. The panellists discussed i.a. the following questions: How can macro-regional strategies complement and support existing initiatives and foster cooperation between actors entrusted with the responsibility of integrating migrants? How can integration of migrants contribute to competence supply and sustainable economies in an EU facing demographic changes? How can macro-regional strategies contribute to learning across borders and across EU?

The seminar was co-organized by HA Capacity (consisting of Baltic Sea NGO Network/Norden Association in Sweden, Swedish Institute, Union of the Baltic Cities) and PA Education (consisting of Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg/Norden Association in Sweden) together with EU Strategy for the Alpine Region, EU Strategy for the Danube Region and EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region.

- **Horizontal Action “Capacity”**

UBC is one of three coordinators, together with the Swedish Institute and Norden Association representing the Baltic Sea NGO Network, of the HA Capacity. Its task is to increase the project capacity, skills and competence of all stakeholders involved in the Strategy, through the training programs. The other dimension of the Horizontal Action Capacity is to ensure broad participation of local and regional authorities as well as all other stakeholders.

The UBC Executive Board at its meeting in Malmö on 18 October 2018 discussed, inter alia, the development of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and especially UBC’s role as a coordinator of the Horizontal Action Capacity. The UBC Board decided to enhance its input to the work of HA Capacity and encouraged its member cities to actively participate in various processes. It was also decided, that the UBC Secretariat would be in direct charge of the technical administration of HA Capacity, a task which earlier had been assigned to an outside organization.

Besides EUSBSR-level planning and coordination, HA CAP has been active in building closer links with the other macroregional strategies, all of which could benefit from exchanging experiences and possibly also building joint support structures. This work has been done with active assistance from INTERACT.

Manifolded capacity building activities of HA CAP included in the reported period, among others, workshops for PAs/HAs, annual meetings (“Autumn meetings”) of EUSBSR stakeholders, as well as support to other stakeholders such as PA Focal Points/steering group members, and Managing authorities of two networks of ERDF and ESF.

HA CAP has also been responsible for organising the Networking village and Participation Day linked to the EUSBSR Annual Fora.

The objectives of HA Capacity have been implemented within the project PA EDU / PA TOU / HA CAP - implementing three work programmes 2018 – 2020, co-funded from the BSR INTERREG Programme.

- Participation Day, Tallinn, 4 June 2018

The Participation Day took place on 4 June 2018 in Tallinn, back-to-back with the EUSBSR Annual Forum. The aim of the event was to attract local and regional levels to take part in EUSBSR cooperation and present concrete project proposals and concepts.

The event was organized together with the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities.

The Participation Day in Tallinn focused on three themes:

1. Sustainable consumption and production (PA Bioeconomy)
2. Integration of migrants (PA Education)
3. Energy efficiency (PA Energy)

- Participation Day, Gdańsk, 11 June 2019

Participation Day 2019 was an excellent opportunity for old and new stakeholders to meet and to learn more about the cooperation within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Participants gathered around four overall themes to discuss project and collaboration proposals. Experienced Policy Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Coordinators participated as mentors, who helped with the assessment of the projects, by creating contacts with the right policy area and proposing how the work can be carried on.

During the Participation Day, the role of young people in Baltic Sea cooperation was also highlighted. The Baltic Youth Camp, that was arranged the weekend before the Annual Forum, adopted the declaration. It encourages all actors to ensure that young people are always included in the work for a better future in the Baltic Sea Region.

- **Youth Employment and Well-Being**

Flagship School To Work aims to strengthen transnational cooperation between stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region in the field of education and work in order to prevent early school leaving and develop support for vulnerable groups of students/youth, specifically NEETs, early school leavers and newly arrived refugees. The project contributes to the achievement of relevant targets in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU's overall strategy Europe 2020. Policy gaps and system flaws will be identified and cooperation models once established, jointly worked through in order to develop new solutions, methods and models.

