

ACTIVITY REPORT

UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

SAFE CITIES COMMISSION

November 2019 – October 2021

1. General description

UBC Safe Cities Commission Chairman Kaspars Vārpiņš (Deputy Chief of Liepāja Municipal Police) and the Vice-Chairman is Torbjörn Lindström (Development manager of Southwest Finland Emergency Services).

UBC Safe Cities Commission secretariat is located in Liepāja Municipal Police (48 Jelgavas str., Liepāja, Latvia, LV-3401).

UBC Safe Cities Commission cooperates in order to improve security services as well as assure better safety standards and procedures for all Baltic Sea Region (BSR) citizens. The problems, which seems to be completely solved in some cities still exist in others. Participation in the Safe Cities Commission allows not only to expand knowledge, but also to gain and share experience amongst the cities. Joint efforts can help make BSR a safer and tidier place to live.

The Commission's main areas of interest are:

- Cooperation and experience exchange in the field of local security;
- Joint projects to increase level of security and public order within the Baltic Sea Region;
- Cooperation with other local organizations (police, fire brigade, emergency, crises management departments, social welfare centres, etc.).

2. Meetings/seminars/conferences

UBC Safe Cities Commission meeting and project "Youth for safer youth" kick-off meeting, December 2019

Place: Liepāja, Latvia

Date: December 10-12, 2019

Number of participants: 36

Short description: UBC Safe Cities Commission members together with youth representatives from the CBSS PSF funded project "Youth for safer youth" met to work on a questionnaire about youth safety feeling and the possible solutions to raise the safety in the Baltic Sea Region. During these three days, the youth together with the safety experts analysed already existing activities and researches about the youth safety. One of the conclusions was that after reaching 18 years age, the youth are viewed as adults, so they are not so much addressed when talking about the youth point of view. The participants developed the main categories, which will be included in the questionnaire, as well as the possible ways to have the best reach of the youth in the Baltic Sea Region. Additionally, it was decided how to work onwards in the project. This joint meeting highlighted, that it was a great

experience for safety professionals to work together with the youth to help improving their well-being.

Outcomes: Joint work with youth representatives, developed input for the project “Youth for safer youth”. Discussions about the youth safety.

UBC Safe Cities Commission four virtual meetings on Covid-19 questions, March - May 2020

Place: Online

Date: March 27, April 16, May 7, May 26, 2020

Number of participants: 10+

Short description: When the Covid-19 pandemic became an issue and was quite big unknown, UBC Safe Cities Commission organized four online meetings to discuss the situation in their cities and shared their experience. In the early stages it may helped to gather thoughts and to see, that we are not alone. The videos were made publicly available on YouTube for other commission members to hear what was discussed.

Outcomes: Discussions regarding the Covid-19 and exchange of experience.

Project “ReSit – Situational Picture of Volunteerism for Societal Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region” final conference, March 2021

Place: online

Date: March 11, 2021

Short description: During the project “ReSit” final conference together with the project partners the results of the project were presented and discussed about volunteerism and societal resilience in the Baltic Sea Region.

Outcomes: Awareness raising about volunteerism in the field of civil protection.

UBC Talks Webinar “Cascading consequences of climate hazards – How to make cities more resilient in the Baltic Sea Region?” together with UBC Sustainable Cities Commission, March 2021

Place: online

Date: March 30, 2021

Short description: The first UBC TALKS webinar of 2021 discussed climate hazards and how cities in the Baltic Sea Region can build resilience. The invited speakers provided insights from their experiences from working with the CASCADE project, which aims to increase practical risk management capabilities of local authorities in the region.

Outcomes: Awareness raising about climate change.

