



Euroregion Baltic

Presidency: Regional Municipality of Bornholm, EU Secretariat, Ullasvej 17, 3700 Røenø, Denmark
Tel: + 45 5692 1303 fax: +45 5692 1301 e-mail: carrefour@brk.dk - homepage: www.eurobalt.org

The ERB Council Session

Bornholm, 29 - 30 August 2003

Minutes

Participants

Annelise Molin	DK, ERB President
Zbigniew Karpowicz	PL, ERB Vice President
Virginia Lukoshene,	LT, Member of ERB Executive Board
Bo Frank	S, Member ERB Executive Board
Knud Andersen	DK, Member ERB Council
Roma Stubriene	LT, Member ERB Council
Henryk Slonina	PL, Member ERB Council
Jadwiga Semmerling	PL, Member ERB Council
Tadeusz Lubaszewski	PL, Member ERB Council
Antoni Jaszczak	PL, Substitute for Ryszard Kurylczyk, Member ERB Council
Henryk Wozniak	PL, Substitute for Stanislaw Szatkowski, Member ERB Coun.
Ewa Szurmicka	PL, Substitute for Andrzej Rynski, Member ERB Council
Victor Koshelev	RUS, Member ERB Council
Ethel Duvskog	S, Member ERB Council
Gert Wollinger	S, Member ERB Council
Lillebil Grähs	S, Member ERB Council
Ragnar Lindberg	S, Member ERB Council
Camilla Håård-Andersson	S, Substitute for Bo Frank, Member ERB Executive Board
Bo Löfgren	S, Substitute for Sigurd R. Petersson, Member ERB Council
Marianne Eckerbom	S, Chairwoman ERB Environmental Working Group
Rolf A. Karlson	S, Project Leader, Seagull Project Secretariat
Niels Chresten Andersen	DK, Head of Main ERB Secretariat
Karen Lynn Jacobsen	DK, Main ERB Secretariat
Giedre Butkute	LT, National ERB Secretariat
Zdzislaw Olszewski	PL, National ERB Secretariat
Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobrzanski	PL, Interpreter
Evguenia Tcherniavskaja	RUS, National ERB Secretariat/Interpreter
Ulf Andersson	S, National ERB Secretariat
Per Gudmund Lindencrona	S, National ERB Secretariat
Erik Ciardi	S, National ERB Secretariat

Guest

Neilas Tankevicius	Deputy Ambassador, Lithuanian Embassy in Denmark
Ewa Debska	First Secretary, Polands Embassy in Denmark
Vladimir Ulasevich	Minister Councillor, Russian Embassy in Denmark
Lars Grönbjerg	Head of Section, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Annika Carlsson	Project Consulnt, Institute for Democracy, Växjö
David Hunt	Project Coordinator, Baltic Seven Island cooperation

1. Presentation round

The ERB Council consists of up to eight (8) persons appointed from each ERB Parties.

Each Party shall inform about any changes in the group of Council members, well ahead of the next Council meeting.

Due to the ERB Statutes only Council members have the right to speak and take decisions.

Persons can be invited to the sessions by the Presidency and given the right to speak.

Recommendation:

Head of each delegation is recommended to shortly present the present Council members and guests, to inform about any changes in the group of Council members since the last Council session

Conclusion:

All participants were presented.

2. Approval of the agenda

The ERB statutes states, that

- The invitation and the preliminary agenda must be send out at least 20 days in advance
- Each Council member can at least 10 days before the session to the main ERB Secretariat submit written suggestions concerning the particulars of the agenda
- A final agenda should be send out 7 days before the session

The invitation and preliminary agenda were sent out 1st August 2003 to the National ERB Secretariats. No written suggestions from Council were received at the deadline 19th August 2003, and the final agenda was sent out to the National ERB secretariats at 21st August 2003.

Due to the statutes the sessions of the Council should be planned in such a way that the whole agenda can be finished during one day. At the ERB Secretariat meeting in Klaipeda 6th August 2003, it was agreed to recommend the ERB Council to have the next session over 2 days, 29th and 30th August 2003, regarding the long agenda.

Recommendation:

The Presidency recommends the Council to approve

- the proposed agenda for the Council session
- the Council session to be held over 2 days

Conclusion:

Recommendation was approved.

3. Approval of minutes for the last Council session

Due to the ERB Statutes minutes of Council sessions shall be delivered to all members not later than 30 days after the session.

Because of specific circumstances in the former Latvian ERB Presidency minutes have been delayed.

