



## Preface: Women and men in the Union of the Baltic Cities 2013

Dear members of the Union of the Baltic Cities

This is the second report on Women and men in the Union of the Baltic Cities. It highlights the importance of a continuous work to promote gender equality and need for further action to improve the status of women. It highlights how local authorities can promote gender equality by integrating a gender perspective into the development of services and infrastructure.

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It is still important to recognize that the work to achieve gender equality can be improved and developed, but it is also important to continuously disseminate knowledge about the good work that is being done and that others can learn from. There are encouraging examples of the will to achieve a gender equal society. Practical examples shows what works and points towards future possibilities.

Gender equality is a fundamental link to build safe, democratic and prosperous cities, and an essential part of sustainable development. It is not possible to achieve sustainability without social justice.

Sustainable development is successful when lasting change is achieved and if we are to create and sustain a region in which equality between women and men is a reality, we need creative thinking, innovative ideas and the capacity to implement them. It is about making change and taking action for the better.

Local authorities play a key role in the work for gender equality because of their closeness to the citizens. Both women and men can take part in this work and both women and men will benefit from a gender equal society.

The Union of the Baltic Cities can be a useful tool for cooperation and implementation in our work to reach the goal of gender equality.

**Mr Per Bødker Andersen**  
President of the UBC

**Mrs Marie-Louise Rönmark**  
Vice President of the UBC