

Euroregion Baltic Executive Board Meeting Gdańsk, Poland 3rd November 2015



Office of the Marshal
of Pomorskie Region
ul. Okopowa 21/27
Herbowa Conference Room

Title	Final Minutes
Submitted by	SM, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document provides the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting convened on 3 rd November 2015 in Gdańsk.
Requested action	Implementation

Participants: ERB Executive Board:

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski	ERB President, Vice-Chair of the Board of Pomorskie Region
Ms Carina Bengtsson	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Council of Region Kronoberg
Mr Lennarth Förberg	Member of ERB Executive Board, Deputy Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Mr Mateusz Kryżba	Chair of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Ms Christina Mattisson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Ms Liana Maximova	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Deputy Head of Agency for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region
Mr Robert Olesen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Deputy Chair of the Board of Region Kronoberg
Mr Per Ole Petersen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Witold Wróblewski	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Association of Polish Communes

Participants: ERB Youth Board:

Mr Maksymilian Lewandowski	Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Polish Communes
Ms Jędrzej Tadrzak	Member of ERB Youth Board, Pomorskie Region

Participants: ERB Secretariats

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Łukasz Bielewski	Director of Foreign Cooperation Department, Office of the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Ms Yana Eremeeva	Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region
Mr Tobias Facchini	Regional Council of Kalmar County, Secretary of ERB Water Core Group
Ms Klaudija Kionies	Director of the Secretariat of Association Klaipėda Region
Mr Sebastian Magier	ERB International Permanent Secretariat
Ms Zofia Makowska	Regional Council of Kalmar County
Mr Jan Martinsson	Regional Council of Kalmar County
Ms Romualda Naruszewicz	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Ms Johanna Rönn	Region Blekinge
Ms Małgorzata Samusjew	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, Director of Association's Secretariat
Ms Krystyna Wróblewska	Deputy Director for International Cooperation, Department of Economic Development Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Ms Joanna Woźniak	Department of Economic Development, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Mr Piotr Zwolak	Office of the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region

Guests:

Ms Raimonda Kučinskaitė	Klaipėda District Municipality
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1. **Opening and welcome**

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, Deputy Marshal of Pomorskie Region and President of Euroregion Baltic, welcomed the participants of the meeting and opened the proceedings.

2. **Adoption of the agenda**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Wiesław Byczkowski presented the agenda.

Decision:

ERB Executive Board approved the agenda of the meeting.

3. **Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Board meeting**

ERB IPS submitted the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place on 16th June 2015.

ERB President, Mr Wiesław Byczkowski and ERB Executive Board member, Ms Christina Mattisson signed the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting of 16th June 2015 (see attached).

4. **Comments on the 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Wiesław Byczkowski opened the discussion and invited the ERB Board members to share their thoughts on the 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders.

Mr Per Ole Petersen said that the event had well planned and organised. Perhaps the time schedule was a bit too long for the afternoon session, but still many participants managed to stay till the end and participate in the workshops. He concluded that the overall impression from the Forum was very good and that it was a good day for ERB.

Mr Piotr Zwolak said that Forum had a very relevant theme and was well organised. Also, it was a good idea to have dedicated workshops.

The general opinion of the ERB Forum was favourable and no more comments or recommendations were raised.

5. **Discussion on the future legal status of ERB**

Mr Sebastian Magier introduced the topic by presenting information about the current situation concerning the process of acquiring the legal status by the ERB.

Based on the decision of the ERB Executive Board taken in Klaipeda, Lithuania on 20th March 2014 it was decided that the draft statutes of the international association would be anchored internally by the Russian partners who would require a longer internal procedure to adopt the draft. This process continued throughout 2015 and was not finalised by the June meeting of the ERB Executive Board.

As decided by the ERB Executive Board on 16th June 2015, the decision on the future legal status of ERB was postponed to give more time to the partners in the Kaliningrad Region to investigate whether they would be able to officially join the new organisation.

During the IPS visit to Kaliningrad on 14th October 2015 (see attached: minutes from the meeting in Kaliningrad on 14th Oct 2015) an updated information about process was communicated by the Russian partners.