The following events were organized in 2018 and 2019:

- study visit, Gävle, 12-14 March 2018
- conference, Stockholm, 18 June 2018
- study visit, Kristiansand, 18-19 September 2018
- study visit, Turku, 1-2 November 2018
- study visit, Gdańsk, 21-23 November 2018
- annual conference, Gdańsk, 11 June 2019
- study visit, Turku, 25-26 September 2019

UBC conference "Supporting Youth Employment and the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee - The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices from Baltic Sea Region" was held on 20 May 2019 in Brussels, in the Committee of the Regions. The Conference concentrated on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Baltic Sea Region and successful networking and the best practices of peer development.

There were also presented examples of good practices of the work with NEETs and Early school leavers. The target groups of conference were policy makers, education and welfare specialists, NGOs, municipalities and public institutions.

- **UBC and CDP**

The report "Climate Leadership from Baltic Sea Region Cities 2017" (<https://www.ubc-sustainable.net/library/publication/climate-leadership-baltic-sea-region-cities>) was presented at the XIV UBC General Conference in Växjö in 2017.

In 2018, cooperation continued (newsletter campaigns, direct calling, CDP participation in UBC Urban Planning Webinar etc.). 28 UBC cities disclosed to CDP during the summer holiday period 2018.

The disclosing cities were Pärnu, Tartu and Sillamäe from Estonia; Espoo, Helsinki, Kemi, Lahti and Turku from Finland; Rostock and Greifswald from Germany; Liepāja, Riga and Jelgava from Latvia; Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Tauragė from Lithuania; Kristiansand and Arendal from Norway; Gdynia and

Gdansk from Poland; Malmö, Karlskrona, Örebro, Linköping, Växjö, Umeå, Trelleborg and Visby from Sweden.

The report revealed that more than half of the disclosing UBC cities have an action plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions whereas, globally, just 45% of the disclosing cities have an action plan for climate change mitigation activities. Nine major areas where emissions are currently cut (or planned to be cut) include: buildings, community-scale development, energy supply, finance and economic development, food and agriculture, mass transit, outdoor lighting, private transport and waste. UBC cities have started the climate change mitigation processes especially from the energy efficiency and retrofit measures and mostly focused on the construction/building and mobility sectors. Concrete good practices that cities have implemented in the fields of mobility and construction across the Baltic Sea Region is evident – the international cooperation projects in the region showcase climate smart leadership and innovating new sustainable solutions for our cities.

Around 40% of the UBC cities who disclosed to CDP reported that they were in progress of actively reducing emissions through different types of measures – in other words, actively creating change and pushing for a transition to carbon neutral societies.

At the Board meeting in Malmö in October 2018, a new Memorandum of Understanding for the next three years was signed.

- **Projects**

UBC has been actively involved in various projects being a partner or associated partner. The Union supports initiatives that aim at improving life in the cities and promoting democratic values.

- PA EDU / PA TOU / HA CAP - implementing three work programmes 2018 – 2020

The INTERREG BSR project's objective is coordination of macro-regional cooperation: to increase capacity of public administrations and pan-Baltic organisations for transnational coordination in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and facilitating the implementation of common priorities with the partner countries. UBC is a partner in this project. Full description is available under the point: Horizontal Action "Capacity".

- Anti-radicalisation BOX project

The project aims to support local actors, including non-profit organisations, police departments and educational institutions by enhancing their competences, skills and knowledge to prevent and counter violent radicalisation amongst young people. Also, promotion of positive relationships between young people coming from different backgrounds both in school and "free time" environments. This project is to create spaces for this exchange and build synergies and long-term cooperation, thus increasing successful countering of violent radicalisation of youth. During the project we will upscale and test the "Unix application" (<https://www.uniks.com>), and introduce the "anti-radicalisation box", a platform dedicated to continuous capacity building and a good practice source for CSOs, educational institutions and policy makers. The application was submitted on 18 March 2019 within Internal Security Fund Police (ISFP) Call for proposals on counter-terrorism.