UBC Safe Cities Commission meeting, April 2021

Place: online

Date: April 15, 2021

Number of participants: 10+

Short description: UBC Safe Cities Commission organized working meeting during which representatives from new UBC member cities (Hamburg and Valmiera) took part and introduced themselves. Information was provided about UBC 30 year celebrations, XVI General Conference, possible cooperation with EFUS (European Forum for Urban Security) and possibility to participate in the Swedish Defense University Strategic Leadership Programme. Updates from UBC Safe Cities Commission projects were presented and participant suggested discussion topics were discussed. Of course the Covid-19 was mentioned and the planning of the exit solutions were discussed, as well the

possibility to take part in the conference about Municipal Police role in environment protection, which will be organized in Poland, in November 2021 by Jagiellonian University and MP Krakow. At the end of the meeting UBC Safe Cities Commission Chairmanship elections were held and the participating members re-elected Kaspars Vārpiņš as a Chairman and Torbjörn Lindström as Vice-Chairman.

Outcomes: Exchange of experience, various possibilities of participation in various activities, elections.

Webinar “How to make cities more resilient?” Results and recommendations from the CASCADE project final conference together with UBC Sustainable Cities Commission, June 2021

Place: online

Date: June 8, 2021

Short description: The final conference brought forward the results and recommendations from the project, including the launch the Climate Risk Preparedness Toolbox, and discussed future of climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resilience.

Outcomes: Finalization of the CASCADE project and informing about the project results.

3. Projects

NEEDS - Needs-based education and studies in societal security

Duration: 01.09.2020. – 31.08.2023.

Financing: Erasmus+

Budget: 426 990 EUR

Project partners: The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat (lead), The Main School of Fire Service (Poland), Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany), UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Liepaja Municipal Police (UBC Safe Cities Commission), Riga Technical University (Latvia), Swedish Defence University, Laurea University of Applied Science (Finland).

Short description: The Needs-based education and studies in societal security (NEEDS) project is addressing the skills gap and mismatch between the societal security education and the knowledge needs in the field as well as the fact that there is a lack of structured transnational cooperation and dialogue between Higher Education Institutes, practitioners, and experts in tackling these issues.

Aims & results:

The NEEDS project will meet these societal security challenges by

- 1) establishing a “community of professionals” network and an interface for collaboration as well as
- 2) developing common learning materials for a short online course on societal security in the Baltic Sea Region.

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

Duration: 01.01.2019. - 30.06.2021.

Financing: DG ECHO

Budget: 850 871 EUR

Project partners: Southwest Finland Rescue Services (lead), UBC Sustainable Cities Commission, Liepaja Municipal police (UBC Safe Cities Commission), The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre (SEI Tallinn), Warsaw Main School of Fire Services, Hamburg Landesfeuerwehrschule,



Frederiksborg Fire and Rescue Service (FBBR), Åbo Akademi University / Centre for Lifelong Learning / Baltic University Programme

Short description: The climate is becoming increasingly unpredictable and extreme, requiring new innovative tactics to prevent disasters, and address risks. Risks related to climate change are not only the concern for professionals engaged with sustainable development. It is becoming more evident each year that climate change is an emerging security threat, and a field in need of multi-level risk governance. The unique project will increase practical risk management capabilities of local authorities in the Baltic Sea Region, as it brings together local administrations and civil protection practitioners, experts at universities and companies, national civil protection authorities and international bodies to achieve its goals.

The project will seek to improve urban resilience in cities and towns, as well as the overall macro-regional resilience. 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. Furthermore CASCADE initiates a region – wide policy dialogue on the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as an effective platform for cross – sectorial cooperation between different levels of governance and for greater policy coherence on climate risk assessments.

Aims & results:

- An online tool for integrated climate change and disaster risk reduction management
- Guidelines for local level public administration on how to operationalize the proper risk treatment options
- Training courses for the target groups, i.e. City officials responsible for civil protection in municipalities, city planners, architects, spatial planners, etc.
- Policy dialogues between local, national, macro-regional, and international actors to
 - o mainstream climate risk assessment into management and policy planning on the national and local level to
 - o ensure coherence of relevant policies in the macro-region, as well as to
 - o ensure sustainability and ownership of the project’s results through anchoring the results in the relevant policy level, and with the relevant stakeholders

Youth for safer youth

Duration: 01.09.2019. – 30.11.2020.