During 2015 partners in Kaliningrad consulted the possibility of joining the new organisation with several federal ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. Based on the official opinions received from the Ministry of Justice, the Government of Kaliningrad Region would not be able to join an organisation that is established on national law of any foreign country. That would mean the Kaliningrad Region could not be legally allowed to become a full member of the ERB when established as an international association under the Polish law. The only option would be to become a support or associated member, which might be possible from the legal point of view, but on the other hand would cause problems when it comes to the engagement and participation of Russian partners in the work of the organisation, especially when the Russian Party is expected to assume ERB Presidency in 2016.

Mr Per Ole Petersen stated that it was important to have Russian partners in the ERB cooperation as full partners. In the view of the facts presented, he proposed that the ERB should continue in its current form but at the same time it should be investigated whether it would be possible to create a body of legal personality within the hosting organisation of ERB. He invited Mr Niels Chresten Andersen to give the details of the proposal.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the proposal would not change the current status of the organisation which consequently would not change the status of the Kaliningrad Region in ERB. As the legal personality brings an advantage to the functioning of ERB e.g. it could hire staff and engage directly in projects, a project implementation unit with the legal status could perhaps be formed under the Polish law. In such case the overall functioning of ERB would not change – it would still have the same status as a cooperation platform without legal personality and with all decision making powers, but in order to have all the gains from the legal status a special project implementation unit would be created under the Polish law. Perhaps it could be arranged similar to the Water Core Group, but with legal personality.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska stated that it was of course important to allow ERB to work as an effective tool for participation in projects. But the practical side of such an arrangement would have to be analysed. Setting up such a legal body would mean an additional formal procedure for the Polish regions which would take time and might raise problems. Additionally, the legal personality would add additional administrative burden to the current work of IPS, which should rather focus on the strategic aspects of ERB cooperation. Of course, pros and cons of such a solution would have to be discussed, but it would mostly likely be quite problematic.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska suggested that perhaps a more practical solution could be introduced instead. As the ERB Board would most probably decide to transfer the IPS to the Association of Polish Municipalities ERB, perhaps the Association would then serve as a tool for project implementation. In such case the IPS would operate within the structure of the Association and implement ERB projects using the Association's legal personality to submit applications and act as a project partner. Of course an arrangement would have to be made with the Association to secure the interests of both sides eg. that the IPS and its project activities are financed only with ERB budget.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen responded that such a solution would be acceptable, but the difference would be that the Swedish, Danish and other partners would then have to be included in the Association. Alternatively, a special unit within the Association could be created to serve this purpose.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska commented that in that case only an association would be a solution, but it would involve prolonged procedures including the involvement of the national level in the process. The Pomorskie region cannot participate in other similar legal forms of cooperation such as foundations.

Mr Jan Martinsson asked whether within this new setup at the Association of Polish Municipalities would still be working for ERB and not the Association.

Ms Wróblewska responded that should the Association be approved as the new hosting organisation for the IPS, Sebastian would still be working for ERB just like in the current setup at the Foundation in Olsztyn. In a way that would be a solution similar to the previous arrangement when the IPS had been hosted by the Association of Polish Communes until 2012. Back then the Association also served as project implementation tool for ERB (eg. Seagull projects, CAPACITY project).

Ms Małgorzata Samusjew, Director of Association's Secretariat, said that the Association could have a special department, but more time would be needed to investigate that. Additionally, all conditions regulating such status within the Association would have to be established, mainly concerning the financing. Of course, it would be up to Association's Board to make the final decision.

Ms Samusjew stated that the Association of Polish Communes was created with implementation of international, cross-border cooperation projects in mind, which makes it an ideal project implementation tool for the ERB.

Additionally, the Association allows for including so called supporting members which could be physical or legal persons providing financial support for the organisation.

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski asked how much time would be needed to facilitate the process within the Association.

Ms Samusjew responded that the next Board meeting would be held in December, but technical solution would have to be set before that in order to have such a solution in place.