- H8ST

According to European Commission reports, there is lack of cross-sectoral cooperation between public authorities, IT companies and CSOs working with hate speech online. This project aims to create spaces for such exchange and build synergies and long-term cooperation, thus increasing successful countering of hate speech online. During the project the "Uniks application" (<https://www.uniks.com>)

will be upscaled and tested, and the “H8 speech toolkit” will be introduced. The project aims to support local actors, including non-profit organisations, police departments and educational institutions by enhancing their competences, skills and knowledge to prevent and counter hate speech online.

The application was submitted on 21 April 2019 within Internal Security Fund Police (ISFP) Call for proposals to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance and to monitor, prevent and counter hate speech online.

- EUppers – youth accelerators of European values and initiatives

The main aim of the project is to create a system that will bring European values to local communities using the experience, competences and motivation of youth who took part in EU mobility projects. In order to help foster a sense of European citizenship among the youth at local/national level, young people have to be mobilized.

The partners are: Out of the Box International, Connect International, Union of Baltic Cities, Wisamar, VŠJ Kauno Jaunimo Slėnis, Libero, Municipality of Vracar, Tipovej, Javni Zavod Mladi Zmaji and Backlash, Ayuntamiento de Quart de Poblet.

The application under the European Youth Together ERASMUS+ Programme call was submitted on 7 August 2019.

- ‘Sport for Values’

The project aims at identifying good practice, developing practical tools and disseminating them through a series of workshops, training and conferences for urban sports development. The project was submitted under the European Commission Call for Proposals EAC/S14/2018 "Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level" in July 2018. In December 2018 the project was selected by the European Commission.

The partners are: Kaunas, Lithuania (Applicant), La Rissa, Greece, Portimao, Portugal, Umeå, Sweden, Campobasso, Italy, Fazana, Croatia, Sandanski, Bulgaria, Thermi, Greece, Liepaja, Latvia and Union of the Baltic Cities.

- NOAH

The NOAH project improves spatial planning and the operation of urban storm water runoff and drainage systems in order to reduce pollution caused by extreme weather such as heavy rains and floods. NOAH develops a new layer for extreme weather events to be used in computer based modelling of drainage. By combining this modelling with traditional city planning techniques, municipal planning shifts from fragmented individual site based planning to a holistic approach covering the entire urban catchment.

The partners are: Tallinn University of Technology, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Gdansk University of Technology, City of Haapsalu, City of Rakvere, Liepaja municipal authority "Komunālā pārvalde", Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Estonian Waterworks Association, City of Pori, Halmstad University, Economic Chamber Polish Waterworks, Riga Technical University, Ogre municipality, Słupsk Water Supply, Technical University of Denmark, Jurmalas udens Ltd, Municipality of Söderhamn, Rakvere Water Company. UBC is an associated partner.

- EmPaci

Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic decision-making in which ordinary people take part in preparing and adopting a municipal or public budget. In the Baltic Sea region, only a few municipalities have applied participatory budgeting to date.

A typical type of citizen in such a process is male, politically active, well-educated, and 35-65 years old. The objective of EmPaci is to get more municipalities involved and mobilise different types of citizens by building municipal capacities, transnational clusters and municipality-citizen cooperation. Its Lead partner is University of Rostock, Germany. UBC is an associated partner.

- **Communications**

During the XIV General Conference held in Växjö in October 2017, a seminar “City Branding in the Baltic Sea Region” was arranged as part of the work of UBC Communications Network.

The seminar was led by Pärtel-Peeter Pere, CEO of Future Place Leadership. Main topics were place branding, place making, talent attraction and change leadership, followed by a workshop. The workshop focused on developing the work of UBC Communications Network for the next 1–2 year period, led by UBC Communications Manager Irene Pendolin.

UBC took new steps in social media during the GC. All participants were encouraged to post about the conference in social media by using the UBC hashtag #UBC_BSR. Twitter and Instagram posts showed on screens in the lobby of the conference venue. In addition, the main sessions were streamed live and could be watched also afterwards in UBC YouTube.

