



UBC e-News

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Info

▪ 49th UBC Executive Board meeting, Jekabpils, 15 June 2007

The 49th UBC Executive Board meeting was held on 15 June in Jekabpils, Latvia, upon the invitation of Mr Leonids Salceвич, Mayor of Jekabpils. Mr Salceвич made a presentation introducing his city.

Mr Pawel Zaboklicki, Secretary General, informed about the status of preparations to the IX General Conference, which will be held in Parnu, Estonia. The following persons were invited as the keynote speakers:

- President of Estonia, Mr Toomas Henrik Ilves, but due to other obligation he can not participate
- Mr Andrus Ansip, Prime Minister of Estonia, who has not yet confirmed his participation
- Ambassador Valdis Krastins, chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials
- President of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Mr Halvdan Skard
- President of the Committee of the Regions, Mayor of Dunkerque, Mr Michel Delebarre
- Mr Stavros Dimas, EU Commissioner for Environment. He hasn't confirmed his participation yet.
- President of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, Mr Xose Antonio Sanches Bugallo, Mayor of Santiago de Compostela
- Mr Joe Montgomery, President of INTA - that International Urban Development Association

On the first day of the Conference there will be three parallel workshops:

W.1 Cities response to the climate change (organisation – Commissions on Environment and Energy)

W.2 Culture as driving force for municipal development (organisation – Commission on Culture and City of Umeå)

W.3 Involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of society (organisation – Commission on Youth Issues)

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

Mr Per Bødker Andersen, Mayor of Kolding – candidate for President

Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå – candidate for 1st Vice-President

Ms Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare - candidate for Vice-President

Representative of Turku - candidate for Vice-President

The Mayor of Gdansk, Mr Pawel Adamowicz, in his letter to the UBC President, requests to keep the UBC Secretariat during the next period. The Board expressed thanks to the City of Gdansk for the offer to maintain the UBC Secretariat and recommended the General Conference to accept Gdansk's proposal.

President Andersen informed about the draft conference resolution on climate change.

The Board decided to propose the General Conference in Parnu to hold the X GC in 2009 in the city of Kristiansand.

The Board also introduced and discussed many other issues. Mr Mikko Lohikoski, Turku, informed about the final paper of the UBC contribution to the Green Paper on European Maritime Policy. Further he presented information about the questionnaire sent out to the member cities on UBC further development.

There had been also information about the latest conferences attended by the Union's representatives, and they presented their remarks.

Mr Zaboklicki introduced the latest issue of the Baltic Cities Bulletin 1/2007 "Culture as Driving Force for Municipal Development".

Ms Anna Sosnicka from UBC Secretariat made general presentation of the new Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be held on the eve of the General Conference, Pärnu, 26 September 2007.

The Minutes from this meeting are at: <http://www.ubc.net/today/49th-executive.html>



- **REMINDER: IX UBC General Conference, Pärnu, 27-28 September 2007**

Union of the Baltic Cities will held its IX General Conference on 27-28 September 2007. The first day of the Conference will be

devoted to three main topics: climate change – cities' response, culture as a driving force for municipal development and involvement of youth in democracy and in the life of the society.

The second day of the Conference will be devoted to the UBC internal matters, such as reports, elections, finances, meetings of the commissions etc.

There is a special conference website: www.reiser.ee/conference/ubc.htm where you can find the program, registration form, the already registered participants, and more.

All UBC member cities should participate in the General Conference in Pärnu.

Please register latest by **24 August 2007**.

- **Welcome to join the third UBC Youth Conference "Under the Surface"!**

The third UBC youth conference will take place from 26th until 29th of September in Pärnu, Estonia. We are inviting over 100 young people, civil servants and politicians to take part in a youth conference "Under the Surface".

We invite one civil servant/politician and two youth representatives (age 16-25 years old) from each UBC member city. Please study conference invitation in order to get more information about participation.

Here you will find the invitation with preliminary programme of the conference and registration form: <http://www.ubc-youth.org/pärnu07.htm>

The deadline for registration for the conference is 17th of August.

