

Summary of the XIV UBC General Conference, Växjö, 24-27 October 2017

INTRODUCTION

The XIV General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 24-27 October 2017 in Växjö, Sweden, at the invitation of Bo Frank, Lord Mayor of Växjö.

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

The conference was attended by 230 participants including representatives of member cities, as well as invited guests from governments, international organizations, NGOs etc. List of participants is enclosed. General Conference interacted with UBC Youth Conference attended by 60 young people from UBC member cities.

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER

Meetings of UBC Commissions and Task Forces

The UBC Commissions: Cultural Cities Commission, Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission, Safe Cities Commission, Smart and Prospering Cities Commission, Sustainable Cities Commission, Youthful Cities Commission and Working Group on Gender Equality held working meetings to present their work to the conference participants and discuss future activities.

Parallel thematic meetings

On the first day afternoon five interactive parallel thematic meetings were held:

- State of the Youth Guarantee in the Baltic Sea Region: Current Situation and a Road Map for the Future. TF on Youth Employment and Well-Being
 - Interreg funding for glocal development in the maritime economy. Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014–2020
 - Interactive meetings with technical experts and specialized civil servants of the city of Växjö
 - Baltic Water Excellence Forum. Coalition Clean Baltic
 - City Branding in the Baltic Sea Region. UBC Communications Network
- Presentations from the seminars are enclosed.

WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER

Parallel thematic meetings

The second conference day started with four interactive parallel thematic meetings:

- Sustainable Development Goals in local & regional setting. Euroregion Baltic, CPMR BSC, Karlstad, Växjö. Followed by: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. CDP, Sustainable Cities Commission
 - “How can cities work with digital start-ups and digitalization?” BDF & UBC
 - Baltic Sea cities as leaders of comprehensive cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea region. WiseEuropa Institute
 - Data collection principles for civil protection prevention activities. Together we can. Safe Cities Commission
- Presentations from the seminars are enclosed.

Mayors' lunch

The Mayors' lunch was co-chaired by Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö and Maja Wagner, Councillor of Gdynia. Around 50 mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and other political representatives discussed the role of leaders in fostering cooperation within Baltic Sea region and UBC.

PLENARY SESSIONS

UBC 25th Anniversary session

A festive session was devoted to the achievements of the UBC in the service of its cities and the region; also the central role of cities in promoting European values and cooperation was highlighted.

The following speakers delivered speeches and presentations during the anniversary session:

- Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC
- Bo Frank, Lord Mayor, Växjö
- Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Committee of the Regions
- Piotr Grzelak, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk
- Jaana Simula, Chair of the UBC Cultural Cities Commission
- Jørgen Kristiansen, Deputy Mayor of Kristiansand
- Krista Kampus, Head of the Sustainable Development Unit – Baltic 2030, CBSS

Appeal on Tackling Rising Populism and Euroscepticism

The General Conference adopted the Appeal on Tackling Rising Populism and Euroscepticism. Today Europe has to encounter fundamental challenges such as the rise of populism and nationalism. In the appeal the UBC General Conference emphasized the Baltic Sea Region cities' attachment to the European values of freedom, democracy, equality, tolerance, and diversity. This democratic shape must be based on the tripartite separation of powers, strong local government, independent media and culture. The appeal is attached.

The second Plenary Session 'Leadership for the future – cities as leaders for glocal sustainable development' was divided into two panels.

Panel 1 - Development of Cities and Region

- Peter Schenk, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, EC Coordinator for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region, "EUSBSR as driver for BSR development"
- Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor of Liepāja
- Alessandro Cenderello, Managing Partner for EU Institutions, Ernst & Young
- Anne Stenros, Design Director, City of Helsinki
- Wolfgang Röttgers, Councillor, Kiel
- Mantas Jurgutis, Councillor, Kaunas

Panel 2 - Environment and reuse of resources

- Carina Svensson, Chair of Environmental Board, Malmö
- Per Schöldberg, Deputy Mayor of Växjö
- Jyrki Myllyvirta, Mayor of Lahti
- Shirin Reuvers, Cities Manager, CDP

After the panels there was a moderated discussion. Summary of the discussion is attached.

Plenary sessions were moderated by Alan AtKisson, an author, speaker and advisor who focuses on sustainability, strategy and the process of transformative change.

Resolution on UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals

The Conference adopted Resolution on UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals. In the Resolution UBC commits to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and will continue to focus on responding to climate change in alignment with the Paris Agreement by implementing and heavily promoting the concepts of the green growth, circular economy, industrial symbiosis and sharing economy. The prime target is achieving low-emission and resource-wise Baltic Sea Region through smart city planning, capacity-building and sharing of best practices. The resolution is enclosed.

THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2017

PLENARY SESSION

The third conference day started with the Plenary Session “Listening to the voices of tomorrow” with the presentations of:

- Lena Ek, Senior Advisor, Sustainable Seas Foundation, Former Minister of Environment, Sweden
- Edgar Nazareus & Vincent Weseloh, Capufaktur, Greifswald

Youth Conference participants actively participated in this session. The day before ie. on the 25th of October, UBC Commissions gave special tasks/cases to the youth to work out solutions and comments during 24 hours. The youth presented results of their work on the assigned tasks. The summary of presented tasks is attached. (under preparation by YCC)

STATUTORY GENERAL CONFERENCE

The statutory General Conference was opened by Per Bødker Andersen, the President of the Union.

Report on UBC Activities and Strategy

President Per Bødker Andersen submitted the report on UBC activities during the period November 2015 - October 2017. The UBC activity report is enclosed. The General Conference approved the report.

Auditor's report

Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, informed the General Conference that the audit of UBC accounts for 2015 and 2016 had been performed by the licensed auditing company Bilans from Gdańsk. The report states that the Union financial transactions and records within the mentioned period have been handled properly. The conference took note of the report. The auditor's report is enclosed.

Board of Audit report

Jukka Vilen, City Director, Kemi, presented the report and recommendations of the Board of Audit. The General Conference took note of the report. The report of the Board of Audit is enclosed.

Absolving the Presidium, Executive Board, Secretary

Following the proposal of the Board of Audit, the General Conference acknowledged the fulfilment of duties by the Executive Board, Presidium, Secretary General in 2015 and 2016.

Membership fees 2018-2019

President Per Bødker Andersen presented the Executive Board's proposal of the membership fees for 2018 and 2019. The Board recommended to level the membership fees for all countries. The fee

depends on the number of city inhabitants. The General Conference approved the membership fees for the financial period 2018-2019. The table with fees is enclosed.

Executive Board in the next period

After appointment/election amongst the member cities in each country the following cities were confirmed as members of UBC Executive Board in the next two-year period:

Naestved (Denmark), Elva (Estonia) /tbc within 2 month after administration reform in Estonia/, Lahti (Finland), Rostock (Germany), Liepāja (Latvia), Tauragė (Lithuania), Kristiansand (Norway), Gdynia (Poland), St. Petersburg (Russia), Växjö (Sweden). City of Gdańsk, the host city of the secretariat was granted with observer status.

President and Vice-Presidents in the next period

The General Conference elected for a two-year period:

Per Bødker Andersen, Councillor, Kolding, as President of the Union

Marie-Louise Rönmark, Chair of the City Council, Umeå, as first Vice-President of the Union

Jarkko Virtanen, Deputy Mayor of Turku, as Vice-President of the Union

Mantas Jurgutis, Councillor, City of Kaunas, as Vice-President of the Union

Board of Audit in the next period

The General Conference re-appointed Marta Chełkowska, Director of Tourism & Promotion Department, Marshal Office of Pomeranian Region, Jukka Vilen, City Director, Kemi, and Roger Kaliff, Chairman of the City Council, Kalmar to the UBC Board of Audit for a two-year period.

Discussion, questions

Participants expressed their views on General Conference, UBC strategies, activities and priorities.

The summary of the discussion is attached.

Venue of the XV UBC General Conference in autumn 2019

Mantas Jurgutis, City Councillor, Kaunas, put forward a proposal from Visvaldas Matijošaitis, Mayor of Kaunas, to host the next XV General Conference in autumn 2019 in Kaunas, Lithuania.

The General Conference warmly accepted the invitation from Kaunas.

Parallel thematic meetings

The third day ended with five parallel thematic meetings:

- Baltic Sea organizations (UBC, BSSSC, ERB, CBSS etc.) working together on youth issues in the Baltic Sea Region

- Gender mainstreaming and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men at the Local Level. WG on Gender Equality

- Culture – key to sustainable leadership. Culturability - cultural planning meets sustainability. Cultural Cities Commission

- Euro Velo No 10 cycling route as an opportunity to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region tourism brand, through the cities cooperation. Marshall Office of Pomeranian Voivodship

- Urbanization, Mobilities and Immigration as a driver of urbanization in the Baltic Sea Cities. URMI project, Demos Helsinki

Presentations from the seminars are enclosed.

Youth Conference

In parallel to the General Conference, the Youthful Cities Commission held a Youth Conference with nearly 60 young people from 13 cities and 7 countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The conference was partly financed by the EU programme Erasmus+. Youth Conference worked on such issues as local participation and migration.

Young people participated actively in sessions and workshops of the General Conference providing youth perspective to debated issues. Youth were also active on social media. As stated above, young people worked out and presented their solutions to the tasks assigned by the UBC Commissions.

Concluding Plenary Session

Moderators of parallel thematic meetings held during the General Conference on 24, 25 and 26 October, presented short summaries of the sessions. The summaries of the meetings are attached.

City of Rostock invited all member cities to Rostock to the UBC Conference on Integration of New Citizens "Baltic Sea Cities - Sharing the European Dream", 12-14 March 2018.

Closing of the General Conference

Per Bødker Andersen, President of the Union, expressed his warm thanks to the City of Växjö, delegates from member cities, young people, speakers, guests and the UBC secretariat for their outstanding contribution to the success of the XIV UBC General Conference.