



UBC e-News

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Info

• 43rd Executive Board meeting

The 43rd meeting of the Executive Board was held on the 11th June in Chojnice, Poland, upon the invitation of Arseniusz Finster, Mayor of Chojnice. Mr Finster made a presentation introducing his city.

Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, informed about the status of preparations to the VIII General Conference to be held in Turku. As regards the keynote speakers, Lohikoski informed that following persons have been approached and invited, among others:

- Matti Vanhanen, Prime Minister of Finland,
 - Andrus Ansip, Prime Minister of Estonia, the former Mayor of Tartu,
 - Polish Commissioner Danuta Huebner, but unfortunately she is not in a position to come (there will be probably a representative from the Cabinet of Mrs Huebner or a senior representative of the European Commission.).
 - Joan Clos i Matheu, the Mayor of Barcelona
- Parallelly to the General Conference, Christian Ramberg, chair of UBC Task Force on Logistic, is preparing the meeting on the Motorways of the Seas and the logistic issues. Additionally, in connection with the GC, there will be a coordination meeting of the Baltic Sea organisations, and the CBSS Senior Officials meeting.

The Board decided to recommend the General Conference the candidates to the Presidium:

1. Per Boedker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding – candidate for President
2. Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umea – candidate for Vice-President

3. Mikko Pukkinen, forthcoming Mayor of Turku - candidate for Vice-President

The candidature for the remaining Vice-President has not been submitted yet. The meeting authorised the Board members from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia to check whether women vice-mayors in their countries would be interested to candidate for the UBC Vice-President.

The Board decided to recommend the General Conference the proposal for the membership fees in 2006-2007. The Board also maintained its support to Parnu's proposal to host the IX GC in 2007.

Concerning the issue of the maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region, the Board members informed they contacted respective PM's cabinets and ministries and urged them to take up this issue during negotiations on new cohesion policy 2007-2013. The Board concluded that the lobbying on this issue must be continued

The Working Group on UBC future development presented some of the ideas and recommendations. Among others there were:

- mini-seminars on the issues being of particular interest for the host city. arranged during the Executive Board meetings
- evaluation of the present system of the Commissions
- thematic conferences in the years where there is no GC (if there is an interest in the cities)
- appointing one of the senior UBC officials as the policy officer. The person should be monitoring the European policies important for

the UBC and should work under President in close cooperation with the secretariat.

- working out a system for exchange of civil servants, their regular professional meetings
- ensuring a more effective presence in Brussels utilising the existing representations of UBC cities there, e.g. Stockholm Office in Brussels

The participants of the Board meeting discussed those proposals and made new ones. The Board authorised the WG to continue its important tasks.

Maciej Lisicki informed about the Working meeting of Baltic Sea organisations: CPMR, BSSSC, UBC, B7, BDF in Malmoe, on 25 May. The meeting discussed issues of common interest, inter alia the future EU Cohesion Policy. BSSSC presented their own paper on Cohesion Policy and proposed the others to support. After discussion the UBC Board concluded that the best solution would be to produce one joint paper instead of two similar papers drafted separately by BSSSC and UBC. The Board took also note of the latest conferences attended by UBC representatives and the latest & forthcoming meetings of the Commissions & Networks.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be held in Turku in connection with the General Conference.

Information about the Board meeting in Chojnice has been extracted from the minutes of the meeting written by Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General. The minutes from the meeting can be found at:

<http://www.ubc.net/today/43rd-executive.html>



From UBC Commissions and Networks

- **Commission on Business Cooperation**

The meeting, chaired by the Chairman Mart Repnau, Business Development Manager of Tallinn City Enterprise Boar, was held at several places. Representatives from 16 cities (Cesis, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Kolding, Naestved, Narva, Panevežys, Šiauliai, Tallinn, Tampere, Tartu, Turku, Vaasa, Viljandi, Vordingborg, Växjö) participated. The Chairman Mart Repnau shortly presented to the participants the main objective of the Meeting – "to meet, to learn, to socialise" – giving a good start for a productive work of the day. The further presentations were made on the following topics:

- Estonia's perspectives in EU (economy, tax system, foreign trade, infrastructures)
- "Dream City for Every Businessman", Tallinn City Branding
- How to Promote Entrepreneurship in the City – The Tallinn Entrepreneurship Day
- Estonia – Innovative IT solutions (e-services, m-services, ID-ticket)

- Development of e-services in the city

During the session also other matters were presented:

- From companies to the citizens, penetration of the IT services into the Healthcare Field (doc@HOME concept) and advantages/disadvantages of the Estonian Market.
- TEHNOPOL – Tallinn Technology Park in the process.

