

STATUTE OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

Mindful of the rich and centuries old historical tradition of cooperation among the Baltic Sea Region Cities in economy and culture;

Bearing in mind the importance of closer bonds between the states of the Baltic Sea Region to the development of European cooperation, and

Convinced that strengthening the cooperation between the Baltic Sea Region cities may contribute in a major way to the development of this region and foster peaceful and harmonious relations between the European nations in the spirit of, and in accordance with the provisions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the founding cities decided to create the Union of the Baltic Cities, hereinafter referred to as the Union.

PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE UNION

Article 1

The Union's aim is to promote and strengthen cooperation and exchange of experience among the cities in the Baltic Sea Region, to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region, and to act on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and international bodies, as well as achieving sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity.

Article 2

To attain the above objectives the Union shall, for example:

- a) Seek a systematic exchange of experience between member Cities in their common fields of interest, and organise meetings, exhibitions, scientific and popular sessions, as well as other events to popularise achievements of the individual member Cities.
- b) Support and assist the member Cities in carrying out research work and publish their efforts to tackle the problems of the Baltic Sea and the adjacent land areas.
- c) Promote interest in the history of the Baltic Region, its ecological and cultural heritage and work together to protect the Region's landscape as well as its cultural and historical monuments.
- d) Support any endeavour to enhance inter human contacts, in particular, among the youth of the member Cities by organising meetings, sport competitions, festivals, and other events.
- e) Assist in and support the cooperation of professional group in the member Cities as well as that between individual Cities, for example, Twin Cities.
- f) Launch initiatives and cooperate with the Baltic Sea Region governments and international organisations in resolving problems posed by economic development of the Baltic Sea Region and

protection of its natural environment, thus enhancing its integration.

- g) Foster communication ties and develop respective networks and links with other regional actors.
- h) Maintain ties with the European Union structures and the Council of Europe.
- i) Stage on public forums common motions, opinions and positions on the cities' and the Baltic Sea Region's interests.
- j) Collaborate in the process of European Union enlargement, bearing in mind the existence of the European dimension to the future of the cities.
- k) Service its member cities in terms of information flow and help generate projects co-financed by European Union, and from other sources, offering cities project quality consulting.
- l) Develop its own public relations program.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNION

Article 3

Any coastal city of the Baltic Sea and its gulfs as well as any other city interested in the development of the Baltic Sea Region may become a Member City of the Union.

The Union founding members are the cities whose representatives participated in the Union founding session, declared their will to enter the Union and signed the Statute. Other cities may join the Union by making a written declaration of their will to enter it. The Union membership will expire upon a voluntary resignation from the Union, thereby terminating all mutual obligations of the parties thus involved.

Interested organisations and institutions may become the supporting members. The Executive Board is authorised to decide upon the acceptance and fees for supporting members.

ORGANS OF THE UNION

Article 4

The Organs of the Union shall be:

- a) The General Conference of the delegates of the Member Cities.
- b) The President of the Union.
- c) The Executive Board consisting of one Member City representative from each country, the President and three Vice-Presidents.

Article 5

The General Conference shall be the highest authority of the Union and have power to take decisions concerning any activities of the Union. In particular, it shall be within the competence of the General Conference to:

1. decide about the Statute of the Union and the rules of procedure for the General Conference, and make necessary amendments to it,

2. elect the Presidium consisting of the President and three Vice-Presidents of the Union for a two year period,
3. elect the Executive Board for a two year period,
4. decide the membership fees of the Union,
5. take note of the auditor's report and absolve the Presidium, Executive Board and the Secretary General of their responsibility for the previous two year period,
6. approve the auditor proposed by the Executive Board,
7. elect the Board of Audit for a two year period,
8. approve the Strategy of activities of the Union,
9. approve reports on the activities of the Union,
10. approve the creation of the Union commissions,
11. decide upon the location of the Union Secretariat for a period of four years,
12. terminate the Union.

The elections shall be prepared by the Executive Board.

ORGANISATION OF THE UNION WORK

Article 6

The General Conference shall be convened by the President of the Union at least once every two years. Taking part in it will be delegations equipped with powers by the Member Cities' authorities. The delegation of every member town shall have one vote at the General Conference.

The date and the place of the General Conference shall be determined by the General Conference at their previous session. The session of the General Conference shall be opened and chaired by the President of the Union.

In the time between the sessions the Executive Board of the Union will be its highest authority. The President of the Union will be the Chairman of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board has the right to formulate and adopt the UBC internal regulations.

The Executive Board approves the budget of the Union.

Article 7

Invitations to the General Conference session shall be delivered at least two months prior to an ordinary session and one month prior to a special session. Invitations shall be accompanied by a proposed agenda and materials for the session.

When asked by at least one third of the Union member cities and at the least one month before a General Conference session, the President of the Union shall update the session agenda, additionally informing the Union members about it.

The General Conference shall be valid when attended by at least one half of the Union member Cities. Decisions shall be taken by an ordinary voting majority, except in the following cases:

1. amendments to the Union Statute shall require an absolute voting majority,
2. the termination of the Union shall require voting by the majority of two thirds and the presence of at least two thirds of the Union member cities' representatives.

Article 8

Upon a request by one third of the Union Cities, a special session of the General Conference shall be convened by the Union President, such a request necessarily containing a proposed agenda for the session.

Article 9

The Union President and Vice-Presidents shall perform their statutory functions until their successors have been elected by a successive General Conference. The Union member Cities representatives shall perform their functions honourably. The President of the Union shall be the external representative of the Union.

Article 10

Conditions for realisation of the Union's objectives shall be secured by the Secretary General elected for a four year period by the Executive Board. A candidate for the Secretary General shall be jointly proposed by the Mayor of city hosting the Secretariat and the President. The Secretary General of the Union may participate in all sessions of the Union.

Article 11

The official language of the Union sessions shall be English.

FINANCES OF THE UNION

Article 12

The General Conference shall decide the fees the member Cities are to contribute to cover the Union expenses. The fees shall be proposed by the Executive Board. The sources of financing the Union activities as well as individual programmes of the Union may come from subsidies from individual States, cities, and corporate bodies as well as from donations and legacies by private persons.

The board of audit consists of three members from three member cities - who are not members of the Executive Board - from three different countries. The Executive Board hands out the auditor's report to the board of audit. The board of audit checks the auditor's report for correctness and proper use of the resources for purposes laid in the decisions of the General Conference and the Executive Board, in the statute and according to the regulations of the donors of contributions. The board of audit has the right to check and read all books, accountants' files etc. of each body of the Union, Secretariat and the Commissions. The board of audit reports to the General Conference.

TERMINATION OF THE UNION

Article 13

In case of the General Conference making a motion to liquidate the Union, the Conference shall appoint a Liquidation Commission to formulate conclusions regarding all matters pertaining to the liquidation of the Union. The final decision on such a termination shall be made by the General Conference. The Union properties will be divided among the Union members in proportion to the financial resources they have contributed for the whole period of their Union membership.

The original Statute was drawn up in Gdańsk on the twentieth day of September, 1991 in one copy in English. The original is deposited in the archives of Gdańsk City Hall.