The first communication event in 2018 took place during the UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens in March in Rostock. One of the workshops during the conference was on the subject of communication and equality. The main sessions in the conference were streamed live. The second communications event of the year was “UBC Seminar on International City Marketing and Business Marketing” arranged in Rostock in November 2018. The whole seminar was streamed live.

In December, UBC webinar on EU funding was arranged, gathering around 30 participants.

During the 10th EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdańsk, the UBC was active in creating news and posts about its own activities in the Forum as well as the event in general.

Other noteworthy communication points during November 2017–October 2019:

- UBC website has been revised to its final form.
- UBC has been active in the following social media channels: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.
- Altogether eight UBC newsletters have been published, including General Conference newsletters.
- The Baltic Cities Bulletin has been published in digital format two times each year.
- UBC actively posts about UBC and member cities’ news and events on its website www.ubc.net and in UBC’s social media.

- **Inquiry on cities’ needs and interests**

43 cities have responded to the inquiry sent to the UBC cities in November 2017. More than 50 posts have been published on the UBC website and on Facebook. The aim of the inquiry was to get broader knowledge about cities’ needs and interests.

According to the responses, all cities are open for investments and start-ups. Most common sectors are: industry, tourism & wellness, energy, ICT, maritime and logistics businesses, sustainability, circular

economy, creative businesses. The companies in the UBC cities are usually open for cooperation in new markets and with new partners from BSR. The cities provide support to businesses e.g. through investments/start-ups agencies, science parks, special economic zones, business incubators, chambers of commerce, local grant programmes for companies.

Most of the respondents were interested in exchange, especially in the fields of culture, youth or sport. In their opinion, staff/teachers exchange would be beneficial (e.g. libraries, art schools and other cultural institutions) but there is a question of funding to be solved. According to the inquiry results, the cities have a lot to offer and are eager to share their knowledge and experiences, but also to learn from others. The most popular fields mentioned in the survey are: civic participation, youth involvement, city planning, safety, integration, sports, gender equality, social services, entrepreneurship.

Also, the cities had a chance to express their expectations towards the UBC. The responses show the variety of needs. Most often, the respondents want UBC to be a platform for collaboration and development of cities around the Baltic Sea, a forum to find partners for projects and interesting best practices, and also an agent that spread out the cities' innovative solutions. UBC should be in active dialogue with its member cities to support and facilitate development of the city and its areas. Also, more tangible results from cooperation and project work are expected. In the cities' opinion, UBC should encourage member cities to be more involved in its activities.

- **UBC National Coordinators**

The Executive Board at the meeting in Rostock 13 March 2018 agreed to launch an initiative to strengthen the capacity and proactivity of the UBC cooperation, by assigning UBC national coordinators in each of the UBC member countries.

The national coordinators were appointed in each city which held the seat in the UBC Executive Board in each UBC member country. Their role is to strengthen the commitment of the member cities to remain active in and contributing to the UBC network.

- **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.

In the last period the following issues have been published: "Gender mainstreaming in the Baltic Sea cities", "Sharing the European Dream", "Nothing about us without us!", "Cities co-operation beyond the Baltic Sea Region". Since spring 2017, only online version has been published. All Bulletins are available at: <http://ubc.net/publications>

UBC Executives during two-year period

Per Bødker Andersen, Kolding, President
Marie-Louise Rönmark, Umeå, First Vice-President
Jarkko Virtanen, Turku, Vice-President
Mantas Jurgutis, Kaunas, Vice-President
Paweł Żaboklicki, Gdańsk, Secretary General

Executive Board during two-year period

Næstved, Denmark
Elva, Estonia

Lahti, Finland
Rostock, Germany
Liepāja, Latvia
Tauragė, Lithuania
Kristiansand, Norway
Gdynia, Poland
St. Petersburg, Russia
Växjö, Sweden
Gdańsk, Poland - observer