After the sessions participants visited the Mustamäe Business Incubator. On the second day cities from new EU member states (Tallinn, Kaunas, Šiauliai) shared their basic 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 (Klaipėda). Cities from older EU member states made some practical advises and also made presentations about new concepts of business incubators (Kolding), e-services (Tampere) and how to make a City

attractive for International Events (Turku). There were different opinions concerning the topics of the future meetings that were basically connected with a different experience of the states of living in EU. These discussions have influenced other discussions about changing the structure of the Commission. It was decided that during the next year members of the Commission will have to decide if it is sensible to make an appropriate restructuring.

Information about the meeting has been extracted from the report of the meeting written by Thomas Darandovas, Secretary of the Commission.

The whole report can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/commissions/urbanplanning.html>

- Commission on Environment

Meeting of the Commission

On 20-21 June in Sopot there was a meeting of the Commission on Environment. Ca. 40 participants took part in this meeting. On the first day Risto Veivo, Head of the Secretariat, presented EnvCom projects and UBC Agenda 21 Action programme update. The Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005 was then introduced by Anna Granberg. Kyösti Lempa presented UBC Sustainable Development Survey. Later there were Best Practice presentations from cities of Gdynia, Aalborg, Umea and Sopot. Presentations were made on such topics: transport, energy, good living environment, nature protection. Marek Maciejowski, Head of the Baltic 21 Unit, introduced Baltic 21 Lighthouse Projects of the Baltic Sea Region. It is a new action line of Baltic 21, which is developed in accordance with the new Baltic 21 Strategy Guidelines adopted last year. The aim is to develop and implement a set of region-wide projects "designed to demonstrate sustainable development in action".

The second day began with the excursion in Sopot, and the participants had a chance to see the latest ecological solutions in the city of

Sopot: a water management system, air pollution control station, bio-filter and a SPA-building with a geothermal pump and solar system. Later there was a discussion on the EU Thematic Strategy for the Urban Environment, after which Mikko Jokinen presented the latest developments in EU environmental legislation. After that, during the thematic workshops, the participants tried to answer the questions: "What should cities do together to solve environmental problems in the local level? Which challenges are the most crucial ones?"

Participants prepared plans/projects with focus on challenges within two topics: transport/energy and good living environment/nature protection.

Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005

Dear UBC cities,

The Union of the Baltic Cities has the honour to invite your city to present a good practice in the field of Transport and Mobility for the Best Environmental Practice in Baltic Cities Award 2005. One of the great challenges that cities are facing is the creation of a sustainable transport and mobility system in the city. A well-functioning environmentally friendly urban transport system is the basis for a prosperous city with a good living environment. There are numerous of good practice with good examples of this in our member cities. Take this opportunity to put your city's good practice in the limelight.

Let your good practice serve as a role model for others! You can find at:

http://www.ubc.net/commissions/Projects/Environmental_award/Award_2005.htm

the announcement together with the application form. In case you would like to know more please contact Project Co-ordinator Anna Granberg anna.granberg@turku.fi

Deadline for applications is 15 August 2005!

Risto Veivo

- Commission on Urban Planning

Dear colleagues and friends! At: <http://www.ubc.net/commissions/urbanplanning.html> you will find the following documents:

- Call for participation in an Interreg IIIB project - Baltic Academy of Planners
- A description of a new InterregIIIB Project
- Draft June 2005 - BSR Neighbourhood Programme - Headlines in the coming Application Form
- Financial Proposal
- Participation List

The project is a free-standing and new project, but it builds on the experiences and results from the UBC Urban Planning Commission's ongoing ABC Project - Alliance of Baltic Cities. The new project, Baltic Academy of Planners, has been proposed and discussed some time among the participants of the ABC-project. It has from those partner cities met a great interest and received a number of positive responses for participation. There are also a number of new cities who have declared their interest of participating in the new project. Time has now come to confirm the shown interests of participating or, for new partners, to state their interest of participation. So please read the letter "Call for participation" carefully, and respond to it as soon as possible. The time for making an Interreg IIIB application is very short. The call should therefore be answered by August 1st.

