



Euroregion Baltic
Present Presidency
Latvia 2002-2003

Minutes

Euroregion Baltic Council Meeting

Hotel “Amrita”, Liepaja, 11-12 March 2002

- Council members:** Roger Kaliff, President
Normunds Niedols, Vice President
Bjorn Johansson
Sigurdth E Petersson
Ulf Andersson
Evy Johansson
Etel Duvsog
Andrzej Helbrecht,
Zbigniew Czepulkowski
Henryk Slonina
Zbigniew Rychly
Danuta Podlaszewska
Hanna Bojarska
Ludwik Szakiel
Jan Kozlowski
Oleg Shlyk
Victor Koshelev
Valery Starikov
Anton Zouikov
Indulis Ozoliņš
- National secretariats:** Maria Lindbom, Southeast Sweden
PG Lindencrona, Southeast Sweden
Gunta Strēle, Liepaja City Council
Gunārs Ansiņš, Liepaja City Council
Ligita Laipeniece
Roma Stubriene
Åke Karlsson
Niels Christen Anderssen, Bornholm
Zdzislaw Olszewski, ERB Poland
Elena Boutorova, Russia
Evgeunya Tcherniavskaya
- Interreg IIIB (PIA):** Håkan Brynielsson, Chairman of Working group
Rolf A Karlsson, Project co-ordinator
Jānis Grundbergs
- Other guests:** Uldis Sesks, Chairman of Liepaja City Council
Vjatcheslav Semjonov, Consul General of Russian Federation in Liepaja
Ivars Gaters, Head of Directorate of Regional Policy and Planning
Māris Zvaigzne, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia
Tadeusz Fiszbach, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Latvia

Māris Ārbergs, Chairman of Talsi District Council
Māris Dadzis, Chairman of Ventspils District council
Tāļivaldis Bergmanis, Chairman of Kuldīga District Council
Nelli Stroganova, Talsi District Co-ordinator of Baltic Sea Coast DA
Inga Miežīte, Foreign Relations and Project Co-ordinator of Talsi DC
Kristīne Bodze, Co-ordinator of BSCDA
Ozoliņa Sarmīte, External Relations counsellor of Saldus District Council
Jānis Vītoliņš, Deputy Chairman of Ventspils City Council
Rūta Valtere, Deputy director of Economic department of City of Ventspils
Stanislaw Wojtasiak, translator
Svetlana Chouvalova, assistant

§ 1 Welcome

Mr Kaliff, Chairman of the meeting opens the meeting by welcoming everybody to Liepaja meeting of ERB Council. He says that important questions to decide have been set for the meeting, e.g. acceptance of new organization members. And this decision is to be made by presence of representatives of governments of the countries of ERB members: Mr Kaliff welcomes Ivars Gaters, Head of Directorate of Regional Policy and Planning of Ministry of Finance of Latvia, Māris Zvaigzne, a Counsellor of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Vjatcheslav Semjonov, Consul General of Russian Federation in Liepaja, and Tadeusz Fiszbach, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Latvia. Mr Kaliff points out that it is better to work together than alone at home, importance of guests is underlined as it is important to have good relations on national level and work together. In the situation where some of the ERB members are of EU candidate countries the ERB members of the EU Member states are ready to support accession. Mr Kaliff points out that close co-operation with colleagues from Russia is important and that the border should allow for such co-operation as Kaliningrad Oblastj is supposed to play active role in many projects of the region and ERB mission is to build a good structure for peace, democracy and social welfare in the area. Close co-operation between all the ERB members is important for all people in Europe to have good future. The meeting has got 5 points on the first day Agenda: points 1-3 to be handled in the meeting room, and points 4-5 (signing documents with new colleagues and presidency change) to be held upstairs in the banquet room.

§ 2 Appointment of a member to co-sign the minutes of today's meeting

Normunds Niedols proposes that the Swedish party could be the co-signor.

Decision

The proposal is accepted unanimously.

