



Kolding, 2 July, 2012

Dear friends!

The summer has started with a great success for the Conference of European Cross-Border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN) and also for our Union of the Baltic Cities. Nearly 400 participants discussed the ideas of CECICN during the 1st Congress on Smart Cooperation on 25/26 June in A Coruña.

The UBC is founding member of CECICN and I am also the president of this network of networks. Already two years after its foundation, CECICN is the leading city network in Europe. It represents more than 500 cities across Europe. Its objective is to boost territorial cooperation among cities and border regions in Europe and to reinforce the importance of territorial cooperation.

Our UBC was clearly visible at this large European conference. We were not only the main organizers, but were also responsible for carrying out a workshop. The topic was "Cooperation contributing to Smart Growth, moderated by Wolfgang Schmidt, Chairman of the Business Commission. My special thanks go to Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå, Sweden, First Vice-President of the UBC and Andres Jaadla, Mayor of Rakvere, Estonia, Vice-President of the UBC. Marie-Louise and Andres have demonstrated in specific examples of how we work in Northern Europe in order to achieve a profit for all.

A number of European decision-makers have accepted our invitation and participated very actively in the discussions: Michel Delebarre, President of COTER, Committee of the Regions and president of the MOT, Carlos Negreira, Mayor of A Coruña, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, Regional President of Galicia, Marta Fernández Currás, Spanish Secretary of State for budget and expenditure, Ann-Sofi Backgren, AEER Vice-President, Ana Miranda, MEP, Representative of the Parliamentary Committee on Regional Development, José Palma Andrés, Director of European Territorial Cooperation, DG REGIO and Henrik Morch, Head of Unit, DG MARKT.

José Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, confirmed in a video message the increase in the budget for the cohesion policy for the next programming period, a sum of 12 billion Euros. It will be debated by the Member States in the autumn.

Cooperation is the key to achieve Europe2020 goals.

Europe is currently going through a difficult phase. It is therefore all the more important for us to remind ourselves of Europe's value. Europe has brought us peace and prosperity. Above all else, it is – now more than ever – a project to shape our future. We can master the tremendous challenges of our age only if we turn Europe into a truly Europe without borders.

Dear friends, I wish you a wonderful summer and am already looking forward to seeing you again soon.

Yours sincerely

Per Bødker Andersen
President UBC
President CECICN

