

REPORTS FROM THE CONFERENCE FORUMS

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FORUM I

“Maritime Logistics Corridors in the Baltic Sea Region”

Moderator: Michael Lloyd, Director, AMRIE

The subject of maritime logistics is wide-ranging. The five presentations reflected this width, covering: IT Logistics; Maritime Safety and Environmental Issues; The Operational Environment for Shipowners; The Impact of Maritime Logistics on the Environment of Cities, and, finally, the overall areas covered by the Memorandum of Understanding on Ports and Cities (later adopted by the General Assembly of the UBC).

The key words used by all the presenters were Standards, Harmonisation, Coordination, Integration, and Sustainability. These issues were linked to the roles of the UBC itself and its responsibilities in these areas; to the role of HELCOM in the area of environmental issues, and the role of the European Commission.

The facilitating mechanisms were finance, regulation, and technology. Regulation was clearly necessary in certain areas, but should be essential, practical, and efficient. Technology will enable solutions to be found in many areas, but it needed to be accompanied by effective manpower training.

Environmental issues were a key driver for the more intensive use of sea transport, as a flexible and environmental low-impact mode, but this meant more attention being paid to maritime logistics. The sea-port-city-hinterland transfer connections needed to achieve an efficient transfer of cargo along the chain. This would require investment in infrastructure – private and public – justified on the basis of socio-economic cost-benefit analyses.

But sea transport was not without some environmental problems, e.g. air emissions from ships, and increased sea traffic would increase congestion around ports at sea and on port cities. These issues need to be tackled by technology (e.g. vessel traffic management systems) and by spatial planning and investment in relation to the congestion on land in port cities and their hinterlands.

Hence, there were issues to be tackled, but the Forum believed that these could be resolved in the ways indicated above. The UBC and of other Baltic Sea organisations and initiatives had a crucial role to play in ensuring a successful resolution.

Mr Michael Lloyd
Director
AMRIE

FORUM II

“Promoting Human Contacts in the Baltic Sea Region”

Moderator: Pauli Heikkinen, Project Manager, Red Cross Finland, South West District

In his opening remarks he addressed the audience about the magnitude of the third sector presence in the Finnish society. According to website of The National Board of Patents and Registration 122 000 associations exist in Finland. Finnish people have actively taken advance in this fundamental constitutional right to form associations for various purposes. Due the wide range of association he suggested that this forum should limit discussions to the groups which could be seen as key stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Regions in future. Those groups are at least youth and immigrants because large part of the population of Scandinavia is approaching retirement and decisions making bodies should think development of the labour market. In Finland alone labour market alone needs urgently 15 000 immigrants within next few years. He convinced the audience that redefined theme of the forum “Promoting POTENTIAL human contacts in the BSR” should therefore be justified.

1. Youth as a POTENTIAL Contact Group

Presentation: Mr. Vegard Hölaas, Director for International Affairs, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

Mr Hölaas pointed out that there is already existing Youth Exchange program that gives opportunities to young people for inter cultural learning and pave way to deeper understanding among participants about different cultures which are present in the Region through immigrants.

Presentation: Ms Liisa Sahi, Director, Development, Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi

Ms Sahi summarized her presentation that Youth organizations needs acknowledgement and appreciation by the city councils. They should also understand the value of work those organizations are doing towards whole society and usually without pay.

Then she gave guidance to the city councils:

Do not!

- Increase bureaucracy
- Demand more papers, reports
- Deny flexibility and possibilities for initiatives
- Separate youth work from other sectors of society (horizontal approach desired)
- Give more workload to associations
 - Especially in the field that they are not familiar to
 - Do not increase the work load at least without proper resources

Instead please! Give support to youth associations

- Economical support to the basic work and general administration
 - Not only financing projects
 - Associations lacking of key personnel
- Suitable locations for young people to meet and organize events
 - Especially in bigger cities there is a lack of these
- Help the associations to create co-operation with each other and/or municipalities

- Centres for youth organizations
- Avoid un-necessary overlapping

Presentation: Mr Miska Keskinen, Youth Secretary, Red Cross Finland, South West District

Mr Keskinen was referring domestic activities in the City of Turku where the city council is buying services from youth associations. He took examples from the partnership between Red Cross, South West District and the city council where Youth of Red Cross run a youth house “Q-vuori” (house for youth organizations), provide emergency shelter for youth (under 18). By promoting and buying these services city council benefits more than the contribution of paid people and activities to idle house, they get additional input of the volunteers.

