



## **A working meeting of the UBC Commission on Tourism**

Liepaja, 17 April 2009

### **Minutes of the meeting**

The main theme of the meeting was: “How to make the Baltic Sea Region more accessible and attractive”.

Liepaja welcomed participants from: Kaunas, Cēsis, Riga, Jekabpils, Palanga, Tukums, Pärnu, Gragždai, Koszalin and Szczecin.

The participants gathered in the premises of the Liepaja City Council. After a warm welcome, Mr. Gunars Ansins, Deputy Mayor, delivered a power point presentation about the city and its latest developments. The main focus was put on changes going on in the city, which takes pride in its unique and fascinating history.

The first part of the meeting was chaired by Mr. Ryszard Zdrojewski, CoT chairman. The working meeting started with the presentation by Ms. Ewa Kurjata, Szczecin Municipality, CoT co-chair, and was devoted to “Baltic Sea Region branding and its significance for the UBC. The leading theme of the presentation was that UBC needs to position itself in the BSR. So should the UBC member cities. There is a need to think over cities’ international policies and how they should focus their work in the UBC. The CoT cities were invited to join the Task Force to prepare the UBC Member City Marketing Guidelines.

Mr. Zdrojewski presented the Heritage Tourism for increased BSR Identity project Agora 2.0 under Interreg IV B. Two of the project objectives are to improve conditions of BSR tourism and support SMEs to cope with future challenges, such as: globalization, demographic transition and climate change, and to generate new innovative ideas for BSR tourism development. Among the problems to be addressed by the project one can find: diversity of the BSR tourism market, lack of innovation and creativity of the sector, distance between political and tourism actors, the need for more sustainable products, poor accessibility of tourism stakeholders to relevant market research.

The presentation was followed by the X General Conference workshop procedures and brainstorming activity. The following questions were worked out during the meeting:

1. How can UBC lobby for better accessibility and reducing the travel time in the region? (accessibility)
2. How to develop a comprehensive travel info system or new technologies to be exchanged in the BSR to secure better attractiveness? (new technologies to support attractiveness)
3. How to brand the BSR and its identity? (attractiveness)
4. How to support the multi-modal transportation system development in the BSR? (accessibility / new technologies)

5. How to use modern technologies to make the BSR a better tourist destination? (new technologies)

These questions shall be then discussed with other supporting commissions responsible for preparing the X GC workshop.

The participants also discussed the questions of accessibility and attractiveness from the perspective of a tourist, an inhabitant and tourism industry.

The second session was chaired by Ms. Ewa Kurjata and mainly concerned internal matters of the Commission. The co-chair covered the CoT competition procedures. The gathering adopted the idea of the competition, its schedule and prizes, as well as jury. The following cities were selected to sit on the jury: Trelleborg, Szczecin, Pärnu, Cesis and Kaunas. The cities shall be sent the proceedings in the following week to express their opinions before actual launching of the competition (scheduled for 1 May).

Mr. Zdrojewski also presented the overall budget of the Commission and the action plan for 2009. The CoT sticks to the plan of organising two meetings during the year.

The cities were invited to express their ideas on how to promote the CoT activities within the UBC.

After closure of the meeting, the group went for sight-seeing (Follow the notes, Karosta military base and prison).

Those of participants, who decided to stay overnight, could enjoy the symphony concert by Liepaja Symphony Orchestra.

Enclosures:

1. A list of participants
2. Agenda of the meeting
3. Questions relevant to the X General Conference workshop
4. CoT Competition – initial proceedings

N.B. All CoT Liepaja meeting documents shall be available in the form of a CD.

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