Recommendation:

The Presidency recommends the Council to approve the minutes for the Council session in Malbork 24th February 2003

Conclusion:

Minutes approved including minor corrections.

4. Appointment of a Council member to co-sign minutes for this session

There has been precedence in ERB to appoint a person to co-sign the minutes after approval of the minutes.

Recommendation:

The ERB Presidency propose Mr Zbigniew Karpowicz, ERB Vice president to be appointed

Conclusion:

Recommendation was approved.

5. Report by the President

- a. Executive Board meeting in Brussels 25 – 27 May 2003
 - b. Report from the Round trip visit to ERB regions, May and August 2003
 - c. Prolongation of ERB presidency period
 - d. Extension of ERB area
-

Draft minutes for the Executive Board meeting in Brussels 25 – 27 August 2003 has been sent to the National ERB Secretariat 30th May 2003 and is available in English and Russian on ERB's official website, www.eurobalt.org.

The Executive Board and the Presidents round trip to the ERB regions in May and August focused on the 5 main objectives, launched by the Danish Presidency in Malbork 24th February 2003:

1. Better prepared ERB meetings
2. High priority of the Seagull project
3. Strengthening of ERB's external profile and lobbying function
4. Anchoring of the ERB cooperation in the ERB regions
5. Round trip visits by the President to all member regions, in order to discuss concretisation of the ERB cooperation and other common matters

A report for the round trip meetings has been sent to the national ERB secretariats and will form the basis for the Council discussion.

At the Board meeting and in some of the round trip two specific subjects was raised and proposed to be discussed by the Council:

- Prolongation of the ERB presidency period
- Extension of the ERB area

In both subjects no final decision will be taken, but the presidency recommends having the first discussion at this session, and the second and final discussion at the next Council session.

The ERB secretariats recommends the Council to list up a 'pro et contra' list of arguments in both subjects. More continuity, especially for the main ERB secretariat could be an argument for a prolongation of the presidency period, but on the other hand there will be longer intervals for each Party to have the Presidency. A possibility could also be to let each Party decide to have the presidency one or two years.

In the discussion about extension of the ERB area, no applications have been received, but requests and questions from Estonian and Lithuanian regions. The ERB secretariats recommend the Council to consider the functionality of ERB and if the Council is open for an enlargement, then to clarify procedures for this. It should be considered to have a special consultation with ERB regions in a country with applicant regions.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- take note of the minutes for the Executive Board meeting in Brussels
- to discuss the President report for the round trip meetings in order to identify main directions for the future ERB cooperation
- to list up arguments for and against a prolongation of the ERB presidency period
- to list up arguments for and against an extension of the ERB area

Conclusion:

Draft minutes for the Executive Board meeting and the Round Trip report was taken into note. Especially the need of a permanent ERB secretariat and a common ERB budget were discussed, and the Council agreed to have the main Secretariat prepare a more concrete proposal to the next Executive Board meeting, taking into consideration:

- *possible cooperation with other Baltic Sea organisations*
- *more clear division of tasks and role of the national ERB secretariats*
- *clarification of the difficulties for ERB to become a legal entity*
- *possibility of letting the permanent secretariat still follow the Presidency*
- *clarification about financing, such as financing partly by the host Party and partly through projects and the rest of the needed payment to be paid by ERB member regions*

The Council agreed not to prolong the ERB Presidency period.

Eventually extension of the ERB area was discussed. Several participants argued for not to include regions for more countries already represented in the ERB. If regions from the ERB countries should apply for membership, the existing ERB members in the country should be consulted before a decision in the ERB Council. It was recommended to especially consider the non-member regions in Lithuania, which will be a part of the future INTERREG III A programme for Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad. A decision will be made at the next Council session.

6. Thematic discussion I: Northern Dimension and the Wider Europe initiative

10th June 2003 the European Commission launched its proposal for The Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2004-06. The proposal sets out a framework of priorities, objectives and actions to be pursued in the implementation of the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border policies of the European Union.

Information about the Northern Dimension and the second Action Plan is available on http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/

1st July 2003 the European Commission launched another proposal “Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument”. This proposal represents a major step towards a better implementation of joint projects on the external borders of the EU, such as the borders with Russia. The European Commission foresees that 955 million EUR could be reallocated for this purpose in the period 2004-2006. For the period after 2007, the Commission highlights a number of options including the creation of a single New Neighbourhood Instrument.

Information about the Wider Europe initiative is available on http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/we/intro/

Both proposals are highly relevant for the future ERB cooperation and the Presidency has invited Mr Lars Grönbjerg from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to introduce these proposals, and to provide the Council a better background to identify the role of and opportunities for ERB to act within these frameworks.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss the two proposals by the European Commission, in order to identify the role of and the opportunities for ERB – and to decide how to further work on these matters.