Executive Board Meetings

Four Executive Board meetings took place during the reporting period between Växjö and Kaunas General Conferences:

81st Executive Board meeting, Rostock, 13 March 2018
82nd Executive Board meeting, Malmö, 18 October 2018
83rd Executive Board meeting, St. Petersburg, 23-26 April 2019
84th Executive Board meeting, Kaunas, 15 October 2019

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

Marta Chełkowska, Director of Tourism Department, Pomorskie Voivodship
Jukka Vilen, City Director, Kemi
Roger Kaliff, Chairman of the City Council, Kalmar

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 City(ies):
Cultural Cities	Kaunas
Inclusive and Healthy Cities	Gdynia/Karlstad
Planning Cities	Aarhus (till October 2018) Gdynia
Safe Cities	Liepāja
Smart and Prospering Cities	Kiel
Sustainable Cities	Turku
Youthful Cities	Kolding

Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions within the reporting period are concisely described below.

Cultural Cities Commission

The Commission is chaired by Rūta Stepanovaitė, Kaunas (LT), from April 2018. Radosław Krajewicz, Chojnice (PL) is a Vice Chairman. Steering Committee consists of Rūta Stepanovaitė (LT), Külli Hansen (EE), Czesław Zdrojewski (PL), Radosław Krajewicz (PL), Iveta Ķelpe (LV). Members of the Commission: 54 representatives from 10 countries.

Meetings/seminars/conferences:

- Chair and Steering Committee member meeting, Kaunas, May
- Steering Committee members meeting will be held on 15 October 2019 and a general meeting of the Commission will be held on 16 October 2019, both in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Projects

- 2018-2021, UBC CCC objective: Regional identity
Partner/Leading partner of the project: Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat
Project: "Baltic Sea Cultural City"
Partners: CBSS; UBC; Kaunas Artists' House; Culture Institute in Gdansk; Agency for International Affairs and Reg Cooperation Kaliningrad; Ars Baltica; Regional Council of Ostrobothnia; Schleswig-Holstein; City of Kiel.
Budget: the total budget of the initiation of the project funded by the Swedish Institute is 500.000 SEK (approx. 47.000€).

Cooperation with other organisations

- 2018-2019, UBC CCC objective: Professionalization of the cultural and creative field / audience development
Partner: ARS Baltica
Project: "ARS BALTICA Creative Dialogue (ABCD)"
- 2019-2020, UBC CCC objective: Urban transformation through culture
Partner: Danish Cultural Institute in Riga
Project: "UrbCulturalPlanning"

Communications

The Commission has proceeded managing the CCC Facebook platform during the year (<https://www.facebook.com/ubcccc/>). Several Newsletters of the UBC CCC were distributed.

Other activities

Partnership in process: the Commission is in negotiation with Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC).

Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission

The Commission was chaired by:

- 2017 - Karlstad (Sweden) together with Gdynia as a co-chair,
- 2018 and 2019 - Gdynia together with Karlstad as a co-chair.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- **Study visit and conference on domestic violence, 6-8 December 2017, Gdynia, Poland**

For three days in December 2017, a group of 6 employees from Karlstad visited Gdynia to see and learn more about how Gdynia have organized local system of support for those who suffer from the domestic violence. There were study visits and workshops, and the space for exchange, explanations, questions and discussions was also secured. The White Ribbon Conference was also a part of the program.

- **UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens "Sharing the European Dream", 12-14 March 2018, Rostock, Germany**

Representatives from members cities of Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission were present at the conference and participated actively in the workshops. The Commission was also engaged in process of conference preparation – representatives of Gdynia were members of the working team.

- **Participation in 81st Executive Board meeting, 13 March 2018, Rostock, Germany**

Jarosław Józefczyk, the Chair of IHCC, Gdynia, informed Executive Board about commissions plans for 2018.

- **Study visit on domestic violence, 16-19 April 2018, Karlstad, Sweden**

Second part of bilateral cooperation in the field of domestic violence between Gdynia, Poland and Karlstad, Sweden, was a three-day study visit in Karlstad.

