

TURKU – HELSINKI INITIATIVE

Mr President, dear friends,

The Union of the Baltic Cities has a long tradition in working and supporting the work for sustainable development. The state of the Baltic Sea is one of greatest concerns for all of us. The UBC as well as its member cities have taken great steps in this respect. The discussions today have again demonstrated, how much is being done by our organisation and the member cities.

Finnish member cities, Turku and Helsinki, have made a joint initiative to improve the state of the Baltic Sea through active cooperation of all stakeholders. The cities have agreed on concrete actions which aim at improving the quality of water in the Baltic Sea.

The English text of this joint initiative and challenge to other cities has been distributed to members in advance by the General Secretariat.

The responsibility for a cleaner Baltic Sea is mutual. More extensive cooperation with all cities and partners is needed to achieve results. Therefore, Turku and Helsinki have also invited other municipalities, companies, organisations, educational institutions and other instances in Finland and other countries around the Baltic Sea to join this initiative.

Turku and Helsinki agreed to bring this appeal to the key Baltic Sea city organisations. Accordingly Helsinki has presented it to the BaltMet network and Turku is now doing the same by introducing it to the UBC general conference.

We kindly invite the UBC and all the member cities to endorse this initiative. We hope, that you would study this initiative carefully and make your own action plans in the spirit of the Turku-Helsinki appeal. We ask that the General Conference would adopt the distributed resolution in support of Turku-Helsinki initiative and that the General Secretariat, in cooperation with the Commission on Environment and it Secretariat in Turku, will be asked to assist Turku and Helsinki in collecting the responses from the member cities and to publish their concrete action plans for a cleaner Baltic Sea in the internet and in UBC publications.

Thank you very much for your attention and cooperation

Jarkko Virtanen
Deputy Mayor
City of Turku
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