2. Immigrants as a POTENTIAL Contact Group

Presentation: Ms Sanda Slipic, International Meeting Point, City of Turku

Ms Slipic reported the activities of the International Meeting Point of Turku which was established 1989 for immigrant organizations and individuals as well. Within last 15 years budget for the activity has remained the same although amount of immigrants and their visits the meeting point has multiplied by 10.

Presentation: Ms Suvi Kaljunen, Coordinator, Becoming More Visible – project, Red Cross Finland, South West District

Ms Kaljunen suggested that well planned integration process of the immigrants is very important when cities are paving path to the immigrants for the active citizenship. Cities should realize that they must create opportunities to the job market for newcomers because that stimulates activity. Cooperation with immigrant association should support this target because “by singing and dancing we are getting nowhere”.

3. Summary of Discussions

There is a lot of discussions about logistical improvement and infrastructure development within Union of Baltic Sea Cities but the perspective of the strength of human contacts is often passed as a secondary matter.

4. Proposals for the UBC

The participants of the forum felt strongly that the board of UBC should consider higher status for the YOUTH NETWORK in UBC. The communication link with already established committees is not satisfactory at the moment and therefore the launch of the YOUTH COMMITTEE should improve the participation of youth in the decision making process and should pay more attention for youth policy dimension within UBC.

Mr Pauli Heikkinen
Finnish Red Cross, South West District

FORUM III

“BSR Cities and EU Budget Framework”

**Moderator: Mr Esko Antola, Director of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellency,
University of Turku**

As a larger context it was stated that the EU Budget Framework was rejected in June. The ongoing British presidency is preparing for a new proposition; EU has to propose a plan how to go on. This is a legal as well as political issue.

As for the Baltic Sea region it is important to think, which the challenges in this region are. On the eastern side of this region there are states with fast economic growth. The western side of the Baltic Sea covers rich national economies with low economic growth. The future challenge would be how to bring these two together. Financial framework is needed. It's also important to think, whether it would be possible to create a new type of economy and which kind of instruments would be available for this.

In the forum Vice Mayor of Terni (Italy) presented a Mediterranean perspective of the role of the cities and regions in respect to EU. This perspective gives the cities a centre role. It was also noted that the Council should agree on the suggestion for framework. There is also a need for regulations. The states and regions are weak and need Europe but Europe also needs cities. The main objective is to make better and more effective Europe.

This city aspect was brought into discussion of sustainable development of BSR. It was stated that there is a need for sustainable economic development. But the economic development alone is not enough, social development is important as well. Cities should be more important centres of the economic development and growth. There should also be Baltic Sea economic regions, (mesoregions), which operate between member states and EU and which are focused and specialized. It is impossible, that one type of policy could be effective. Difference has to be accepted. Also political cooperation within Baltic Sea region is important. Cities and regions should be able to speak in one voice. This could also give UBC more presence in Brussels.

Regional aspect is important for a lot of reasons. People share a common region and are closer to each other. This is good for transmitting practises. UBC could be seen as an instrument of transmitting practises and good governance.

In the forum there was also stated a danger that there will be tensions between netto contributors and netto receivers. The aim is not to create an east-west divide again but to create common methods for bridging this gap. This stresses a role also for UBC. It should be able to represent interests and speak in common voice.

It is important to find modes of economic cooperation and practises. It has to be found ways to cooperate in frames of budget framework.

Ms Anne Nykänen

FORUM IV

“BSR Cities and the New Neighbourhood Policies”

Moderator: Mr Urpo Kivikari, Professor Emeritus, Pan-Europe Institute, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration

The timely and highly interesting topic of the role of the EU neighbourhood policies and respective financing instruments in the Baltic Sea cooperation was discussed in this parallel forum. Dr. Urpo Kivikari, Professor Emeritus from Turku School of Economics and Business Administration, chaired the forum, and Ms. Ewa Kurjata, Senior International Officer from the City of Szczecin, and Mr. Esa Kokkonen, Director of the Baltic Institute of Finland, gave introductions to the forum theme. The forum gathered approximately 30 participants.

