**Minutes of the 72nd Meeting of the Executive Board**

 **Kemi, 25-27 February 2015**

**1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

Per Bødker Andersen, the President of the Union, opened the meeting. Mr Andersen expressed his gratitude to the hosts for inviting the UBC Executive Board to hold its 72nd meeting in Kemi. The meeting adopted the agenda, attached to the minutes.

**2. Election of two persons who, together with the President, will check the minutes.**

Satu Heikkinen, International Relations Coordinator, City of Jyväskylä and Wiesław Bielawski, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk, were elected to check the minutes together with the President.

**3. Welcome and presentation of the City of Kemi, Mayor Tero Nissinen.**

The City of Kemi, with its 21 939 inhabitants, is the logistics centre for Lapland, the Bothnian Arc and the Barents area, also the centre of administration, commerce and services in the region. It was founded in 1869 by royal decree because of its proximity to a deep water harbour.

The main economic activity in Kemi is centred on two large paper and wood pulp mills Stora Enso and Metsä-Group and on the only chromium mine Outokumpu Kemi Mine in Europe. There is also Technology Centre - Techno-Village Digipolis which has about 500 places for employment.

Students can gain knowledge at Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Music Institute, Lappia Vocational College Kemi-Tornio, Summer University of Lapland.

Among the top priorities for the municipality there are: Arctic knowledge Projects, Kemi Custom and Sarana Enterprise areas, Sarius – Holiday and Leisure Centre Project, Development of the City Centre, Development of the Ajos Deep-water Port.

Kemi is famous for its great tourist attractions: SnowCastle, built every year for the last 20 years, a place for eating, sleeping and getting married. Another one is Icebreaker Sampo, offering cruises on the frozen Bothnian Bay, with a possibility to float in the sea dressed with rescue suites.

**4. Towards Circular Economy – Industrial Symbiosis in Kemi Region, Kari Poikela, Program Manager, Kemin Digipolis ltd.**

Kari Poikela, Program Manager, presented the unique innovation and pilot platform in Kemi Region.

Kemi-Tornio region is one of the most important Finnish regions in terms of industrial refinement and exports value. The region produces 80% of Lapland’s industrial production and creates 6% of Finland’s exports value.

Digipolis is mostly owned and funded by city of Kemi. It is a cooperation platform of the industry and SMEs in the field of industry services, arctic condition expertise and product life cycle management. There are 50 companies, 500 employees in the technology park.

The compact Kemi-Tornio area hosts a globally unique conglomeration of wood, steel and mining industry actors, all within a radius of 25 kilometres. The idea of the circular economy is to identify by-product flows with business potential, to find opportunities for their utilisation and to locate actors who will create new businesses sprouting from the associated ecological niches.

Lapland has also been chosen to one of the six model regions in EU in modern cluster strategy development. Its core theme is Sustainable utilisation of the arctic natural resources. The region should focus on refining of Arctic natural resources in a socially and ecologically sustainable manner, combined with high value added generation from natural resources in the region.

Among few questions from the audience there was a request to hear a concrete example of circular economy. Mr Poikela informed that the industrial waste in the area can be reused and circulated even in more innovative and holistic way than previously.

**5. Winter tourism in Kemi, CEO Susanna Koutonen, Kemi Tourism Company ltd.**

Susanna Koutonen, Kemi Tourism Company, presented three main tourist attractions in Kemi.

Sampo Icebreaker is the world’s only icebreaker that operates specifically for tourism purposes. It was built in 1960, and since 1987 it started to operate tourist courses. It can carry up to 150 tourists. The cruise includes the soup lunch, guided tour, swimming in the sea dressed in warm survival suits.

SnowCastle, was first time built in 1996. It is rebuilt every winter with a different architecture. The area comprise the SnowRestaurant with ice tables, SnowChapel for weddings and SnowHotel offering rooms. Every year there is a new theme of the SnowCastle, in 2015 it is: The way of Finland, and numerous symbols or Finnish legendary heroes are visible among decorations.

