



**MINUTES OF THE 75<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
Rostock, Germany, 16 March 2016**

**1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

The Executive Board meeting was opened by Jarkko Virtanen, Vice-President of the Union of the Baltic Cities, Deputy Mayor of Turku. Mr Virtanen expressed his gratitude to the hosts, the City of Rostock, for holding the 75<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board Meeting in conjunction with the UBC conference on refugees. The meeting adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes.

**2. Election of two persons who, together with the President, will check the minutes.**

Karin Wohlgemuth, Senior Expert, City of Rostock and Mantas Jurgutis, Councillor, City of Kaunas, were elected to check the minutes together with the Vice-President.

**3. Presentation of the City of Rostock, Kirsten Schümer, Senior Consultant Rostock Business and Technology Development Agency.**

Kirsten Schümer, Senior Consultant in Rostock Business and Technology Development Agency, made a presentation about the city of Rostock. Rostock, which was granted city rights in 1218, has been a Hanseatic city since 1257. It is the largest city in the north German state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Rostock University, with its over 13.500 students, is one of the oldest universities in Europe. It was founded in 1419.

The city has one of the largest German Baltic Sea seaports with long tradition in shipbuilding and logistics. Numerous ferry and ship connections, especially to Scandinavia and the Baltic States, two motorways leading into the city (motorway junction A20/A19), and the regional airport Rostock-Laage with connections to several domestic and foreign destinations make Rostock a hub for intermodal traffic.

Rostock, with its over 20.000 companies in the city and the near surroundings, is an economic and industrial centre of North-East Germany. The economy is characterized mainly by maritime industries (especially shipbuilding), high-tech industries (IT, biotechnology/life sciences, Medical engineering), the University of Rostock, tourism and the service sector.

The city of Rostock is also a famous tourist destination offering the largest inner city beach in Germany and having seaside resort Warnemünde as a city district. It is a host of many international events, eg. Hanse Sail Rostock or Warnemünde Week.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.



#### **4. Summary of the Conference “Impact of the European Refugees Crisis in the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region”, Rostock, 14-16 March 2016.**

Steffen Bockhahn, Deputy Mayor of Rostock, shortly summarised the Conference as a very successful, discussing the role of municipalities, concentrating on best practices and analysing the needs, challenges and the chances faced by the cities. Mr Bockhahn emphasized that we need to be open-minded and care for dignity of the refugees. He also called for solidarity within the European Union.

Piotr Grzelak, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk, thanked the City of Rostock and the Secretariat for all the work done to organise the successful conference. He said that all the compliments expressed by the participants of the conference show the cities which direction they should go. Mr Grzelak underlined that there are still subjects to be discussed, when it comes to the refugees crisis, and it is yet another task for the Executive Board.

Charlotte Lundkvist, Head of Strategic Development of the City of Umeå, said that the conference was very interesting and led to fruitful discussions. She suggested, however, to try to invite more female speakers for the next conference.

Jarkko Virtanen answered that, unfortunately, it is not always possible to demand a speaker of a certain sex while inviting the institutions to speak, it can be even embarrassing.

Jørgen Kristiansen, Deputy Mayor of Kristiansand, suggested that in the future, once a year for instance, the UBC could organise a thematic seminar, in conjunction with the Executive Board meeting. He pointed out that radicalisation had not been discussed thoroughly and could, perhaps, be a subject at the next General Conference in Växjö.

Mikko Lohikoski, UBC Strategy Coordinator, emphasized the complexity of the situation, and expressed hope that the flow of people coming to Europe would be more organised. He also said that there is a long process of integration ahead and we should continue to work on these issues.

Decision:

The Board decided to authorise the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss how UBC could follow the results of the conference on refugees in Rostock and promote exchange of know-how between the member cities in question.

The Board authorized the Secretariat to send out the Conference Resolution to relevant Baltic and European governments and institutions.

#### **5. Comments to UBC Strategic Framework 2016-2021, implementation of the Strategy, information from Strategy Coordinator.**

Strategy Coordinator Mikko Lohikoski reminded that the previous UBC Strategy 2010-2015 was adopted at the X General Conference in the City of Kristiansand in 2009. The new Strategic Framework 2016-2021 was presented and accepted at the XIII General Conference in Gdynia in October 2015.



Mikko Lohikoski informed that in November 2015 the UBC Strategic Framework 2016-2021 was sent out to the member cities and commissions for comments and it got a number of valuable responses and proposals, which were incorporated to strengthen the document.

