



UBC e-News

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VIII UBC General Conference

Over 270 participants from 67 UBC member cities, and guests from other European organisations and institutions took part in the VIII UBC General Conference, which was held in Turku on 29.09 – 2.10. The first two days of the conference were devoted to the main theme "Towards a New Baltic Sea Agenda". The last day was devoted to the internal matters of the Union - meetings of the Commissions and Networks and the General Assembly.

In connection with the UBC General Conference there was held the meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Committee of Senior Officials and consultation meeting of Baltic organisations - CBSS, CPMR, BSSSC, B7, UBC.

Speakers

The Conference was opened by Mr Armas Lahoniitty, Mayor of Turku, and Mr Per Bødker Andersen, President of UBC.

A greeting to the Conference from the Prime Minister of Finland Mr Matti Vanhanen was delivered by Mr Pertti Paasio, Chairman of Turku City Council. The address from the Prime Minister of Estonia, Mr Andrus Ansip was delivered by Ms Laine Jänes, Mayor of Tartu.

UBC also invited honourable Speakers:

- Ambassador Kornelius Sigmundsson, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials of CBSS
- Mr Stephen Kabuye, Chairman of the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Cooperation

- Mr Bernard Hoarau, Principal Programme Coordinator, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- Mr Pavel Telicka, European Coordinator for Rail Baltica, First Czech Commissioner
- Ms Anna Zigure, Author, former Latvian Ambassador in Finland
- Ms Elisabeth Helander, Director, European Commission, DG Regional Policy
- Mr Kurt Bodewig, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Deutscher Bundestag
- Mr Markku Mylly, Director General, Finnish Maritime Administration
- Mr Carl Cederschiöld, Mayor Emeritus, City of Stockholm
- Mr Viktor Surikov, Mayor of Kronstadt
- Mr Zbigniew Rykowski, Chairman of Committee on Spatial Development of VASAB
- Mr Emilio D'Alessio, Vice-Mayor of the City of Ancona, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities
- Mr Mikko Rönholm, Development Manager, Fortum Heat Corporation
- Mr Vegard Hölaas, Director for International Affairs, Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

Conference forums

During the conference six forums were held:

1. Maritime Logistics Corridors in the BSR
2. Promoting Human Contacts in the BSR
3. BSR Cities and the EU Budget Framework
4. BSR Cities and the New Neighbourhood Policies
5. Active and Attractive City: physical

activity promotes wellbeing
6. LVRLAC - UBC Cooperation Forum

15 Baltic ports and port cities signed the "Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Port and Maritime Policy for the Baltic Sea Region". General Conference endorsed the Memorandum.

General Assembly

In the morning the Chairmen had separate meetings of their Commissions.

Later during the General Assembly the Reports 2003–2005 and Action Plans 2005–2007 from the Commissions were delivered by the Chairmen / Board members of the Commissions and Networks.

Elections

The UBC elected the new Presidium for the years 2005–2007:

- Mr Per Bødker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding, as President of the Union
- Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umea, as first Vice-President of the Union
- Mr Aleksí Randell, Chairman of City Board, Turku, as Vice-President of the Union
- Ms Laine Jänes, Mayor of Tartu, as Vice-President of the Union

UBC also elected the new Executive Board for the years 2005–2007:

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

Other decisions

- UBC adopted the Conference Resolution
- UBC approved the Report on UBC Activities October 2003 – September 2005.
- UBC approved the membership fee system for 2006–2007.
- UBC elected the new members of the Board of Audit:

-Ms Ewa Back, Mayor of Sundsvall
-Ms Marta Chelkowska, Vice-Mayor of Łeba

-Ms Silvia Löbner, Head of Audit Department, Wismar
UBC decided to held the next General Conference in Pärnu, in 2007.

City of Kaunas was granted The UBC Best Environmental Practise in Baltic Cities Award 2005 for the "Modernisation of the public transport network in Kaunas City".



Other info

- In October UBC is represented in the following conferences:
 - 7th Baltic Development Forum Summit, Stockholm, 16–18 October by Mrs Lillian Westerberg and Mr Mikko Lohikoski, UBC Executive Board members.
 - 13th BSSSC annual conference, Szczecin, 20–22 October by Mrs Anna Nowak, Vice-Mayor of Szczecin
- Seminar of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning, in the framework of the ABC project was held in Malmö on 6–9 October.
- Baltic Sea Youth Conference, prepared by the UBC Commission on Youth Affairs, was held in Vilnius on 13–16 October.
- UBC Commission on Transportation will have a meeting in Gdynia on 20–21 October.
- The Commission on Tourism changed the lead city from Kalmar to Koszalin. The new Chairman is Mr Ryszard Zdrojewski.
- UBC Women's Network changed the name for the UBC Gender Equality Network, and the Network on Youth Issues became the

UBC Commission on Youth Issues. The changes had been approved by the General Conference.

