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**UBC´s Executive Board Meeting  
Notes of Communications Network meeting**

**11June 2015 Dolina Charlotty, Poland**

**1. Ubc.net working group**

Ubc.net working group was established:

Head of WG:

UBC Communications Manager Anna Kotaviita

Members:

Present in Dolina Charlotty:

Carsten Adamsen (Kolding), Satu Heikkinen (Jyväskylä), Miłosz Jurgielewicz (Gdansk / Safe Cities Comm. Officer), Natalia Vecvagare (Liepaja)

Not present in Dolina Charlotty / need to be confirmed:

Christina Karlsson (Växjö), Esther Kreutz (Turku, Sustainable Cities Comm. Officer), Esa Linna (Jyväskylä), Lena Modin (Gävle)

+ Gdansk UBC Secretariat personnel

+ Commissions’ Communications Officers who will be appointed by their Commissions

Questions / to be defined:  
What is the main focus for the networking group? Content, structure etc., making a list of time limits and responsibilities (🡪 Communications Manager).

# 2. Pitching session

**Group 1**

UBC – become part of the network to foster sustainable, smart and safe cities

UBC – 2000 professionals in 100 cities working with …. to foster sustainable, smart and safe cities

BOOST your professional skills – join the UBC network

UBC – Working together to help all of us becomes better cities (in xxx) …

Have an idea for city development – join the UBC and share it with the BSR

UBC – to steal ideas from other cities

Want a solution for your challenges/problems – join the UBC

UBC – Coffee club of international cities in BSR

Need a partner? UBC – the best matchmaker in Europe

Need a boost – Ask your UBC colleagues for it!

**Group 2**

Future oriented, smart and open organisation with long and rich history

Behind it, sharing its experience to inspire other organisations and cities

Inspiring: Future is the Union of the Baltic Cities, we are united by different themes, which we have managed to combine. We have already solved many problems together and will do so also in the future.

# Group 3

Cooperation

Providing solutions for cities

Professionals for people

Sharing knowledge

Simple and touchy messages to the citizens

A Family of Cities

Friends of Helping Hands

Active members

🡪 Simple messages that can be easily spread

🡪 The UBC is about sharing knowledge

Active members – municipalities, activating into inner communications

Problem: language barrier, not enough of experts with language skills

Targets and achievements

There is a problem on how to explain to regular citizens what the UBC does, how to communicate it in simple messages.

We should create messages that everybody can relate to (everybody wants to be in a family etc.)

Using powerful key words like family, helping etc.

It is up to the existing members of UBC to promote UBC and make us as a more active organisation

Only 30–40 cities of current members are actually active – we come again to the question should we actively invite more cities to join UBC.

We have to be critical of ourselves and involve our own municipalities more in the (UBC) communication.

Many municipalities would like to be more active but they don’t have the capacity to appoint their specialists into every commission.

Also, communicating in English can be a problem so the cities can sometimes choose only one or two people to be involved in UBC. This is a barrier we somehow have to work with.

**Conclusions / discussion:**

# 🡪 These pitching sentences are touchier and down to earth (compared to the long, more complicated ones we use now) and more like the messages we want to use in online and all UBC communications – of course keeping in mind the professional content and messages we want to convey.

# 🡪 Right now the messages on the website are too complicated and difficult to understand.

# 🡪 Too complicated organizational speech can do harm instead of bringing us closer (to each other). In modern communications it is more about reaching people and talking their language than going behind very difficult organizational structures and descriptions.

🡪 Pitching is about emotions, not so much about knowledge. Of course we have to deliver (our messages and services), but we shouldn’t hide behind structures. Pitching should be about emotions.

🡪 Simple messages about what we are and what we do.

# 3. Ubc.net brainstorming session

**Categories**

1. Best functions and contents at the moment in ubc.net, should be kept

2. Unnecessary functions and contents that should be changed or deleted

3. New things to be added

**A. Target group: General Public**

* Events calendar

1. Month/day
2. Mobile friendly

* Events calendar should be accessible to the cities so that they can update it easily themselves.
* Mobile application: possibility to search for events according to location?
* About UBC
* “About UBC” section is needed
* What and where 🡪 Possibility for a virtual map?
* Less text, more pictures
* Commissions
* “Commissions” section is needed
* Picture gallery
* UBC events
* “How UBC works” – this should be clearly defined
* List of Commissions and their contact persons
* UBC in your city
  + This could be done with a map application?
  + Information on the cities and their contact persons
* UBC news
  + Recent news (what has been done)
  + News carousel
* Social media icons (links)
* More pictures, less text!

**Conclusions / discussion:**

🡪Going through statistics of different ubc.net pages before deleting contents and functions

🡪Marketing of cultural etc. events should be done in the member cities – possibility to not include events calendar in the new website (only UBC calendar), events and news woul be concentrated only on UBC.

🡪 We need to cut down on the number of pages, at the moment we have too much information on the pages that is also partly overlapping.

**B. Target group: Stakeholders**

* Documents
  + Search function for contact persons?
* Commissions
  + Possibilities: what does the UBC offer?
  + Bringing forth the member cities through the work they do in the commissions: news etc.
* Most relevant publications
* Member cities
* Search function
* UBC events: General Conference, Executive Board meetings etc.
* Should there be or not be cultural events calendar?
* Different possibilities that UBC offers
* News
  + There should be more news. They could also be applied in the possible digital newsletter (published e.g. three times per year).
* Virtual Map
  + Possibility to e.g. search for cities of specific size and their contact persons?
* Documentation Center / Database
  + Arranging information according to topics
  + Documentation center should be online available to all – this benefits transparency –

“There’s nothing to hide”

* + Information can also be accessed by the media, researchers etc.
  + Everyone should be able to update documents online – avoiding overlapping and too many emails 🡪 Intranet?
* Funding
  + Not the main UBC function – should be deleted or placed somewhere less central?

**C. Target groups: Partners**

What is the UBC? What does the UBC do?

🡪 UBC’s main functions and news

In addition, these should be included:

* Commissions’ main activities
  + Commissions’ functions and meaning should be clear
* Documents!
  + Only the strategies? Less is enough?
* Information how to join the UBC, fees and values
* Contacts
  + Contacts should be easily found

**Conclusions / discussion:**

🡪 Only word documents, no pdf’s if can be avoided, so the information is more usable

🡪 How can the cities communicate more actively about the UBC in their own cities?

🡪Using more cloud services to avoid too many emails

🡪 Boost campaigns in the cities – UBC could provide a basic ”tool kit” (information kit) which the cities can utilize. Useful especially to new member cities?

🡪In the end, the member cities decide themselves how they wish to communicate about the UBC and what their city’s role in the UBC is – should we focus more on what to tell (messages) than how?

🡪 Communications matrix can be a useful tool in internal communications – could be updated through the intranet.