Mr Lohikoski pointed out that the Strategy is only successful as long as it is being implemented. He stressed the importance of questions such as 'What should we do to continue to be relevant?', 'How could we gain new members through the added values' or 'What we are, and what we want to be?'. He also emphasised that exchange of ideas and experts between cities should be strengthened, and that cities should support each other more. It should be ensured that our organisation serves our member cities in the best possible way. Our work should be systematic and more goal-oriented and the capacity of running projects should be broadened. Mr Lohikoski underlined the importance of continuing the renewal process and defining the role of the secretariat to optimise the work of UBC. He noted that we should continue to work on youth issues, including immigrant youth.

Mikko Lohikoski commented on UBC's participation in EUSBSR and said that we should be more advanced and present our issues. He added that radicalisation should be included in EUSBSR and that UBC could lead it. He also mentioned that UBC should continue with BUF project.

The implementation of the Strategy shall be discussed more in detail at the next Board Meeting in Kaunas in June.

Mr Lohikoski reminded that in 2013 UBC established a Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being to collect best-practices and highlight the challenges and solutions in the field. The Task Force produced final report called 'The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices'. The report serves as a handbook for professionals and others interested in the topic. It presents concrete suggestions and raises questions to be solved in the future and is a valuable tool to combat youth unemployment and marginalization.

In February 2016 the report was sent out by secretariat to all kind of stakeholders, including respective ministries, EU institution and organisation, and received very positive responses and proposals of cooperation in this important field. The report sums up the results of the two year's work of 27 experts from 15 member cities and six countries.

Denis Mustonen, Development Manager from the City of Lahti, underscored the necessity to improve communications. Namely, the agenda of the Board Meeting should be sent out earlier so the cities can discuss it before the meeting.

Decision:

The Board decided to authorise the Presidium to create a Task Force to discuss implementation plan of the Strategy.

## **6. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, UBC involvement.**

Strategy Coordinator Mikko Lohikoski said that at the proposal of our Executive Board last year the member states of the EU and their Baltic Sea ambassadors decided that UBC would be included as a Horizontal Action Capacity coordinator.



The task of the Action, as Mr Lohikoski pointed out, is to strengthen the role of regions and cities, civil society and businesses, chamber of commerce, universities etc. in the implementation of the EUSBSR. He mentioned that, at the moment, UBC and two other structures are involved. One of them is the Baltic Sea NGO Network, and the other is the Swedish Institute. Mr Lohikoski informed the action plan has been submitted to the European Commission and Baltic Sea Funding Programme and the response should be received by the Board Meeting in Kaunas. The work is in progress.

Mikko Lohikoski suggested sending a communication to the member cities to encourage them to express their interest in the Strategy and its implementation so that we could have a working group of cities interested in this issue.

## **7. Proposals of new UBC logo.**

Anna Kotaviita, UBC Communications Manager, introduced the process of UBC logo renewal.

She reminded that at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Executive Board meeting in Dolina Charlotty in June 2015 a decision on UBC “facelift” was made. Updating the UBC logo is a part of a larger communications renewal for the UBC taking place during 2015-2016. In September 2015 an email to member cities was sent with a request for comments on new UBC logo proposals designed by Finnish consulting company KMG. Two new logo proposals are attached to the minutes.

The vast majority of communications network’s and cities communications’ experts were in favour of a version with UBC abbreviation (version one). On the other hand, according to the feedback of several members, the Baltic Sea outline is seen as symbolizing the UBC area and therefore they stressed that it should be kept in a new version of the logo. Version two is too similar to the logo of Helsinki Commission (HELCOM).

Majority of the Board members opted for the version one of the logo (with abbreviation UBC) according to the suggestion of the communication network. It includes two options: one with the contour of the Baltic Sea and one without it, depending on the usage.

Karin Wohlgemuth opted for keeping the current logo, as it is widely recognizable in the Baltic Sea region and in Europe. Another argument in favour of the current logo was, that the new logo consisting only of the abbreviation is used by many institutions and therefore, is not original enough.

Mantas Jurgutis suggested making a brand book with guidelines on the usage of the new logo.

Decision:

The Board decided to choose version one as the new UBC logo.

## **8. Financial report 2015 and budget 2016.**

Secretary General presented the financial report for 2015. Mr Žaboklicki informed that the major source of income was the membership fees and the assets saved in 2014. The main expenditure were: the costs of the commissions, meetings including the General Conference and the Executive Board sessions,



services/maintenance, communication issues etc. Five annexes are attached to the report: membership fees, expenditure of UBC commissions, contributions to the secretariats, projects with external funding, cities' contributions to the UBC events. The report is attached to the minutes.

The only member city that had not paid its fee was city of Kaliningrad. City of Kaliningrad informed in a letter that, due to a difficult financial situation, they were unable to pay the member fee until the situation improves.

The Board stressed that every member city has the same rights and the same obligations. Having this in mind, the Board urged the City of Kaliningrad to transfer the membership fee like all other UBC member cities.