Mr Per Ole Petersen said it would be good to investigate that, but we should not be too quick with this process. It is important to have all the information before the decision is made.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the ERB partners will receive the minutes of the meeting and will be able to reflect on them. After that they could have time till the end of November to give their recommendations whether such a solution be introduced or not. Then the Association could discuss the proposal internally at its meetings in December. He asked the Board whether such a procedure would be acceptable.

The ERB Executive Board supported the proposal to investigate possibilities within the Association as requested by Niels.

Decision:

Following the discussion, the ERB Executive Board decided to maintain the current organisational setup ie. ERB with no legal personality and the IPS being hosted by another organisation, while the possibilities for more a structured solution for ERB within the hosting organisation would be investigated by the IPS.

6. Priorities of the Russian ERB Presidency and date of first meeting in 2016

Mr Sebastian Magier informed the ERB Executive Board about the consultations in Kaliningrad on 14th Oct 2015 concerning the upcoming Russian ERB Presidency.

During the IPS visit to Kaliningrad, the Russian partners communicated their readiness to assume the ERB Presidency in accordance with the schedule.

During the discussion in Kaliningrad, Ms Alla Ivanova indicated that the Russian Presidency in ERB would like to continue with the current priorities of cooperation. However, she stressed that more focus should be put on the activities of ERB related to project development and implementation. Also some additional themes of cooperation

might be proposed to the partners, but still the current strategic activities should be maintained.

Mr Magier also informed the Executive Board that prior to the meeting the representatives of the Kaliningrad Region had submitted proposals for dates of the first meeting of ERB Executive Board in 2016 to be held in Kaliningrad. These are: 10-11th March 2016, 24-25th March 2016 and 6-7th April 2016, of which the first was the most advantageous to the organisers.

Speaking on behalf of the Kaliningrad Region, Ms Liana Maximova, Deputy Head of the Agency for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region, thanked the Executive Board for its constructive approach towards reaching a common solution on the matter of ERB's status. She stressed that the joint cooperation of all current partners of ERB is indispensable for the organisation's long term development and participation in joint projects.

In the view of the Board's previous decision, the Kaliningrad Region would of course be ready to take over the Presidency as indicated earlier during the meeting in Kaliningrad. As to the dates, the proposal took into account the budgetary process at the regional government, which means that the meeting could be scheduled only in March / April 2016 at the earliest.

Concerning the themes of cooperation, Ms Maximova underlined that the Kaliningrad Region would not propose any major changes to the current strategic areas of cooperation. However, she said that the organisation could also focus on social and health issues such as services for the disabled and elderly people. There is not enough expertise in the Kaliningrad Region so such initiatives within ERB, if they could provide new interesting solutions, would be very welcome. In the ERB there are partners, especially from Sweden or Denmark, who have extensive experience and knowledge in the sphere and if this experience could be shared through some joint activities, such as project, that would certainly be beneficial to the entire ERB cooperation.

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of ERB, requested the ERB Executive Board to comment on the proposed themes of cooperation as well as the proposed dates of the first Board meeting in 2016 in Kaliningrad.

Mr Per Ole Petersen stated that in the future whatever date is chosen it should be maintained and not changed. Commenting on the Russian proposal of the new cooperation themes, he also said that such project ideas from the Kaliningrad Region are very welcome.

Ms Klaudija Kionies, Director of the Association of the Municipalities of Klaipeda Region, stated that the April dates were the most convenient for the Lithuanian partners.

Ms Christina Mattisson also stated that the April dates were better, but once chosen the date should be kept and not changed.

After a brief discussion during which other regions mentioned their availability during the first week of April, the final date for the ERB meetings in Kaliningrad was scheduled for 7-8th April 2016.

Commenting still on the new cooperation themes, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen asked the Russian partners to submit concrete project ideas that could be jointly facilitated by the ERB Task Force for Project Facilitation.

Ms Liana Maximova replied that such initiatives could be dedicated to such issues as agricultural tourism, development of new protected areas, elderly care and day care centres, hospices for children with cancer, etc.