Kemi’s Gemstone Gallery was founded in 1986. It presents a large collection of gemstones and minerals. The collection also includes Crown designed for the king of Finland and a replica of the Imperial State Crown of Great Britain.

The amount of Asian tourists has doubled every year since 3-4 years due to the marketing and promoting campaign in Asia. Success factor in the international marketing is recommendations made by the visitors on the website and press releases send all year all over the world, especially to Asia.

**6. Report by the Strategy coordinator on implementation of UBC Strategy and developments, including the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Baltic Urban Forum for Smart Cities BUF.**

Mikko Lohikoski, UBC Strategy Coordinator, started his report on noting the active response by member cities in joining the new UBC Commissions. This was a most important development, of which we should be proud. “It also proves we are on the right track”, he said, stressing that this work must now be relentlessly continued.

The Strategy coordinator reminded that the current UBC Strategy, adopted for the years of 2010-2015, comes to its end this year, and the forthcoming General Conference in Gdynia shall adopt a new strategy for the coming years. It is of vital importance for the further development of UBC that the strategy process will be taken seriously so the new document will define our coming priorities and chart our work in the future. In order to prepare a successful strategy we have to critically analyze our achievements and failures during the last years in implementing the current strategy. Mr Lohikoski made a preliminary analysis about some aspects of the Strategy implementation, noting that we should be proud of what has been done by the Board, but stated also that much remains in front of us. He proposed, that the Board should entrust the Presidium, the Strategy coordinator and the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of the UBC strategy implementation (2010-2015) in time for the next June meeting of UBC Board, where it shall be discussed.

Mikko Lohikoski noted, that we also have to analyze the developments and changes in our operational environment – economic, social, political etc. – as well as in the way the Baltic sea cooperation has developed. For example, the EUSBSR – adopted at the same time as the UBC Strategy – has reached “early maturity” and we should analyze our role in its implementation. Also important for the new Strategy will be to analyze forthcoming challenges which we will face, in fields such as Baltic Sea cooperation, urban policies and role of cities in European governance, multicultural challenges, internal civil safety and security issues etc. The Presidium should invite representatives of UBC member cities in Brussels to contribute to this part of the Strategy preparation.

Mr Lohikoski reported some main outcomes from the first meeting (Kemi, 25.2.2015) of a Task force appointed to prepare the content of the UBC General Conference. He noted, that a strong emphasis was laid on strengthening the build-up process of the new UBC Commissions, and made a proposal that they will be consulted on this matter and that representatives of the new Commissions (up to three per Commission, including the one responsible for communication) will be invited to the next Executive Board meeting, where a day will be allocated to discuss the future work of Commissions, their relationship with the Executive Board.

Mr Lohikoski reminded, that the UBC Task Force on the Development of UBC organization, the report and recommendations of which has been approved by the Board, also contained important issues regarding renewal of the working methods of UBC – better and more precise preparation of Executive Board meetings, transparent election procedures, fostering more dialogue and exchange of opinions on common challenges, etc. He noted that these have to be implemented for the benefit of stronger UBC and that these issues must be taken on the agenda in the next Executive Board meetings.

Mr Lohikoski also reminded that the Strategy included the proposal to organize a bi-annual BSR Urban Forum, with aim to engage better also political decision makers of the member cities. He suggested to seek possible host city for such a Forum in Autumn 2016. The Strategy coordinator noted with delight the steps taken in the implementation of the UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy, and the active response of member cities in this work.

In conclusion, Mr Lohikoski noted that an application on Baltic Sea Forum for Smart Cities has been submitted to the Baltic Sea Programme by a consortium including UBC as key partner. This initiative, launched by the UBC, has great potential for the further development of UBC and its Commissions, he noted, and stressed that all commissions should seek to participate in this work.