Conclusion:

ERB should start lobbying to become its own Neighbourhood programme besides the already proposed 24 programme areas, and continue to lobby in order to have maritime borders with the same status as land borders in the cross border cooperation.

The main ERB Secretariat will follow up the discussion and prepare further steps to be discussed by the Executive Board at its next meeting, including a discussion on the difficulties with the new visa regime between Kaliningrad and neighbours Lithuania and Poland.

7. Thematic discussion II: Structural Funds 2006+

At the last Council meeting in Malbork 24th February 2003 it was decided to forward letters to the European Commission, promoting ERB to have an INTERREG III A like status in the future EU Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds.

The President sent letters in the beginning of April 2003 to

- Commissioner Michel Barnier, responsible for the EU Cohesion Policy
- Commissioner Günther Verheugen, responsible for EU Enlargement

- Commissioner Chris Patten, responsible for EU External Affairs

No responses have so far been received, but the Executive Board followed up the subject during the meetings in Brussels 25 – 27 May 2003, and agreed to have a thematic discussion about the future EU Cohesion Policy at this Council meeting.

The Executive Board agreed that each Party should inform their respective National government about ERB's opinion on the future EU Cohesion Policy and about ERB's efforts to become a future INTERREG III A like status. In the meetings in Brussels it was especially stressed to the European Commission to give maritime borders the same status as land borders in cross-border cooperation programmes such as INTERREG.

The European Commission has for many months prepared the next (third) report on the Cohesion Policy, to be launched in November 2003 and including proposals for more concrete directions in the future Cohesion Policy. Several interregional organisations have already decided on their positions and are lobbying intensively to EU institutions and national governments.

The aim of this thematic discussion is to outline positions within the ERB and therefore each delegation will be asked to present their opinions on the future EU Cohesion Policy.

To form a background for the discussion, Mr Knud Andersen, Head of the Danish delegation in the EU Committee of Regions and member of the ERB Council, has been asked to give a status for the preparations for the EU Cohesion Policy after 2006, the positions of Committee of Regions and the Association of Danish Regions.

The EU Committee of Regions organised a Conference in Leipzig 5 – 6 May 2003, and decided on a Declaration: The future of European Cohesion Policy, which is available on http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/document/futur/europ/leipzig_declaration_06_may_2003_en.pdf

All delegations are recommended to read and if possible discuss this declaration before the Council session.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- discuss the future EU Cohesion Policy in order to identify the possibility to decide a common ERB position, and if so
- to decide on the further procedure in forming a Position Paper.

Conclusion:

The Council agreed in preparing a common ERB Position Paper, to be discussed at the next Executive Board meeting. The main ERB Secretariat will prepare a draft paper and consult persons involved in management of Structural Fund programmes, in order to include more practical matters. Renationalisation of the EU Cohesion Policy must be avoided, but instead regional authorities should have more responsibilities implementing the Cohesion Policy. Maritime Borders should have same status as Land Borders in Cross Border programmes.

In the follow up the ERB Parties should also consider lobbying the national governments.

The Polish Party asked for support by the main ERB Secretariat in the current discussion of the management of the INTERREG III A programme for Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad. This support will be provided.

8. ERB's external role and lobbying function

One of the main objectives for the Danish presidency is to improve the ERB external profile and lobbying function. The objective must be seen in the light of several discussions in the Council and the Executive Board since especially 2001.

The current political agenda in the Baltic Sea Region and in Europe underlines the need to improve the external profile of ERB, in such matters as EU Enlargement, the second Northern Dimension Action Plan, the Wider Europe initiative, EU-Russia relations and the future EU Cohesion Policy.

The aim of this discussion is to have a final decision on eventually membership of the Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR), and /or to increase the involvement in the Cooperation of Pheripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR).

Secondly the discussion aims at following up the recommendation in the adopted resolution from the Ronneby Conference 2 – 3 December 2003, to strengthen the inform to national governments, EU institutions, the Council of Baltic Sea States and other key actors.

A third aim is to discuss how to form a strategy and structure for ERB's lobbying function, based on the discussion at Executive Board meeting in Brussels 26th May 2003. Please take note of minutes of the Executive Board meeting, available on www.eurobalt.org

AEBR membership: Since the beginning ERB has had an observer status in the AEBR, which in 2001 asked ERB to replace the observer status with a membership, which includes a membership fee. In October 2002 the Latvian ERB Presidency was invited to and took part in the AEBR Annual Meeting, and since then ERB has received invoices on AEBR membership fees for 2002 and 2003. Nevertheless ERB has so far taken no final decision on eventually AEBR membership.

