



# UBC e-News

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## Info from UBC Secretariat

- 47<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UBC Executive Board, Gdynia, 19-20 October 2006

On behalf of the Mayor of the City of Gdynia Mr Wojciech Szczurek I have an honour to invite you to the 47th meeting of the UBC Executive Board to be held in Gdynia, Poland, on 19-20 October 2006.

Part of the meeting (Friday, October 20) comprising annual reports of the UBC working Commissions will be open to all member cities.

A preliminary programme, practical information, travel connections and registration can be found at:

<http://www.ubc.net/today/47th-executive.html>

Please return the registration form to the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk latest by 18 September 2006.

The proposals to be discussed at the meeting shall be sent to the Secretariat latest 1 month beforehand (18 September 2006).

The meeting agenda will be sent out in due time, after receiving your registration.

Contact person in Gdynia:

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Paweł Żaboklicki

Secretary General

- BCB Call for stories

In autumn 2006, the UBC Antenna Office is planned to be opened in Brussels to lobby for the UBC cities' interests even more effectively. Hosted by the Stockholm Region's Office in Brussels, the antenna office will focus its work and efforts on strengthening UBC's presence in the European institutional dialogue and debate. The UBC Antenna Office will also serve as a useful, and, hopefully, effective device for those member cities which do not have own representation in Brussels.

The next issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin will be devoted to the theme:

### BALTIC SEA CITIES IN BRUSSELS

The Editorial Board invites all the member cities to describe their representations in Brussels. How are they represented – in the city or regional offices? How do these offices work? Establishing such antenna offices is always connected with a hope for success, tangible results and benefits. What advantages can the city get from being represented in Brussels? How is the potential of the Brussels' offices used? How does your antenna office help lobbying regional /municipal interests in Brussels? How does it contribute to enriching the international cooperation and /or help in finding new partners? Does your antenna office meet the challenge of promoting the city it expects? As such undertakings can be challengeous from cultural, economic, formal, technical, etc. aspects, you are welcome to describe your experience with tackling problems and difficulties in this respect.

Those cities that are not directly represented in Brussels are very welcome to write articles on their activities in the European Union. Does your city have developed any EU Strategy? What do you do to be closer to the EU policies? What is your cities' experience with participation in the European consultations, projects and programmes? How do you manage the load of information received from the EU institutions to the benefit of your own city/region? The Editorial Board believes that your knowledge and practical advice related for example to the EU funds will constitute an invaluable contribution to the Bulletin.

As usual, apart from the main theme, we are looking forward to receiving stories on interesting events and daily stories from our member cities. Those articles are published in the chapter "News from Member Cities". The UBC Commissions are welcome to inform about their events, meetings and projects in the chapter "UBC Today".

The guidelines to be followed when submitting your story are at:

[http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/CallBCB2.2006.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/CallBCB2.2006.pdf)

The deadline for stories to the Bulletin is 2 October 2006. Please respect this timetable as we are unable to print out stories received after this deadline. Deliver the story by e-mail to: [anna.dargiewicz@gdansk.gda.pl](mailto:anna.dargiewicz@gdansk.gda.pl) in MS WORD format. Please remember to kill the viruses before sending it.

- **"News from Member Cities"**

There is a new promotional tool on the UBC website – News from the Member Cities at: [http://www.ubc.net/News\\_from\\_cities.html](http://www.ubc.net/News_from_cities.html), where you can find information about interesting meetings, projects, events and activities in UBC cities.

All the UBC member cities are kindly requested to send us more information (a story shall be not longer than 300 words) for

this page, as well as the photos and logos of events on the address [info@ubc.net](mailto:info@ubc.net)

### **From UBC Commissions**

- Commission on Urban Planning

*Seminar of the UBC Commission on Urban Planning, Rostock, 21-23 September 2006*

Dear urban planning colleagues and friends,  
Here: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/21-23-09-2006/Rostock.pdf> please find invitation and registration form. Please send in registration forms as soon as possible.

More details about travelling, hotel rooms and planned activities can be provided by our dear colleague Andreas Schubert.

Gvido Princis

Chairman

UBC Commission on Urban Planning

- Commission on Tourism

*Annual Meeting of the UBC Commission on Tourism, Jurmala, 27-28 September 2006*

The UBC's Commission on Tourism plans its annual meeting in Jurmala in September 27th - 29th.

