



**Title** Final Minutes

**Submitted by** SM, International Permanent Secretariat

**Summary / Note** This document provides the minutes of the ERB Executive Board online meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Requested action** Implementation

**Participants:**

**ERB Executive Board**

Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of Region Kronoberg

Ms Akko Karlsson Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of the Regional Council in Kalmar County

**ERB Secretariats**

Ms Klaudija Kionies Managing Director of the Association of Municipalities of 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 Johanna Rönn Region Blekinge

Ms Małgorzata Samusjew Acting Director of the Secretariat of Association of Polish Communes ERB

Ms Joanna Woźniak Department of Economic Development, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska Deputy Director of Department of Economic Development, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region

## 1. **Welcome & Opening**

Speaking on behalf of Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Krystyna Wróblewska welcomed all participants of the meeting and opened the ERB Executive Board meeting.

## 2. **Decision on the ERB's involvement in the CaSYPoT project as Project Partner**

Sebastian Magier briefly introduced the CaSYPoT - Capacity Building for Strategic Youth Policy and Transnational Cooperation (formerly known as SYPERB) project which led by the Regional Council in Kalmar County and is to be submitted to the first call for proposals within the South Baltic Programme (SBP). The project has already been endorsed by the ERB Executive Board and approved for further development within the ERB Task Force for Project Facilitation. With the development finally coming to its conclusion, the project will now officially apply for funding within SBP.

Jan Martinsson continued the presentation and stated that project has been modified to better suit the SBP framework and now not only addresses the development of strategic youth policies in the ERB but also focuses on capacity building measures to better accommodate the requirements of the PA 5 in the South Baltic Programme. The main aim of the project will be to increase cross-border cooperation resulting in building capacity of local actors working with youth in the ERB. The partner municipalities will jointly carry out a survey among teenagers to identify their needs and problems, providing comparable data. The survey is based on a method called LUPP which was developed and implemented in Swedish municipalities and now it will just be adjusted to the other countries' local contexts. The obtained results will be analysed by universities and compared between the countries. Also additional tools to get knowledge about the situation for youngsters in the participating municipalities and regions will be created and tested. Further the project will lead to creating joint knowledge based youth strategy in ERB as well as local youth strategies.

Next Jan Martinsson briefly described the partnership led by the Regional Council in Kalmar County. Although some institutions left the project partnership (Kretinga municipality and Pomorska

Academy in Słupsk) it is still possible to submit the project by allocating the activities and funds to other partners.

Sebastian Magier continued the presentation and said that the ERB (the Association of Polish Communes as a formal project partner) would be working as a project partner with the total budget of 42 449,00 EUR in the course of 3 years. However, with the budget transferred from the Pomorska Academy this would increase by 20 660,00 EUR. The total budget would then be 63 109,00 EUR, which with co-financing of 15% would give 3 155,45 EUR per year from the ERB budget. The remaining costs would be reimbursed. Sebastian stated that although this would increase the spending, still many activities are ERB related and the ERB will have a special allocation for project implementation which can be used for financing the activities. In all the ERB's participation would be beneficial for the organisation and strengthen its youths cooperation agenda.

Commenting on the information, Jan said that the option is still possible that there will be a Polish partner doing the research for the project, which would be mean that ERB would not have to increase its budget to accommodate that. Talks are underway and the results should be known by Thursday. Only after that we will know whether ERB will have to increase the budget or not.

Both Regional Municipality of Bornholm and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region provided comments to the meeting's agenda as indicated their support for including ERB as a project partner in the CaSYPot (SYPERB) project.

*Based on the information provided during the discussion the ERB Executive Board decided that the ERB should be formally included in the project. On taking on the role of the Pomorska Academy, the Board decided to wait until the situation with the Gdańsk University clarifies and only after that include additional budget in the ERB budget.*

### **3. Request to participate in the Baltic Sea Tourism Centre as Associated Partner**

Ms Klaudija Kionies, Association of Municipalities Klaipeda Region, and Mr Sebastian Magier presented the objectives of the Baltic Sea Tourism Centre. During the investigation of IPS into new cooperation possibilities, the Association of Klaipeda Region

suggested the possibility of including ERB as an Associated Partner in the project.