The Council at the last session decided first to analyse other European interregional actors, in order to find out which organisation(s) should be preferred. Which organisation is most suitable regarding the ERB cooperation? How should the cooperation be – contacts, observer status or membership? Will it be possible for ERB to assure necessary human and financial resources?

The Executive Board had a meeting 26th May 2003 with Mr Pascal Gruselle, Head of the CPMR delegation in Brussels (CPMR: Cooperation of Pheripheral and Maritime Regions). Mr Gruselle presented the organisation and task of CPMR. Only the regions of Bornholm and Klaipeda are so far members of CPMR, which has a special Baltic Sea Commission.

The Council is recommended to take note of the later discussion about an ERB Information and Communication Strategy, which includes proposed concrete actions in order to improve the ERB external profile and lobbying function.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- discuss the ERB external role and lobbying function, and
- to take a concrete decision on eventually membership of AEBR and/or CPMR.

Conclusion:

The Council agreed to recommend each ERB member region to consider membership of CPMR and its Baltic Sea Commission, and to let the main ERB Secretariat negotiate a reduced membership fee. AEBR membership is for the moment not relevant. In the lobbying activities it is important to

participate in BSSSC activities and to lobby both regarding EU institutions and the national governments. It was also agreed to seek more concrete cooperation with other interregional organisations, such as the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC).

9. Seagull project, report

- a. Steering Committee meeting in Klaipeda 7 August 2003
 - b. Status for applied co-financing from PHARE, TACIS and NMC
 - c. Actions undertaken and reports elaborated since last Council meeting
-

One third of the Seagull project implementation period has passed. Much of the analysing background activities have been finalised and reported, and the number of seminars and other activities will increase in the next coming months.

The Seagull projects influence in the ERB cooperation is increasing, considering the agenda for this Council session.

- Several reports have been drafted under the different work packages
- A large number of seminars and working group meetings have been held since last Council session
- A drafted information and communication strategy will be discussed in more details later at this Council session
- A one page electronically newsletter has been launched by the Seagull project management, expected to be send out 1-2 times per month.

Still the implementation of the project faces some difficulties, such as lack of participation in the working groups and lack of co-financing for the participation of the non-EU partners. During Spring 2003 co-financing have been delivered to PHARE, TACIS and Nordic Council of Ministers programmes.

The Council will be informed by the project management about the outcome of the Seagull Steering Committee meeting 7 August 2003 in Klaipeda, a status for co-financing applications, the progress of the project and problems raised during the implementation of the first project milestones.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss the report by the Project management, and to decide on necessary initiatives to be taken in order to reduce current difficulties and provide the best possible basis for further implementation of the Seagull project.

Conclusion:

The Council took the report by the Project Leader into account. The co-financing problem is about to be solved some of the way, as some applications have already been approved. An information meeting with the Polish partners and municipalities will soon take place.

In future, Steering Committee meetings will be coordinated with the meetings of the national ERB Secretariats, which will improve the preparing of Executive Board and Council meetings.

It was stressed to the ERB Parties to assure more continuity in the participation in the project working groups and to inform back from the Steering Committee meetings.

10. ERB Information and Communication Strategy

As a part and one of the main out puts of the Seagull project, work package 5, an ERB Information and Communication Strategy has been drafted.

In the ERB statutes it is stated, that realising the aims of ERB cooperation includes organising information channels and supporting media development to provide all the Parties with current information.

The drafted strategy concentrates on the future, setting up objectives, describing target groups and listing up concrete priority actions to be undertaken during 2003 and 2004 in three areas:

- 1) Internal information and communication within the formal ERB structures
- 2) Information within the ERB member regions
- 3) Information and lobbying activities outside the ERB area

Each proposed action include a proposal on when it should be implemented, who should be responsible and the main cooperation partners in implementing the action.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss, propose possible amendments, and approve the Strategy

Conclusion:

The draft information and Communication Strategy including all concrete proposed actions were approved and will now be followed up by the ERB secretariats and the WP5 group in the Seagull project.

11. Ronneby resolution, follow up

The resolution adopted at the Ronneby Conference 2 – 3 December 2002 was presented at the last Council session in Malbork 24th February 2003. It was decided to follow up the recommendations in the resolution.

- a. To take further measures for effective involvement of municipalities in the ERB cooperation and in the project activities on the agenda.