Ms. Kurjata approached the topic from a local and sub-regional perspective, and emphasized the role of cities, regions and their partnerships and networks as key players in international cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, and accordingly in the new EU neighbourhood policies. Ms. Kurjata especially stressed the importance of local and regional level cooperation in the promotion of sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. By referring to borders as “scars of history”, Ewa Kurjata also reminded about some historical and cultural barriers still inhibiting the full exploitation of the potential of the Baltic Sea cooperation. Ms. Kurjata pointed out that the EU neighbourhood policies as well as various national policies for interregional cooperation should provide a workable framework to facilitate the overcoming of these barriers. Finally, Ms. Kurjata emphasized the role Euroregions as facilitators of the EU integration and neighbourhood policies. She informed that 5 out of altogether 18 Euroregions in which Poland is participating also include partners from the EU neighbours (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine). Ms. Kurjata pointed out that there are still some basic border problems hampering the activities of those Euroregions.

In his presentation, Mr. Esa Kokkonen from the Baltic Institute of Finland introduced the background and key elements of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013 (ENPI), as well as its preparatory form, Neighbourhood Programmes 2004-2006. Mr. Kokkonen concentrated especially on the cross-border cooperation component of ENPI (other two programme types are country/multicountry programmes, and thematic programmes), plans in regard to its geographical scope and eligible areas. Mr. Kokkonen emphasized that eligible areas for the cross-border cooperation component – the largest ENPI programme type – should not be defined too narrowly, as was the case with the previous Interreg IIIA programmes. Mr. Kokkonen pointed out that if the Baltic Sea Region is divided into numerous cooperation zones, well-established and well-functioning structures for the Baltic Sea Cooperation can not be fully utilized. He also reminded that practically any subregion or city in the Baltic Sea Region can be regarded as part of a CBC area.

Mr. Esa Kokkonen also raised a question about the interconnectiveness of ENPI, the four common spaces of the EU-Russia partnership and the Northern Dimension policy, and about how the special features and existing cooperation structures of the Baltic Sea Region can be taken into consideration within these wide-range policies: Should we still seek for a special programme or budget line for the Baltic Sea Region or the Northern Dimension?

Following the presentations, a lively discussion took place. Participants – representing not just cities, but other Baltic Sea organizations and academia as well – shared their experiences on the EU financed Baltic Sea cooperation, and presented their views in regard to the coming ENPI. It was concluded that a kind of learning process is under way in the Baltic Sea Region: How to create and facilitate real sustainable partnerships with the new neighbours in the region? The participants emphasized that UBC

and other established organizations and networks for the Baltic Sea cooperation are excellent platforms to facilitate these partnerships and to finally overcome the remaining elements of the East-West divide in the region.

Mr Esa Kokkonen
Director
The Baltic Institute of Finland

FORUM V

“An Active and Attractive City: physical activity promotes wellbeing”

Moderator: Ms Riitta Asanti, Executive Director, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association

The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association was the organiser of the forum. There were 7 lecturers, 29 people participated.

Presentations and presenters

There were six presentations in the parallel session from four countries. The session was chaired by the organiser, the Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association. The aim of the parallel session was to present the latest evidence of the physical activity to the health of people and introduce the best practises around the Baltic Sea. The parallel session was targeted to the participants of the UBC cities, local decision makers in Turku, as well as, the WHO Healthy Cities and the Finnish National Healthy Cities Network.

1. Opening
Dr. Riitta Asanti, Executive Director, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association, chair of the session
2. Elements of success in promoting Wellbeing and Physical Activity at the local level
Dr. Kaija Hartiala, Deputy Mayor, City of Turku
3. Healthy City is an Active City – promoting physical activity in the urban context
Dr. Agis Tsouros, WHO European Office, Centre for Urban Health, Copenhagen
4. Active Living - time for a Living Act
Dr. Olli J. Heinonen, Paavo Nurmi Centre/University of Turku
5. UBC Commission on Sport - experiences and activities
Ewa Depka, UBC CS Co-ordinator, Manager of Foreign Relations, City of Gdynia
6. New, untraditional ways in offering Active Living to young people
Tone Nybakken, Head of sport and physical activity, Sports Department, City of Bergen
7. Can the whole day at school be physically active?
Anu Oittinen, Project manager, City of Turku

Results

Three main points arose from the presentations. The slogan presented by the representative of WHO/Healthy Cities "the healthy choice should be the easy choice", describes these messages.

Firstly, the slogan relates very much to the physical activity and active living promotion. Healthy Cities as well as promoting physical activity are related to the decision making in the cities. The decision makers have the role of providing people the healthy choice as an easy choice. The living environments need to be developed to take in consideration, among other things, inhabitants' possibilities to be physically active near home. This means close collaboration between the health, sport and the city planning departments.

