



UBC Safe Cities Commission

Activity Report October 2013 – September 2015

Meetings

Meeting in Karlstad, October 2013

Participants from 6 cities discussed mainly on systems of safety and crises respond management in the cities. The main goal was to implement in the cities better policy of safety and security for the citizens and visitors. The member of Commission's secretariat reported to the forum results of ongoing work on European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) flagship project, priority area 14 Security. Nacka and Tallinn representatives introduced how they implemented in their cities "Neighborhood Watch Program" that could be introduced in other Baltic Sea Region cities. Currently several European cities have such system that gives positive effects. Commission on Local Safety (now – Safe Cities Commission) as a partner of Prevention of and Fight against Crime – European Commission (ISEC) project under Lithuanian presidency has been asked to provide to this project some experience on prevention of domestic violence in the cities. The topic was also discussed during the meeting and summary were presented in December 2013 during European Crime Prevention Network (EU CPN) Board in Vilnius.

Meeting in Vilnius, May 2014

Commission on Local Safety (now – Safe Cities Commission) in Vilnius was held together with 2nd International Municipal Police Conference. The main goal of the conference was to establish point of contacts among municipal police officers from various cities in Europe and exchange of experience in the maintenance of law and order in the cities. While delivering presentations participants took note of the specific risks in different cities and how to eliminate these threats. The conference was attended by representatives of the Municipal Police from 12 cities: Madrid, Valencia, Riga, Sofia, Klaipeda, Warsaw, Jelgava, Liepaja, Daugavpils, Vilnius, Duisburg and Gdansk. Attenders had the possibility to get acquainted with the structure of one of the biggest Municipal Police in Europe – Madrid. This municipality has over 6000 Municipal Police officers. Duisburg city presented solutions in the field of services responsible for the maintenance of order in the city. Duisburg municipality have developed a system of cooperation with the Police State and other services responsible for safety in the city. Former Vice Chairman of the Commission Mr Andrejs Aronovs from Riga presented global problem with legal intoxicants (legal high). European countries did not have legal tools in order to prohibit distribution of such dangerous chemicals. Influence of minor violations on urban safety was also discussed during this conference, which attenders summarized that there is a big role of local municipalities to maintain law and order in the cities. During the conference two cities expressed their willingness to cooperate with Safe Cities Commission: Klaipeda (Lithuania) and Daugavpils (Latvia). Daugavpils as non-member of the UBC will cooperate as affiliate partner.

Meeting in Gdańsk, June 2014

Safe Cities Commission meeting was organized in connection to CiFoSa project. The main objective of the meeting was to extend initial partnership and to exchange information on the project S-37 "Building urban safety through citizens participation (Citizens for Safety)". The meeting was attended by representatives of nine municipalities: Gdańsk, Jelgava, Liepaja, Panevezys, Riga, Słupsk, Sosnowiec, Tallinn and Vilnius. Moreover several professional speakers had been invited representing academia sector (Gdansk University of Technology), NGO's (Union of the Baltic Cities,

European Forum for Urban Security, Political Critique) and information technology specialists (ACCUS consortium).

The project group accepted that the need for safety remains as a fundamental for any modern society and has to be delivered on highest possible standard. However upgrading feeling of safety factor cannot be achieved without obtaining citizens engagement. Due to that the main project activities should focus on finding the ways to boost citizens engagement in safety issues. One of discussed idea was to set up a web-based portal website consisting of interactive threat map and correlated database. Those features might deliver a unified platform boosting cooperation between local actors on macro regional level. Moreover project website could help cities to improve their safety policy by gathering guidelines for real safety problems and practical examples for implementing. On the other hand all participants accepted that even the most sophisticated features do not gain citizens trust without appropriate input in social cohesion and engagement.

Meeting in Liepaja, February 2015

This Safe Cities Commission meeting was organized again in connection to CiFoSa project. The main objective of the meeting was to analyze the survey reports which was made in Gdańsk (Poland), Liepaja (Latvia) and Vilnius (Lithuania). The meeting was attended by representatives of ten municipalities: Gdańsk, Jelgava, Johvi, Liepaja, Riga, Słupsk, Sosnowiec, Tallinn, Tukums and Vilnius. Moreover several professional speakers had been invited representing academia sector (Gdańsk University of Technology) and NGO's (Union of the Baltic Cities, European Forum for Urban Security, Political Critique). The most important issue during the meeting was to plan activities for the main stage project and determine functionality of the web-based tools. During the event were discussed different safety issues and how citizens can improve the safety feelings in their cities, as well as how to include more inhabitants into active citizenship. During the meeting experts were presenting and discussing other experience in safety feeling issues and what impacts it. After looking to some real life experiences and in later discussions, were decided on the possible future main project. All work and activities in the event were based for the project and planned outcomes of the Seed Money Facility financed project.