Some Board members expressed opinion UBC shall have strict regulations concerning cases like the Kaliningrad's one.

Ando Kiviberg, UBC Vice-President, Mayor of Viljandi, referred to 30% discount in membership fee for cities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia. Mr Kiviberg expressed opinion that all member cities should be treated equally.

The Board agreed that UBC should gradually reduce the discount on membership fee for cities from the countries mentioned above.

Secretary General presented the proposal of the UBC budget for 2016. Mr Żaboklicki informed that the President decided to release 10.000 EUR for each commission as a start-up money for 2016. Further grants would depend on the plan of activities. The budget proposal is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board took note of the financial report 2015 and approved the budget for 2016.

The Board agreed the amount of funding to each commission shall depend on the submitted action plan and activities performed in the previous year. The Board authorised the Presidium to make a decision in question.

The Board decided that no more than 40% can be spent by the lead city(s) for: secretariat, remunerations (including projects), subcontractors, travel, mailing, office supplies, promotion materials. Changes in the commission budget require President's approval.

#### **9. UBC–CAAC cooperation agreement from 2004 , time for renewal.**

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed that the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC) reminded UBC that the co-operation agreement between our sister organisations was signed in 2004 in Nantes. The original agreement is attached to the minutes. Because it has been 12 years since the agreement was signed, CAAC proposed to renew the document.

Decision:

The Board agreed it is a good idea to refresh the cooperation agreement with CAAC after 12 years and authorised the Presidium to handle the matter.



## **10. Election of Secretary General for the next period.**

Following the proposal of the Mayor of Gdańsk, the General Conference in Gdynia, 29 October 2015, decided to maintain the Secretariat in Gdańsk for the next four-year period. President of UBC Per Bødker Andersen and Mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz proposed Paweł Żaboklicki to continue as Secretary General for the next period.

Decision:

The Board approved the proposal and elected Paweł Żaboklicki as Secretary General for the next four-year period.

## **11. Any other business.**

### **11.1 Letter from VASAB.**

Vice-President Jarkko Virtanen informed that UBC received a letter from VASAB (Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea) inviting UBC for closer cooperation on pan-Baltic spatial planning issues. The letter is attached to the minutes.

Paweł Żaboklicki, introduced VASAB in few words. VASAB is intergovernmental multilateral co-operation of 11 countries of the Baltic Sea Region in spatial planning and development. VASAB prepares policy options for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region and provides a forum for exchange of know-how on spatial planning and development between the Baltic Sea countries.

Mr Żaboklicki informed that VASAB would like to strengthen the cooperation with UBC, in particular with UBC commissions. They are inviting UBC commissions to join next VASAB Conference "Achieving Good Living Environment: territory matters. What's beyond 2030 for macro-regions?" taking place in Warsaw, Poland on 7 June 2016.

Mikko Lohikoski reminded that VASAB is one of the key organizations in the region and there is a lot of common interest between our organizations. He also proposed to add VASAB to the list of organizations, in the Strategy Framework, with which we should continue to work closely - the Board agreed.

Decision:

The Board authorised the Secretariat to send the letter from VASAB to the commissions and encourage them to strengthen / establish cooperation with VASAB.

### **11.2. Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Programme 'Unboxing the Sandbox'.**

John Lauritzen, Councillor, Naestved, informed that UBC had been invited by the Swedish Institute to three seminars in the framework of Baltic Sea Programme 'Unboxing the Sandbox'. The goal of the programme is to help organizations unlock the full potential of transnational cooperation. It targets the local and regional level in the Baltic Sea region, in particular senior elected officials (politicians) and the head of administrations (administrators). These two groups represent the strategic level of each organization, with



the position to redesign the existing governance structure that has allowed the "sandboxing" of transnational cooperation. Mr Lauritzen participates in the programme on behalf of the city of Naestved. Paweł Żaboklicki added that, except Næstved, several UBC cities have been invited to participate in the programme, ie. Gdańsk, Kaunas, Lahti, Liepaja, Rostock, Växjö, Viljandi and UBC Secretariat.

**12. Next 76<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting, Kaunas, 7 June 2016.**

Vice-President Jarkko Virtanen informed that UBC received an invitation from the Mayor of the City of Kaunas Visvaldas Matijošaitis to hold the next Executive Board meeting in Kaunas on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2016.

Decision:

The Board decided to hold the next 76<sup>th</sup> UBC Executive Board meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 in Kaunas.

Jarkko Virtanen  
Chairperson

Paweł Żaboklicki  
Secretary

Karin Wohlgemuth  
Adjuster

Mantas Jurgutis  
Adjuster

The meeting documents are available at:  
[http://www.ubc.net/events\\_calendar,283,3524.html](http://www.ubc.net/events_calendar,283,3524.html)