Here: [http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/27-28-09-2006/Agenda\\_regform.doc](http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/27-28-09-2006/Agenda_regform.doc) you will find detailed agenda, as well as the registration form.

CoT will reimburse accommodation costs (up to two nights in "Villa Joma" hotel) for one person per UBC member cities from both, Russia and new UE member states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland).

New goals of CoT and project ideas in tourism will be presented during the meeting. There is also discussion on Interreg's support in BSR tourism expected.

Ryszard Zdrojewski

Chairman

UBC Commission on Tourism

- Commission on Transportation

*Annual Meeting of the Commission on Transportation on "Integration of Transport Systems in the Baltic Europe", Gdynia, 29 September 2006*

It is our honour and pleasure to invite you to the Annual Meeting of UBC Commission on Transportation which will be held in Gdynia on 29th September 2006.

The subject of this year's meeting will be the "Integration of Transport Systems in the Baltic Europe". It is essential that liveable and competitive cities have effective and high quality public transport. The boundaries of metropolises are often drawn by the range of transport connections and not by administrative borders.

In recent years the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) have become the factor raising the attractiveness of public transport. In many cities there is an ongoing discussion about the possibilities of introducing ITS. Therefore, we warmly invite you to this year's Annual Meeting of UBC Commission on Transportation which will offer you the opportunity to get acquainted with the experiences and perspectives of ITS development in the Baltic Europe.

The deadline for sending registration forms is 13th September 2006 and they should be sent to the UBC Commission on Transportation Secretariat by e-mail: [ubctransport@gdynia.pl](mailto:ubctransport@gdynia.pl) or by fax: +4858 621 86 20.

Wojciech Szczurek  
Mayor  
City of Gdynia

Marcin Wolek  
Chairman  
UBC Commission on Transportation

More information at:  
<http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/29-09-2006/index.htm>

- Commission on Health and Social Affairs

*Annual Meeting of the UBC Commission on Health and Social Affairs, Rostock, 5-7 October 2006.*

The Commission on Health and Social Affairs announces its Annual Meeting on 05-07 October, 2006 in Rostock. The special workshop topic will be: BALTIC CITIES AND MIGRATION - Problems \* Potential \* Perspectives.

Please, find Agenda and Registration Form here: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/5-7-10-2006/index.htm>

Local specialists dealing with migrant's affairs in the Baltic cities are very welcome to share their knowledge!

Please, watch the deadline of 22 September 2006!

Karin Wohlgemuth  
Coordinator of the Commission

- Commission on Youth Issues

*Meeting of the UBC Commission on Youth Issues, Liepaja, 8-9 November 2006*

We are very happy to invite you to the next meeting for UBC Commission on Youth Issues in Liepaja, Latvia, in November.

There will be an open Commission meeting on 8-9th of November, open to all UBC cities. For more information and programme see <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/8-9-11-2006/index.htm>

Please register to the meeting by filling out the registration form by 13th of October.

The "Core group" of the Commission will have a closed meeting on 7th of November, open to one civil servant and one youth representative from those cities that have signed a letter of intent so far. (Tallinn, Kuressare, Riga, Liepaja, Kolding, Rostock, Kalmar).

We are also happy to announce that the Commission's new website is up and running. [www.ubc-youth.org](http://www.ubc-youth.org) It is now up to all of you

to help us fill it with information, especially the part that will act as a "show-room" for best practices from each city. All material, feedback and ideas on how to improve can be sent to [web@ubc-youth.org](mailto:web@ubc-youth.org)

Charlotte Gustafsson  
Co-ordinator of the Commission

- Commission on Culture

*Meeting of the UBC Commission on Culture, Vaasa, 24-26 November 2006*

It is a great pleasure for me to invite the representatives of the UBC cities to the 9th annual working session of the Commission on Culture.

The session is going to be held in Vaasa 24-26 November and it is open to all member cities.

We hope especially to see cultural officials of the cities and festival, producers taking part of the discussions of the theme "Cultural Festivals as Strengtheners of Local Identity". For more information and programme see <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/24-26-11-2006/index.htm>, or contact:

[Tarja.hautamaki@vaasa.fi](mailto:Tarja.hautamaki@vaasa.fi)

I am convinced that Vaasa has a lot to offer you professionally and give some unforgettable memories as well.