Mr Sebastian Magier, said that perhaps it would be useful to try investigate funding opportunities offered by the Swedish Institute.

Ms Maximova reminded that the Russia was also a partner to the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and the initiatives could be also developed there.

Commenting on the dates of ERB meetings, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen proposed to also investigate dates and locations of other meetings of the Executive Board. If possible the dates could be set up by 1st December 2015. As usual, the doodle platform could be used for this purpose.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board decided to hold the first 2016 meeting in Kaliningrad on 7-8th April 2016. Other dates and locations shall be investigated via doodle and online meetings of the ERB Secretariats. The Board also took note of the information about the proposed priorities of the Russian Presidency in ERB urging the Russian Party to provide more details in order to better facilitate the cooperation in the suggested fields.

7. Decision regarding the transfer of the International Permanent Secretariat

Information about the current status of the IPS transfer to a new hosting organisation was presented by Mr Sebastian Magier.

Following the decision of the ERB Board taken on 16th June 2015, the Polish Party was requested to have an internal dialogue on selecting a new hosting organisation for the ERB International Permanent Secretariat. As a result of these consultations, the Polish Party has proposed the Association of Polish Communes ERB to become the new hosting organisation. The Association of Polish Communes agreed to take on the new role which was confirmed by the Association's Board during its meeting in Elbląg on 18th September 2015. The proposal of the Polish Party maintains the independence of the IPS within the hosting organisation when it comes to the scope of work, while providing all services necessary to maintain IPS

operations within the hosting organisation and a guarantee that all these operations would be covered with ERB budget.

During the consultations with both the Foundation for Support and Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Olsztyn and the Association of Polish Communes it was agreed that the transfer of the IPS would be finalised by the end of November, so that the IPS would be ready to seamlessly continue its work at the Association starting from 1st December 2015.

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of Euroregion Baltic, asked the Executive Board for comments and then to agree on the proposal to transfer the ERB International Secretariat to the Association of Polish Communes ERB in Elbląg as of 1st December 2015.

The ERB Executive Board unanimously approved the proposal to transfer the IPS to the Association of Polish Communes in Elbląg and thanked Mr Sebastian Magier for a swift and seamless execution of this process.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board decided to approve transfer of the ERB International Permanent Secretariat from the Foundation for Supporting and Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Olsztyn to the Association of Polish Communes ERB in Elbląg as of 1st December 2015.

8. Information on ERB joint budget

Sebastian Magier informed the ERB Executive Board on the implementation of 2015 ERB budget as of 30th September 2015 (see attached).

Decision:

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

9. Participation of ERB in WaterNets project

Mr Tobias Facchini, Regional Council in Kalmar County, presented the information about the WaterNets project and its main objectives.

If approved, the project would introduce a water management concept for a cleaner Baltic Sea, referred to as Water Users Partnerships (WUP), creating a fora for local and regional water users, enabling them to get actively involved in the implementation of EU and International Water Policies, and also facilitate a cross-sectoral and vertically aligned policy oriented dialogue amongst all levels. The main objective is twofold, first to increase the mobilization among local authorities by providing an efficient water management concept and tools (i.e. WUP concept and tools) and secondly, establish a jointly developed concept (i.e. WUP concept) and common understanding among water authorities in the Baltic Sea Region, on

how to better involve the local level in the EU Water Framework context, enforcing implementation of concrete measures.

The project main outputs will help the project to achieve its objectives, output O.2.4 "New WUP framework concept" will highlight how WUPs can become an efficient water management concept enabling local stakeholders (i.e. local authorities) to get more actively involved in higher level water authority planning and decision making. Output O.5.3 "A WUP enabling multilevel governance framework" will outline the government framework challenges that needs to be addressed to enable more active local stakeholder (e.g. local authorities) involvement in the implementation of International Water Policies (e.g. the Water Framework Directive). Outputs O.3.3, I.3.4, O.3.4 and I.3.6 will in different ways enhance and support the WUPs in their daily work with concrete activities and tools which will help mobilize active WUP members which is the very core for becoming a successful WUP.