§ 3 Information on Euroregion and provided activities

Håkan Brynielsson makes a brief presentation of Euroregion Baltic as a new organization. Euroregions are not new as an instrument: there are all together about 150 Euroregions in Europe. (Illustrates by a map). Euroregions have always been and will be a very important tool for integration. The map of Euroregion Baltic will change today. It is a unique organization among the Euroregions of Europe: some of participating regions in ERB are from 2 EU member states: Denmark and Sweden, some other participants are from 3 candidate countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, and we have also a member from Russia that is neither an EU member state nor an access country. It is a unique mixture today, and after accession we will have a new puzzle. The aim of the organization is to build a better future using what is common among us. Mr Brynielsson reminds that ERB will have the 5th change of presidency since its foundation on 02 February 1998. The organizational structure consists of the Council, Executive Board, President, Secretariat, Working Groups (demonstrates the organization map). We need to have efficient bodies to build a long-term approach, a strategy.

Rolf Karlsson informs about the Seagull project, which has been worked upon for more than 1 year. It is a complicated strategy making project as provides for involvement of 9 regions, 6 countries with at least 6 types of culture, different interests. The present situation is that the application to Interreg IIIB has to be finalized by the end of March. The task is to deepen co-operation, to multiply inputs of moneys for the whole region: 50% costs from EC for member countries, Russia and East European countries can get 75% from Phare and Tacis. This is to be reached through working out a joint strategy, transnational, not just by putting together separate strategies. We will have a programme with corner stones. We can make investments representing 6 million inhabitants, first set the priorities, and then invest – that is the idea. This includes subprojects concerning environment, science parks, rural programmes, information and communications. We have set a 3-year project at 3.3 million EUR for preparing the development plan. Swedish side has prepared a special project called Good governance. Kaliningrad oblastj is supposed to benefit more; also Latvia and Lithuania can develop their good governance in broad sense. Government of Sweden has contributed 1.9 million SEK for the Baltic Billion project. All accession states as well as Kaliningrad in Russia has to improve governance to be able to be successful members in management of international projects. If good evaluation is reached we will go further. We are not speaking of Poland in this project.

§ 4 Brief Baltic Sea Coast Planning Region presentation and discussion on acceptance of new ERB members

Chairman of the meeting introduces a discussion on acceptance of new ERB members saying that decision will be finally made in another room. First he gives the floor to **Kristīne Bodze**, representative of Baltic Sea Coast Planning Region (BSCPR) who makes a brief BSCPR presentation. (See the attachment)

After the presentation **Ulf Andersson** starts discussion. He declares having no doubt about the acceptance adding that the presentation has been very clarifying and everything is clear and he has nothing to add.

Victor Koshelev says he has a proposal about indicating the new territory on the general map of ERB.

Gunta Strēle says this will be done in the next few hours or days.

Chairman of the meeting makes a short presentation of the Council members who participate in the Council meeting for the external guests.

Gunta Strēle says she has prepared a list with the participants of the meeting.

Chairman of the meeting invites the guests to say a few words.

Tadeusz Fiszbach says he is only a few months in Latvia as the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland. He thanks for the invitation to the meeting and wishes ERB the best.

Ivars Gaters informs about the strategy of Government of Latvia to change the scale of development planning more efficiently and that Directorate of Regional Policy and Planning has been established for this purpose of merged responsibility to acquire the pre-accession instruments of Phare, Social Cohesion Funds, Interreg. He sees that development could be in scale of Planning Regions. Mr Gaters says that he is happy to participate in the ERB Council meeting today and to see the extension of ERB by appointment of new members. He believes that joint development planning is more effective, and the Directorate is supposed to have a dialogue to Planning Regions. Mr Gaters concludes with the expression of hope to have a strong partner in ERB.

Māris Zvaigzne thanks the Council for invitation to their meeting and says he appreciates to be in Liepāja today. Mr Zvaigzne says he sees ERB as an additional instrument of further development. The important EU initiative, Northern initiative, is lacking instrument for implementation and he sees ERB can help with it. Mr Zvaigzne wishes all the best in the name of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia and himself.

Vjatcheslav Semjonov thanks for the invitation to the meeting. He says he enjoys that the topic of the meeting is broad-minded and the presentations are talented and that he prefers to be a student here.

Mr Kaliff ascertains Mr Semjonov that ERB would like to co-operate with him in future.

Gunta Strēle provides organizational information about evening activities.