Tarja Hautamäki  
Chairperson of the Commission on Culture

### **Conferences attended by UBC representatives:**

- Structured Dialogue Meeting with Commissioner Ján Figel, 20 June, Brussels (Olov Gibson, UBC Commission on Culture). The meeting was devoted to: "The European Policy of Education and Culture: its contribution to the success of the Lisbon Strategy – the role of regions and cities".
- Conference "Towards future maritime policy of the EU", 19-21 July, Turku (city of Turku)

- Conference "Prosperity and Sustainability - Local Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region", 16-18 August, Visby (Marie-Louise Rönnmark, UBC Vice-President, Mayor of Umeå, Paweł Żaboklicki, Secretary General). Mrs Marie-Louise Rönnmark delivered a speech on "The Baltic Sea Region and its cities in a political-historical perspective". The conference was attended by 350 representatives of BSR ministries, regions, cities, institutions and business organisations.
- 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference BSPC "The Northern Dimension and the Oceans and Seas", 4-5 September, Reykjavik (Paweł Żaboklicki, UBC Secretary General). The conference discussed cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, the Northern Dimension and the European Maritime Policy.

UBC will be represented at the conferences:

- Conference on European Maritime Policy, 20-21 September, Kiel (Aleksi Randell, UBC Vice-President, Chairman of the City Board of Turku)
- Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities VIII General Assembly, 29 September-1 October, Koper, Slovenia (Per Bødker Andersen, UBC President)
- Conference on Safe, Sustainable and Financed Motorways of the Sea, 2-3 October, Helsinki (Christian Ramberg, Chairman of the UBC Task Force on Logistics, Managing Director of the Port of Turku)
- 66th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, 11 October, Brussels (Per Bødker Andersen, UBC President)

### **Partner Search**

- Project on improvement of the earlychildlike development

Mr. Professor Dr. Hans Arnold, former Director of the university clinic Luebeck looks for co-operation partners for a project within the following field: "improvement of the earlychildlike development (Migranten

and socially pressed families)" For the project partners from 5 European Union countries are needed. Large interest exists for the partner search in the Baltic Countries and Poland.

I would like to ask you therefore to provide me with suitable contacts, so as Mr. Professor Dr. Arnold can take up direct contact to the potential partner. A short description in English language is at:

[http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/Short\\_Descr.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Short_Descr.pdf). I would also like to ask you to dispatch a description of the project by e-mail to the suitable partners.

Dario Arndt  
[arndt@luebeck.org](mailto:arndt@luebeck.org)

### **Invitations to other conferences**

- China Baltic Sea Business Forum

At: [http://www.ubc.net/today/e\\_News/documents/InvitCBBF.pdf](http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/InvitCBBF.pdf) you will find an invitation to the China Baltic Sea Business Forum that is going to take place in Kalmar on 25-26 of October. The Forum gives opportunities to meet between the regions Yangtze River Delta Region and the Baltic Sea Region. Yangtze River Delta Region has 100 million consumers and is the geographical area with the highest growth in China. This gives the opportunities for business between companies in the two regions. Baltic Sea countries are invited to participate with officials and companies. The full programme of the China Baltic Sea Business Forum will be ready in two weeks.

Anna Nilsson  
[Anna.Nilsson@kalmar.regionforbund.se](mailto:Anna.Nilsson@kalmar.regionforbund.se)

- Baltic Sea and European Marine Strategy - Linking Science and Policy"

The Academy of Finland with other cooperation organisations is arranging a Conference called "Baltic Sea and European Marine Strategy – Linking Science and

Policy" during Finland's EU Presidency, on 13-15 November 2006 at the Marina Congress Center in Helsinki.

The aim of the conference is to demonstrate how research can support the protection and management of the marine environment. The conference addresses the Baltic Sea in terms of research, protection, environmental awareness, education and international cooperation. The conference invitation, preliminary programme and more info are available at <http://www.eu2006balticsea.net>

Pia Pyykkö  
[pia.pyytkko@aka.fi](mailto:pia.pyytkko@aka.fi)

- Nordregio course on "Successful cities: Strategies for management"

For the second year Nordregio is offering a stipend to enable practitioners within regional development and spatial planning from the Baltic region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and the Russian Federation) to join their European and Nordic neighbours in some courses Nordregio is arranging.

The stipend is partly sponsored by the EU Interreg programme IIIB Baltic Sea Region, and covers the course fee and most of the travel and hotel expenses.

The next course will take place in Oslo 8-10 November 2006 and is called "Successful cities: Strategies for management". The deadline for the stipend for this course is 12th September.