The project has two main targets groups. First of all, local authorities taking active part in the WUPs which will strengthen their role in the implementation of International Water policies. Secondly, higher level water authorities using the WUPs as a mean for gaining local involvement and thus local knowledge, capacity and experience.

Mr Sebastian Magier, ERB IPS, continued the presentation by providing the details of ERB's involvement as a Reserved Partner.

During the meeting of the ERB Executive Board on 16th June 2015 the Board discussed ERB participation in the WaterNets project and decided that the organisation should take part in the project as the Associated Partner (AP). This was due to the lack of the budget proposal and the precarious situation with respect to the IPS hosting organisation which would potentially become as the formal project partner.

Based on the further consultations with the project development team in Kalmar and the BSR Programme JS held in July 2015, it was found that it would not be possible for the ERB to participate in the project as the AP without the legal personality.

Therefore, to still allow the ERB to take part in the project, the IPS decided to use the new institution offered by the Programme which is the Reserved Partner. Being the Reserved Partner allows the organisation to reserve a place in the partnership as a normal project partner but without the final decision on such participation before the final approval of the project application. The only requirement was to submit the proposal of activities with relevant budget, and only later submit the information about the name of the organisation that would become the actual partner. Using this facility would allow ERB to still reserve a right to be a partner in the project, and upon further consideration from the ERB Board regarding the activities and budget – decide on the final participation in the project. Should the Board decide not to take part due to the financial or other aspects, there will be no problems for the project partnership as both tasks and

budget could be absorbed by another partner responsible for the relevant component.

Within the project ERB through its hosting organisation would be responsible for implementing WP 4 which is to facilitate the trans-Baltic exchange among 1) the WaterNets project WUP pilot areas 2) regional / national water authorities (dealing with WFD and other regulations' implementation) in BSR countries 3) international panBaltic organisations with water groups or similar.

ERB is planned to host the first of the Water Forums and its follow-up meeting. Having strong expertise in the cross-border strategic and political cooperation, the organisation will support the WP4 leader UBC in establishing and upkeeping the dialogue with the relevant transBaltic environmental organisations. Based in Poland, ERB will also assist the project consortium with outreaching potentially interested Polish water sector stakeholders and contribute to translation and dissemination of project materials.

On the financial side the range of ERB participation in the project is small enough to provide financial liquidity and, what is more important, cover the costs of activities already planned in ERB Action Plan i.e. Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders, ERB Water Forum, Board meeting, cooperation with other pan-Baltic organisations such as UBC, etc.

With the reimbursement rate of 85% the actual costs will be very small, while allowing to have more impact on the water related cooperation. The total budget for the ERB in the project was specified for 49 000 EUR during 3 years of implementation. With 85% reimbursement rate the total co-financing provided by ERB in the project would be 2450 EUR per year. This would also mean that the workload on the part of the IPS should not surpass the actual work being done for the water issues. The whole solution should allow ERB to become more visible in the CBC arena and provide more funding for the activities that have already been foreseen in the Action Plan 2015-2016 (see attached: ERB budget in WaterNets project, full WaterNets application).

Following the presentations, Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of Euroregion Baltic requested the ERB Executive Board to give its opinion on the proposal to include ERB as a partner in the WaterNets project with the proposed budget and range of activities.

The ERB Executive Board supported the idea for ERB's participation in the WaterNets project as a project partner.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board decided to approve the participation of ERB in the WaterNets project as a partner.

10. **Information on the activities of the ERB Water Core Group**

Mr Tobias Facchini presented information on the current status of the ERB Water Core Group in the view of possible participation of ERB in the WaterNets project.

Focusing on the WCG Work Plan for 2015-2017 he stated the overriding goal for the ERB Water Core Group was to implement concrete measures aiming to improve ecological and chemical status in the ERB waters, as a base for better development of the area. To this end the WCG proposed two focus areas: 1/ Decreasing the outflow of nutrients and hazardous substances into the water by coastal and upstream work (for example water management and/or spatial planning). This focus area could be tackled by the WaterNets project, should it be approved for implementation.