§ 5 Final Acceptance of New ERB Members and Document Signing

Mr Kaliff welcomes everybody to the formal meeting of final acceptance of new ERB members and signing the document for this membership. He asks if everybody agrees to accept Baltic Sea Coast Planning Region as the new ERB member.

Decision

The members are accepted with applauses.

Mr Kaliff asks the responsible members to sign the document “Amendments to the Agreement on Establishing Euroregion Baltic”.

The document is signed by: Māris Ārbergs, Jānis Vītoliņš, Māris Dadzis, Sarmīte Ozoliņa, Tālivaldis Bergmanis.

§ 6 ERB Presidency change

Mr Kaliff presents Normunds Niedols as the new ERB President.

Decision

The proposal is approved unanimously.

Mr Kaliff welcomes this choice and thanks Mr Niedols for the good co-operation in the past and wishes good luck in the future. He promises support from the Swedish side and to be an active participant in ERB activities.

Mr Niedols thanks Mr Kaliff for the good words and says that with his help we will do it.

Mr Kaliff says that Vice-president Knud Anderssen has gone to Brussels and they will meet tomorrow. He assures that Vice-president will also play an active role in future.

Second part of Council Meeting

Mr Niedols opens the 2nd part of the meeting by his first speech in the role of a President:

Dear ladies and gentleman, excellencies!

Since Euregion establishment document signing has been passed away 4 years. After two years all involved parties will end first round of the presidency.

Latvia begins its presidency at the beginning of Liepaja City anniversary celebration week. This coincidence shows on the co-operation importance between neighbours of the South Baltic.

At the beginning of the next year our Euregion will be five years old. Thus there will be necessity to evaluate in previous years provided activities importance for everyone of the Euregion “Baltic”

In the work of Euregion there are involved five new members from North west of Latvia, which are excellent supplement to existing partners.

Latvian party has stated up several priorities and tasks to be done this year:

- 1) to promote wider society involvement onto bilateral and multilateral co-operation projects. There is necessary to involve wider society into Euregion work – providing this we will rise the significance and support to our organisation.
- 2) We need to rise effectiveness of Euroregion work. Work on this item had started previous presidency – Swedish side. Our aim is to turn our attention towards national and main secretariat work, as well towards effectiveness and necessity for working groups. We would like to evaluate each work group provided work value to reach the Euregion common goals.
- 3) To promote and rise the effectiveness of information exchange within Euregion and outside of it. Especially important information sowing right in time at ERB home page, as a basis using information exchange system which is set up at our statutes.
- 4) To eliminate as one of central common priorities Seagull and Good governance projects;
- 5) Latvian side hope to provide a seminar “Marketing of cities and regions within Euregion “Baltic””; We would like that attendees would be tourism industry representatives from our region and neighbouring countries.;

6) Main attention should be forwarded towards ERB popularisation within EU structures.

Carrying its duties, Latvia' side (Liepaja city) hopes for partner understanding and assistance at all ERB activities.

Thank you very much!

Polish side asks to change the agenda for the day as they have to leave earlier. They propose to start with a discussion on Work Plan 2002-2003.

Decision

The proposal is accepted.

§ 7 ERB Work Plan 2002-2003

Gunta Strēle reports that Board meetings will be held in Talsi in June and in Bornholm in November, Council meeting will be held in Liepaja in September. Council meeting will be held in Liepaja in January before the change of presidency.

Polish side asks to make a change in the proposal and to have the Board meeting in Kaliningrad during the time of EXPO.

Gunta Strēle says that the Latvian side are not sure they will be able to participate in EXPO in Kaliningrad.

Niels Christen Anderssen says that Bornholm, too, are not sure about participation in the EXPO event and that it is not possible to have Board meeting at the same time.

Polish side ask to consider the option of having the Board meeting in Bornholm in August while it is possible to get there by ferry because it is too difficult to get there later.

Gunta Strēle asks for some time to think of it. She reminds again about the request to send the list of culture and sport events of all the ERB members to her because her computer has been stolen and the information lost. She asks to help to solve this problem and resend the lists of activities as soon as possible. Later everybody will receive a full list of all the activities over the ERB territory.

Maria Lindbom says that the right version is to be found in the home page.

