



Title	Final Minutes
Submitted by	SDD, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document provides the final minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 th June 2009
Requested action	Signing

ERB Executive Board and Council

Mr Jacek Protas	ERB President, Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Mr Arunas Burksas	ERB Vice-President, Klaipėda County
Ms Cajsa Augustzén	ERB Youth Board Chair, Södra Småland
Ms Marie-Louise Hilmersson	ERB Board member, Södra Småland
Mr Åke Nilsson	ERB Board member, Kalmar
Mr Per Ole Petersen	ERB Board member, Bornholm
Mr Mihail Pluhin	ERB Board member, Kaliningrad
Ms Suzanne Svensson	ERB Council member, Blekinge

ERB Secretariats / Working Groups

Mr Ulf Andersson	ERB Secretariat, Södra Småland
Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	ERB Secretariat, Bornholm
Mr Erik Ciardi	ERB Secretariat, Kalmar
Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański	International Permanent Secretariat
Ms Marie Fridh	ERB Secretariat, Region Blekinge
Ms Adriana Gniado-Turkowska	ERB Local Initiative Working Group, Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Ms Carolina Gunnarsson	ERB Water Working Group, Kalmar
Mr Hans Håkansson	ERB Transport Infrastructure Working Group, Blekinge
Ms Annika Henesey	Region Blekinge
Ms Karen Lynn Jacobsen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Elena Koroleva	Government of Kaliningrad Region
Mr Victor Koshelev	ERB Secretariat, Kaliningrad Region
Ms Agata Kosno	ERB Local Initiative Working Group, Blekinge
Mr PG Lindencrona	ERB Secretariat, Blekinge
Mr Jon Madsen	ERB Local Initiative Working Group, Bornholm
Ms Agata Nazar	Secretariat of ERB Association of Polish Communes
Mr Henrik Eybye Nielsen	ERB Transport Infrastructure Working Group, Bornholm

Mr Zdzisław Olszewski	Secretariat of ERB Association of Polish Communes
Ms Victoria Snioliene	ERB Secretariat, Klaipeda County
Ms Kora Stańczyk	Pomorskie Marshal Office
Mr Rafał Wolski	Wamińsko-Mazurskie Marshal Office
Ms Krystyna Wróblewska	Pomorskie Marshal Office
Mr Piotr Zwolak	Wamińsko-Mazurskie Marshal Office

1. Opening

ERB Board President, Mr Jacek Protas welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.

President Jacek Protas gave the following address to the participants in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of 2004 EU Enlargement.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

1st May 2009 marked the fifth anniversary of the EU Enlargement. The accession of, inter alia, Lithuania and Poland to the European Union was a historical milestone when real rapprochement with the other European states and nations took place, which is proved by our presence here as well. It should well be noted on this occasion that Lithuania and Poland have a long tradition of co-existence within one union of states. Between 1385 and 1795 they were merged through the personal union first, and then the real union. In its heyday Polish – Lithuanian Union was a leading actor on the political and economic map of Europe. Today, we can refer to this common experience of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect, and thus exercise significant influence on the shape of the present Union.

Membership in the EU is a unique chance, a chance we cannot waste, a chance for security and welfare for all countries in Europe. It brings together the inhabitants of our countries to the extent which until recently had not been possible to reach. It opens new areas of cooperation for us politicians but also creates perspectives for ordinary people, especially for young people. Our task is to make a good use of these new possibilities. Instruments which we have at our disposal can help to resolve the problems that our societies face.

The EU Enlargement was the crowning achievement of long lasting efforts initiated by the protest of shipyard workers here in Gdansk in August 1980 and highlighted by the first free elections in Poland on 4th June 1989. We have just celebrated the 20th anniversary of those remarkable events when for the first time in our post-war history one nation of the Eastern bloc countries could freely decide about its fate, the course of changes and elect its representatives. The Polish elections of 1989 turned out be an impulse for other countries of the Eastern Europe which sparked off the rapid process of regaining independence and democratization.