Lars Brattberg

- UBC Women's Network

Dear colleagues,

Please mark the dates of the forthcoming event: IV. International Conference "Women and Democracy" 6.10.05 – 8.10.05 in St. Petersburg. The 2nd Meeting of the Members of international Organizing Committee took place in Smolny on 25.05.05 followed by a high level gender mainstreaming seminar and a discussion on the prospect of gender equality co-operation around the Baltic Sea in the

future, chaired by vice-governor of Saint-Petersburg Lyudmila A. Kostkina. The conference "Women and Democracy" is to become the final one in the row of conferences "Women and Democracy" and "Women of the Baltic Region States". In the future it is planned to organize conferences on a smaller scale focusing on specific issues regarding the development of the policy of gender equality. Registration forms are to be sent out in due time but you are welcome to let me know of your interest even before that. As before every country has a quota. (30). We are expecting delegations from 12 countries. UBC Women's Network has a quota of 20 participants.

More information can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/6-8-10-2005/index.htm>

Ulla Lundqvist

- Task Force on Logistics

The second meeting of the UBC Logistics Task Force was held on 26-27 May 2005 in Turku, upon the invitation of Christian Ramberg, Managing Director of the Port of Turku, Chairman of the Task Force. He presented the Logistics Task Force mission and summarised the tasks of the Logistics Task Force and the preliminary timetable for the preparation of the new logistics policy, as well as the current situation of the preparation of the new policy. So far, a questionnaire highlighting the most important issues in maritime logistics in the Baltic Sea area has been carried out and outlines prepared of the Baltic Sea organisations and projects in the area working on transport issues. For the meeting, a list of suggested Expert Group members was drafted, as well as a preliminary programme for the maritime logistics segment of the UBC General Conference Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda. Later the questionnaire results were reviewed and the status of the questionnaire was discussed. It was noted that the questionnaire results should not be over-

emphasised in the upcoming expert group discussions, and a separate small-scale inquiry should be made focusing on the shipping business in the Baltic Sea area. Later the preparation of the policy paper and the maritime logistics segment of the Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda conference were discussed. It was concluded that the policy should be a lobbying tool UBC could use in promoting the interests of the Baltic cities in the EU. It was decided that the Expert Groups would meet in Turku on 22 August 2005.

Information about the meeting has been extracted from the report of the meeting written by Christian Ramberg, Chairman of the Task Force. The report can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/26-27-05-2005/minutes.doc>

Other

- **Kaunas Festival**

We would like to invite you to our traditional international folk-dance festival "ŠOKI TRYPKI-2005", which will gather the groups of folk dances, music and songs from Kaunas twin towns. The festival will take place on September 21 to 25, 2005. We could receive and accommodate a group of 35-40 people aging from 20 to 50 years. There will be 3 concerts. Each group will show a program of 20 minutes. Apart from the concerts we will organize an evening party and excursions around Lithuania. You would only have to find your own transport. We kindly ask you to send us as soon as possible the details of appropriate groups.

Loreta Raudinikiene
E-mail: lloretano@one.lt

- **Baltic Challenge Award**

Leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators and producers of ICT products and services from both public and private sectors are invited to showcase solutions improving the working

routines in public administrations, educational institutions, businesses and among citizens. The Baltic Challenge is open for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions and applications facilitating daily life for employees, citizens and customers - both at work and in private. The aim is to create a strong and united ICT market in the Baltic Sea Region, built on co-operation, partnership and exchange of knowledge. In addition, a joint regional market will increase the global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region. Participating projects can compete in ten categories: Infrastructure & Access, Business Development, Culture, Tourism, Online Security, Education, Governance & Administration, Health, Emergency Response & Prevention, and Environment. The Baltic Challenge Award 2005-2006 invites applicants from all Baltic Sea countries - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden - including Belarus, Norway and Ukraine. The online application form is open at www.balticchallenge.net until December 31, 2005. For more information, please contact: Maria Hinas, email: maria.hinas@ab.lst.se

- **Yach Film Festival**

Yach Film Festival; Polish national music video festival will be organized for the 14th time in the beginning of October 2005. As it became a tradition several years ago, besides Polish music videos, there will be an international section in the festival's programme. Five years ago we have started the Amber Eye project, the contest of music videos from Scandinavian and Baltic Countries. First editions went very successfully, more than 40 works were presented every year and the best chosen by professional, international jury. The winner obtained Amber Yach award as well as a money award. Starting from the year before, we decided to concentrate on animation. To get more information about the festival, please contact Magda Kunicka-Paszkiewicz, e-mail: burszynoweoko@op.pl

