

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES

18 October 2003 (Klaipėda) – 1 October 2005 (Turku)

Introduction

Since the VII General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, held in Klaipėda on 17-18 October 2003, the Union has further consolidated its network, launched new projects and political initiatives, organised a number of conferences, seminars and events.

The Union developed existing and established new contacts with other Baltic and European organisations and institutions i.e. European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Parliamentary Conference on Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, Eurocities, Helsinki Commission, Baltic 21, VASAB 2010, Baltic Ports Organisation, Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation and others.

In 2004 UBC was granted with an observer status to the Committee of the Regions which proves that Brussels recognizes the work carried out by our organisation. Through the participation in the Committee of the Regions Plenary Sessions UBC has a chance to influence the work and policies of this important European Union institution. Since receiving the observer status UBC has been regularly attending the COR Plenary Sessions.

UBC has also signed the cooperation agreement with the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC), during CAAC General Assembly in July 2004. UBC cooperation with CAAC focuses on lobbying for cities interests on one hand and on facilitating joint projects between our member cities on the other hand. Since the cooperation agreement was signed there has been intense partner search between Baltic and Atlantic cities for Interreg and other EU-funded projects.

Examples of policy issues raised by UBC

Dialogue between the European Commission and associations of local authorities

At the General Conference in Klaipėda, 18 October 2003, UBC adopted the resolution appealing to the European Commission for regular consultations with local authorities associations, on EC policies which affect local authorities. In January 2004 Commissioner Michel Barnier sent a letter to UBC informing that on 19 December 2003 the Commission adopted a communication on "Dialogue with associations of regional and local authorities on the formulation of EU policy". In this communication the EC proposed to give the regional and local representatives an opportunity of expressing their views – via their associations – during annual hearings which would concentrate on the Commission's annual work programme, and the major policy initiatives that have a significant regional and local impact.

UBC and our sister organisation Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities welcomed the EC communication as continuation of the work began with the publication of White Paper on Governance. However CAAC and UBC were of the opinion that consultations between the EC and local authorities associations should take a form of a dialogue; it can not be only one-way communication.

Both organisations sent a joint statement to the European Commission expressing their views on proposed consultation procedures. In the statement UBC and CAAC underlined that the communication, in outlining the purpose of the dialogue, made no mention of the possibility for national and European associations to make their own priorities, concerns and proposals known to the European institutions. The presentation of the dialogue was limited to a description of the procedures

for presenting the Commission's priorities and initiatives, to which the regional and local government associations are asked to react. In the statement we stressed that a genuine dialogue can only be established if all various partners have the possibility not only to react to but also to initiate subjects for discussion. It is essential that regional and local authorities are able to obtain information and exchange points of view before decisions are taken. It is just as important for them to be able – via this dialogue – to introduce and debate questions concerning their own needs, to which the European Union has to find a response.

UBC and CAAC also underlined to the Commission that not only the national organisations should be heard in this dialogue (which is stated in the draft of the new EU treaty) but also organisations like ours.

In the statement which was sent to the EC President and Regional Policy Commissioner we welcomed an opportunity to meet the Commission on regular basis and at the same time we expressed our opinion that organisations should not only be informed about EU policies but also should be given an opportunity to influence these policies.

Our reaction was noted in Brussels. Director General of Regional Policy replied in a letter that annual meetings “will offer the opportunity to the associations to inform the Commission about the expectations of their members concerning the development of EU policies”. The joint UBC-CAAC statement proved that acting together make our voice stronger in Brussels.

The first dialogue meeting between the EC and the local and regional authorities organisations was organised by President Romano Prodi in May 2004 in Brussels. The meeting was attended by the most important European organisations including the UBC. UBC has also participated in the second dialogue meeting held in Brussels in February 2005 at the invitation of CoR President Peter Straub and Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

Transport and logistics issues

In the beginning of 2004 the UBC Presidium expressed an opinion that there is a need for some structure within UBC which would deal with the issues of transport / logistic corridors in the Baltic Sea area. UBC shares the opinion that modern port and land transportation infrastructure coordinated with maritime transport is crucial for further development of the BSR. In 2002 UBC issued statements on EU white book on transportation and on Trans European Network (TEN), in order to get greater EU attention on the BSR transportation problems.

Having in mind above, the Executive Board decided to create a task force on logistics to be responsible for preparing the UBC policies on this crucial issue which is the transportation (logistic) corridors system in the BSR. The Board also suggested that transportation and logistics corridors in the BSR should be one of the main themes of the General Conference in Turku. UBC realises that improvement of transportation corridors is essential for further development of the whole region.

UBC received the European Commission's consultation document on “Motorways of the Seas” concept to be financed through the revised Trans-European Network Transport Guidelines (TEN-T). UBC logistic task force welcomed the Commission's implementation framework of the “Motorways of the Seas” concept and expressed hope it would contribute to the improvement of intermodal transportation system in the BSR.