From UBC Commissions

- Commission on Environment

Signing the Memorandum of Understanding

Dear UBC Contact Person,

The Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Port and Maritime Policy for the Baltic Sea Region was signed by 15 major Baltic ports and port cities on the 30th of September at the VIII UBC General Conference in Turku, Finland. On the same occasion, the UBC unanimously endorsed the Memorandum.

This Memorandum of Understanding constitutes an important step forward in creating harmonised environmental policies and practices for all ports at the Baltic Sea Region. It is also a very important European and Global pilot initiative. The basic intention is to extend the environmental and sustainability policies of the 21st Century into maritime transport.

Please, note that *all Baltic ports, port cities, shipping companies and stakeholder organisations are now welcomed to sign the Baltic Memorandum*. Of UBC members Lübeck, Stockholm, Helsinki, Turku, Malmö, Pori, Mariehamn, Kolding, Rostock, and Szczecin-Swinousje have already signed and several others have inquired of possibilities to do so. More information, the full memorandum text, signing instructions and forms are available at the NewHansa for Sustainable Ports and Cities website: <http://www.newhansa.net>

Please, do consider within your city (and port) the option of entering this important voluntary commitment!

Best Regards,
Risto Veivo

- Commission on Information Society

The Commission on Information Society will held its annual meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, from 26th to 28th October 2005. The topic of the meeting will be: "Contribution of the cities to the creation of the common information space of the Baltic Sea Region".

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss in more detail the role of the UBC IS COM in developing interaction in the field of information society and information technologies between the UBC member-cities and to emphasize the common priority directions of further cooperation to provide a basis for creating long-term projects in this field.

More information can be found at: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/26-28-10-2005/index.htm>

- Commission on Tourism

Dear Friends,

I am greeting you very warmly from Koszalin! I still remember with a great pleasure our meeting during the VIII General Conference in Turku. I am really glad for your support in the election of new Board of the Commission on Tourism as well as the possibility of further cooperation.

I would like to propose now the discussion about Commission's aims:

- have the untimely aims been realized?
- which practical experiences should be kept and propagate?
- which chances and threats for the BSR tourism turned up after the widening of EU?
- what aims should the CoT have now?

With very best regards,
on behalf of Mr. Ryszard Zdrojewski,

Joanna Socha
e-mail: joanna.socha@um.man.koszalin.pl

From UBC Secretariat

- Call for stories to the UBC Bulletin

Dear Members of the Union,

The Baltic Sea region entered a new era after the EU enlargement and is now perceived as the fastest developing growth area in Europe. The competition between Baltic ports and cities seems to be the driving force of the development of the whole region. It is an impulse to investments which cannot be dependent on a good will of the local authorities. They have to be aware now that attracting the investors became necessity. How do the Baltic Sea cities promote themselves to win the competition? How does the region compete with the rest of Europe?

The next issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin will be devoted to the theme: *CITIES AND COMPETITIVENESS*. The Editorial Board intends to publish interesting articles and interviews with prominent politicians and experts. We would like to present the UBC member cities views on competitiveness. Our aim is to show how the local authorities stimulate new investors, what they do to make the city competitive for the foreign and national companies. Additionally, we would like you to answer the question how to promote the city to attract more visitors. Is it worth to join the forces and co-operate with other cities within common promotional undertakings? And, last but not least, what do the Baltic cities to be attractive for their own inhabitants? As usual, apart from the main theme, we are looking forward to stories describing interesting events and a daily life of our member cities. Those articles are published in the chapter "News from Member Cities". UBC Commissions and Networks are welcome to inform about their events, meetings and projects in the chapter "UBC Today". The bulletin is distributed in 6000 copies all around the Baltic Sea Region to over 200 Baltic cities and many key organisations and institutions including the EU.

Please follow these guidelines, when submitting your story:

- Deliver the story by e-mail to: anna.dargiewicz@gdansk.gda.pl in MS WORD format, remember to kill the viruses before sending.

- Each member city may submit two articles - one related to the cover theme and one to the chapter "Cities in Action". Naturally all stories shall be sent in English.

- Each article may have max 400 words, no more than 1 page A4, font TimesNewRoman 12pt. The editorial board sometimes needs to shorten the stories in order to include more stories into the Bulletin. It is also important to include the author's name and contact numbers for possible further questions related to the story.