OECD urges Europe to face up to globalisation

Employment rates and economic growth are set to remain sluggish in the eurozone over the next two years but protectionism is not the answer to the challenges of globalisation, according to a major new study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published on 28 June. The report predicts that 14.8 million people will be out of a job in the EU's 15 original member states by 2006, compared to 15.1 million in 2005, with the average jobless rate creeping down from 8.2 percent to 8.0 percent over the same period. At the same time, the region's economy will grow by 2.1 percent in 2006 compared to just 1.4 percent this year. Looking at specific countries, the report shows that between 8 and 10 percent of people are set to stay out of work in France, Germany, Italy and Spain in the near future, while France, Germany and Italy are set to post the lowest economic growth at just 1.1-2.0 percent. The study linked the poor outlook for jobs in the OECD region, which also includes other EU countries such as the UK and Poland as well as the US, Japan and Australia, to the challenges of globalisation and EU enlargement as well as high oil costs. Labour costs in India and China are up to 20 times lower than in the eurozone, and up to four times lower in new member states such as the Czech Republic, with the new economy endangering workers and causing downward wage pressure in both the manufacturing and service-related sectors. "The spectre of job losses is not confined mainly to blue-collar workers but could also hit many white collar workers too", the OECD's director for employment John Martin said in a statement accompanying the findings. But Mr Martin urged developed nations to embrace the new global economy. "Only a fraction of job losses recorded in OECD countries is likely to be directly attributable to trade and investment liberalisation", the director noted. "Past experience also shows that protectionist policies are a blind alley: countries that have been more open to trade have also tended to

experience higher economic growth than less open economies", he added. The Paris-based OECD's conclusions seem to dovetail with the current debate on EU financing and Europe's internal market. In recent weeks, France has argued that the EU should maintain high levels of subsidies to farm workers and that old member states should be able to protect themselves from an influx of cheap service providers from eastern Europe. On the other side, the UK has championed the so-called 'Atlanticist' or 'Anglo-Saxon' view that more EU cash should be spent on research and development. The most startling OECD figures came out of eastern Europe with countries such as Poland struggling with high jobless rates but racing to catch up with the EU 15. Unemployment will fall from 18.2 percent to 17.3 percent in Poland next year, while the country's economy will grow 4.5 percent the study predicts. Slovakia will have the highest unemployment out of the whole OECD zone on 17.5 percent as well as the fastest economic growth in the EU with 5.7 percent.

Source: EUobserver

Regions in the EU periphery do best

For centuries the idea was promoted that growth lay at the heart of Europe. The vision was even painted in EU colours and branded the 'blue banana' stretching from London to Vienna – via Amsterdam, Munich, Zurich, Milan and Paris. But times are changing. According to new research from BAK Basel Economics, regions in the EU periphery are now doing best, reports Le Figaro. "With annual growth at an average of 2 percent between 2000 and 2004, the UK, Ireland, Spain, the Scandinavian countries, and central and eastern Europe are the driving motors of Europe. All these regions have emerged successfully from the recession at the beginning of the millennium", says managing director and chief economist of BAK Basel Economics Christoph Koellreuter. Portugal and Luxembourg are the only exceptions to this pattern, according to the study. Portugal, situated on the very South-

Eastern edge of Europe has not prospered economically in the past couple of years, while Luxembourg, mainly due to big multinational pharmaceutical companies, has done well. Low taxes are of major importance in attracting international investments, the researchers point out. BAK Basel Economics is an economic research institute founded in 1980 as a spin-off of Basel University.

Source: EUobserver

EU men earn 20 percent more than women

EU men are earning on average a 20 percent higher salary than women, according to a Manpower Study made in cooperation with Barcelona university. The study puts the discrepancy down to women being discriminated against at the beginning of their careers and having less opportunity to secure a promotion afterwards. The gap is the widest in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK - between 26 and 23 percent - while in Spain, Portugal and Ireland the difference is around 20 percent. The fact that 20 percent of EU women work on a part-time basis while only 1 percent of men do so has also tilted the average income calculations. The study is based on 2001 data, which are the latest available. According to recent findings from the EU's own statistical agency, Eurostat, EU women earn 25 percent less than men.