**7. UBC Cultural Cities Commission plan of activities for 2015, Jaana Simula, City of Pori.**

Jaana Simula, Vice-Chair of the former Commission on Culture, informed that at the annual meeting of the Commission in Tallinn 12.11.2014 the legacy of the former and the vision of the new Commission were taken up.

The general vision of the Cultural Cities Commission is to work strategically and cross border with national and international bodies and to deal with sustainable and inclusive development within the EU Baltic Sea strategy and EU 2020 strategy. The Commission wants the cultural issues to be taken into account in all policies for developing the local level, in regional, national and international context.

Jaana Simula highlighted four objectives of the new Commission:

- Network based cultural cooperation, which includes among others development of the exchange program and promotion of a more intensive cooperation between the UBC cities

- Professionalization of the cultural field, e.g. by sharing new knowledge in social media

- Strategic partnerships with EUSBSR PA Culture, Ars Baltica, Nordic Council and others

- Research by developing programs together with: national or regional universities, city authorities and professional research institutes, etc.

The next Commission meetings are scheduled in March, June, October and December.

In the Action Plan the Commission intends, among others, to take part in different EU & Baltic conferences and seminars, prepare Seminar: Festival Production on the City Level, launch the project “Baltic festival managers’ cooperation” together with Ars Baltica, support the children's culture.

**8. Update on the flagship project of the Priority Area Secure of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region “Citizens for Safety”, Miłosz Jurgielewicz, City of Gdańsk.**

Miłosz Jurgielewicz, Safe Cities Commission, Gdańsk, presented the latest developments on the CiFoSa (Citizens for Safety) project.

Strengthening the cooperation and building the new links within the region to boost civil protection and urban safety management in a macro-regional context are the main goals of the EUSBSR flagship “Building urban safety through citizens participation”. The project has been financed from the Seed Money Facility, agreement signed in 2014. The total budget is 40,434.00 EUR (EU grant 34 368, 90 EUR).

The UBC Safe Cities Commission, as a partnership consisting of the municipalities, supports exchanging the best practices and initiatives that result in regionally unified strategies. Successful management of civil protection and urban safety has to be based on cost-efficient and society-oriented prevention activities. The flagship project “Building urban safety through citizens’ participation” is based on the EU 2020 Strategy principle that promotes usage of accessible online services and mobile devices technology.

The need for safety remains fundamental. Effective safety management in the cities requires coordination of work of many different actors (e.g. police or civil protection agencies). The Commission fosters and supports wide range of activities related to the safety from exchanging of experiences, through study visits, to mutual implementation of best practices among BSR cities. Most of the risks related to safety around BSR cities are very similar. The biggest obstacle, that has not been overcome yet, is different methodology of classifying and measuring of the data related to safety. It clogs free flow of information and limits mutual implementation of best practice. A platform for collecting data related to the feeling of safety among citizens will overcome existing limitations.

One of the outcomes of the project will be a common database – a reliable tool to compare and analyze the data on macro regional level. This will facilitate the exchange of experiences and circulation of the best practices around the BSR. The database will be set up as a free of charge and generally available online platform. The database correlated to the threat map would deliver a unified platform boosting cooperation between local actors on macro regional level. The project website will help cities improve their safety policy by gathering guidelines for real safety problems, practical examples for implementing and evaluation indicators. It is expected that this tool will cause greater citizen involvement in various participation programs in the field of security. As an outcome of this project, a survey was executed with around 700 answers.

**9. Information from the UBC Task Force on youth employment and well-being on the progress of work, Matti Mäkelä, Task Force chair, City of Turku.**

Matti Mäkelä, Task Force chair, presented the latest developments on the TF work.

The Task Force held three meetings in 2014 (Tampere, Turku and Karlskrona) and one in 2015, in Riga. So far, 22 experts representing 14 UBC cities have contributed to the work providing the answers and solutions to the top 7 questions:

1) How to motivate youngsters? Tools and methods

2) How to promote social entrepreneurship and social economics?

3) How to recognize and validate skills of the youngsters?