Victor Koshelev asks if the Latvian side are not going to participate in EXPO event in Kaliningrad? He says that Ministry of Economy of Latvia have expressed their readiness to participate.

Gunta Strēle says that only enterprises, not the City can participate.

Gunārs Ansiņš reminds that this decision has already been made in Vilnius.

Normunds Niedols asks to proceed with the next point on the agenda.

Decision

The Work Plan 2002-2003 is approved. The Polish side's proposal about change of Board meeting time is not approved.

§ 8 Annual Report on the ERB work

Maria Lindbom says that everybody has got the report on the ERB activities during the Swedish side's presidency in written way. (See attached)

She points out especially that it is important to intensify searching financial tools. Common ERB website which has been created is supposed to contribute to this goal. She points out that the report comprises environmental, infrastructure and social matters but the outline of Social working group, Spatial planning WG and Good Governance project has not been received by her yet so they are lacking in the report.

Maria Lindbom asks to send the lacking information either to her or to Gunta Strēle in 2 weeks and says that she will remind of it correspondingly.

Decision

The Annual Report of ERB Work is approved.

§ 9 Approval of new Board and Council members

Gunta Strēle introduces the new Board and Council members:

Normunds Niedols – Board member

Tāļivaldis Bergmanis - Council member, District of Kuldīga

Māris Ārbergs - Council member, District of Talsi

Sarmīte Ozoliņa - Council member, District of Saldus

Jānis Vītoliņš - Council member, City of Ventspils

Victor Koshelev informs that Mr Ivanov has left the Council and Mr Shlyk should be considered as a Council member instead.

Gunta Strēle informs that from the Lithuanian side Mr. Algirdas Balcytis is replaced by Mr. Arvydas Jakas as a Council member.

Decision

The new members of Board and Council are approved.

§ 10 Information on the Project “Good Governance”

Rolf Karlsson informs that time frame for the project is pretty tight, as it has to be implemented and evaluated till the end of the year. It means that we have to carry out different activities during the spring to prepare this. The Project provides for holding 16 different seminars and workshops: 3 for politicians in each country (i.e. 9 meetings for politicians), 6 – for officials and 1 for summary. He says that we have to plan these events carefully: 5 meetings in each country plus 1 common in November. Mr Karlsson's proposal is to try to implement all the seminars for politicians before summer and for the officials – immediately after summer. The project leader together

with National secretariats should plan this. The proposed content for politicians should include:

- Roles between politicians and officials
- Effectiveness of governance at local level
- Financing
- EU transparency in public sector
- Co-operation with press and private sector.

The content for officials should have quite another content, training of trainers and having 2-3 day seminars on raising administrative capacity and knowledge, the issues include social services, financing, and pedagogy of training.

Mr Karlsson introduces a written material, which will be translated into English and Russian. For the Project the Co-ordinator from Swedish side is going to be a full time position, and costs for 1 assistant from each country will be covered at rate of 75% for Kaliningrad Oblastj and 50% for others. He says this is a good starting point to start to discuss how to find people for this position.

Maria Lindbom says that in 1 week we will have the translation into English and Russian. This is an important project for Swedish side, too, because we all must learn, not teach.

Gunārs Ansiņš says that information on this Project should be made available on Internet. So that the other regions see how active we are.

Maria Lindbom says that we will have it later.

Gunta Strēle asks when will we have this information on website.

Maria Lindbom answers that it will be done next month.

Sarmīte Ozoliņa wants to clarify in which way will the new members benefit.

Mr Karlsson answers that it depends on the Latvian side. 25-30 politicians and executive officials should be selected. The group may be possibly a little bigger but not too big. And the training for trainers should be for 15-20 from each country.

Niels Christen Anderssen wonders about time consuming problems. And he has also got a question whether Polish and Danish side are totally excluded. He proposes that in the issues of roles and effectiveness the Danish side would also like to benefit.

Decision

Information on the Project “Good Governance” is accepted for further consideration.

§ 11 Approval of changes in Statutes

Bjorn Johansson informs that the supposed changes have been discussed between the National secretariats in Klaipeda in February and approved by the Board yesterday. Article 4 will include 5 new words: “... and as an administrative body”.

Normunds Niedols asks if everybody agrees with the insertion into Article 4.

Decision

The proposal is accepted.