- Please make all efforts to include a smashing photo or a digital picture to illustrate the article (JPG format, min. 300 ppi, one e-mail - one picture, the file should not exceed 3 MB). Remember to send us also the code of arms of your city, if you have not sent it earlier.

- The deadline for stories to the Bulletin is 24.10.2005; please respect this timetable as we are unable to print stories received after this deadline.

All material should be sent directly to the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk. If you have interesting issues to report, please do not hesitate to send them.

Paweł Żaboklicki
UBC Secretary General

From UBC Cities

- *City of Riga*

Riga City Council launches the conference "New- Europe- New Challenges of City administrations", which will take place in Riga, November 09-11.2005. This conference will be focused on the problems of sustainable urban development, on setting up active business relations and exchange of experience

between different European municipalities, institutions and organizations. The objective of the conference is to raise awareness of the EU enlargement focusing on problems that cities have regarding optimization of city administrations, including project management, financial flows, human capacity raising, cooperation models with different institutions and Public-Private-Partnership. Speakers from European Commission and municipalities from the EU (Riga, Liverpool, Amsterdam, Lund) will give the presentations on project management issues. Together with the conference Partner search will be organized, where municipalities with the same problems and project ideas can meet each other and establish contacts for further cooperation. Deadline for registration- 28th of October, 2005. Our contact person for the event will be Ivita Maurina, Chief specialist of International Project Division, City Development Department, Riga City Council, telephone: +3717037930, e-mail: Ivita.Maurina@atdep.rcc.lv. More information can be found at: <http://projekti.latreg.lv/conference>

Ivita Maurina

- *City of Tartu*

We invite You to Tartu to the Vanemuine Concert House to participate in the conference discussing cultural sector marketing issues. The Tartu City Government Department of Culture organizes an international cultural conference on November 3-4 from the series „What is attractive culture?“ The general aim of the conference series is to study the problems related to the issues in cultural policy, management and funding and to find answers to the questions that have emerged. The goal of the conference is to give an overview of the current cultural marketing status in Estonia and the world, to introduce new trends and to offer practical examples from cultural marketing. The conference is free. We ask

that You inform us of Your decision to participate by October 28. Registration via the internet is available at the address www.tartu.ee/kultuuriturundus

Katriin Fisch-Uibopuu

Partner search

- Project CITYVOLT

The city of San-Sebastian in Spain is preparing a project proposal in order to be submitted under the LIFE programme and maybe your city could be interested in the proposal. The objective of the project CITYVOLT is to promote the use of photovoltaic energy in the cities. Please contact directly Ms Arantza Iriondo (contact details below) if the project is interesting for you. It is the case, let her know which of the activities are interesting for you and you would like to carry out under the project: only the study phase, the demonstration part, etc. You will find a copy of the project proposal at http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/CITYVOLT.doc Contact details: Arantza Iriondo, arantza_iriondo@donostia.org

- CULTURE 2000

You will find at:

http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/ProjectODESSA.doc a project proposal from the city of Lorient (France) to be proposed under the framework of the CULTURE 2000 programme. The main purpose of the project named ODESSA is "to make discover a common work of art while making it available to the greatest number and, in logic of a social and interdependent economy, to ensure in long run equitable incomes for all concerned actors."

Cities interested are requested to contact Lorient directly at their earliest convenience, e-mail: fmeder@agglo-lorient.fr

EU steps up human flu 'preparedness'

Over the next two days Europe moves to gear-up EU readiness for a potential human flu pandemic. Europe's governments and EU officials will seek to play down epidemic public fears linking bird flu to a potential human influenza pandemic while stressing they are ready for the worst. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control on Wednesday publishes a human health risk assessment following the arrival of H5N1 bird flu in Europe. The ECDC will look at risk to human health and give recommendations on the protection of people handling poultry in avian flu hit areas. Europe's ECDC is a new agency tasked with driving cooperation between 25 national public health authorities across the EU. Based in Stockholm at the Karolinska Institute the ECDC became operational in May 2005. In Brussels, European Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou will set out a 'simulation exercise' to test the preparedness of EU member states to respond in a coordinated fashion to an outbreak of human flu. The exercise will be organised by the European Commission and run before the end of the year. Europe's health ministers will on Thursday discuss the EU's readiness should a form of the H5N1 virus, or another like it become, transmissible between humans sparking a flu pandemic. Speaking on Tuesday, Kyprianou stressed that, despite a major scare, the arrival of bird flu within the EU did not increase the risks of a human influenza outbreak. "The fact that we have avian flu in Europe now does not affect the threat of a human pandemic... it could come from the mutation of any other influenza virus," he said. But the commissioner did note that "more than half" of the EU's 25 countries do not have sufficient anti-viral drug stockpiles to fight a human flu pandemic. Figures suggest that EU member states hold only ten million anti-viral jabs to cover over 450 million people — 100 million short of World Health Organisation guidelines. On current projections by the end of 2007, there could only still 46 million