The task force emphasises that improved transport and logistical connections, including Motorways of the Seas, have become critically important prerequisites for development and competitiveness of our countries, regions and cities. This applies especially to the BSR, one of the most dynamic regions of Europe. During the General Conference in Turku the task force shall prepare a workshop on the Motorways of the Seas and the logistic issues.

Cross-border cooperation and Cohesion Policy

In December 2004, on the UBC's initiative, the major Baltic Sea organisations namely B7, BSSSC, CPMR-BSC and UBC sent the joint statement to the European Commission on the objective 3 of the reformed cohesion policy from 2007 – European Territorial Cooperation. The statement emphasizes the fact that the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region may be severely harmed if the limit of 150 km for maritime border is introduced.

The aforementioned Baltic Sea organisations consider that the maximum distance of 150 km of maritime border - to be eligible to obtain funding for cross-border projects – is counter-productive to the very idea of strengthening the territorial cooperation and therefore we object to it.

We expect from the European Commission a more flexible approach taking into account existing cooperation in various fields between the partners on both sides of maritime border as well as historical, social, cultural and economical factors which justify cooperation across larger distance than mentioned above.

In January 2005 the EC replied - in the letter from the Director in DG General Regional Policy Mr Ronald Hall – that the Commission intends to introduce 150 km threshold for the cross-border strand and that multilateral maritime cooperation would make more sense under the transnational strand.

In March 2005 the President sent the statement also to all prime ministers of ten Baltic Sea countries. UBC hopes that all Baltic Sea governments will strongly take up this issue during the negotiations on the new cohesion policy 2007-2013. The Executive Board members contacted respective PM's cabinets and ministries in their countries and urged them to raise this problem in Brussels.

During the April session of the Committee of the Regions UBC Board member spoke to the Commissioner on Regional Policy Ms Danuta Huebner about the 150 km limit for maritime border. Ms Huebner supported UBC statement and promised to take up this issue in the European Commission.

As regards transnational cooperation strand mentioned in the letter from Mr Hall, it should be stressed that proposed areas for cooperation within the transnational strand have very little to do with the tasks of the local authorities. The proposed topics lie within the competence of state and regional authorities. It is necessary to complement these areas otherwise the cities will not be able to cooperate in the fields they are responsible for and interested in.

The above standpoint on transnational cooperation strand is expressed in the position paper on the Cohesion Policy currently (September 2005) being drafted by B7, BSSSC, CPMR-BSC and UBC.

UBC Executives during this two-year period

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President, Mayor of Kolding
Mr Armas Lahoniitty, First Vice-President, Mayor of Turku
Mr Arno Pöker, Vice-President, Mayor of Rostock
Mr Gundars Bojars, Vice-President, Mayor of Riga
Mr Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General, Gdańsk

Executive Board during this two-year period

Næstved	Denmark
Kronstadt	Russia
Gdańsk	Poland
Kristiansand	Norway
Voru	Estonia
Liepāja	Latvia
Lübeck	Germany
Kaunas	Lithuania
Kotka	Finland
Stockholm	Sweden

Executive Board Meetings

Six Executive Board Meetings took place during the reporting period between Klaipėda and Turku General Conferences:

- 39th Executive Board meeting, Vaasa, 5-7 March 2004
- 40th Executive Board meeting, Kristiansand, 16-17 May 2004
- 41st Executive Board meeting, Riga, 15-17 October 2004
- 42nd Executive Board meeting, Luleå, 4-6 March 2005
- 43rd Executive Board meeting, Chojnice, 3-5 June 2005
- 44th Executive Board meeting, Turku, 30 September 2005

The Executive Board played meaningful role in the development of UBC activities. The Board considered and endorsed a number of actions, initiatives and projects submitted by the Presidium, Commissions, Networks and Member Cities. The projects, initiatives, activities, events and other actions carried out by UBC during the described period are outlined in this report.

Board of Audit during this two-year period

- Mr Bartłomiej Sochański, Advocate, Szczecin
- Ms Silvia Löbner, Head of Auditing Department, Wismar
- Mr Alfredas Lankauskas, City Councillor, Šiauliai

UBC Secretariat

The Union of the Baltic Cities Secretariat is located in the City of Gdańsk at the residence of the City Council. The Secretariat provides daily service to the UBC and its members. The Union has been satisfied with the work performed by the Secretariat. The financial matters have been handled properly as confirmed by the auditor. The Union would like to express its thanks to the City of Gdańsk for its contribution to the UBC over the past years.

UBC Commissions and Networks

In the described period the UBC Commissions have been led by the following Cities:

Commission:	Lead Cities:
Commission on Business Cooperation	Kaunas, Vaxjo, Tallinn
Commission on Culture	Szczecin, Vaasa, Visby, St.Petersburg, Tukums
Commission on Education	Kärdla, Norrtälje
Commission on Environment	Turku, Nacka
Commission on Health & Social Affairs	Rostock, Lübeck
Commission on Information Society	St.Petersburg, Tampere
Commission on Sport	Gdynia, Karlskrona
Commission on Tourism	Kalmar, Palanga, Liepaja, Jurmala
Commission on Transportation	Göteborg
Commission on Urban Planning	Helsinki, Malmö, Umeå, Riga
Women's Network	Turku (Femina Aboensis)
Network on Youth Issues	Kalmar

The Commissions and Networks oversee Union activities in each of the respective areas. Examples of projects, activities and events carried out by the Commissions / Networks within the reporting period are concisely described below.