Financing: CBSS Project Support Facility

Budget: 19 039.68 EUR

Project partners: Liepaja Municipal police (UBC Safe Cities Commission) (lead), Liepaja Children and Youth Centre “Youth house”, Southwest Finland Emergency Services, Espoo Youth Services, Kaunas City Municipality

Short description: In collaboration between safety experts and youth representatives from Latvia, Finland and Lithuania a research about youth safety in Baltic Sea region will be organized. Safety experts together with youth representatives will develop a questionnaire in which safety concerns and information about how to best reach youth will be discovered. 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. During this project the collaboration between safety experts and youth will be a crucial point and it will show the value of

collaboration between safety experts and youth. The results of the research will be publicly available and will be shared through various networks, i.e. in the network of Union of the Baltic Cities.

Aim & results:

The main aim of the project is to find out safety concerns for the youth in the Baltic Sea region. As this project will help to find out the safety concerns of our youth around the Baltic Sea Region, the project results will be the information about the safety needs of youth. So the project results will deliver long-term impact, because it will be basis for the larger scale project where it is planned to develop youth safety project, where youth together with the safety experts will develop an informal educational materials and provide them to youth using communication channels they are easier to reach.

ReSit - Situational Picture of Volunteerism for Societal Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region

Duration: 01.12.2019. – 01.04.2021.

Financing: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

Budget: 110 900 EUR

Project partners: The Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK (project leader, Finland), Liepaja Municipal Police (as Union of the Baltic Cities Safe Cities Commission), Frederiksborg Brand og Redning (Denmark) and Beredksabsforbundet - Danish Civil Protection League (Denmark)

Short description: To ensure that society is as resilient as possible in natural and man-made disasters, authorities cannot function on their own. Active civil society organizations (CSOs) and skilled volunteers are needed to support authorities in their actions.

Volunteers play a significant and a vital role in helping to ensure their local communities are safe and societies are resilient towards threats and risks. Engaging and involving volunteers contribute to the creation of a common societal culture, where all actors play a significant and a complementing role in resilience.

ReSit, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland, will aim to create a situational picture of volunteers and volunteerism in fire, rescue and civil protection in the Baltic Sea Region and thus, in part, enhance resilience in natural and man-made disasters.

The situational picture will be used to create common guidelines for volunteerism in the region and the project will also map out potential funding for a European-level project. Project will be conducted through questionnaires and interviews with experts, volunteers and authorities in the area. Special focus will be on local authorities and especially cities.

Aims & results:

Research the situational picture of volunteerism for the Societal Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region and to take the situational awareness to practical level through creating common guidelines for volunteers and implement the results further to the region.

4. Cooperation with other organisations

During 2019-2021 UBC Safe Cities Commission continued to have an active cooperation with various stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. Cooperation included the collaboration with all the partners from projects, as well in addition strong cooperation was with the following organizations:

- Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat
- EUSBSR PA Secure (Member of Steering group)
- European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS)



5. Communications

The UBC Safe Cities Commission does not have a communication officer, but is following the UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy and provides various articles about our work and activities. UBC Safe Cities Commission had a edition of the Baltic Cities Bulletin dedicated to Safe Cities in Autumn 2019, called “Safe city for everyone”. Contribution was provided to UBC Jubilee Book “UBC – 30 years of boosting cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”.

6. Other activities

Mainly all activities include to strengthening the cooperation and recognition of UBC and UBC Safe Cities Commission in the Baltic Sea Region with the stakeholders in field of safety.

UBC Safe Cities Commission took part in various activities, such as taking part in developing various project applications, Research-Practice interface in societal security in the BSR, UBC Strategy and Sustainability Action Programs, etc.

Kaspars Vārpiņš

UBC Safe Cities Commission Chairman