One of the consequences of the changes which took place twenty years ago has been the increase of the importance of local and regional authorities in our countries. In result, we can meet in such a company as we are today. Consequently, we could also bring into existence Euroregion Baltic.

This year we are also celebrating one more anniversary in Euroregion Baltic: the fifth anniversary of establishing International Permanent Secretariat which was set up as a result of the discussion, initiated during the Danish Presidency, on enhancing institutional capacities within Euroregion Baltic. The Secretariat is a coordinative body not only in our everyday activities but also in these key issues related to the implementation of the ERB Joint Development Programme. Throughout the past five years Euroregion has gone a long way from the moment when we agreed in our joint strategy to the present time when the implementation of the specific strategy action begins. Let me here thank the Association of Polish Communes for granting the legal personality to the Secretariat, which makes it possible for all of us to implement joint projects: Seagull II in the past and possible a future one which we will today debate on.

It must be stressed that the tightening of cooperation within Euroregion Baltic has also been accompanied by its growing significance on the international arena. Our active involvement in European debates on Schengen, EU Cohesion Policy, European Neighbourhood Policy and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has been acclaimed by our state, EU institutions and other Baltic organisations.

Naturally, such a dynamic development of Euroregion Baltic would have not been possible without commitment and support offered by all the partners. Therefore, on my own behalf as well as of my predecessors' here in this seat, let me express gratitude and appreciation for your work and invaluable contribution to the

development of our South – Eastern corner of the Baltic Sea Region and to the construction of long lasting relations among our regions.

2. **More contributions**

ERB Executive Board member, Mr Per Ole Petersen presented his reflections on the occasion.

2004 EU Enlargement was undoubtedly historical and worth celebrating. It concluded the reforms taking place in the Central and Eastern European countries which accelerated especially with the first democratic elections in Poland on 4th June twenty years ago.

The Polish elections formed the basis for the rebuilding of close contacts and cooperation between Bornholm and our neighbours in Poland, which has been of significant benefit for both parties.

The reforms in Poland and the other Central and Eastern countries, and the EU Enlargement, have had enormous political, economical and cultural effects on Bornholm, as well as on the development of the whole Baltic Sea Region.

Without the reforms in Poland we would not be sitting here today! For this and many other good reasons we from Bornholm would like to express our congratulations to our colleagues in Poland!

ERB Executive Board member, Mr Åke Nilsson, on behalf of the Swedish delegation, expressed satisfaction and gratitude on the occasion, congratulating Lithuania and Poland, new member states in the European Union, on their accession and development since 2004.

3. **Adoption of the agenda**

ERB Executive Board approved of the present agenda.

4. **Adoption of 11.09.08 ERB Board Meeting minutes**

ERB President, Mr Jacek Protas and ERB Board member, Mr Per Ole Petersen placed their signatures in the approval of the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place in Kaliningrad on 22nd January 2009 and of the minutes of the online meeting on 6th April 2009.

5. **Request by the Association of Polish Communes ERB**

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański presented a request by the Association of Polish Communes that the ERB Executive Board is extended with their representative, following the approval of necessary changes in the ERB Statutes by the ERB Council.

The arguments behind the request included that of the Association of Polish Communes being one of the founding partners of Euroregion Baltic, which since 2004 has been hosting ERB International Permanent Secretariat. The Association of Polish Communes has supported international cooperation within ERB by offering its accounting services to IPS and equipping Euroregion Baltic with a legal status, e.g. necessary in leading the Seagull II project.

After the request was presented, the discussion began. Mr Ulf Andersson said the Swedish delegation considered the request justifiable but would rather not introduce the ERB Statutes. Therefore, he continued, he would propose that the Association is given the status of a permanent observer without the voting right. On behalf of the Danish delegation, ERB Board member, Mr Per Ole Petersen said he was very positive to the request. The condition of the approval must be, he added, that the two Polish regions also accept it. On behalf of the Russian delegation, ERB Board member, Mr Mihail Pluhin thought that the Statutes should be changed to enable a seat in the Board to the Association considering the amount of work done by the Association for Euroregion Baltic. On behalf of the Lithuanian delegation, ERB Board member, Mr Arunas Burksas agreed with the argument presented by Mr Pluhin.