I. Commission on Business Cooperation

In 2004 the Commission has been chaired by Mr Lennart Gardmark, Växjö. In 2005 the Commission has been chaired by Mr Mart Repnau, Tallinn.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Business Cooperation is located in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Technology Parks and Business Incubators

The Commission has continued the project Developing a Technology Park and Business Incubator Concept in Lithuanian Cities. The overall aim of the project was to promote and support innovative entrepreneurship in the cities of Klaipėda and Panevezys by improving the services of existing regional support structures, new business development services developed for research-based and technology-oriented SMEs and start-up entrepreneurs. Klaipėda Regional Dev. Agency was the project leader and the Baltic Institute of Finland was the Finnish coordinator of the project, which was financed by Phare CBC Small Project Fund. Now the project is successfully finished. There is a strategy for the development of the Science and Technology Parks in Lithuania prepared as a result of this project.

Commission Meeting in Vaxjo, 10 June 2004

The meeting held at the Videum Science Park at the Växjö University Campus was attended by representatives of 15 member cities. The presentations covered subjects such as: Videum Science Park establishment and growth; InternetCity - the regional IT cluster and web service competence centre; the regional bioenergy export cluster: city, university and companies; Swedish Business Incubators; industrial design promotion of innovation and design; young entrepreneurs; entrepreneurship for the future; accelerators versus Incubators; and others.

The topics of the second day were: how to attract the EU structural funds in order to accelerate the development of business cooperation sector, the concept of conglomerate between cities, cooperation between universities and private companies. The presentations and discussions concerning the attraction of the EU structural funds, preparing the documentation, applying for funds, making appropriate projects, have influenced the decision to continue the theme in the next annual meeting in Tallinn.

Commission Meeting in Tallinn, 15-17 May 2005

The Commission meeting in Tallinn was attended by representatives of 16 member cities. The presentations were made on the following topics: Estonia's perspectives in EU (economy, tax system, foreign trade, infrastructures); how to promote entrepreneurship in the city; innovative IT solutions (e-services, m-services, ID-ticket); development of e-services in the city; IT services in the healthcare field; Tallinn Technology Park and others. After the session the participants visited the Mustamäe Business Incubator.

On the second day the cities from new EU member states have shared their experience on how to attract the EU structural funds and how to handle it in order to accelerate the development of business sector and also about establishing Science and Technology Parks. Cities from older EU member states made some practical advises and also made presentations about new concepts of business incubators, e-services and how to make a city attractive for international events. Conclusion from the meeting was that there is no significant gap between East and West anymore. During BizCom meetings all cities can learn something useful no matter how long they are in the EU.

II. Commission on Culture

In 2003-2005 the Commission was chaired by Mr Sławomir Szafranski, Szczecin and Ms Tarja Hautamäki, Vaasa.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Culture is located in Szczecin, Poland.

Commission on Culture Board Meeting, Tukums, 19-21 March 2004

The first meeting of the new board of the Commission on Culture (CoC) took place at Tukums Museum. The board discussed potential topics and sites for the CoC's annual meetings in 2004-2006.

Ars Baltica Forum, Gdańsk, 23–25 September 2004

The Ars Baltica Forum in Gdańsk was the venue where policy makers, cultural operators and artists discussed the conditions and challenges for cultural cooperation in the BSR. The UBC General Secretary, Paweł Żaboklicki, the Chairman of CoC Sławomir Szafranski and editor of Mare Articum magazine, Magdalena Lewoc, represented UBC during this meeting. Mrs Lewoc presented Mare Articum, which since 1999 holds the 'Ars Baltica' logo. Mr Szafranski proposed to organise, together with the Les Rencontres association, a meeting of cultural networks that are active in the BSR, in Vilnius 2006. The CoC vowed to take a more pro-active stance in developing the network of cultural institutions in UBC-member cities. This includes more frequent correspondence with city officials about upcoming cultural events and efforts to improve culture updates on the UBC website.

Commission on Culture Board Meeting, Riga, 15-16 October 2004

This meeting took place in connection with the 41st meeting of the UBC Executive Board in Riga. The CoC Board discussed economic matters, secretariat and actual projects. It was decided that the next session should focus on museum management.

Commission on Culture Board Meeting, Visby, 14-16 April 2005

The chairmanship and structure of the CoC Board were among the topics of this meeting. Mr Szafranski has left his post in Szczecin City Hall. Ms Tarja Hautamäki, Head of Culture Department of Vaasa, was elected as the new CoC chairman.

Metropolis, National Museum in Szczecin, June - July 2005

This international art exhibition was organised under the auspices of CoC and opened during the 13th Ministerial Session of CBSS in Szczecin, 9-10 June 2005. Artists that took part in Metropolis came from Poland, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany. Metropolis presented works that look for relations among spatial form and social structure. The featured artists investigate the city as an organism in which various attitudes and opinions are created and in which a range of interactions take place. The exhibition touched on the palpable tensions in modern cities and both the beauty and the pathologies that arise from them.