4) New ways for guidance and support of Immigrant-youngsters that arrived in their teens

5) How we can use new technology more efficiently in guidance, support and education?

6) Steps from ill-being to well-being and employment

7) How we help the system to become more diversity-friendly?

Mr Mäkelä presented the report which is divided into three sections:

- Statistics from different countries and cities

- Where are we now? where will we be tomorrow? – containing the challenges, existing solutions

 and innovations

- Where the magic happens (true success stories) – presenting the stories from the UBC cities

By 6 March the report is to be loaded at: www.koulutustakuu.fi/training-guarantee

Mr Mäkelä informed also about the plans for 2015. On 8 April the online meeting for TF partners will be held. In March – May the local workshops are planned. The third meeting of the TF will be organised in Næstved on 2 June. The final seminar will be probably held in connection with the UBC GC in Gdynia.

The Task Force is also to check for possible ESF funding to continue and deepen the cooperation between TF partners.

Mikko Lohikoski stressed that after the report with concrete proposals the work should be continued on using them. He added that the question of youth unemployment will be given more priority in the new Action Plan for the EUSBSR. The further UBC activity in this field could get finances from the Baltic Sea program. We could also promote this issue together with other BSR organisations and get some resources from them. We could organise a conference with other stakeholders. First of all we should utilise the EUSBSR Annual Forum (Jurmala 15-16 June 2015), have meetings there and promote this issue and the UBC.

President Per Bødker Andersen proposed that a keynote speaker on this issue could be invited to the General Conference in Gdynia.

The minutes from the meeting in Riga and the report are attached to the minutes.

**10. Promoting gender equality issues within UBC, proposal of the City of Umeå.**

At the previous meeting in Växjö, October 2014, the Board decided that the question how to promote the gender equality goals in UBC in the best way will be discussed at the following meeting in Kemi.

The city of Umeå was authorised to submit proposals how to handle gender equality issues within the UBC.

Linda Gustafsson, City of Umeå, reminded that the gender issues are horizontal and concern all aspects of life, they are also important for the EUSBSR. The City of Umeå submitted proposal to set up either the Working Group or the Commission (the Gendered City Commission). The proposal is attached to the minutes.

The Working Group would serve as experts and would suggest the new Commissions themes for considerations. WG could also encourage all UBC member cities to be signatories of the European charter for equality of women and men in local life of CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions).

The focus of the Gendered City Commission could be the awareness raising and creating knowledge. The Commission could be a partner in projects in the framework of implementation the EUSBSR. The Commission could also intercede with contacts to CEMR and EIGE (European Institute of Gender Equality).

City of Umeå prefers the option that the work on gender issues would be organised in the form of Commission. The City of Umeå offered to lead the Commission.

Mikko Lohikoski reminded that there is a criteria of sufficient number of cities interested in participating in the Commission. In the former Commission on Gender Equality there were not so many members. He advised to set up Working Group or a Task Force to deal with gender issues and to ask the new Commissions to add gender dimension to their Action Plans.

Mr Lohikoski suggested to check out which UBC member cities have already signed this European charter for equality of women and men in local life of CEMR. Then we could send the declaration to the other cities with information, which cities have already signed and encourage them to take this issue into discussion. Mayors could be also invited to GC in Gdynia to officially sign the declaration.

Hans-Otto Lund, City of Kristiansand, supported the idea of having the Working Group or a special rapporteur on gender issues within the framework of the Inclusive and Healthy Cities Commission.

Marie-Louise Rönnmark stressed the importance of continued work on disseminating knowledge on gender issues.

The Board emphasized that the Working Group on gender issues should be more connected to the member cities and cooperate closely with the new Commissions.

Decision:

The Board agreed, in principle, with the Umeå proposal to establish a Working group on Gender issues.

 The City of Umeå was invited to start the preparations of the WG, including invitations to member cities to nominate their representatives to the WG. The next Board meeting will confirm the WG provided that at least 5-7 cities from three or more countries have confirmed that they would work in the WG (same criteria as Commissions).