Meeting in Gdańsk, May 2015

In Gdańsk took place the first meeting of UBC Safe Cities Commission, which was known formerly as the UBC Commission on Local Safety. In the new renewed commission meeting the new authorities of the Commission have been elected. In the meeting was accepted the action plan for coming years. The main focus in the plan is to encourage and activate the international collaboration between the safety organizations and as well to educate the society in safety questions.

Projects

Citizens for Safety

Member cities of Safe Cities Commission – Gdańsk, Liepaja, Vilnius – implemented seed money project – S37 Building urban safety through citizens participation (Citizens for Safety) under EUSBSR Seed money facility.

About the project – The economic crisis affects the Baltic Sea region in a similar way as any other region in the world bringing economic and social instability. Difficult time needs wise strategy focused on a long-run perspective. Proper implementation of the EUSBSR will change our region to be better prepared to encounter coming challenges and to take advantage of arising opportunities. One of key factor of success for the EUSBSR Strategy is integration between regional and local

authorities within the region. Main goals of the flagship “Building urban safety through citizens participation” is to strengthen existing cooperation and build new links within the region to boost civil protection cooperation and urban safety management in a macro-regional context. The activity of core group of the partnership of the flagship project is already on-going within the region since 2010. Acting under umbrella of Priority Area Secure brings great prospects for future funding towards delivering results better visible and more attractive to the public. Most communities in the Baltic Sea region face similar risks and many practices might be shared and learned through transnational cooperation. The UBC Commission on Local Safety, as a partnership consisting of municipalities, supports exchanging the best practices and initiatives that develop regionally unified methodology. Successful management of civil protection and urban safety has to be based on cost-efficient prevention activities oriented on needs of local communities. To achieve that the flagship “Building urban safety through citizens’ participation” is based on principle of EU 2020 Strategy that promotes usage of accessible online services and mobile devices technology.

Future after the project - Successful management of civil protection and urban safety has to be based on cost-efficient prevention activities oriented to the needs of local communities. To achieve this, the main project aims at identifying safety and security threats in the local environment. The project will gather reliable information on the state of public security based on inhabitant opinions. It will also facilitate the establishment of a website with an interactive threat map and a mobile device application. One of the outcomes will be an open, free-of-charge database – a reliable tool to compare and analyze the data on macro regional level. This will facilitate the exchange of experiences and circulation of the best practices around the Baltic Sea Region.

Action Plan

UBC Safe Cities Commission will continue the policy of activities from UBC Commission on Local Safety which confirmed and brought tangible results.

The main area of interest during two years will be:

- To expand partnership and collaborations of organizations which are responsible for safety promotion in the cities by creating collaboration tools;
- To disseminate knowledge about the safety of young people through their education in the schools, promote appropriate lawful behavior;
- To conduct conference/exchange information on best practices on working against organised begging;
- To continue cooperation with other organizations i.e. European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) which is one of the most important and big organization in Europe (assembles over 300 cities). The experience of this organization with EU projects about safety and security may bring to the Commission good ideas and solutions on EU co-financed projects;
- To promote safety issues among community members using modern media and other coordinated activities in local communities of the Commission member cities.

During the period of 2015-2016 Safe Cities Commission plans to organize two meetings/seminars each year.

First tasks to do:

- To create a website/database for safety professionals to expand partnership and arrange possible experience exchanges (study visits, educational materials and experience articles);
- To make the discussed topics wider to involve safety workers from more fields;

- To create a pilot - short film about one of the safety topics in collaboration with organizations that are responsible for safety promotion. After pilot film to apply to possible project funding to create further short films about different safety topics;
- To organize next meeting in Turku, Finland.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF ACTION UNTIL 2017

Follow up CIFOSA project and work on new projects supported by EU funds with the main goal to build urban safety through citizens participation.

Implementing projects on opportunities and areas of cooperation with the private sector in terms of maintaining law and order in the cities.

Kaspars Varpins
Chairman of the Commission
Liepaja city Municipal Police

22 September 2015