III. Commission on Education

The Commission is chaired by Mr Kurt Pettersson, Norrtälje and Mr Ivo Eesmaa, Kärddla.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Education is located in Kärddla, Estonia.

Since the last General Conference in Riga, the activities of the Commission on Education focused on projects with the young people: "The Meeting Point of Different Cultures" and "Summer School for potential researchers in the field of aquatic ecology". Commission meetings concentrated on the exchange of experiences between the teachers, politicians and civil servants.

Meeting of the Commission in Norrtälje, September 8-9, 2004

The following issues were discussed: Educational planning coordination – educational boards, professionals; cooperation in teaching of languages; Internet conference – how to use this tool in the commission work; projects Meeting Point and Summer School, Adult Education seminar.

Meeting of the Commission Presidium in Norrtälje, April 23, 2005

The meeting concerned Commission's activities in 2005. The presidium decided to go on with the Summer Research School project in year 2005. An agenda for the Commission annual meeting to be held in Norrtälje on 9 September 2005 was also prepared.

The meeting discussed "Life-long learning and styles of learning" seminar to be held in Norrtälje on 7-8 September 2005. The seminar will start with an introduction of Swedish school system. The seminar will also include distance education, tailor-made educational programs, mentorship, communication

systems and infrastructure, styles of learning, integration of subjects as well as excursion to the new Campus Roslagen with several higher education programs.

Projects

"Meeting Point of Different Cultures"

The project has been organised 4 times – from 2001 till 2004. The aim of the project is to become aware of participants' own roots and to understand the differences between different cultures. Young participants studied the history and culture of native places from 1940's to 1960's. The project gives a possibility for communication, the development of English speaking skills, motivation to learning foreign languages, mutual understanding of European cultures. In 2003 five schools participated in the project, from: Norrtälje, Tartu, Tukums, Šiauliai, Kärđla. The camp took place on the island of Hiiumaa.

"Summer School for potential researchers in the field of aquatic ecology"

The project was held in 2004 and 2005. The research school was organised by the Erken Laboratory situated in the countryside of Norrtälje. The students stayed for 4 weeks, they lived together at the laboratory site. The students had lectures in general limnology. They worked independently with their research project under the protective wings of international supervisors. The primary objective of the research school is to let the students work with scientific research.

IV. Commission on Environment

The Commission is chaired by Mr Mikko Jokinen, Turku and Mr Guldbrand Skjönberg, Nacka.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Environment is located in Turku, Finland.

The UBC Statute and Strategy define sustainable development, with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity, to be part of the purpose and strategic objectives of the Union. For the implementation of this objective, General Conference in Klaipėda 2003, adopted cross-sectoral **Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities**. The programme is being implemented under the supervision of the Executive Board. The programme implementation has proceeded well, programme is reaching a concrete impact on the ground at UBC member cities. The programme activities target five thematic focus areas: Good governance and sustainable urban management; Sustainable use of energy and resources; Good living environment and nature protection; Sustainable economy and transport; Social integration and health. The programme has reached its volume goal of 10 Million Eur. This funding is today committed by decisions and contracts of different partners and funding agencies towards the implementation of the projects and other program activities. The first programme assessment, the Baltic Cities Sustainable Development Survey 2004/2005 has been completed. The answering rate of 73% both reflects the interest and commitment of UBC members and provides an excellent basis for analysis. According to the results, the member cities highly appreciate the services and projects provided within the programme.

The activities of the EnvCom have during the reporting period included the thematic seminars with up to 70 participants in each of them. These were organised in Sundsvall April 2004, Turku December 2004 and Sopot in June 2005. Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin has been developed and thematic editions have been published. Many of the Agenda 21 projects have a strong environmental dimension and much of the work on them belongs to the EnvCom. For example the New Hansa of Sustainable Ports and Cities, EMAS Peer Review for Cities, etc. The commission has continued the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award scheme. The website has been regularly up-dated and contact data-bases maintained. The commission has contributed strongly to Baltic Sea Regional and European policy cooperation processes on cities' environmental governance and sustainable urban development. The commission has represented UBC at Baltic 21, HELCOM, EU Urban Environmental Expert Group and EU WG on Environmental Management Systems.

Main projects of Agenda 21 Programme:

BUSTRIP - Developing sustainable urban transport planning. Partners: EnvCom, TransCom, Chalmers Technical University, 14 Baltic Cities, 2005-2007. 3.4 MEUR - BSR Interreg III B and Finnish Ministry of Environment.

Managing Urban Europe-25 - Developing cities' environmental managements systems to address the whole functional urban area. Partners: EnvCom, ICLEI, UNEP etc (altogether 23 partners, inc. 14 cities), 2005-08. 2.9 MEUR - DG Environment, Finnish MoE + other founders

New Hansa of Sustainable Ports and Cities - Developing ports environmental practices at the Baltic Sea. Partners: Stadtwerke Lübeck, Baltic Energy Forum, EnvCom, 16 ports & cities, Finnlines Shipping Co, 2003-2005. 1.0 MEUR - BSR Interreg III B, Finnish MoE.