Charlotte Gustafsson

Chairman of the Commission on Youth Issues

Vilis Bruveris

Coordinator of youth conference

From UBC Commissions

- Commission on Culture

UBC Cultural Prize

At: http://www.ubc.net/commissions/Projects/Environmental_award/Award_2005.htm there are regulations and application form for the UBC Cultural Prize "Innovative Cultural Activity of the Years 2005 and 2006". The application form should be e-mailed to the UBC Commission on Culture Secretariat by 31st August 2007 at the latest, to the e-mail: olov.gibson@kff.gotland.se The decision of the UBC Commission on Culture about the winner will be announced during the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu.

Tarja Hautamaeki
Chairman of the Commission

Election of a new Board of the UBC Commission on Culture.

The election of the new Board of the UBC Commission on Culture will take place during the UBC General Conference in Pärnu.

The present Board of the Commission on Culture hereby ask the UBC member cities to propose their candidates for membership of the next Board. These application have to arrive not later than on 1st of September 2007 to the present Secretariat of the Commission in Visby on the following e-mail adress:

olov.gibson@kff.gotland.se. The updated general rules of the Election of the Board of the UBC Commission on Culture were established during the Board meeting in Vaasa on 23rd of November 2006.

Countries which have not had any representation will have precedence to become members of the Board. More info at: http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/CoCBoard-election.doc

Olov Gibson
2nd Chairperson of the Board

- Commission on Environment

Call for interest in Integrated Management for Urban-Rural areas

The upcoming "Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013" is still in the final stage before finalizing and opening for calls and proposals. One of the new elements for this programme is the proposal for starting so called strategic projects. As mentioned the programme is not yet finalized but at this stage a strategical project is seen as a project that should; Address a vital problem for the Baltic Sea Region, Encompass the whole region or relevant parts of it, Reach an investment or local demonstration stage, Recieve strong political support at national level leading to real investments. The projects are also expected to be larger than before in terms of budget and length of project. More information can be found at <http://eu.baltic.net/>

In the programme there are several topic areas mentioned with specific interest and need of so called strategical projects. One of these topic areas is "urban-rural partnership". UBC Commission on Environment has been involved in brainstorming and proposing ideas and recommendations for the "urban-rural partnership" topic area and one result is that the UBC Commission on Environment is involved in drafting a project proposal.

An important part of the drafting is to open up for comments and suggestions as well as finding interested partners for developing and taking part in the project! Here: http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Urban_RuralProject.doc you find a concept paper on "Integrated Management for Urban Rural Areas" and some questions or criterias that we hope you will answer and send to us. After your city/region has submitted your indication of interest we will make a selection of cities/regions and take contact to discuss the involvement in the process.

Björn Grönholm
Head of Secretariat

Reminder: Environmental Bulletin 2/2007

Please, find here:

http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/Env_bulletin2_07.pdf call for contribution for the next Baltic Cities Environmental Bulletin 2/2007 (to be published in September 07). The deadline for submission of articles is 15th of August.

▪ Commission on Tourism

„Meet the Baltic Sea Region - Your Homeland”

The UBC Commission on Tourism together with the Mayor of Koszalin City announce: An international contest of knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region entitled: „Meet the Baltic Sea Region - Your Homeland”

At: <http://www.ubc.net/commissions/tourism/contest.html> please, find the Announcement and the Regulations. In order to find more about it, refer also to the website: www.baltic-contest.koszalin.pl Please spread this information among secondary level schools in your region. Their pupils in the age of 15-20 are welcomed to take part in the contest. If the school would like to register to the contest please log-in on the above-mentioned website and send an e-mail to Mrs Joanna Wilczek joanna.wilczek@um.man.koszalin.pl Don't hesitate to use this address in case of questions or when some additional information is required.

The Commission on Tourism is strongly convinced that by participating in the contest students in Baltic Sea Region will get to know better each other, while having fun at the same time. They will also broaden their knowledge about the neighbouring countries. This should help increasing a tourist traffic in the foreseeable future.