The WG is invited to prepare an action plan including priorities and concrete actions for the coming period (GC 2017) and a draft budget; these are to be presented to the Board for possible funding.

The Board decided to find out which UBC member cities have already signed the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life, by CEMR.

After that the President will write to the member Cities urging them to sign it. This signing ceremony could be arranged in the UBC GC in Gdynia, if possible, to demonstrate the issue. Also, a training event/seminar should be planned on the substance of the issue, either as part of the GC or otherwise.

The Commissions are requested to provide information how they intend to address the gender issues in their Action Plans.

**11. New structure of UBC Commissions.**

 - information on participation in Commissions by Member Cities

 - process to nominate Commission lead cities

 - nomination of Board contact persons to the Commissions

 - allocation of funds for 2015 - process

 - future steps for the consolidation of the new Commissions

President Andersen reminded that the UBC General Conference in Mariehamn authorized and obliged the Executive Board to decide on the new Commissions' structure to enter into force on 1 January 2015.

At the Board meeting in Växjö 29 October 2014, the Task Force appointed by the Executive Board, submitted the proposal to create Commissions thematically and operationally. As a result, they shall be more relevant, viable and active, attracting more member cities. The improvement of efficiency of newly structured Commissions was strongly emphasized.

In Växjö the Board decided the following Commissions would be created if there is sufficient interest among the member cities: Cultural cities, Inclusive and healthy cities, Planning Cities, Safe cities, Smart and prospering cities, Sustainable cities, Youthful cities.

The member cities were asked to nominate a representative to each Commission they are going to participate during the period 2015-2017 by 15 February 2015.

Secretary General Paweł Żaboklicki informed on the number of cities that signed up to the respective commissions including proposals to take the leadership as follows:

- Cultural cities, 32 cities, leader city of Pori

- Inclusive and healthy cities, 25 cities, no proposal of leader yet

- Planning Cities, 37, leader city of Aarhus

- Safe cities, 26, leader city of Gdańsk

- Smart and prospering cities, 33, leader city of Kiel

- Sustainable cities, 35, leader city of Turku

- Youthful cities, 28, leader city of Turku in 2015, city of Gävle since 2016

Decision:

The Board shall nominate its contact persons to each Commission.

The Commissions will be requested to submit Action Plans. The Board authorised the Presidium to allocate funding for Commissions activities in 2015 based on submitted action plans.

Commissions will be asked to hold launch meetings preferably before the Board meeting in June.

This meeting should elect – for the period until 2017 General Conference – the chair, vice-chair (or two co-chairs) as well as other (2–4) members of a small steering group. The host city of Commission Secretariat should be confirmed when applicable.

The Board authorised the Presidium to allocate the needed funds to the Commissions for the start up work.

**12. Implementation of Communication & marketing strategy, UBC Communications Manager Irene Pendolin.**

UBC Executive Board approved the Plan of Action for UBC Communications and Marketing 2014–2015 in Växjö on 29 October 2015. Irene Pendolin, UBC Communications Manager, presented the report from the activities that followed up.

Irene Pendolin informed that on 15-16 April 2015 the Communications Seminar for representatives of the new Commissions, cities’ communication experts and possibly other stakeholders will be held in Turku.

One of the issues discussed is the UBC website. Its renewal is part of the larger process that comprises renewing the whole UBC look: logo, visualities, typography, etc. All these elements are part of strengthening the UBC brand. The change is not only about mechanism, but also about new ways of working and connecting within the organisation, between cities, commissions, and UBC administration. Also, creating UBC intranet – internal website, should be taken into consideration.

The UBC brand should be more recognizable, both internally and externally. The UBC’s services and know-how should be known to the member cities. The possibilities of getting involved and benefitting from the UBC activities and work should be widely communicated. The proposal of the UBC Communications Network could help to meet this challenge.

More information is available in the documents attached to the minutes.