ERB President, Mr Jacek Protas, informed the Board that the request gained support of all the Polish partners within Euroregion Baltic. He proposed to the Board, asking the Swedish delegation if they find it acceptable, that the International Secretariat should prepare concrete formal proposal to be presented to the Board on 7th October 2009. Mr Ulf Andersson said the Swedish delegation was very positive to the request. ERB Board agreed to the procedure proposed.

6. Information on the upcoming events

6.1 Conference on Baltic Sea Strategy and Eastern Partnership

Mr Rafał Wolski informed the Board that the Conference will have this preliminary title: "Around the Baltic Sea – European inspirations" and be organized in Ryn by the Office of the Marshal of Warminsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship and Committee of the Regions on 15 – 17 September 2009. This event will gather around 80 participants: politicians of Committee of the Regions, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rivne Regional Administration from Ukraine and representatives of the regions of Euroregion Baltic. The official part will be on the 16th of September and it will be divided into two sessions:

*The Baltic Sea – European gate to the East, and
(Euro)region Baltic – The center of modern interregional cooperation.*

The first session will be devoted to the Eastern Partnership, as seen from the European Union and Ukrainian perspective, with input from Polish Government, the Committee of the Regions and Rivne Region. The second session will be about Euroregion Baltic as a model of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, with presentation of its achievements and multilateral cooperation of its member regions. The programme of the seminar will also contain some insight into EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. During the seminar the final document will be discussed and adopted. Interpretation in Russian and English will be provided. Costs of food and accommodation will be covered by Marshal Office, while transport by participants (tbc). Invitations will be sent out to the members of the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board.

6.2 ERB Executive Board in Brussels

ERB Board meeting and a seminar co-organised with the Committee of the Regions will be held on 7th October. Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski informed the Board that preparations are underway.

6.3 Almedalen 2009

Mr PG Lindencrona talked about the Baltic Sea Region Strategy seminar to be held during Almedalen Week on Gotland on 29 June 2009 by the Swedish regions. The aim was to discuss the role of the local and regional authorities in the implementation of the Strategy. Ms Marie Fridh explained that Ms Cajsa Augustzen will introduce a youth aspect at the seminar.

Ms Krystyna Wroblewska said she and Marsahal Kozlowski attended Almedalen twice and were both impressed with this spectacular event. She also informed that the Polish regions and Ministry of Regional Development and Office of the Committee of the European Integration met several times to raise similar issues concerning the Strategy and to support decentralization and subsidiarity rules.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said ERB must get strongly involved in the debate on the Strategy governance model He also said that the proposed one annual event is not proper consultation of the Strategy, thinking it necessary that ERB regions turn to their national governments to address the problem.

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information.

8. Cooperation within ERB in the coming years

President Jacek Protas said that in the coming years the ERB cooperation will most probably focus on the implementation of the Joint Development Programme, further integration of local communities and youth, as well as on meeting current and new challenges related to such EU policies as EU Cohesion Policy, Baltic Sea Strategy, European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, etc. The aim of the discussion is to find best possible solutions to the management of joint ERB resources (both administrative and financial) to face ever-increasing intensity of the cooperation, which will at the same time enable continuous build-up of the ERB brand.

The two following aspects were addressed in the discussion:

8.1 projects by Working Groups and ERB Youth Board

Five projects have been approved in 2nd call of the South Baltic Programme and will be implemented until 2011 / 2012. The ERB Working Groups which have not yet developed projects will also prepare applications at a later time.