We would be pleased if you could help us spread this information to people within your contact network who might be interested. On our web page

<http://www.nordregio.se/coursenov06.htm>

you will find information about the course and the stipend. (It is also possible to attend the course without any stipend.)

Sara Östberg  
[sara.ostberg@nordregio.se](mailto:sara.ostberg@nordregio.se)



**Popular opinion backs EU foreign minister post**

A majority of EU citizens are in favour of having a single EU foreign minister for the bloc, the results of a new survey have shown. Conducted by the German Marshall Fund in June across several member states including France, Germany, the UK and Italy, the survey showed that 65 percent of respondents would like to see the post created.

The greatest support for the idea was found among the Spanish (74%), the Italians (71%) and the French (69%) while British and Slovak respondents proved among the least keen on the idea, clocking in 52 and 48 percent respectively.

The EU foreign minister position is one of the key innovations of the European constitution which was shelved last year after French and Dutch voters rejected it in referendums.

And so long as the constitution remains moribund, the post is unlikely to see the light of day.

But while there was some strong support for a foreign minister, the idea of the bloc strengthening its military power to play a larger role in the world proved more controversial. On average, 51 percent were against the idea but there were big differences between countries with the Portuguese (68%) and the French (56%) more in favour of the bloc assuming military responsibilities but the Germans (64%) and the Italians (56%) more against. A majority of those surveyed believed further enlargement of the EU would bring peace and democracy to the EU bloc's borders (62%) and would strengthen the EU's role in the world (63%).

*Source: Euobserver*

**EU confident on new strategic deal with Russia**

The EU is hoping to start negotiations covering future strategic relations with Russia in November after a bilateral summit but some new member states remain deeply mistrustful of the bloc's giant neighbour to the east.

"It seems quite clear we can finalise the mandate - there were no substantial differences," Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja said after EU ministers over the weekend discussed the new negotiating mandate for updating the current agreement with Moscow.

"The negotiations then will be a prolonged process naturally starting after the summit, but from the EU point of view, we have a clear understanding of how we want to proceed," continued Mr Tuomioja, whose country currently chairs the EU.

But some EU member states remain wary of Moscow and want Brussels to push a hard line in its relations with Russia.

Czech foreign minister Cyril Svoboda told Reuters that the mandate was "more or less" acceptable" and urged a "very strong and tough" negotiating stance.

And Poland expressed concern about how to secure the EU's energy supply.

"Poland is very much concerned about energy security. We are too much dependent on one source of energy, on one direction of energy supply," said Polish foreign minister Anna Fotyga.

Spain's Miguel Angel Moratinos indicated that in order for an agreement to be reached on time "everybody will have to make an effort to get there."

At the moment, Russia's relations with the EU are governed by a so-called Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) – but the ten-year agreement, covering political dialogue and economic and trade relations, runs out in 2007.

EU diplomats present at the ministerial meeting in Finland noted that the original PCA had been drawn up "with little awareness" of the bloc's energy dependency on Russia, when the EU itself has less powers in justice and home affairs and when there was no prospect of Russia becoming a member of the WTO.

But the EU's dependency on energy from Russia – it supplies up to 25 percent of the bloc's needs – has now changed the power

stakes, with state monopoly Gazprom before the summer publicly threatening that it could deliver its gas supplies elsewhere if investment opportunities in Europe were blocked.

There is also a growing awareness among some EU member states of Russia's importance on the world stage with its position on international questions on Iran proving key.

Into this mix come central and eastern European member states - particularly Poland and Lithuania - who would not sign up to an agreement which they feel pursues too soft a line on Russia. One EU diplomat summed the approach towards Moscow in the EU as falling into two camps "those that think of EU-Russia ties geo-strategically and the neighbours of Russia."

"Russia is a strategic partner. Russia is a very important neighbour and Russia sometimes is also an ally, but it is also a more and more assertive player on the world stage, so we have to get this relationship right," said EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner on Saturday.

*Source: EUobserver*

### **Less than one in three EU scientists female**

Statistics for the year 2004 show that more than half of the science and technology workforce is female but that actual scientists and engineers continue to be predominantly male. Eurostat statistics on gender differences among Europe's knowledge workers for the year 2004, published in August 2006, indicate that 50.4% of human resources in science and technology (HRST) in Europe were female. Three quarters of them (77.3%) worked in knowledge-intensive services, such as financial intermediation, education or health. However, only 29% of the EU's 8.7 million scientists and engineers are women, with the exception of the three Baltic states, where women count for more than half of these professions: 55.5% in Lithuania, 51.4% in Latvia and 51% in Estonia. Scientists and engineers (SE) are a particular interest group

in the science and technology workforce as they are more likely to be involved in leading-edge technology in physical, mathematical and engineering occupations and life-science and health occupations.