Bjorn Johansson continues that addition to the text of Article 5 is a few words: “... and the agreement”.

Normunds Niedols asks if everybody agrees with the insertion into Article 5.

Decision

The proposal is accepted.

Normunds Niedols thanks everybody for involvement in this point. He says that the Statutes in the new edition will be printed out and sent to the parties and we will have 6 good-looking Statutes in 5-6 weeks.

§ 12 Communication system approval for years 2002-2003 in accordance with the Statutes

Gunta Strele points out in the Statutes At the Chapter 1 paragraph 2 is mentioned following – The aims listed in § 1 will be realized in the following ways: Organizing information channels of ERB and supporting media development to provide all the Parties with current information. Chapter 2. Paragraph 3 The parties inform each other about their own undertakings, which could have cross-border or other transnational consequences. Paragraph 6 - Each party shall inform the other parties if there are any changes in the group of council members, as quickly as possible. Paragraph 7 points that The national secretariat in the country where the president resides, is responsible for invitations to the sessions 20 days in advance together with a preliminary agenda. A final agenda shall be sent out 10 days before the sessions. Each member of the council may submit written suggestions concerning the Agenda's particulars to the presidency secretariat. The suggestions shall be sent at least one week before the session. The presidency national secretariat is responsible for the minutes of the sessions. The minutes shall be delivered to all members not later than 30 days after the session The presidency shall make an annual report. The report shall be presented at the first council meeting the following year., not later than the 31st March. Paragraph 11 - Any working group the council decides to appoint, shall report and stay in contact with the official secretariat.

The national secretariats shall help the official secretariat and provide information asked for.

The chairman of a working group is responsible for the result of the work, for the reports and that the group finalize the work in the time stipulated.

The national secretariats receive from the presidency secretariat the following documents

- the minutes of the Council and Board sessions
- resolutions, provisions and decisions of the Council and the Board
- notices of establishing working groups and the results of their work, as well as other reports from the working groups
- changes in Statutes, the membership, the territory of ERB operation and organizational regulations
- programs, expert appraisements and analyses
- information about personnel changes in the structure of the Council and Board members within 14 days since the changes were agreed

The presidency secretariat prepares the following documents for the Council and the Board:

- documentation of the Council and Board sessions
- drafts of resolutions, agreements and decisions to be approved

- annual report of the presidency
- notices to the Parties of the Agreement of the personnel changes in the Council and Board

information on ERB current matters.

New information should be highlighted on the website: project ideas, searching for partnership. You can send your proposals to National secretariats, they will put in on the website.

Niels Christen Anderssen says he promises assistance to the Latvian side in this.

Sarmīte Ozoliņa suggests that all the project ideas could be displayed on the ERB website so that find help for search of project partners.

Normunds Niedols says he finds it a good idea, but also sensitive in the same time because everybody may want to use his ideas on his own.

Gunta Strēle asks if anybody has got objections.

Normunds Niedols summarizes that there are no comments and this point is closed.

Decision

Communication System is approved.

Normunds Niedols asks if anybody wants to say anything in the end of the Council meeting.

Niels Christen Anderssen says that the Swedish side have deserved big thanks for the good job and for the good report. He says also that he is impressed by the plan of the Latvian side on the communications regarding Statutes. He adds that some may like and some may dislike it, still it is important that the structures are in place and communication system is in place and we can move on during this year with the Seagull project and the Baltic Billion project to make things happen. Mr Anderssen thanks the Swedish side and the Latvian side once again.

Oleg Shlyk says he would like to say a few words from a person who participates as a member of ERB Council for the first time. He says he finds that it is a well co-ordinated work. The whole agenda has been covered by the lunch, i.e. earlier than planned. He says he believes that the expectations of the new members will be fulfilled. Mr Shlyk says that Kaliningrad Oblastj is in a special situation as the EU is expanding to the East and he hopes that it will not become a restricted area. He says it is his biggest wish that ERB would help in this situation with the common effort. Mr Shlyk wishes ERB every success and steady growth of international approval.

Normunds Niedols confirms that the idea of ERB is to help to common interests and for this reason common activities for future are being planned.

Normunds Niedols
President

Vice President

Gunta Strēle
Secretariat