2/ Actions needed to cope with effects from climate change, like droughts and flooding, on water supply and water recipients (for example rain/storm water, drinking water). Within this focus area activities concerning storm water treatment could be tackled within a South Baltic Programme project which would also provide additional support for the functioning of the WCG.

The ERB Water Core Group operates from a local and regional perspective and support trans-boundary cooperation. Moreover, this approach should be characterized by participation from private, public and academic sector (Triple Helix) and be based on the structure of water basin areas.

The WCG continues to be led by the Regional Council in Kalmar County with Ms Akko Karlsson as the Chair and Mr Tobias Facchini as the Secretary. The WCG is supported by the EBR IPS which engages in its activities and liaisons with ERB partners when it comes to coordination of its work.

Commenting on the presentation, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen informed that the South Baltic Programme is currently offering consultations for project proposals which can also concern water related issues. He continued by saying that the Regional Municipality of Bornholm is contemplating project ideas connected to water recirculation systems allowing to reuse waters that was previously used for other purposes. Also private companies operating industrial laundries on Bornholm are currently testing similar water circulation systems. Also Mr Per Ole Petersen is a member of a water management commission which is working on a special testing plant responsible for waste water cleaning and reusing proteins from waste.

Mr Andersen went on to say that Bornholm would be very much interested in water issues and was looking forward to taking part in the upcoming Water Forum. In this context he mentioned storm water issues as they have become increasingly important for local authorities. Apart from Interreg programmes he also mentioned the Horizon 2020 Programme as a relevant tool allowing to work on testing systems.

Decision:

Having received all the comments, the ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

11. Information from ERB Youth Board

Mr Mateusz Kryżba, Chair of ERB Youth Board presented information about the results of the current activities within the ERB Youth Board.

He started by saying that the EVS volunteer support provided by the PIONIER association has been completed, and that a new EVS hosting organisation would be needed to provide assistance to the Youth Board.

Also Mateusz mentioned that his organisation submitted a project proposal to the Erasmus+ Programme where activities included also the participation of the Youth Board.

Unfortunately it was not possible to organise a face-to-face meeting of the Youth Board in September in Olsztyn, as there was not enough interest from particular regions. In this context Mateusz said that he was very much looking forward to the news from those ERB member organisations that had not appointed new YB members. Without new members being appointed it was difficult to maintain contact and circulate information within ERB on youth related issues.

He also said that the issue of taking over the YB Chairmanship was not discussed so far within the YB.

Commenting on that, Ms Liana Maximova said that the Kaliningrad Region did not receive any information about the YB Chairmanship but was very much looking forward to further discussions on that subject.

Continuing the discussion, it was mentioned that the ERB continued to be engaged in the development of the SYPERB (Strategic Youth Policies in ERB) project, where it was envisaged that the ERB would take on a role of Work Package leader responsible for promotion and dissemination of information.

Commenting on these issues presented, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the engagement of ERB in the SYPERB project was a good thing. As to the YB issues, the ERB should continue to work in order to solve the problem, as skipping youth cooperation would have a negative effect on ERB. He suggested that the cooperation within YB could be more concrete and that the SYPERB project could be used for that purpose.

Mr Jan Martinsson expressed regret that Kalmar was not participating in the YB activities. He mentioned that the YB activities in Kalmar would be coordinated by the KUMULS organisation which is specialising in youth related cooperation.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska informed the Executive Board that the Pomorskie Region would have a new representative of the YB - Mr Jędrzej Tadrzak, who was chairing the Pomorskie Regional Youth Council. In addition the Pomorskie Region was engaged in supporting the Maritime Education Programme which had been active for 5 years already and would now try to expand its activities on international level within the Baltic Sea Region.

Commenting on the discussion, Mr Sebastian Magier apologised for not submitting the question of the participation of ERB in the SYPERB project as a full partner. In order to still have the ERB Executive Board backing before the submission of the project, he proposed to have an additional online meeting of the Board in December. Information about the meeting would be sent separately once that date was set.