Europe needs more scientists and researchers to achieve scientific and technological excellence and, as women are currently under-represented in the field of scientific research, the Commission is promoting measures specifically aimed towards encouraging women to take part in European research.

*Source: EurActiv*

### **Scientists call for more research into obesity**

Scientists call for more research into obesity to understand the genetic and environmental factors that lead to weight gain.

"The more we learn about obesity, the more complex it becomes. People often talk rather simplistically about the balance of energy in and energy out, but don't ask why so many people no longer seem to be able to maintain this balance in a modern society. We need to develop a much more sophisticated understanding of the biological mechanisms which interact with the environmental influences that lead to weight gain and obesity," said Professor Arne Astrup, the president of the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) speaking in the 10th International Congress on Obesity (ICO 2006) on 4 September 2006. New research does suggest that factors such as too little sleep or increased intake of trans-fats can alter our biology, making us more susceptible to overeating and less active.

"Highly energy-dense Western diets have had much of the flavour and micronutrients processed out of them and replaced by artificial additives, making starchy, fatty and sugary foods that are appetising and easy to eat quickly," said Dr Anne-Thea McGill. According to McGill, too much processed food results in an excess energy intake that is deficient in micronutrients and which

produces a state of malnutrition. "The body reacts to this 'famine' stress and nutrient imbalance by storing fat around the upper body," she added.

As to weight-loss treatments that include dietary supplements, McGill said that minerals, fibres and garlic are more efficient when taken in their natural forms in food.

The Health in All Policies initiative, which particularly seeks to address Europe's growing obesity problem, is a priority for the Finnish EU Presidency. (See Euractiv 2 August 2006)

*Source: EurActiv*

### **EU proposes new alcohol duties**

Potentially divisive proposals to increase the minimum duty on alcoholic drinks have been unveiled by the European commission.

The current duty rates were set in 1992 and have not been increased since. The commission fears the rates will become "meaningless" unless they are adjusted to take account of inflation. Friday's proposals would see the basic duty rates increase by the rate of inflation between 1993 and 2005 from January 1 2008. Although member states have asked the commission to come forward with plans for increasing basic duty rates, national governments do not always see eye to eye on the issue. While minimum rates are set at the EU level, national governments have the right to increase duty rates, which many do on the grounds of public health. Scandinavian countries in particular have high rates, mainly on public health grounds, but this has led to an increase in cross-border bulk buying of alcohol in countries such as Estonia or Germany that have lower rates. The commission has insisted its latest plans should not provide cause for concern because most member states already exceed the proposed minimum rates.

Official say any member states who experience difficulties in increasing their national rates will benefit from plans for transition periods that last up to 2010.

But wine-producing EU countries that have traditionally had very low duty rates for wine

– zero in many cases – are set to respond negatively to the rise.

*Source: EUPolitix*

### **Job discrimination against smokers is allowed, says Brussels**

A European company has the right to refuse employment to smokers, European Commissioner for employment and equal opportunities of Employers Vladimir Spidla has confirmed. Scottish Labour MEP Catherine Stihler brought the issue to the commission after Irish call-centre company Dotcom Directories had advertised for a worker but said smokers needed not apply.

"If people are smoking on a coffee break or in their own time they come back into the office and they stink. We have a small office here and it would make things unbearable for the other staff", said Philip Tobin, director of Dotcom Directories in a radio interview.

EU legislation prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief in employment and other fields.

"A job advertisement saying that 'smokers need not apply' would not seem to fall under any of the ... prohibited grounds," the commissioner stated in a written reply to the MEP, quoted by the Financial Times.

"We all know employers discriminate on all sorts of grounds, from being too fat to the wrong colour hair. But for it to be so overt is depressing and shows that smokers are fair game," said Simon Clark, director of the British pro-smoking pressure group Forest to the paper.

The commission later clarified its position saying that "the fact EU legislation does not cover non-discrimination of smokers does not mean that the Commission regards discrimination against smokers as rightful".

"Any kind of discrimination beyond the mentioned scope of EU legislation falls under the responsibility of member states", it said in a statement.

*Source: EUobserver*