Specific aspects of the cooperation within these bodies will first be presented by the chairs and/or administrators of the Working Groups and Youth Board, with special focus placed on extra requirements that will be expected of the ERB Executive Board as a result of the implementation of the projects.

Ms Marie Fridh informed that YC3 project has an established secretariat and the partners in each region are now specifying in more details their planned activities. She requested that the ERB Executive Board takes on the role of the YC3 project Steering Committee. The ERB Executive Board agreed, considering it will be most effective to include this role as part of the regular Board meetings.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen informed of the conference for all Local Action Groups (LAG's) in ERB on Tuesday 4 August 2009 in Olsztyn, co-organized by Warmia-Mazury Region, and LAG South Warmia and Bornholm. This will be followed by meeting for the ERB Rural Development WG on Wednesday 5 August 2009.

Ms Kora Stanczyk informed her WG is now working on the clarification process for the BaltNet project which has been awarded grant on some conditions. There will be a change of schedule and two extra trainings added to the project activities.

Mr Ulf Andersson explained that the Energy WG started off very well with the LED project being the top project in the 2nd call for proposals but now faces some difficulties with regional representatives (only members from Sweden and Warmia and Mazury), and in result had to cancel their meeting the second time.

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski informed that the SME/Innovation WG is now working on the clarification process for the BaltNet project which has been awarded grant on some conditions. The kick-off conference is planned for September 2009.

Ms Carolina Gunnarsson informed the Board that the MOMENT project has been approved under some conditions and will prepare the final application. Special interest for the ERB Board will be its role in the work of the Water Forum facilitated by the project.

ERB Executive Board members were invited to respond to the presented input and discuss how to best safeguard effective management of the joint resources in order to use the expertise and outputs generated by the projects to the benefit of Euroregion Baltic.

8.2 ERB joint project

Following a series of meetings focusing on the elaboration of best possible ideas to be implemented within the framework of the next joint project for Euroregion Baltic, two proposals have been submitted:

- a Key Study on the Creation of ERB Business Promotion System
- a BSS Pilot Project Aiming at Decreasing CO2 emissions

ERB Executive Board members were therefore requested to make a choice of one idea to be further developed into a project application. Danish, Polish and Swedish regions opted for the climate project as a theme of the joint ERB effort while Lithuanian and Russian regions preferred the business promotion system.

Mr Per Ole Petersen said compromise has to be found in order for ERB to move on. Mr Niels Chresten Andersen pointed out that this should not be a WG project but an ERB project which must be related to the Baltic Sea Strategy. ERB partners are regional authorities but must seek cooperation with knowledge and business sectors. A good idea, in his opinion, would be to use climate change for business, also tourism sector which could benefit from the Strategy flagship of the network of sustainable cities and villages.

Mr Ulf Andersson remarked that even though a combination of the two themes is possible, one has to be more prominent than the other. Without beneficial climate conditions, he continued, we will not have tourism development. Mr Per Ole Petersen said that green businesses and CO2 reduction companies should be part of the project.

Ms Carolina Gunnarsson added it will be extremely important to add activities related to the adaptation measures to climate change. Mr Mihail Pluhin said he fears Co2 emission reduction agenda is very much related to energy issues which lie beyond the competence of the regional level in the Russian Federation.

ERB President thanked everyone for a very good discussion where everyone spoke their opinions and was right. He urged the ERB Secretariats to work further on the project proposal and prepare one that could be satisfying for all the ERB parties before the next Board meeting in October.

9. **Information on the conference on EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea**

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski informed the Board of the conference entitled: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea: Building Partnership for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Competitiveness, which was co-organised by demosEUROPA Centre for European Strategy, Office of the Committee for European Integration, Swedish Embassy in Poland, Scandinavian – Polish Chamber of Commerce and Baltic Development Forum and took place on 3rd June 2009 in Warsaw.

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information.

At this point the agenda was completed and ERB President, Mr Jacek Protas closed the meeting.

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Jacek Protas
ERB President

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Arūnas Burkšas
ERB Vice-President