**13. XIII UBC General Conference in Gdynia, 27-30 October 2015.**

 Multimedia presentation of the Conference facilities – City of Gdynia

 Proposal from the working group on the main Conference theme

 Preparation of the General Conference issues, including time-table

 New Strategy of the UBC – preparatory process

Monika Pawlińska, City of Gdynia, presented the conference centre in the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia which will be the venue of the UBC GC. The auditorium can seat up to 300 guests. The centre is also equipped with smaller conference halls that can be used for workshops. The centre provides multimedia projectors and projection screens, audio, TV and DVD devices, as well as a wireless Internet. Presentation on General Conference venue facilities is attached to the minutes.

On 25 February 2015 the meeting of the Working Group set up by the Presidium was held in Kemi.

The meeting raised a number of important guidelines and themes to be taken into account when preparing the General Conference.

A number of topics were raised and the broad agreement was that the overall theme of the open forum at the General Conference session could be “Building smart cities in the Baltic Sea Region”.

This overall broad theme would allow to discuss challenges of our cities from various angles – economic, cultural, safety, participatory, equality etc – covering fields of all Commissions.

The Board stressed that we should emphasize the role of our new Commissions in preparing the General Conference. This means in practice, that the Commissions will be invited to participate actively in the GC programme. In this way, the General Conference would strengthen the beginning of the Commission work - and thus the whole UBC.

As we have to proceed with the first invitations to Member Cities, VIP guests and partners, the Board members were asked to comment the proposed theme by 20 March 2015.

**14. Financial matters.**

Secretary General presented the financial report for 2014. Mr Żaboklicki informed the income was mostly generated by the membership fees and the assets saved in 2013. The main expenditure were: the costs of the commissions, meetings including Executive Board sessions, services/maintenance, etc. Five annexes are attached to the report: membership fees, expenditure of UBC commissions, contributions to the secretariats, projects with external funding, cities’ contributions to the UBC events. The report is attached to the minutes.

Secretary General presented also the proposal of the UBC budget for 2015. The budget proposal is attached to the minutes.

Decision:

The Board took note of the report and approved the budget for 2015.

The Board decided the amount of funding to each Commission will depend on the submitted Action Plan. The Board authorised the Presidium to make a decision in question after the Commissions have submitted the Action Plans.

The Board decided that no more than 40% can be spent by the lead city(s) for: secretariat, remunerations (including projects), subcontractors, travel, mailing, office supplies, promotion materials. Changes in the commission budget require President's approval.

**15. Any other business.**

Application for membership from the city of Bergen auf Rügen, Germany.

The President informed that UBC received an application from the city of Bergen auf Rügen, Germany, to join the Union of the Baltic Cities.

The Board decided to accept Bergen auf Rügen as a member of the Union of the Baltic Cities and wished Bergen auf Rügen a successful cooperation with other UBC member cities.

**16. Next meeting of the Executive Board, Charlotta Valley, 10-14 June 2015 and accompanying events: UBC BBQ Championship, Youth Rock Bands, Moto Fest, information from the host.**

Waldemar Sypiański, Vice-Chair of former Commission on Business, Ustka, on behalf of Mirosław Wawrowski, the owner of UBC Partner member Charlotta Valley (http://www.dolinacharlotty.pl/en), invited the Board to hold the 73rd Board Meeting in Charlotta Valley, on 10-14 June 2015.

All member cities are invited to attend the open session of the Board meeting and the accompanying events: UBC BBQ Championships, review of Youth Rock Bands from UBC cities, Charlotta Moto Fest.

The Board accepted the invitation and encouraged the member cities to take active part in the Executive Board meeting and the accompanying events to be held in Charlotta Valley on 10-14 June 2015.

The meeting documents are available at:

http://www.ubc.net/documentation,76,3116.html

Per Bødker Andersen Paweł Żaboklicki

Chairperson Secretary

Satu Heikkinen Wiesław Bielawski

Adjuster Adjuster