UBC Conference
The Impact of the European Refugees Crisis in the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region
in Rostock / Germany, 14-16 March, 2016

December, 2015

Esteemed member of the UBC, esteemed Mayor,

The recent weeks are holding us under constant tension because the conflicts in Middle East and Africa reached the Baltic Sea region. Hundreds of thousands, even millions of persons from those regions are trying to get away from imminent danger and pain. They know that it could take years to solve the armed conflicts in their national territories, mainly caused due to civil war and occupation by terror organisations and oppressive regimes. That means they cannot expect a normal life in peace and that they would be excluded from education, normal development and chances, being the growing and following generations condemned to poorness. So many of them are looking for shelter, a save stay and opportunites in the Baltic Sea region.

The arrival of that huge, steadily increasing number of refugees leads many cities in our region to their limits and beyond. Housing, clothing, food, medical care, schooling, language teaching, employment for hundreds or even thousands of persons – all this has to be provided and mastered within shortest time, in fact, instantly.

To which extent cities are demanded depends strongly from the national asylum policy, i.e. how many persons are being received in the country, and to how many locations they have to be distributed. That means that in our region the situation of the cities may differ considerably.

The mayors of the involved cities now carry an additional responsibility for persons who are still not able to sustain themselves. A lot of extraordinary measures has to be taken. Many cities already have experience in how to achieve integration of groups of persons from other cultures. There, citizens with foreign roots in the first or second generation have their associations, clubs, meeting centres etc. helping them to manage life in a new and different social environment. This advantage is helpful when it comes to large numbers.

But there are also new requirements in the field of public order and security. We had to learn that adherents of terror organizations try to mingle in between the refugees in order to infiltrate easier the European countries, with the aim to destabilize these societies by destructive and bloody acts of violence. So it is very important to avoid situations, which could make it simple for terrorists to hide among the newcomers. On the other hand, for a good living together of persons from different origins it seems that all inhabitants will have to learn new lessons of tolerance and mutual understanding.

Dear Mayor, as recently announced at the XIII UBC General Conference in Gdynia, a UBC Conference on **The Impact of the European Refugees Crisis in the Cities of the Baltic Sea Region** will take place in Rostock / Germany from 14 till 16 March, 2016. On behalf of the Union of the Baltic Cities and the Hanseatic City of Rostock we have the great pleasure of inviting you to share your experiences with your UBC colleagues. Please, save the date and expect detailed information which will be delivered within short time. It would be important to hear the facts from your city as well as your points of view. All experiences, informations, methods etc. are worthy! They need to be spread to help each other mastering this challenge - perhaps the biggest for our cities in this epoque. In case you might not be able to take part, we would appreciate very much listening to your rapporteur. The outcome of the conference is planned to be reported to the corresponding levels of the European Union. The cites should make their voices heard because there is the field where the problems have to be tackled and solved.

Looking forward to welcoming you in Rostock,

Per Bødker Andersen
UBC President

Roland Methling
Mayor of the Hanseatic City of Rostock