

UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES REPORT OF THE VIII GENERAL CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The VIII General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities was held on 29 September – 2 October 2005 in Turku, Finland, at the invitation of the Mayor of Turku.

The theme of the first part of the Conference was “Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda”. The second part was devoted to internal UBC matters such as reports, elections, finance etc. The Conference programme is enclosed with the report.

The Conference was attended by 273 participants, including representatives of 67 Member Cities, as well as invited guests from governments and international organisations. The list of participants is attached to this report.

THURSDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2005

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

The following speakers delivered addresses during the opening plenary session.

Mr Armas Lahoniitty, Mayor of the City of Turku, warmly welcomed all participants at the VIII UBC General Conference in Turku.

Mr Pertti Paasio, Chairman of Turku City Council, conveyed a greeting to the General Conference from the Prime Minister of Finland, Mr Matti Vanhanen.

Mr Per Boedker Andersen, President of the Union of the Baltic Cities, opened the VIII General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities.

Ambassador Kornelius Sigmundsson, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials, Council of the Baltic Sea States, gave an address on behalf of the CBSS.

Mr Stephen Kabuye, Chairman of Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation, gave an address on behalf of LVRLAC.

Mr Bernard Hoarau, Principal Programme Coordinator, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), delivered the address “*UNITAR: Exchanging Experiences Among Cities - Opportunities and Prospects*”.

Mr Pavel Telicka, European Coordinator for Rail Baltica, first Czech Commissioner, gave the address “*Rail Baltica - Challenge and Opportunity*”.

Ms Anna Zigure, Author, former Latvian Ambassador in Finland, gave the address “*Our Sea has many Shores*”.

The speeches are enclosed with the report.

FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2005

PLENARY SESSION

The following speakers made presentations during the plenary session on Friday:

Ms Elisabeth Helander, Director, European Commission, DG Regional Policy, “*EU Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region*”.

Mr Kurt Bodewig, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Deutscher Bundestag, “*The Baltic Sea and the role of it in the European Transport System – Motorways of the Seas*”.

Mr Markku Mylly, Director General, Finnish Maritime Administration, “*Baltic Sea Region as Part of European Transport Networks - Maritime Safety*”.

Mr Carl Cederschiöld, Mayor Emeritus (Stockholm), “*Cities and Competitiveness*”

Mr Viktor Surikov, Mayor of Kronstadt, representative of the Governor of St. Petersburg, “*Cities and Good Neighbourhood Policies*”.

Mr Zbigniew Rykowski, Chairman of the Committee on Spatial Development of VASAB, “*Results of the 6th VASAB Ministerial Conference*”.

Mr Emilio D'Alessio, Vice-Mayor of the City of Ancona, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, “*Baltic Sea Region - A Mediterranean View*”.

CONFERENCE FORUMS

The following forums were held concurrently during the second day of the conference:

1. Maritime Logistics Corridors in the BSR
2. Promoting Human Contacts in the BSR
3. BSR Cities and the EU Budget Framework
4. BSR Cities and the New Neighbourhood Policies
5. Active and Attractive City: physical activity promotes wellbeing (co-organised with the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association)
6. LVRLAC - UBC Cooperation Forum

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

Mr Mikko Rönholm, Development Manager, Fortum Heat Corporation, delivered an address from Fortum Corporation which sponsors UBC in 2004 and 2005.

The “*Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Port and Maritime Policy for the Baltic Sea Region*” was signed by 15 major Baltic ports and cities. The General Conference unanimously endorsed the memorandum. The memorandum is enclosed with the report.

Moderators of the conference forums presented summary reports on their meetings. The forum summaries are enclosed with the report.

Mr Vegard Hölaas, Director for International Affairs, Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, made a presentation on “*European Voluntary Service*”.

Ms Laine Jänes, Mayor of Tartu, delivered an address to the General Conference from Prime Minister of Estonia, Mr Andrus Ansip titled “*Is Baltic Sea A Safe Heaven?*”

The above speeches are enclosed with the report.

SATURDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2005

COMMISSION/NETWORK MEETINGS

The UBC Commissions and Networks held working meetings in order to discuss reports for the last period and action plans for the next two-year period.

OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly was opened by Mr Per Boedker Andersen, President of the Union.

President Andersen thanked the outgoing Vice-Presidents: Mr Armas Lahoniitty, Mr Arno Pöker and Mr Gundars Bojars, for their outstanding contribution to the UBC success in the last years.

REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONS AND NETWORKS

The following representatives of the Commissions and Networks submitted reports and action plans to the assembly:

Commission on Business Cooperation – Vytautas Juodagalvis

Commission on Culture – Tarja Hautamäki

Commission on Education – Kurt Pettersson

Commission on Environment & Agenda 21 Program – Guldbrand Skjönberg & Risto Veivo

Commission on Health and Social Affairs – Karin Wohlgemuth

Commission on Information Society – Vladislav Balsky

Commission on Sport – Beata Łęgowska

Commission on Tourism – Kyrre Dahl

Commission on Transportation – Lisa Sundell

Commission on Urban Planning – Jussi Kautto

Women’s Network – Ulla Lundqvist

Network on Youth Issues – Tina Jönsson

Logistics Task Force – Christian Ramberg

The Conference took note of the reports. The activity reports and action plans of the Commissions and Networks are enclosed.

REPORT ON UBC ACTIVITIES

Mr Per Boedker Andersen, President of the Union, submitted the Report on UBC Activities during the period October 2003 – September 2005. The UBC Activity Report is enclosed. The General Conference approved the Report on UBC Activities October 2003 – September 2005.

AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2003-2004

Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General, presented the auditor's report on UBC accounts for 2003-2004 prepared by the licensed auditing company BILANS from Gdańsk, stating that the Union financial transactions and records within the mentioned period had been handled properly. The Conference took note of the report. The auditor's report is enclosed with this publication.

BOARD OF AUDIT REPORT

Mr Bartłomiej Sochański, an attorney of Szczecin, presented the report of the Board of Audit. The General Conference took note of the report. The report of the Board of Audit is enclosed.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE FULFILMENT OF DUTIES BY THE PRESIDUM AND THE SECRETARY

The Board of Audit proposed to the General Conference to acknowledge the fulfilment of duties by the Presidium and the Secretary General in 2003 and 2004.

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MEMBERSHIP FEES 2006-2007

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki presented the Executive Board's proposal of the UBC budget and new membership fees for 2006 and 2007.

The General Conference approved the membership fees for the financial period 2006-2007. The financial documents are enclosed with the report.

APPROVAL OF UBC AUDITOR FOR 2005-2006

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed the Conference that the Executive Board proposed the licensed auditing company BILANS from Gdańsk as UBC auditor for 2005-2006. The General Conference approved BILANS as UBC auditor for 2005-2006.

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The following cities were elected as members of UBC Executive Board in the next two-year period:

Naestved (Denmark), Pärnu (Estonia), Vaasa (Finland), Rostock (Germany), Liepaja (Latvia), Kaunas (Lithuania), Kristiansand (Norway), Gdańsk (Poland), Kaliningrad (Russia), Stockholm (Sweden).

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

The General Conference elected for a two-year period:

Mr Per Boedker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding, as President of the Union

Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umea, as first Vice-President of the Union

Mr Aleksi Randell, Chairman of City Board, Turku, as Vice-President of the Union

Ms Laine Jänes, Mayor of Tartu, as Vice-President of the Union

ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF AUDIT

President Per Boedker Andersen presented the candidates to the Board of Audit:

Ms Ewa Back, Mayor of Sundsvall, Sweden

Ms Marta Chełkowska, Vice-Mayor of Leba, Poland

Ms Silvia Löbner, Head of Audit Department, Wismar, Germany

The General Conference elected the above persons to the UBC Board of Audit for a two-year period.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

President Per Boedker Andersen presented a proposal of the resolution from the VIII UBC General Conference in Turku. The General Conference unanimously adopted the resolution. The resolution is enclosed with the report.

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE IN BALTIC CITIES AWARD

The UBC Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005 was granted to the City of Kaunas, Lithuania, for the “Modernisation of the public transport network in Kaunas City”. The award granting festive ceremony took place on 30 September during the reception at Turku Castle given by the Mayor of Turku. The winner received a grant of 5.000 EUR donated by Per Aarsleff A/S, Aarhus, Denmark. The report of the Award Committee is enclosed.

VENUE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 2007

Following the proposal of the Mayor of Pärnu, the General Conference decided to hold its 9th meeting in the City of Pärnu in the year 2007. Mr Armas Lahoniitty, Mayor of Turku, handed over the UBC flag to Mr Mart Viisitamm, Deputy Mayor of Pärnu, wishing Pärnu a successful conference in 2007.

OTHER MATTERS

Following the proposal from the Network on Youth Issues, the General Conference decided to transform the network into the Commission on Youth Issues. Following the proposal from the Women's Network, the General Conference decided to change the name of the network to the Gender Equality Network.

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr Per Boedker Andersen, the President of the Union, expressed his warm thanks to the City of Turku, delegates from member cities, speakers, guests and the UBC secretariat for their outstanding contribution to the success of the VIII UBC General Conference.

In connection with the UBC General Conference the following meetings were also held in Turku on 29 September 2005:

- meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
- consultation meeting of Baltic Sea organisations – CBSS, UBC, CPMR, BSSSC, B7.