I will be highly grateful for your co-operation with this contest. Don't hesitate - join us now!

Ryszard Zdrojewski
Chairman of the Commission

▪ Commission on Urban Planning

The UBC Commission on Urban Planning warmly invites you to our next seminar and general meeting in Kotka, Finland in October 4th-6th, 2007.

The seminar theme is "City Identity". It will deal with cities' attractiveness and characteristics as well as branding cities with the tools of city planners.

Please find the preliminary programme of the seminar: <http://www.ubc.net/calendar/doc/3-6-10-2007/1stInvitation.doc>. A final invitation together with the registration form will be sent out in August.

Make arrangements for the participation from your city already today and mark the days of 4th-6th of October in your agenda!

Sirpa Kallio
Chairman of the Commission

From UBC Member Cities

▪ City of Siauliai

The city of Siauliai kindly invites you to participate at the VIII International Sports Games Siauliai 2007 which will be held on 7-9 September, 2007. The detailed information about the competition is at: http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/SportsGamesSiauliai.doc

Kestutis Petraitis
Head, Department of Physical Culture and Sports

▪ City of Tallinn

I have the pleasure to invite you to the Tallinn Entrepreneurship Day on 4 October 2007. The theme of the Day is "SUCCESS THROUGH COOPERATION".

Tallinn City Enterprise Board team together with its cooperation partners are organizing the traditional Entrepreneurship Day on 4 October. This event will take place for the

fourth time in Tallinn. The Day originates from pan-European Entrepreneurship Day and has grown year by year in terms of cooperation partners and participants.

The main purpose of the Entrepreneurship Day is to acknowledge and value business operators and entrepreneurial lifestyle. It is important to value the role of business in the development of the city.

We hope that all this will encourage people to become more actively engaged in business.

Events are organized in cooperation with different institutions: professional associations, educational institutions, businesses and unions.

You will find the preliminary information on this event at:

http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/TallinnEntrepren.pdf

See you in Tallinn!

Kairi Teniste

Head of Tallinn City Enterprise Board

▪ City of Turku

1st Announcement Turku Development Forum 2007.

At: http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/TDF2007.pdf please find the 1st Announcement and preliminary programme for the Turku Development Forum 2007, which will be held in Turku, Finland on 29-30 November 2007. The theme of the Forum is: Education Systems – Vitality of Urban Regions – Welfare. You are also welcome to forward this information to people interested in the issue. For further information of the Forum visit www.turkudevelopmentforum.fi. On behalf of the Organising Committee of the Forum I warmly welcome you to TDF 2007!

Harri Andersson

Vice rector, University of Turku

Other announcements:

- *Vacancy: Financial Advisor for Audit and Control*

The BSR INTERREG III B Joint Secretariat Rostock office is looking for a Financial Advisor for Audit and Control. We would kindly ask you to support us by distributing this announcement further to your contacts. Please find the full text of the vacancy announcement:

http://www.ubc.net/today/e_News/documents/FinancialAdviser.doc

Conferences attended by UBC representatives:

- 14th Plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 30 May - 1 June 2007, Strasbourg (Mart Viisitamm, Mayor of Pärnu)
- 70th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 6-7 June 2007 (Per Boedker Andersen, President of UBC)
- 14th CBSS Ministerial Session, Malmö, 13 June 2007, (Per Boedker Andersen, President of UBC)
- Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities General Assembly, Chester, 28-30 June 2007, (Adolfas Antanas Balutis, City Councillor of Kaunas)
- CLRAE Conference: "Towards a Europe Without Dividing Lines - Transfrontier Cooperation in Europe: Examples from the High North and the Baltic Sea", Tromsø, 3 July 2007 (Maciej Lisicki, Deputy Mayor of Gdansk)

MEPs set to back new EU maritime policy

MEPs are this week expected to throw their weight behind ambitious proposals for an EU-wide maritime policy. At its Strasbourg plenary, parliament will adopt its formal position on European commission plans for a cross-sectoral approach to maritime issues.