- **Planning meeting, 21-22 August 2018, Gdynia, Poland**

Chair and Co-chair, Gdynia and Karlstad representatives participated a planning meeting in August in Gdynia to prepare Commissions annual meeting in Karlstad and to set up plans for next activities in 2018 and 2019.

- **Workshops on The Global Goals and Annual meeting of IHCC, 30-31 October 2018, Karlstad, Sweden**

The theme of the workshops was: Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission and The Global Goals 2030 - How can we use the Global Goals for sustainable development in our commission? How can our work in the Commission contribute to achieving the goals? As a result of the workshops the topic suggestion for the next IHCC meeting and future work is Goal 3: "Good health and well-being".

Projects

In April 2018, on behalf of UBC Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission (as an associated partner), Letter of Support for the project "Healthy Boost - urban Labs for Better Health for All in the Baltic Sea Region - boosting cross-sectoral cooperation for health and wellbeing in the cities" was signed.

Leader of the project: Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association, Turku, Finland. The project got funding from Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 within the priority 1.3 - Non-technological Innovation.

Planning Cities Commission

The members of the Steering Group are: Mara Liepa-Zemesa from Riga, Paulina Szewczyk from Gdynia, Tomas Strömberg from Umeå, Christian Hegardt from Visby (Sweden), Björn Grönholm from Turku and Niels-Peter Mohr from Aarhus (Chairman), in October 2018 replaced by Paulina Szewczyk from Gdynia (Chair).

Meetings/seminars/conferences

The annual seminar "Urban Transition Zones - Sustainable urban transformation in the context of a small historic city" was held in Visby on 21–24 October 2018, in cooperation with Region Gotland. Ca. 40 participants from UBC cities together with ten local planners. the main aim of the seminar and workshop was to reflect and give suggestions on the development of two areas close to the historic town and the medieval city wall, the Inner Harbour and the East Centre. One important challenge for the city is how to create urban space for seasonal flexibility and better connect the historic town centre with the modern city.

Cooperation with other organisations

13-14 June 2019, the steering group met Stockholm Environmental Institute/CASCADE Project and SCC Advisory Board in Gdynia. Mara Lepa-Zemesa from the UBC PCC Steering group took part in VASAB conference "Competitiveness of Small & Medium-Sized Cities in the Baltic Sea Region" on 04 June 2019.

Safe Cities Commission

Safe Cities Commission Chairman has been Kaspars Vārpiņš (Liepāja Municipal Police) and the Vice Chairman - Torbjörn Lindström (Southwest Finland Emergency Services). UBC Safe Cities Commission secretariat is located in Liepāja Municipal Police.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- **Safe Cities Commission meeting, 12-14 June 2018, Lahti**

Youth safety issues, organizing of large-scale events, climate change and collaboration between institutions were the main topics of the meeting.

Safe Cities Commission meeting, 5-7 June 2019, Tartu

At this meeting the discussions about Innovative solutions in safety and emergency management were held.

Additionally, the workshop of the project CASCADE was organized by Stockholm Environment Institute in Tallinn.

- **UBC Safe Cities Commission meeting with UBC Sustainable Cities Commission and Planning Cities Commission, 13 June 2019, Gdynia**

Three UBC Commissions had a small meeting in Gdynia to discuss their joint actions and cooperation. Also, the new CASCADE project (Community Safety Action for Climate Change Adaptation) and the opportunities the project brings to the Cities were introduced.

Projects

CASCADE (Community safety action for supporting climate adaptation and development)

The expected outcome of CASCADE is to adapt existing risk assessment methodology to the climate change context and tailor it to the local level. This methodology will be used in a training course for city officials, responsible for civil protection. If successful, the training can be replicated by all BSR countries.

Youth for safer youth

The main aim of the project is to research safety concerns for the youth in the Baltic Sea region and prepare for the larger scale project in which youth in the Baltic Sea Region will be educated about how to increase their safety in physical and virtual world, especially in the fields where they feel less secure.