EMAS Peer Review for Cities - Developing of environmental management system EMAS at cities. Partners: EnvCom, Eurocities, University of West England and 17 cities, 2003-2004. 0.7 MEUR - DG Environment, Finnish MoE.

Baltic University Urban Forum - Capacity-building, demonstration of good practices re. sustainable development. Partners: Baltic University Program, EnvCom, Technical University of Sweden plus 10 cities and eight other universities, 2003-2006. 0.9 MEUR, BSR Interreg III B

Cooperation with LVRLAC, improvement of sustainable development and env. practices at Lake Victoria Region, 2004-2006 (started already earlier), 0.6 MEUR during 2005, SIDA.

V. Commission on Health & Social Affairs

The Commission on Health & Social Affairs is led by the City of Rostock, Germany.

During the meeting at the General Conference in Klaipėda the Commission decided to re-organise and re-orientate its work towards the needs of the cities ie. on the UBC Social Charter and on EU priorities. It was decided to organise task force meetings with selected participants to deal with special topics. Guidelines for the activities of the Commission should be the Social Charter and the EU Strategy Against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

In January 2004 the 1st task force meeting took place in Rostock. Participants from 9 member cities met to define the working direction and methods. Participants described situations in their cities. As a result of this analysis two working groups were set up: the WG on Children and Youth on Risk chaired by Riga and Gävle and the WG on Employment chaired by Klaipėda and Helsinki. Also a Social Charter WG was set up, responsible for implementation of Charter goals within UBC cities. Further debated themes were: EU Strategy on Poverty and Social Exclusion - how to work with it in the municipalities; experiences in EU projects design, application, implementation and follow-up and the Open Method of Coordination as an instrument of international cooperation.

On 14 May 2004 the 2nd task force meeting (4 cities) took place in Riga. It was concluded as follows. The WG Children and Youth on Risk should: work with exchange of experience on Children Crisis Centres; cooperate with Social Hansa - a joint meeting in Lübeck to be proposed; take part in the exchange programs of social workers. The WG on Employment should: define how to work in cities with the EU Strategy on Poverty and Social Exclusion; plan a meeting dealing with unemployed depending on social welfare.

In September 2004 WG Children and Youth on Risk (3 cities) met in Stockholm. Main focus was "Strengthening of networking and more thematic meeting occasions". A questionnaire on key issues was to be developed with the purpose of getting a picture of cities priorities among different social fields. It is planned to organise workshops on cities prioritised fields, including representatives of CBSS and other relevant organisations.

During the reported period the Commission had contacts with the Women's Network, Commission on Sport, Commission on Environment.

VI. Commission on Sport

The Commission on Sport is chaired by Ms Beata Łęgowska, Gdynia and Ms Lena Ryge, Karlskrona.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Sport is located in Gdynia, Poland.

Annual Meetings

Narva, 02-03.04.2004 – Education through Sport

The annual meeting in Narva was attended by representatives of 12 cities from 7 countries. In response to the announcement of European Year of Education through Sport by the Council of EU, the Commission on Sport devoted its meeting to this particular subject. Among the presentations, there were examples of projects on education through sport carried out in the fields of sailing, rugby and kick-boxing. In connection with the European Year of Education through Sport, the Commission decided to award grants for the organisation of sporting events with special emphasis put on counteracting social exclusion of socially disadvantaged groups. In the year 2004 UBC Commission on Sport allocated (from the UBC budget) grants of total amount of 5 000 EUR. “Move your body, stretch your mind” grants were awarded for the organisation of projects combining sports values with educational aspect.

Klaipėda, 14-16.04.2005 – Healthy Lifestyle Through Sport

One of the questions posed during the 10th Jubilee annual meeting of the Commission organised in Klaipėda on 14-16 April 2005 was how to motivate people to be more active. Participants from 13 UBC member cities from 6 countries discussed the issue of physical activity and health promotion. Furthermore, there was a presentation of the 10 years of Commission’s activity as well as of 2005 grant awarding procedure entitled “Healthy Lifestyle through Sport”. By awarding grants for sports projects, the Commission wanted to demonstrate the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In the year 2005 UBC Commission on Sport allocated grants of total amount of 5000 EUR. The grants were awarded to raise awareness of the importance of sport as an integral element of healthy lifestyle.

Cooperation with other organisations

In the reported period the Commission cooperated with the following organisations: The Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association, SK GARANT, Finnish Rugby Federation, Estonian Rugby Federation, Rugby Club Arka Gdynia.

Annual Calendar of Sports Events

The Commission on Sport decided to create Annual Calendar of Sports Events on its website in order to spread information about sporting initiatives having educational aspect which are taken in member cities. Commission’s website was updated and information about international sports events open to all was put on this website.