The project undertakes to Establish a permanent service unit for improved communication and cooperation at transnational level by associating the key tourism stakeholders and promoting a sustainable, responsible and innovative tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The BSTC is developed within the framework of the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and complements and supports the activities of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in profiling the area as a tourist destination and contributes to the target and action defined in the strategy as "Establishing the Baltic Sea region as a common and coherent tourism destination" (see attached Baltic Sea Tourism Centre description).

With respect to ERB, participating in the project as an AP will give the organisation a direct access to all important activities and further contribute to the implementation of the ERB Action Plan 2015-2016 and its specific action fostering B2B cooperation with focus on clusters, innovation, entrepreneurial internationalisation and tourism development. The project comprises partners from Blekinge, Kalmar, Klaipeda and Pomorskie.

Last Thursday Sebastian talked to the LB representative, Johannes Volkmar and was informed that the ERB would be welcome as the Associated Partner.

Commenting on the request, Ms Akko Karlsson said that in developing tourism in ERB it is important to focus especially on the harbour infrastructure as the tourist often need to cross the sea to reach its destinations. And these interconnectivity issues should also be tackled by the projects.

Jan Martinsson added that within the BSTC the Regional Council in Kalmar County would be responsible for WP 4 – Baltic Sea Tourism Forum. Also Region Blekinge will be working as a project partner.

Mr Krystyna Wróblewska added that it would be good for the ERB to be included in the project as described as it will give us more possibilities to share information we would receive from the partners.

The Regional Municipality of Bornholm provided comments to the meeting's agenda and indicated its support for including ERB as an associated organisation in the BSTC project

*Based on the discussion held, the ERB Executive Board decided that the ERB should participate in the project as an Associated Partner.*

#### **4. Request to participate in the SOUTH COAST BALTIC project as Associated Partner**

Ms Klaudija Kionies, Association of Municipalities Klaipeda Region, and Mr Sebastian Magier presented the objectives of the South Coast Baltic which also applied for including the ERB as an Associated Partner in the project.

The project proceeds and reinforces the joint efforts to foster boating tourism intensity along the "South Coast Baltic" that started with MARRIAGE project thereby project seeking to establish durable and comprehensive boating destination management for the area of South Baltic. The project comprises partners from the following ERB regions: Bornholm, Kaliningrad, Klaipeda and Pomorskie. It also underlines the need for the development of maritime tourism thereby improving the interconnectivity of the region.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska said that the project includes serious partners from Pomorskie and the ERB can easily support the project.

The Regional Municipality of Bornholm provided comments to the meeting's agenda and indicated its support for including ERB as an associated organisation in the BSTC project.

*Based on the discussion the ERB Executive Board decided in favour of ERB's participation in the project SOUTH COAST BALTIC as an Associated Partner.*

#### **5. Information about the Attractive Hardwoods project**

Ms Johanna Rönn, Region Blekinge presented information about the project proposals to for the South Baltic Programme called Attractive Hardwoods. Gathering partners from the ERB regions of Blekinge, Pomorskie and Klaipeda, the project intends to increase the number of visitors and unlock the potential of natural hardwood sites as attractive tourism destinations.

The project see Euroregion Baltic as an important target group for in this awareness raising activities. Regional political leaders

in the South Baltic area are invited to follow the project and take part of the project results. During the 3 year project period several cross-border seminars will be arranged as well as study visit to regional/local Hardwood sites.

The Attractive Hardwoods project is included as a flagship project under the EUSBSR priority area Bioeconomy. The project initiative is sprung from the Hardwoods are Good - project co-financed by the South Baltic Programme 2007-2013.

Consulting with the Lead Beneficiary of the project, Johanna requested a formal support (draft attached) by means of an official letter of support signed by the ERB President.

Akko Karlsson asked whether the project was building on the results of the Hardwoods are Good project.

Sebastian and Johanna responded that indeed the project was a continuation of the successful cooperation within the HaG project.

Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson wanted to know if you ERB had any contacts with Region Kronoberg regarding those proposed projects that were being discussed.

