

UBC Sekretariat

Report from the Gender equality working group

1. Number of Member Cities

Secretariat of the commission

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Each participant in the Gender equality working group (GEWG) has a big responsibility to formulate what are the important issues in this area and raise awareness in their own cities. Being part of a Baltic Sea network is very important for the legitimacy for questions concerning gender equality.

Working with gender equality is essential to achieve a democratic European Baltic sea region. Gender equality is promoted by developing cooperative structures for networking and the exchange of experiences and practical knowledge. The GEWG has researched experiences of gender equality work in the member cities. The GEWG has throughout this period worked with networks within the area of gender equality and been active in meetings and conferences. The GEWG has also established contact with the European Institute of Gender Equality in Vilnius, Lithuania and the CEMR observatory in Brussels.

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The report "Gender equality in the UBC" was updated in 2013 and has been distributed to all cities in the UBC. The report offers a framework that provides the basis for the development of gender equal societies. The report shows the conditions for social change to happen, and can be used as a way for cities to adapt to, and support, the objectives of gender equality. The report also presents examples of good practices of gender equality work from some of the member cities, and by using examples from different countries it allows for flexibility and creativity in fulfilling the objectives of gender equality.

The GEWG has been involved and contributed to the UBC Bulletin with specific theme on gender equality. Articles were written on gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming, specific projects working as best practice.

In late 2014 and early 2015 the work was dominated by the discussion on the re-structuring of the commissions within the UBC network. The gender equality commission examined the work that has been done and how it should best be organized, in a commission or as a working group. At the executive board meeting in Kemi, in February of 2015 the board decided that the gender equality issues should be organized as a working group connected to the executive board to secure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed into the work of all the commissions.

The working group was represented and gave a key note speech at the conference "Local action against human trafficking", in Riga on 19-20 May 2015, organized by among others the the Council of the Baltic Sea States Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Members have also participated at the final conference of the CEMR observatory in Brussels in October 2015. In November 2015, the city of Umeå will arrange an open seminar focusing on peace and gender equality in the Baltic sea region and to highlight Umeå's participation in the gender equality working group.

The goals of the Gender Equality working group are as follows:

- To disseminate knowledge about issues of gender equality. The GEWG will further the awareness-raising within the field of gender equality and the strategy of gender mainstreaming.
- To spread campaign material and find ways to inspire the cities to promote gender equality as an important parameter for a city's growth and the well-being of its inhabitants.

- Collect examples of good practices. Experience-based knowledge accumulated through exchanges within the UBC-network can inspire member-cities to move forward and apply knowledge in practice.
- Promoting municipalities to apply the examples of good practices to move forward in the work for gender equality and to promote mutual exchange of experiences of good practices within the UBC. Promote signing the European charter for equality of women and men in local life.
- Strengthening the cooperation with commissions
- During the next two years update knowledge inspired by the previous report.