doses of anti-viral drugs available, according to media reports. Demand on pharmaceutical manufacturers currently outstrips capacity and Europe's health ministers will look schemes to boost seasonal anti-flu jabs to free up new investment. The important thing is that all should have enough pharmaceutical defence in this respect. This is something we will be working on with the member states," said Kyprianou. "I want to see if there any problems in provision, which is why we need to talk to [governments] and industry and see if there any problems in supply in terms of manufacturing capacity."

Source: EUpolitix

Europeans don't know who to call for help

The European emergency telephone number — 112- is still unknown to far too many EU citizens with human lives at stake, information commissioner Viviane Reding said. "We must end the days when this 112 emergency number is one of Europe's best kept secrets," she indicated, urging member states to make the necessary investment to create an "emergency service you can rely on". According to a European Commission report, several member states cannot properly handle the number of languages required by the 112 system, or do not have the technology needed to locate mobile phone callers' geographical position. Long response times from national rescue forces to accidents are risking the lives of those involved, Brussels revealed, adding that a great number of EU citizens simply do not know the number to call in an emergency. Commissioner Reding said that the 112 number was an "absolute essential, not a luxury add-on", to saving lives in Europe. "What number do you call if you are British and you need an ambulance in Greece on holiday? What number do you call on your mobile if you are involved in a road accident in Sweden, or if there's a fire in your apartment in Prague?" Once the commission is satisfied with the overall quality of emergency call services in the EU, it aims to

launch a communication campaign to raise awareness of the 112 number. The single European emergency phone number was created to make it easier for travellers in the EU to find help in emergency cases under the same number in all countries. Although the 112 scheme has been around for years, EU citizens continue to call the old, well-rehearsed national numbers they grew up with instead. In most EU member states, these old numbers still work for domestic emergencies, but not if calling from abroad.

Source: EUobserver

Corruption in the European Union

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2005 shows that business people and analysts consider, once again, the Nordic countries as the world's least corrupt, "reflecting a professional and transparent public administration combined with strong civil society and civic culture". Finland is the least corrupt, followed closely by Denmark and Sweden. According to the report, Greece, Italy, the Czech Republic and Poland have performed relatively poorly and "show little or no sign of improvement". This could weaken the credibility of the EU in the fight against corruption in its new members and in countries proposed for accession. However, countries that are involved in the accession process show more positive signs than countries that are not. Bulgaria, Turkey, Croatia and Romania are the best performers in the non-EU South and Eastern European countries. As to the EU's close neighbourhood, the TI report scores demonstrate a perception of endemic and worsening corruption in Belarus and Russia - resulting from reduced transparency of government activities and the closing down or outlawing of several independent organisations, the media and NGOs (fewer watchdogs to monitor government activities). At the same time, Ukraine has significantly improved its score since the new administration came to power.

Source: EurActiv

EU takes first step in tackling mental health problems

On Monday (17 October), the Brussels executive adopted a Green Paper on a strategy for mental health in the EU. The commission's move represents the first time that mental health policies are to be included in general EU policies. Mental illness affects over 27 percent of European adults every year, and is responsible for the majority of the annual 58,000 deaths by suicide, more than the number who die from motor vehicle traffic accidents, according to the commission. "I can think of no other disease that would remain so low profile if such a high percentage of the population were struck by it. Mental health has been swept under the carpet for too long", EU health commissioner Markos Kyprianou said while presenting the paper. Studies have estimated that by 2020, depression will be the highest-ranking cause of disease in the developed world. In terms of its economic impact, ill mental health costs the EU 3-4 percent of its GDP through lost productivity and additional burdens on sectors such as health, education and justice. But there are large differences between member states when it comes to mental health. Suicide rates range from 44 per 100,000 people in Lithuania to 3.6 in Greece, while the number of involuntary placements in mental health institutions is 40 times higher in Finland than in Portugal. The share of spending on mental health ranges from more than 13 percent of the national health budget in Luxembourg to just 2 percent in Slovakia, the paper notes. As part of the process, governments, NGOs, stakeholders and individual citizens may now comment on the paper and the role the EU can play in tackling mental illness. The consultation will continue until spring, after which the Commission will use the input to draw up a proposal on a EU-wide mental health strategy, which is the next step in the process.

Source: EUobserver