“Dreams Without Limits” - continuation

Children’s works sent for the international art competition “Dreams Without Limits” organised in 2003 were used for other projects such as Calendar 2004 and 2005 Calendar as well as the material for travelling exhibitions. Since January 2004, the exhibition has been available for expositions in UBC member cities. The works of disabled children were presented in: Gdynia, Szczecin, Rostock, Tallinn, Vilnius.

VII. Commission on Tourism

The Commission on Tourism is chaired by Mr Kyrre Dahl, Kalmar.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Tourism is located in Kalmar, Sweden.

Annual meetings

The Commission had two annual meetings in the reporting period – Kalmar, November 2004 and Jurmala, September 2005. During the annual meetings, representatives of different institutions such as Interreg IIIB, Nordic Council of Ministers, Animare Tourism Project Management etc were invited to inform the participants about possibilities for project subsidies. The Commission has focused on information, education and training in tourism. The Commission developed several projects on sustainable tourism.

HOLM Pearls of the North. The project aimed at common marketing. The participants should market their destinations through common marketing material. Local development in tourism, organisational reconstructions, brochure productions, were also included. Participants: Wismar, NordWest Mecklenburg, Schwerin, Lübeck, Schleswig, Ostholstein, Kalmar, Karlskrona, Växjö, Östfold. Project budget: 1.137.562 Eur.

Baltic City Tourism. This project focused on the 4 topics: Baltic Event Calendar (internet), Baltic Tourism Academy (seminar series on how to organise an event), Baltic Point (platform for gathering of project experience) and Common Marketing Network. Participants: Kalmar, Karlskrona, Rostock, Turisme Region Syd, Gdynia, Vilnius, Tallinn. Budget: 848.000 Eur.

Baltic Welcome Centre. The main cooperation topics within this Interreg IIIB project have been divided into the following 5 work packages: International Standard, Spatial & Tourism Planning, Visitor Centre Investments, IT, Marketing & Communication. Participants: Kalmar, Växjö, Halden, Östfold, Schwerin, Turisme Region Syd. Budget: 1.500.000 Eur. Three Phare partners joined the main Baltic Welcome Centre project through PHARE program - Latvia, Lithuania (Palanga), Poland (Malbork). Total Phare budget: 345 259 Eur. Also Tacis project joined the main BWC project (North-West Russia, Kaliningrad), October 2002 – August 2004, budget 235 168 Eur.

Ancientimes. The ANCIENTIMES is an Interreg IIIB project on how to integrate culture, history, education and tourism in one concept. The project aims at establishing a basis for an authentic heritage site, and at developing Ancient Times' villages/museums into successful tourist attractions. The ambition is to set up a minimum standard to run a heritage site. The concept of "edutainment" is central within the project– offering both education in history and entertainment value. This will be realised by interactive exhibitions, historical scenarios, visitor involvement and do-it-yourself elements. Partners: Kalmar (lead partner), Cesis, Medieval Museum in Nykøbing F, Lofotr Viking Museum in Lofoten, Slav Village Passentin, Mecklenburg. Interreg IIIB budget: 1.800.000 Eur, Phare budget: 253.718 Eur.

Baltic Sea Cycling. This Interreg IIIB project aims to enhance sustainable urban mobility in the BSR by developing urban bicycle transport and combining it with other modes of transport. Bicycle transport is efficient and more environmentally compatible for the city than motorised transport modes as proved by some cities in north-west BSR. In order to elaborate urban cycling development strategies at municipal and regional scale, a network among the participating cities will be established involving actors from governmental, public, private and NGO sectors. 22 participating cities, Örebro as lead partner. Project budget: 2.300.000 Eur.

VIII. Commission on Transportation

The Commission on Transportation is chaired by Mrs Lisa Sundell, Göteborg.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission on Transportation is located in Göteborg, Sweden.

The work of the Commission on Transportation has focused on three areas in order to encourage sustainable transport solutions: public transport - how to develop the management of public transport systems; cycling - to learn why and how to improve the conditions of cyclists and pedestrians; mobility

management - exchange of information on mobility management tools to develop efficient sustainable transport habits.

In August 2003 a questionnaire was sent out to all member cities which were asked to indicate what subjects they are interested in and what could be topics for the commission to work with. The result was the forming of a working group of initially 6 cities: Göteborg, Tartu, Gdynia, Örebro, Norrköping and Nyköping. The group has during the period met three times in Göteborg, on 6 February 2004, 11 June 2004 and 6 September 2004. The TransCom network is continuously growing and today contains 47 cities from 9 different countries.

An application to Interreg III B was submitted together with the EnvCom. The application has been approved and the project will run between July 2005 and December 2007. BUSTRIP – Baltic Urban Sustainable TRansport and Implementation Planning is the name of the project. EnvCom is the lead partner and TransCom is in the steering group. The aim of the project is to develop and improve Sustainable Urban Transport Plans in partner cities and to start implementation of pilot projects.

During autumn-04/spring-05 the search for a new chair for the TransCom begun. A letter was sent out to all UBC cities explaining the possibility to take over the chairmanship. A number of applications have been received and the new chair will be elected at the annual meeting 2005.