On Wednesday, deputies will vote on a report which will form the assembly's official response to a 12-month consultation period on the commission's green paper on future maritime policy.

The report has been drafted by five parliamentary committees - transport, environment, industry, fisheries and regional. Several amendments have been tabled but the report, by German Socialist MEP Willi Piecyk, is expected to be approved in plenary. One of the amendments is from Italian ALDE member Luigi Cocilovo who stresses "that onshore and offshore wind power has a very substantial potential" for the development of peripheral and maritime regions.

Cocilov, a member of the transport and tourism committee, also considers that regions should be at the heart of any future maritime policy.

He said, "It should be mandatory to consult with, and involve, the regions when drafting programmes."

Over 400 organisations and bodies have responded to the consultation process, which ended last week.

The commission, which is aiming for a more "holistic" approach to future sea-related issues, will digest all the contributions before drafting a maritime action plan for publication in mid-October.

Meanwhile, seafarers' unions throughout Europe are urging MEPs to adopt measures to prevent "cut-throat" competition with poorly-paid foreign crews and safeguard EU maritime skills.

In a campaign paper being sent to all MEPs, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) warns that the number of non-EU/EEA seafarers working on EU ferry services has soared by 19 per cent in the past 20 years at a

time when employment for EU seamen has suffered a sharp decline.

"The failure to regulate terms and conditions on intra-European ferry services makes the need for some form of control more urgent than ever," said ETF general secretary Eduardo Chagas.

Source: EU politix

Brussels calls on member states to step up fight against fraud

The European Commission has called on EU member states to cooperate more with Brussels on fighting abnormalities with EU funds. A new report shows that over €1 billion of EU money was affected by irregularities and suspected fraud across the bloc in 2006.

EU anti-fraud commissioner Siim Kallas on Monday (9 July) presented the annual commission report on the issue, calling for more timely, precise and complete information from the EU states when they suspect fraud cases.

Without cooperation, the bloc cannot successfully fight cases of fraud and other irregularities, which damage the reputation of the EU, he said.

Under EU law, member states must report suspected fraud or other abnormalities concerning EU cash. But Mr Kallas said the EU capitals were not all taking fraud seriously, while others were too slow in reporting cases.

The report shows that the total number of irregularities increased in agriculture, cohesion and pre-accession funds, and decreased for structural funds and so-called 'own resources' - such as customs duties, agricultural duties and sugar levies collected by member states on behalf of the EU.

For example, in agriculture expenditures - which Mr Kallas called "one of the most disputed areas of EU spending" - the irregularities reported were up 3 percent from the previous year, but the total amount

involved was 15 percent down to €87 million compared to 2005.

Italy at the top of the class.

According to the head of the EU's anti-fraud office OLAF - Franz-Hermann Brüner - Italy, which has the second highest number of active fraud investigations in the EU, has been "exemplary" in cooperating with his office.

But he criticised Belgium, which has the highest number of on-going anti-fraud investigations at the moment for its lack of resources and sluggishness in helping assist with cases.

Belgium's high number of cases is due to the capital being the home of most of the EU institutions and the slow process of the Belgian investigation authorities is a problem for the reputation of the EU institutions as a whole, he said when launching OLAF's 2006 activity report alongside the commission report.

Source: EU Observer

EU states slow on energy-efficiency, environment

EU ministers called for a "new impetus for EU environmental policy" at the 28 June Environment Council, stating that "further decisive action is needed" in the field.

But despite ministerial declarations, "environment remains the sector where Member States show least respect for Internal Market rules", according to the latest Internal Market Scoreboard, published by the Commission on 2 July.

A full 21% of all infringement cases brought against member states by the Commission is in the field of environmental policy, 5% more than for taxation and customs union, the second most "popular" source of infringements.