Secondly, the participants of the parallel session heard Very Good News. Physical activity is a Super Medicine. Being physically active provides you more life to years and more years to life. It has very strong and evidence based benefits to physical health, as well as, for mental and social well-being. Active citizens bring along also economical savings for the cities. It is individually, but also economically worth while to make the healthy choice an easy one. But the question, why do we not, as individuals or cities, use this super medicine effectively enough?

Lastly, several innovative and enthusiastic examples from different cities were presented. Examples and achievements exist at the local level, more information about them as well as reports and results needs to be distributed around the Baltic Sea Region. The parallel seminar created confidence in that the healthy choice can be an active and an easy choice!

Ms Heini Parkkunen
Co-ordinator Healthy Cities Programme
Baltic Region Healthy Cities Office

FORUM VI

“LVRLAC – UBC Cooperation Forum”

Moderator: Sulev Nõmmann, Project Coordinator, UBC Commission on Environment

Dr Sulev Nõmmann, the project's Co-ordinator, opened the forum at 14.15 by welcoming the participants warmly to the forum. That was followed by self-introduction of participants.

Mr Risto Veivo, Head of UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat, also welcomed everybody to the forum. He mentioned that UBC needs to be an open house and to develop into direction of a “family” where also countries outside Baltic Region can benefit from our network experience. He added that global goals need also to be remembered and mentioned UBC's willingness to contribute to the UN Millennium Declaration when it comes to solving international problems of economic, social and environmental areas.

Next spoke the Chairman of LVRLAC and Mayor of Entebbe, Mr Stephen Kabuye. He thanked the UBC for the invitation to the VIII UBC General Conference and to this forum. He continued by giving a short overview of the history of the LVRLAC and the UBC-LVRLAC co-operation.

Mr Anders Engström, UBC Honorary President and Vice-Chairman of the LVRLAC-UBC Cooperation Project Steering Group, explained why it is important for UBC to be involved in Africa. He stated that although the differences between the areas these two networks operate are big and local democracy level varies a lot, local authorities and municipalities in both regions carry out the same roles and should in principle provide similar services to their citizens.

Mr Engström continued by telling some of the lessons learned. Both networks in cooperation have been too optimistic with time use as everything has taken longer than expected. So far there are no well defined roles and responsibilities in LVRLAC network. LVRLAC faces difficulties in collecting member fees and attracting new member cities. It is important that the benefits from the project are for as many as possible local authorities, not just for one or two cities. In addition, it is important that LVRLAC will build up capacities to manage different network projects and attract funding for these projects from different sources also other than Sida.

Next spoke Dr Julius Ayo-Odongo, LVRLAC Secretary General about the LVRLAC Strategic development areas in three years perspective, forming with his presentation a good basis for later discussion among participants of the forum. Dr Ayo-Odongo introduced the main cornerstones of LVRLAC organisation's activities by stating the vision, mission for future, main objectives of LVRLAC and strategic plan to achieve these objectives.

The vision is that LVRLAC will be a competent and influential networking organisation of local authorities in the Lake Victoria region with the capacity to facilitate its members in their quest to provide better living standards and services as well as opportunities for sustainable development within a decade.

The mission is to strengthen the capacity of local authorities, promote and explore cooperation with national governments, the donor community, private sector CBOs /NGOs, and serve as a mouth piece for the interest of local authorities in the Lake Victoria region.

He continued by stating the objectives which are to determine suitable mechanisms involving community participation in the sustainable utilisation of the lake's resources, to set up projects and programmes to mobilize and sensitize communities both rural and urban to participate in mitigating pollution and water quality degradation due to industrial, urban and agro-based effluents, and to work for the broadest possible community participation in the promotion of urban planning and rural development for the benefit of the community while safeguarding the environment.

The LVRLAC strategic plan 2005-2008 was adopted and launched in February 2005. The Priority areas include: Environmental Management and Ecological Improvement, Disaster Management, Improved Health and Sanitation, HIV/AIDS, Urban and Rural development and planning, Poverty Reduction and Livelihood Improvement, Tourism and Culture, Good Governance, and Conflict Management.

Before short coffee break the floor was given to the Project Co-ordinator Ms Riikka Juuma from Tampere Mwanza Co-operation project. The cooperation (twinning) project between Tampere and Mwanza (a twin city of Tampere) is a very good example of sustainable development cooperation between one Nordic and one Southern local government. The project is administrated by Finnish Association of Cities and financed by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim of the project is to promote sustainable development, cultural exchange, good governance, and to develop the expertise and technical skills of Mwanza municipality staff.