European Transport Projects seminar in Kaunas, 10-11 June 2004

55 participants from 22 cities in the BSR participated in the conference. Since the Baltic countries just entered the EU, it was the right time to discuss funding possibilities in the sustainable transport field. Speakers from EC and SALA gave an insight on priorities of EU funding programs. Göteborg, Tallinn, Malmö, Gdynia and Kaunas showed practical examples and shared their experiences from different types of European projects. At the annual meeting on 11 June the participants discussed how the commission should work, how to use the network efficiently, future topics for seminars etc.

Bicycle workshop in Örebro 6–7 September 2004

In September 2004, 18 persons from Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Sweden gathered in Örebro to participate in a bicycle workshop. The seminar started with presentation of Örebro as a “Bicycle friendly city”. The National Road Administration presented a project where a 4 km bicycle lane was built, as example of how to build a lane in the city centre, along busy streets and housing areas. The workshop also dealt with such issues as: bicycle network, single/double bicycle lanes, safety, security, road signing, information, marketing, behaviour influencing etc. Moreover the whole group was taken on a bicycle tour around Örebro.

IX. Commission on Urban Planning

The Commission on Urban Planning is chaired by Jussi Kautto, Helsinki and Lars Brattberg, Malmö.

The main activity of the Commission on Urban Planning was the ABC - Alliance of Baltic Cities - project. The project started in March 2003 and lasts for three years. The project engages 27 UBC cities from 7 countries in the BSR. ABC project is financed by Interreg III B. The Polish partners have financial support from PHARE. Lead party is the City of Malmö with architect Lars Brattberg as project leader. The project engages city planners and architects working in municipalities. The project includes two common seminars per year. There were four seminars in the reporting period.

The participants work three days at every seminar with these main issues: learning the local circumstances in the host city, planning legislation in that country; lectures on burning planning questions of today; workshops on how to solve local planning problems; workshops on: developed urban management, cities as regional engines, renewal of city districts. The project aims to result in: networking and exchange of best practice between colleagues; proposals on how to deal with city planning problems; Small Scale Investment proposals.

The **Vaasa** seminar was held in October 2003. The main theme was Cities as Regional Engines - Urban design and regional development. There were 46 participants from 22 cities. The **Liepāja** seminar was held in April 2004. The main theme was Renewal of City Districts. Reuse of coastal and central residential areas towards sustainability. There were over 50 participants from 24 cities.

The **Viljandi** seminar was held in September 2004. The main theme was “Culture and Nature meet the Built Environment”. In three workshops proposals were worked out for solutions and small investments on the themes: Connecting the historical town with the centre; Development of lakeside area of Viljandi; Wooden ecological housing- restoring and constructing new. The seminar had over 40 participants, from about 25 cities.

45 city planners from 27 cities in 8 countries met in April 2005 in **Gdynia**, for the 5th seminar of the ABC-project. The seminar theme was “Cities as regional engines - Improving the city core”. After welcome greetings from the Mayor of Gdynia, Wojciech Szczurek and UBC Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki the first day focused on presenting information about Gdynia and the Tri-city region. The second day focused on three workshops. One group studied how to redevelop a harbour area close to the center. Another group worked with how to revitalise a number of inner city housing quarters. The third group worked with how to make best use of a green corridor near the city hall.

The last ABC seminar will be held in **Malmö** in October 2005. The Commission intends to continue the project after 2005. The Commission submits a new project proposal to Interreg III B - Baltic Academy of City Planning. The new project will use the methods successfully worked out during the ABC project. Almost 30 cities from 8 BSR countries have stated interest of participating in the new project.

UBC Women’s Network

The UBC Women’s Network is chaired by Ms Ulla Lundqvist, Femina Aboensis, Turku.

At the GC in Klaipėda 2003 UBC Women’s Network (WN) decided to consolidate the network and to increase the knowledge about the situation of women in Europe. The Network adopted the following important areas to follow up: violence against women and trafficking, women’s entrepreneurship and women’s situation on European labour market.

In 2004 WN sent inquiry to the member cities to collect information on responsible persons appointed by the city-administrations to deal with gender equality issues. The Network also asked for information about yearly budgets and about women’s organisations in the cities. The answers indicated that member cities vary considerably in the degree of human and material resources appointed to gender equality issues. Especially in the “new” EU member states many municipalities reported that nothing (visible) has been done. But within UBC we also can find cities that have used resources to develop good practices. In 2005 a new inquiry was sent asking for the representation of women/men in municipal councils and city administration.

WN has discussed the equality issues of UBC organisation pointing out the importance of just and open appointment procedures. WN is of the opinion that today UBC is much male-dominated organisation. The Network supports the female candidate for the UBC Vice-President.

Participation in conferences

The coordinator took part in the committees preparing the 10th Anniversary Seminar of the Nordic Forum in Turku 12-13.8.2004. WN was invited to participate in the Forum. The Network annual meeting was held in Turku on 14.8.2004.