Decision:

Having received all the comments the ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

12. Information from the IPS about the first activities within the newly approved Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014-2020

Mr Sebastian Magier informed the ERB Executive Board on the results of the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014-2020.

The first meeting of the new Monitoring Committee of the Programme took place in Gdańsk on 1-2nd October 2015. At the meeting the ERB was represented by the Head of IPS, who had been appointed by the ERB Executive Board the member of the MC. During the meeting the ERB representative was also appointed as the Head of the Joint Delegation of Euroregions (Baltic and Pomerania) to the MC.

It was also worth mentioning that the MC unanimously approved the ERB's proposal to include the Regional Government of Kaliningrad as an observer to the Monitoring Committee (see attached the letter of invitation submitted to Ms Alla Ivanova by the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development which was acting as the Managing Authority of the Programme).

At the meeting the MC approved all the relevant documents including the Cooperation Programme, Programme Manual and the application pack. It also decided to launch the first call for proposals which would take place between 2nd Nov – 18th December 2015.

The ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

13. Information about the Gdańsk Maritime Education Programme

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska, Pomorskie Region, presented information about the new initiative of in the area of maritime education that is supported by the Pomorskie Region.

The Maritime Education Programme in Gdansk was launched in 2010 by the Gdansk Foundation at the request of the President of Gdansk. The project was initiated by Mateusz Kuśnierewicz, a World Olympic Champion in sailing, and an Ambassador of the City of Gdańsk for Maritime Affairs.

As a part of the Programme, all 1-year students in Gdansk gymnasiums go on educational cruises around the Gdansk Bay. During that time they learn the basics of sailing, study history, geography and biology, and get to know their city from an off-shore perspective. The aims of Programme include youth activation as well as popularisation of maritime traditions and the rich heritage of the city among young inhabitants of Gdansk. Participation in cruises is free of charge. The Programme is organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, and the Ministry of National Education.

Since 2011 the Programme has been organising an annual contest dedicated to maritime issues. The theme of each contest refers to an annual issue of United Nations World Water Day. Due to the Polish Presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in 2016 the Programme would like to invite students from around the Baltic Sea Region to an international contest that will culminate in summer cruise along the coast of Baltic Sea (see attached information materials about the MEP).

Commenting on the information presented, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the internationalisation of the contest was a very good idea and if it would be organised in July it would offer good possibilities for promotion.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board welcomed the initiative to internationalise the Maritime Education Programme and took note of the information presented.

14. Other issues

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen informed that Bornholm was working on the development of participatory democracy.

This work included the establishment of a digital panel of citizens open to all citizens of Bornholm.

Also the idea of a participatory budget is being developed which would allow all citizens to decide on the allocation of certain amount of the budget on activities, services or investments proposed by citizens.

Finally, the island was developing a policy for voluntary work in all social areas eg. services for army veterans.

Responding to this, Mr Jan Martinsson informed that Kalmar was developing a board for working with citizen dialogue, and that they would be very eager to come into contact to discuss possible cooperation.

Ms Raimonda Kucinskaite from the District Municipality of Klaipeda informed that in the participatory budget was one of the activities offered by the authorities to better engage citizens in its development.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska said that the participatory budget is implemented in many cities in Poland and it has proved to be an effective tool for activating citizens.

Ms Małgorzata Samusjew stated that the city of Elbląg had been implementing the participatory budget for 4 years and currently the total allocation for the edition of the project amounts to 2,5 million PLN. She also mentioned the Age Friendly Cities programme which undertakes to engage all citizens irrespective of their age in the common activities for the development of cities and towns. It is ready made concept implemented in many cities around the world which could be also implemented in the ERB area.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen added that the similar activities are taken on Bornholm where a public meeting on common policy was attended by more than 180 citizens.

15. **Conclusion and Closing**

ERB President, Mr Wiesław Byczkowski thanked all the participants for constructive discussions and closed meeting of the ERB Executive Board.