After coffee break, Dr Sulev Nõmmann invited participants to discuss on how UBC commissions and member cities could more concretely participate in LVRLAC-UBC cooperation and assist LVRLAC in its future work. The UBC commission represented in the forum were: Environment, Business co-operation, Education, Health and Social Affairs, Tourism, Transportation, and Culture.

Mr Kyrre Dahl from Tourism Commission opened the discussion by asking if LVRLAC has made a list of possible funders.

Mr Anders Engström suggested looking for further possibilities of twinning. Several UBC member cities have indicated their potential interest in this global cooperation.

Mr Tõnu Karu from Tallinn handed out some copies of the Annual report 2004 of the European Community's development policy and external assistance. He suggested participants to read and evaluate it and use in the future project planning.

Mr Bernard Hoarau, Senior Programme Co-ordinator from UNITAR, said that the LVRLAC-UBC cooperation project seems currently under-funded. At the moment, the potential donor countries are not contributing to it. He also suggested of asking funding from donors like the World Bank. He continued by saying that the ground work for co-operation has been done. In the future LVRLAC should work more on capacity building. There could also be a new program with assistance from UNITAR for example on HIV problem.

Mr Kaido Koppel from Pärnu introduced their case of Blue Flag experience as an example of good practice potentially be transferred to Lake Victoria region.

Mr Mikko Jokinen, from Turku and also the Co-chair of UBC EnvCom Secretariat, asked if LVRLAC has collected a "nest basket" of project ideas where LVRLAC would need UBC's help. He continued by asking if LVRLAC wants that UBC promotes twinning among UBC member cities. Mr Jokinen stated that so far LVRLAC has not approached any other funding institutions such as FINNIDA which is the Department for International Development Co-operation of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He continued that based on his experience with a good project proposal the funding would not be a problem.

Mr Toivo Riimaa from Association of Estonian Cities said that it is important to invite also national associations of local authorities onboard to work together in the Lake Victoria region.

After that Sulev Nõmmann asked all commission to briefly comment on their possible contribution to the LVRLAC-UBC cooperation.

Mr Erling Winther, a member of UBC Business Co-operation, said that they would like to have more detailed list of needs where LVRLAC would like to have help from them.

Mrs Karin Wolhgemuth from the Commission on Health and Social Affairs, would also like to have more information on the need of help. She suggested employment and children & youth as possible areas of co-operation.

Mr Ivo Eesmaa from UBC Commission on Education said that people learn more from their own experience and not so much on others experience. One has to find the right modalities for cooperation. One-way "guidance" in the form of teaching people (municipalities) in the Lake Victoria region without any experience of the local circumstances will not lead to expected results.

Ms Lisa Sundell for the UBC Commission on Transport said that transportation is a broad area. They would also like to know what the focus of help is. She commented that for example safe navigation is certainly an important and valid issue in Lake Victoria region.

Mr Gulbrand Skjönberg from Nacka and also the Co-chair of Commission on Environment, commented to that one help topic would be to assist in creating good and reliable transportation across the Lake Victoria. The transportation is really needed for all aspects: goods delivery, local people and tourism. He would also like to continue with the establishing of environmental pedagogic centres in the area. He said that UBC has a lot of experience among itself and it is important to share it globally.

Mr Bernard Hoarau, asked what expectations LVRLAC has for the capacity building.

Dr Julius Ayo-Odongo replied that they will prepare a further paper on the ideas for possible help and also on twinning.

Mr Anders Engström said that the next LVRLAC Steering Group meeting should concentrate on ideas on twinning and other valuable ideas heard in this Forum.

After that Dr Sulev Nõmmann thanked participants for their valuable comments and suggestions informed that the time for forum was ending. He asked the Mayor of Homa Bay, Mr Stephen Agullo to say the final words.

Dr Stephen Agulo thanked all participants for their interest towards LVRLAC and the forum. He stressed the seriousness of problems in Lake Victoria Region backing his statement up with the facts of one third of the population suffering from HIV/AIDS, poverty index in Kenya of 71 % and other indicators of the region. He finished by thanking the UBC Environment Commission Secretariat for organising the Forum

Ms Sari Bowie
UBC EnvCom Secretariat