Source: EUobserver

EU driving licence blocked

Luxembourg's hopes of securing an agreement on European - wide driving licences have been scuppered after a minority of national governments rejected the proposals. Europe's ministers could not agree at meeting on 27 June - the last transport council under the Luxembourg EU presidency - on plans that would replace an existing 110 types of licence different certificates with a pan-European version. Germany led a blocking minority including France, Austria, Poland and Denmark who all objected to provisions in the plans

which would make drivers hand in their current licences. "Germany felt that people are still very attached to their national licenses," said one EU source. "And many countries felt it was premature to exchange all existing licences - they felt it was not something the public would agree to." Securing a deal will now fall to the forthcoming UK EU presidency, due to take office on Friday July 1, with negotiations scheduled to re-start after the German elections. Other items on the agenda included proposals for EU wide air traffic controllers licence - plans to harmonise qualifications for air traffic controllers, enabling workers to move throughout the EU with a mutually recognised licence. The plans were waived through by ministers, which have already been given the green light by the European Parliament.

Source: EUpolitix

Energy in Central Europe: How sustainable?

A seminar organised by EurActiv in the European Parliament on 30 June has taken a look at the energy situation of the ten countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004. EurActiv provides an overview of a complex situation. EU accession negotiations have been a major driver for change in the energy sector in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs). The countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004 have embarked on a long and painful restructuring process, converting or closing old soviet-style energy plants to meet the strict economic and environmental standards of the EU internal energy market - and incorporate thousands of pages of EU legislation into national law. This included the setting up of a regulatory body for the gas and electricity market and a nuclear safety authority. In terms of energy-efficiency - the Commission's current priority - new member states are currently far behind the EU-15. According to Eurostat figures for the year 2001, it took about four times more tons of oil equivalent (Toe) to produce a GNP of one million Euro (Meur) in the EU-10 than it did in

the EU-15. According to the Commission's recent Energy Efficiency Green Paper, reducing energy consumption would improve the sustainability of the EU's energy sector by improving competitiveness and security of supply as well as reducing Europe's dependency on imports while contributing to meet the Kyoto Protocol target to curb greenhouse gas emissions (EurActiv, 23 June 2005). Oliver Schaefer, Policy Advisor at the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) says public awareness about renewable energies in the EU-10 countries is relatively low. "One indicator is that the Green Party is only represented in the Parliament of Latvia. Another indicator is the relatively low number of persons acting in environment organisations," Schaefer points out. A report by the World Wide Fund (WWF) in September 2004 pointed to the enormous potential for reducing its energy consumption in the EU-10 (EurActiv, 29 Sept. 2004). However, it pointed out that many barriers prevented this from happening. Analysing the energy sectors of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, the study indicates that enlargement negotiations with new member states focused mainly on market liberalisation and new investment in infrastructure, with insufficient attention given to the opportunities to reduce inefficient use of energy.

Source: EurActiv

Britain takes over the EU's chair

The British presidency of the EU started on Friday (1 July) in an atmosphere of high expectation following Tony Blair's strong calls in recent days for reform of the bloc. This expectation will be coupled by a general curiosity to see how London handles being the negotiator primarily for Europe rather than for its national interests, given its on-off relationship with Brussels. Mr Blair's ambitious reform rhetoric has in part helped the British prime minister stem the negative criticism following the collapse of an EU summit two weeks ago, largely due to London intransigence

over its annual rebate. The whole debacle sparked a debate about Europe is just a free trade zone or about more political integration - giving Mr Blair his platform to launch his presidency. But while there is general agreement that change is needed to make Europe more efficient, sceptics argue that the duration of one presidency - six months - will not produce many miracles. And to push forward the most urgent issues on the table - such as the future EU budget or controversial internal market laws, Downing Street will need to work on its allies in the other European capitals.

EU budget first. To get some of his traditional supporters among the new member states from central and eastern Europe back on his side, Mr Blair will have to prove his willingness to move ahead with the budgetary talks. These countries are set to be most affected by the delay in agreement on the next EU budget. In a bid to convince his partners of his good will, the British leader has been suggesting that his country's refund from the common European coffers can go - as long as it is accompanied with the reform of the bloc's agricultural policy (CAP). Green light for business. Beside the budgetary negotiations, the British presidency wants to press ahead with a number of important laws. Among them, the regulation of chemicals, the directive liberalising services and financial sector, and the working time directive are likely to spark the hottest debates. At the same time, London wants to launch a review of the existing legislation, ensuring that it is not too burdensome for business. Enlargement. Britain will also have its work cut out for it on enlargement issues. It strongly favours further enlargement of the bloc, also to Turkey, due to open EU negotiations on 3 October. However, it will have to contend with opposition in some member states that want to make it more difficult for Ankara to start the talks. Its big test will be securing agreement among member state negotiating mandate for Turkey.

Source: EUobserver