In 2005 the coordinator has participated in the international planning committee of the 4th Conference WoMen and Democracy. This Conference organized by St. Petersburg Social and Economic Institute, City of St. Petersburg and the Nordic Council of Ministers takes place on 6-9.10.2005 and expects to gather over 600 participants from all Baltic Sea countries. UBC as an organization participating in the planning has been given the benefit to invite 20 participants from the WN.

Projects

LIBRA 2003 project was coordinated by the City of Barcelona. The project gathered municipalities and regions from Italy, Hungary, England, Finland, Spain and networks - UBC WN through Femina Aboensis, Arco Latino, Urb-AI, Partenalina. The results of the project were spread to the Network. Since the seminar in Turku in 2004 the Network is planning a project. As was the case in LIBRA it would become a project for municipalities, regions and networks. The Project would be coordinated by Femina Aboensis with WN as one partner.

In 2005 the coordinator was invited together with gender equality officials from Poland, Estonia and Nordic Countries to the seminar on Gender Mainstreaming in St.Petersburg 27.5.2005. The next day a discussion on the prospects of gender equality cooperation around the Baltic Sea took place.

The latest Women's Network annual meeting was held in Narva on 26.8.2005.

Network on Youth Issues

The UBC Network on Youth Issues is led by the City of Kalmar.

11-12 February 2004, Kalmar

The first meeting of the Working Group. Participants received background of UBC and had an opportunity to get to know each other. The WG decided to work towards a Youth Conference in 2005.

17-18 May 2004, Kolding

The meeting discussed:

- to produce a booklet with chronicles written by young people around the Baltic Sea.
- possibilities of funding sources for the Youth Conference in 2005
- how to "watch over" the UBC commissions and to increase the youth perspective in their work; it was decided that each participant within the WG shall monitor the work of different commission.

14-15 October 2004, Riga

At the meeting in Riga the members of the Network on Youth Issues mostly discussed the network homepage and the Baltic Youth Conference Vilnius 2005. "Youth participation and influence on a local level" was chosen to be the main topic of the conference.

4-6 February 2005, Rostock

It was agreed that Youth Conference 2005 should produce a catalogue of requests and demands, which will be sent to the local and national authorities and other supporters. The catalogue shall act as documentation from the conference. A project group responsible for the conference preparation was created. A new project, the Urban Youth Project was also discussed. The Network decided to ask every member city to make an analysis on why young people have so little influence in their city, this analysis will be the basis for future activities of the network.

10-12 June 2005, Kurressaare

In Kurressaare it was decided to call the Vilnius conference "Young and Active in the Baltic Sea Region". The Network decided to employ a project administrator who will work full time with planning and evaluating the conference. The Swedish Board for Youth Affairs approved the application from Kalmar and provided approx. 40.000 € for that purpose. The meeting agreed there will be 4-5 workshops during Vilnius conference namely: youth influence at school and university, youth influence in the city, priorities in life, demographic change, intercultural learning.

Agenda 21 Action Program

The UBC Statute and Strategy define sustainable development, with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity, as one of strategic objectives of the UBC. For the implementation of this objective, the General Conference in Klaipėda 2003, adopted an action programme, the UBC Agenda 21 Action Programme 2004-2009 – Roadmap for Sustainable Baltic Cities. This action programme is being implemented under the supervision of the Executive Board. The

programme activities target five thematic focus areas: Good governance and sustainable urban management; Sustainable use of energy and resources; Good living environment and nature protection; Sustainable economy and transport; Social integration and health. The programme has reached the volume of 10 Million Euro. The programme is coordinated by the Commission on Environment secretariat. More information about the programme is included in the EnvCom bi-annual report.

UBC website and e-news

The Secretariat has further developed the UBC website www.ubc.net which provides information on UBC structure, aims and activities. The main links on the website are: Organisation, Member Cities, Commissions & Networks, Events Calendar, Documentation Centre, UBC Bulletin, General Conference, Funding sources, Statements, Twin Cities, Photo & Art Gallery, Members [www](http://www.ubc.net) sites, Contact list, Baltic & European organisations. The Secretariat also provides electronic news to the member cities about ongoing UBC projects, meetings and activities as well as on the EU related matters.

Baltic Cities Bulletin

The Baltic Cities Bulletin published by the UBC Secretariat provides information about the work of the Union and news from the member cities. Moreover an emphasis is put on covering some specific fields of general interest, which are presented as main themes of each issue. The bulletin is printed in 5500 copies and sent out to over 200 Baltic cities as well as to the number of Baltic and European organisations and institutions, including the EU. The bulletin is available on the internet at <http://www.ubc.net/bulletin/bulletin.html>

In the years 2003-2005 the following issues have been published: BCB1/03 “Cities Without Limits”, BCB2/03 “The Baltic Sea Wave – Business Development in the New Europe”, BCB1/04 “EU Enlargement in the Baltic Sea Region”, BCB2/04 “Education through Sport”, BCB1/05 “Logistic Corridors in the Baltic Sea Region”.

Per Bødker Andersen
President

Paweł Żaboklicki
Secretary General