In the area of energy-efficiency, member states had reaffirmed their commitment to submit national action plans before July, as requested under an EU directive on energy end-use efficiency and energy services, but so

far, only three states have done so: Denmark, Finland and the UK.

Environmental group Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE) lamented the missed deadline: "Cutting energy waste is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but most of the EU member states are falling at the first hurdle."

Michelle O'Neill of EuroACE, an alliance of companies providing energy-efficient solutions for buildings commented: "Following the trend of non-implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings directive, EuroACE...is sorely disappointed that only three member states met the June deadline to submit a national energy efficiency action plan. It is important that governments lead by example and take energy efficiency very seriously."

Despite the apparent negative trend, Germany has recently announced a domestic plan for increasing energy-efficiency and reducing CO2 emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels by 2020. And France's minister for environment Jean-Louis Borloo announced his government's ambitious 5-year plan on environment and sustainable development.

Source: EurActiv

Obesity platform to promote healthy lifestyle at workplace

Members of the EU obesity platform have decided to launch an initiative to motivate staff in their own organisations and member companies to take more exercise and eat healthier food.

The EU Platform on diet, physical activity and health, launched in March 2005, started on 3 July 2007 an initiative to improve health at the workplace. This initiative, launched at a conference entitled 'Diet, physical activity and health @ workplace', aims in particular to promote physical activity as well as healthy and balanced food choices for employees.

"The challenge at the workplace is to know how to make the right tools available for both SMEs and big multinationals to promote

physical activity and healthy eating,” said the director general of the Commission DG for health and consumer protection Robert Madelin. ”Lifestyle is a challenge that is difficult to communicate,” he added.

According to the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) workplace health promotion activities should be integrated in the corporate strategy, systems and processes and be supported by an overall corporate strategy. The network argues that workplace health promotion leads to less costs in terms of absenteeism, accidents and diseases as well as to less turnover of employees. Workplace health promotion is also expected to improve company image and position in the labour market and lead to increased productivity.

Asked whether schools can, in this context be considered as childrens’ workplace and what more could be done there, Robert Madelin said that ”schools are more important than workplace”, but that ”it is never too late and never too early. Our big target is those under 12 years of age and workplace.”

He also reminded that introducing more physical activity or education on nutrition in the school curricula is up to member states and pledged for media support for raising awareness and convincing parents to ask for curricula changes.

Source: EurActiv

Late switch to healthy lifestyle still worthwhile, study shows

Clinical research conducted by the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, shows that adopting a healthy lifestyle, even at middle age, promptly reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases and early death.

The research results demonstrate that adopting four healthy habits - eating five fresh fruits and vegetables daily, practising physical exercise for at least 2.5 hours per week, maintaining a reasonable weight and not smoking - is sufficient to reduce cardiovascular risks in a relatively short time.

The three main findings of the study are:

The benefits from switching to a healthy lifestyle after the age of 45 is felt quickly in the four years that follow;

the beneficial impact of the lifestyle switch occurs even with modest changes to habits, and;

people adopting only three healthy habits experienced lower early mortality but not fewer cardiovascular incidents during the same period.

However, the study, conducted among a sample of the US population aged 45-64, also found that only 8.5% of middle-aged adults practise the four healthy habits and only 8.4% switch to such a lifestyle after the age of 45.

Source: EurActiv

Copenhagen the dearest Nordic city

Copenhagen is the most expensive city in the Nordic Region according to a comparison of 143 cities around the world. Copenhagen came in seventh on the list, which was topped by Moscow, with Oslo at number 10, Helsinki at 22 and Stockholm 23.

The survey was conducted by the research institute Consulting Mercer Human Resource. It takes into account factors such as the cost of accommodation, food, clothes and transport. New York is used as the base for the comparison and has index number 100. The corresponding figure for Moscow is 134.4.

Moscow is followed by London, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong. European cities dominate, making up 30 of the top 50 most expensive cities in the world. The survey identifies Asuncion i Paraguay as the cheapest city in the world to live in for the fifth year in a row.

Source: Nordic Council