

COMMISSION ON CULTURE

ACTIVITY REPORT OCTOBER 2005 – SEPTEMBER 2007

A meeting about cultural cooperation was made during the UBC General Conference in Turku on 1st of October 2005, with 9 participants from various cities. The meeting was led by the Chairperson of the Commission on Culture, resulting mostly in giving information about the background and activities of this unique Commission.

The Board of the Commission on Culture had a separate meeting in connection with the Session in St. Petersburg in 2005, with an evaluation of this Session that was made together with some of the participants. The Board decided, among other things, to move its secretariat from Szczecin to Visby 2006-2007, to accept a proposed Action plan 2006-2007 and the idea of the Chairperson Tarja Hautamäki to establish a cultural prize.

The 8th Annual Session was successfully realized by Izvara museum in Cooperation with the city of St. Petersburg 6 – 9 of December 2005 with a focus on the theme “The Role and Value of the Museums in the Modern World”. The Commission on Culture presented a report about this Session in the UBC Bulletin 1/2006, a publication based on the various speeches that was produced by St. Petersburg, printed and distributed with support from the Commission on Culture.

The Board of the Commission met in Umeå on 21-22 of April 2006, with support from the secretary Georg Gyllenfjell, Visby. The Board discussed the publication about the Session in St. Petersburg, the rules of election of members to the Board, its budget, plans for the future and other matters.

The Board of the Commission on Culture met in Vaasa 23 of November 2006. According to the minutes of the meeting, the city of Cesis was the first to receive the UBC Cultural Prize that is established by the Commission. The Board planned future activities, the election of a new Board etc.

The Annual Session of 2006 was also held in Vaasa 24-25 of November 2006 on the theme “Cultural Festivals as Strengtheners of Local Identity” with 11 lecturers and also parallell group works, discussions, etc. The session gathered together 40 participants. All countries around the Baltic Sea except Denmark were represented. The Participants could also experience some of the great Wildlife Vaasa Film Festival during these days.

The Festival of the Baltic Cities was held for the first time in St. Petersburg 15-18 June 2006. The chairperson of the Commission on Culture was invited to the organizing committee of the festival. Board member Olga Cherkasova was representing the Commission on Culture in the opening panel and in the closing round-table discussion of the festival. The Commission on Culture and the organizers of the festival are discussing of different ways to co-operate in the future. The second chairperson Olov Gibson participated in a meeting during the Festival in Kaunas in May 2007 with representants from various cities and from the Baltic International Festival Center in St. Petersburg – see www.baltichouse.spb.ru

The EU Committé of the Regions had an interesting meeting in Brussels on 20 June 2006, that Olov Gibson could participate in with financial support from the UBC Secretariat in Gdansk, that has received his report from this meeting. It was led by the Commissioner Jan Figel on the theme “The European Policy of Education and Culture; its contribution to the success of the Lisbon Strategy, the role of the regions and cities”.

The cultural network Les rencontres had a meeting in Rovaniemi on 23 – 25 of August 2006. The Chairman of the Commission on Culture participated actively as the representative of the Commission. Les rencontres is a forum for lectures and discussion about european cultural policies.

The Catalogue of Cultural Institutions, presented on www.ubc.net was updated by the Secretariat of the Commission on Culture, Visby. From 2006 it has been completed with a new network of cultural institutions around the Lake Victoria, in order to stimulate contacts with and within the sister organisation of UBC: Lake Victoria Regional and Local Authorities Cooperation (LVRLAC).

During the 47th meeting of the UBC Executive Board in Gdynia 19 – 20 of October 2006 the Commission on Culture was represented by its chairpersons that presented the activities of the Commission and participated in the discussions about the structure and future of the UBC Commissions.

The Board of the Commission met in Visby 3rd of May 2007 to plan its election of a new Board and one of the workshop named “Culture as a driving force for municipal development” in Pärnu 27 – 30 of September 2007. It also proposed to the next Board themes for the future Annual Working Session: Youth Culture, Libraries, Culture Education, Cultural Tourism and Underground Culture. dicussed budget matters etc.

The 10th Working Session in Visby 4 – 5 of May 2007 was named “European means for cultural cooperation” and had 8 lecturers, among them representatives from Ars Baltica, Les Rencontres, Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish National Council of Cultural Affairs. The Session attracted 45 participants all together, which also discussed in groups how to apply fundings from the EU cultural programme Culture 2007 and others.

The World Public Forum of Civilizations organized a Regional Conference “European Civilization Space: Baltic Dialogue” in Tampere 4 – 5 of June 2007. The chairperson of the Commission on Culture was invited to the conference as a speaker.

The 7th Baltic Biennial of Contemporary Art – transRobota was opened at the National Museum in Szczecin 4 August – 9 September 2007. The exhibition was themed as an examination of globalization’s effect on labor trends and patterns in the new Millenium.

The Board of the Commission participates in the **IX UBC General Conference** in Pärnu 27 – 28 of September 2007, especially responsible for the Report of the Commission, the workshop “Culture as driving force for municipal development” and for the mentioned election of a new Board for the Commission on Culture 2008 – 2011.

ACTION PLAN 2008 - 2009

The Commission on Culture will arrange the election of a new Board of this Commission during the IX UBC General Conference in Pärnu 27 – 28 of September 2007. The Action Plan for further activities mentioned here, is only to be regarded as suggestions to the next Board, which will take over from 1st of January 2008:

1. The newest initiative of the CoC Board is the creation of the UBC Cultural Prize, which will recognize extraordinary achievement by artistic groups or associations working in the field of cultural activity in UBC member cities. The idea is that the Board invites the cities to candidate for that prize once a year and that the prize has a special theme each year.
2. The traditional Annual Working Sessions initiated by the Board or by the member cities should continue with focus on a special cultural field each year.
3. The Cooperation with St. Petersburg Baltic International Festival Center about the “Festival of Baltic Cities” will be developed and better marketed.
4. The Commission will keep the Catalogue of Cultural Institutions at www.ubc.net updated and develop contacts with other cultural networks, for example Les Rencontres and European Capitals of Culture.
5. The Commission on Culture shall be more well known by producing a presenting leaflet.
6. The Commission is cooperating with the UBC Choir Festival 2008, in Vaasa.
7. The present Board will eventually have its last meeting in Cesis later in 2007.

Tarja Hautamäki
Chairperson
City of Vaasa