

NEW COMMISSION ON EDUCATION



The Commission on Education is the newest UBC Commission established at the 21st Executive Board meeting in Klaipėda, on 26 June 1998.

The targets for this commission will be to offer the member cities good possibilities for exchange of experiences and to bring up new initiatives for joint EU-projects on competence improvement. At its first meeting, the Commission on Education will discuss the following main fields of activities: pupils, students and teachers exchange, distance education and adult projects.

Pupils, students and teachers exchange.

There are a lot of initiatives and exchange activities that UBC members are experienced with. The Commission will discuss how to support and take initiative to organise an exchange network between pupils, students and teachers among UBC members.

Distance education projects. The UBC members are already experienced with distance education projects between cities and in the Baltic Region. This experience shows that it is a very efficient mean in regional development, cross-boarder cooperation and networking. Some of the ongoing and planned projects are aimed at jointly developed business management, marketing, language, EU-knowledge, environment, sustainable tourism and IT-know-how. These projects will gain in widening them to include more cities and regions in the Baltic Sea Region. Other projects in this field can use the UBC network to find the right partners to formulate an application for EU-founding. This will be discussed in one special workshop during the first commission meeting.

Adult education projects. A lot of the Baltic Sea Regions give priority to adult educational. At its first meeting the Commission on Education will discuss how to support joint program for adult education and cooperation between UBC member organisations.

Many UBC members have announced their interest to join the new commission, among else to exchange information on different educational matters. The first commission meeting will discuss how to develop a functioning and easily managed

information routines on these matters. A special question to answer is on what educational levels the commission should concentrate its initiatives and activities. This question will also be handled at the first commission meeting.

The first Commission Meeting will be held in Norrtälje, Sweden, on 27-28 of November. The Commission will discuss what specific targets will be worked out and how the commission will be organised to live up to the expectations the UBC members. All members will have an invitation to this first meeting.

So far 25 UBC members have announced that they will join the Commission on Education. The lead cities for the Commission are Norrtälje in Sweden and Kärdla in Estonia.

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EU COORDINATOR PROJECT

In 1997 the City of Pärnu put forward the idea of building a network of EU coordinators in UBC member cities. The UBC-EU Information Project that was carried out during 1997 clearly showed the need for information on EU for local authorities. The EU Coordinator Project is one of the outcomes of the UBC-EU Project. The leading cities of the Commission of Communication, Kalmar and Riga, have agreed to arrange a preparatory meeting in Riga late November or early December. An invitation to the meeting will be distributed to all UBC member cities in the beginning of October.

The background to the project is the present process of integration between the European Union and the transition countries in the Baltic Sea Region. In order to meet this challenge several cities have installed EU coordinators in their staff and still more are planning to do so in the near future.

One main task for the EU coordinators is to create networks within the local municipal administration and public sector. This network will spread information about the EU funds and programs, support the development of new projects, assist with the preparation of applications to the EU and keep in contact with EU representatives.

Another main task is to match the obligations that follows with a membership with the possibilities of receiving support from the EU. As the EU coordinators constitutes an entirely new profession in local authorities there is a great need to create a network in order to exchange information and experiences.

The aim of the project is to shape this network of EU coordinators in the UBC member cities. Information tools for dissemination and exchange of information will be created to serve the network properly, i.e. a database on EU issues available on the UBC homepage and e-mail list for the EU coordinators.

The preparatory meeting will give all partners the opportunity to discuss and agree on the content of the project. This will be carried through during the meeting by making a survey of the needs of the different partner cities and creating a network for the continuation of the project. The outcome of the preparatory meeting will result in an application to the EU program SWEBALTCOP. The cities Riga and Kalmar will take responsibility for preparing the application. The project will start in January or February 1999 if the application is approved. All UBC member cities that have plan or consider to create an EU Coordinator position are welcome to participate in the project.

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