Cooperation with other organisations

- Regular participation at CBSS and EUSBSR PA Secure meetings.
- European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) conference "Security, Democracy & Cities – Coproducing Urban Security Policies" (Barcelona, November 2017)
- Swedish Institute organized Baltic Leadership Programme (Stockholm/Sigtuna, November 2017)
- CBSS Concept Development Workshop "STAC-CBRNE – Strengthening the Transnational Capacity of the Management of CBRNE agents related to Emergencies", (Stockholm, February 2018)
- 1st International Forum of the Baltic Sea States (St.Petersburg, November 2018)
- Swedish Defence University Senior Course on Crisis Management and Civil Emergency Planning (CMCEP) (Stockholm, April 2019)
- EUSBSR Workshop "BSR – an interconnected system" (Stockholm, May 2019)
- Baltic Sea Youth Camp (Gdansk, June 2019)

Smart and Prospering Cities Commission

The Commission is chaired by Wolfgang Schmidt, City of Kiel, Germany. Its secretariat is located in Kiel.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

- ***Digitalization from an urban perspective – Fehmarnbelt Days 2018 (Malmö – 28/ 29 May 2018)***

The increasing digitization is changing all municipal processes and redefines relations between city to society and city to region. The seminar gathered answers to this disruptive revolution:

- What are the main challenges and opportunities for modern cities?
- Are cooperation and regionalization factors for successful digitalization?

- ***Digitalization in the Baltic Sea Region – Digital Week Kiel 2018 (Kiel, September 13 2019)***

The workshop showed how cities like Aarhus, Tallinn and Kiel handle digitalization and how the city as a business destination can profit from digital transformation. It has also been discussed how city networks can help cope with the rapid change.

- ***Digitalisation empowering citizens' participation – UBC General Conference, Kaunas 15-18 October 2019***

The workshop will focus on different digital solutions that are used to empower citizen participation through practical examples.

Conferences:

- Meeting **Baltic Sea Tourism Center** – Copenhagen, 15 January 2018
- **Innovative City Congress** – Nice 28 June 2018: speaker engagement on the topic of “Why waterfront cities are more innovative“
- **INTA World Urban Congress** “*The hidden value of medium-sized cities*” – Rostock, 21-22 September 2018

Projects

INTERREG 5B *Creative Ports – Internationalisation of the Cultural and Creative Industries in the Baltic Sea Region*

Duration: January 2019 – January 2021

UBC SPCC is member of the advisory board. The next meeting will be held from 8-10 of October 2019 in Malmö.

Cooperation with other organisations

Goethe-Institute, Swedish Institute, STRING, INTA International Urban Development Association, Baltic Development Forum, Digital Week Kiel

Sustainable Cities Commission

The UBC SCC is steered by three Co-Chairpersons in close cooperation with the Head of the SCC Secretariat and its Advisory Board. The SCC Secretariat is located in Turku.

During 2017-2019, the Chairing board of the UBC SCC consisted of the three Co-chairs: Irena Sakalienė (City of Klaipėda), Per-Arne Nilsson (City of Malmö) and Risto Veivo (City of Turku).

Meetings/seminars/conferences

UBC SCC participated or organised a number of events during 2017-2019, among others:

- Baltic Sea Future Conference, UBC SCC Advisory board meeting, St Petersburg, March 2018
- EUSBSR 9th Annual Forum, Tallinn, June 2018
- Sustainable cities Commission meeting, Klaipeda, September 2018
- XIX Baltic Sea Future Conference. UBC SCC Advisory board meeting in St Petersburg, March 2019
- EUSBSR 10th Annual Forum, Gdańsk, June 2019
- Europe Forum, Turku, August 2019
- Climate Alliance Summit 2019, Rostock, September 2019

Projects

iWater – 2015-2018 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)

Financing: Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020; budget: 2 350 000€

Project partners: 9 project partners from Finland, Sweden, Latvia.