Responding to the question, Johanna said that the Attractive Hardwoods as the Swedish Forest Agency as the LB and it includes the territory of Kronoberg and will have an impact there.

Jan Martinsson said that the CaSYPoT project already relayed heavily on the Swedish partners and it was not possible to add more of them from other regions.

Turning the attention briefly to youth issues, Ms Akko Karlsson said that the Council was talking to the Kumulus organisation about including a representative of the organisation in the ERB Youth Board.

Sebastian responded that the Association of Polish Communes is also in talks with the Europa Association and its affiliates to also include this very experienced organisation in the work of the ERB Youth Board. This may give new impetus to youth cooperation in ERB. Additionally, Elbląg Europa was supporting the CaSYPoT project as an Associated Partner.

*The ERB Executive Board decided to support the Attractive Hardwoods project by issuing a letter of support.*

## 6. **Decision on the dates of ERB meetings in 2016**

Sebastian Magier summarised the discussions concerning the establishment of dates for the ERB meetings in 2016.

With the first ERB meeting in 2016 taking place in Kaliningrad on **7-8<sup>th</sup> April 2016**, the decision still needed to be taken as to two subsequent meetings that year.

As for the second meeting, the ERB Executive Board has been invited by the Regional Municipality of Bornholm to have the meeting there in June 2015. Based on the discussions of the ERB Secretariats and doodle poll filled out by some of the member organisations, the most suitable date seems to be **8-9<sup>th</sup> June 2016** (lunch-to-lunch). Additional information is that the Board meeting might be organised in a broader setup and include representatives of local authorities from the Association of Polish Communes which to this end submitted a project application to the Polish MFA. Should there be a positive result of the call, a group of about 25 local politicians and civil servants might visit Bornholm on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The project initiative was facilitated by the IPS as it is part of the broader initiative of study visits planned for 2016 in ERB. Another visit is being planned by the Swedish regions of ERB for late August/September during which leading regional politicians are planning to go to the regions of Pomorskie, Warmia-Mazury, Kaliningrad and Klaipeda. Should the ERB President be unable to attend the meeting on Bornholm, the Board could be chaired by the ERB Vice President.

Concerning the third ERB Board meeting, there were two options being discussed – **24-26<sup>th</sup> Oct** or **7-9<sup>th</sup> Nov**. Although the first option was better timewise for some, the second option would include the ERB presence at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of EUSBSR held in Stockholm and organised by the Swedish Government and Nordic Council of Ministers. The Forum would be similar in setup to the Almedalen Week concept with series of public seminars and panel discussions taking place in the city. Organisations interested in holding such seminar might apply for that opportunity by taking part in a special call for proposals (details attached). ERB could consider applying for such a possibility to organise its own Forum within the framework of EUSBSR Forum, perhaps also engaging other Baltic organisations working on regional and local level such as BSSSC or UBC to discuss the participation of local/regional level as well as third countries (Kaliningrad) in the implementation of EUSBSR.

There were favourable comments as to the organisation of the ERB meetings in Stockholm in November, although some members had already their time booked in November and considered October dates as better.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska said that joining the EUSBSR Forum would allow the ERB to voice its concerns about the engagement of the local and regional level in the implementation of the Strategy. It would be also good to engage other Baltic organisations in preparing the seminar.

Akko Karlsson said that it was important to set the date as fast as possible. She added that the Stockholm meeting would be beneficial and we also could have the Board meeting there.

Jan added that fast decision should be made because of practical issues i.e. accommodation.

Britt-Louise Berndtsson added that organising all ERB events in Stockholm (Board and Forum) would be the best alternative.

Ms Wróblewska offered its assistance in contacting BSSSC and UBC to discuss the details.

The ERB Executive Board discussed the proposals and decided that the Executive Board meeting on Bornholm should be carried out as planned on 8-9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 while the final date of the autumn meeting will be chosen based on additional consultations via email. ERB IPS will notify the Secretariats with information about the two alternatives.

## **7. Closing**

Closing the meeting on behalf of Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of ERB, Ms Wróblewska wished everyone in ERB Merry Christmass and Happy New Year 2016.