IWAMA – 2016-2019 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)

Financing: Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme 2014-2020; budget: 4 600 000€

Project partners: 17 project partners from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Finland.

CIVITAS ECCENTRIC – 2016-2020

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 19 307 741€

Project partners: 28 Project partners from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Bulgaria and Spain.

SUMPs UP – 2016-2020

Financing: 7th Framework Programme - CIVITAS Initiative; budget: 3 742 998€

Project partners: 15 project partners from Germany, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Hungary, United Kingdom, Greece.

Cities.multimodal – October 2017-2020

Financing: Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme 2014-2020; budget: 3 796 750€

Project partners: Lead partner – Hanseatic City of Rostock (DE) + 16 project partners from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Russia

CASCADE 2019-2020 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)

Financing: DG ECHO Civil Protection. Budget: 850,871.49

Project partners: 11 partners from Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Poland, Estonia and Germany.

BSR WATER 2018 - 2020 (A Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region)

Financing: BSR INTERREG Programme 2014-2020 with financial support from the Russian Federation; budget: 1 133 440€

Project partners: 10 partners from Finland, Germany, Estonia, Poland, Latvia and Russia.

Disseminating Smart Water Competence in Belarus 2018 - 2019

Financing: Council of the Baltic Sea States, CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development, Baltic 2030 supported by the Swedish Ministry of the Environment; budget: 8 000€

Project partners: 5 partners from Finland and Belarus.

Cooperation with other organisations

One of the main guiding strategies for the cooperation is the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). EUSBSR coordinates the activities to promote a more balanced development of the region. UBC coordinates the HA Capacity within the strategy.

The strategic cooperation of the UBC – CDP is based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the UBC Executive board in November 2016.

Furthermore, UBC SCC is in a close cooperation (as observer) with Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission known as HELCOM. UBC SCC has an observatory status with the body and contributes to the matters dealt with by HELCOM.

UBC SCC has also a well-established cooperation with VASAB – inter-governmental multilateral cooperation of 11 Baltic Sea Region states. In the framework of the CBSS – Baltic2030 Action Plan UBC SCC is a member of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development.

Youthful Cities Commission

Carsten Adamsen, municipality of Kolding, has been the chair of the Youthful Cities Commission during the years of 2018 and 2019.

Meetings/seminars/conferences

Several Commission's meetings were held in the reported period:

- Narva, Estonia, 18–22 March 2018 – Open meeting

A total of 36 people participated in the commission meeting (15 youth, 21 officials from 13 cities)

- Rostock, Germany, 8–11 October 2018 – Open meeting

21 persons attended from 11 UBC cities. 10 youth participated. Also specially invited was 2 members of the BSSSC Youth board to talk about their ways of working.

- Kolding, Denmark, 29 April – 2 May 2019, Open meeting

Main topic of the meeting were city safety issues, youth (council) cooperation and youth conference program in Kaunas. A total of 25 participants (14 youth) from 10 cities.

There were also several project meetings and seminars preparing to the EUSBSR Annual Fora in Tallinn 2018 and in Gdańsk 2019.

Projects

BALTIC SEA YOUTH CAMP

Total CBSS funding for the project was EUR 65,000 and the total budget was EUR 110,000.

YCC YOUTH CONFERENCE

Total budget: EUR 48,223 with maximum participation.

Working Group on Gender Equality

The Working Group on Gender Equality is coordinated by Ann-Sofie Lagercrantz and Katarina Johansson Storm from the city of Kalmar.

Meetings

- Tallinn, 5 June 2018

The meeting was to discuss strategies on gender mainstreaming in the UBC cities.

- Malmö, 17-19 October 2018

Ann-Sofie Lagercrantz and Katarina Johansson Storm from the city of Kalmar attended at the Executive Board meeting, they gave a report from the group's work.

Projects

- Preparation of the project concept - To increase the capacity for a more strategic engagement in gender equality among UBC member municipalities and its commissions.