Status: The issue has been included in the round trip meetings, and it is expected that a more concretized ERB cooperation will increase the involvement of municipalities.

- b. Inform the respective governments, the Council of Baltic Sea States, the EU Commission and the EU Committee of Regions about the ERB priorities and activities, thereby also stating the importance of enhanced national and EU level support to local and regional authorities for developed management and governance competencies in all concerned countries

Status: This issue has been a main subject in the Board and Council discussions on how to improve ERB's external role and lobbying function

- c. Investigate the possibility to – for instance every second year – arrange a conference with broad participation from the municipalities of the member regions in order to summarise te ERB

cooperation activities and establish an arena for networking and exchanging experience and ideas.

Status: The Executive Board recommends the proposals to the Council and to let the main ERB Secretariat together with the Polish Secretariat and the Seagull project Secretariat to prepare a proposal for such a conference in 2004.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- take note of the status of the follow up on the Ronneby resolution, and
- to approve on the proposal to have a conference similar to the Ronneby conference again in 2004.

Conclusion:

The recommendation was approved.

12. Presentation of a project proposal

The Association of Local Authorities of Kronoberg has initiated a project “Leadership and Competence Development within the ERB-region”.

Ms Annika Carlson from the Institute for Local and Regional Democracy in Växjö, Sweden, has been invited by the Presidency to present the project proposal. The aim is in first hand to deliver an application for Seed Money before the deadline 8 September 2003. If the application is approved, expected in the end of October 2003, an application for the INTERREG III B programme will be made. Next deadline is 27th February 2004.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- comment the project proposal presented,
- to decide about eventually support to it, and
- to identify ERB partners willing to participate in the Seed Money project

Conclusion:

The Council took into account that the necessary partners for a Seed Money application are already on place, and recommends that more partners take part in the project. It was especially recommended to involve partners not already involved in the ERB cooperation.

Some concerns were discussed, such as the limited resources of the ERB formal bodies.

If possible it was recommended to find a lead partner among the Eastern ERB parties for the project to drafted.

13. Co-operation with Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion

The Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru based in Romania has in a letter asked for exchange of informations and collaboration with ERB.

The Executive Board at the meeting in Brussels 25 May 2003 decided to have the ERB secretariats to draft an answer for a Council decision.

At the ERB Secretariat meeting in Klaipeda 6th August 2003 agreed to recommend the Council that information about the Euroregions can be exchanged, and if mutual interests, collaboration could be established in specific fields.

The secretariats consider the nearer Euroregions to be of bigger interest of ERB to create closer contacts and cooperation with.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss, propose amendments or changes, and to approve the letter to the Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru

Conclusion:

The draft was approved.

14. Maritime Safety

The resolution adopted by the ERB Council in Malbork 24th February 2003 has now been signed by all ERB Parties, and the originals will be distributed at the Council session on Bornholm.

The Executive Board in Brussels 5 May 2003 decided

- To recommend all ERB Parties to send their respective National governments the resolution, if not already done. The resolution should addressed to the Prime Minister and ministers responsible for environment and transport,
- To send a letter to the EU Commissioners responsible for transport and environment, including a recommendation to put focus on unsafe Oil Production platforms and on the role of regional and local authorities in the Maritime Safety structures, and finally to recommend support for the Baltic Sea to become a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area,
- To ask the ERB Environmental Working group to put Maritime Safety on their agenda and if possible and relevant, to prepare a proposal for a specific ERB conference on this matter,
- To ask the Lithuanian partners to send further information about the discussion on planned oil production platforms near the Curonian Spit,
- To let the main ERB Secretariat send out a list over initiatives and decisions on this matter, taken during the last few months

Some delegations have already promoted the resolution and taken more concrete initiatives in the field, not at least in the relation to the oil spill near Bornholm and South Sweden, caused by the Chinese vessel 'Fu Shan Hai' late May 2003. This episode has lead to an initiative by South Sweden regions and Bornholm, in cooperation with other Baltic regions and actors to organise a conference during autumn 2003. A preliminary date has been set to 12th November 2003. South Sweden (SYDSAM) is expected to be the main coordinator of this conference.

The ERB secretariats at their meeting in Klaipeda 6th August 2003 recommend to the Council to join this initiative, which aims to stress National governments and other key actors in Maritime

Safety to more urgent implement the many initiatives, recommendations and decisions taken during the last months, mostly in light of the Prestige disaster in November 2002.

The Council is also recommended, if needed, to appoint ERB representatives to join the further preparations of this conference, and if possible, to let ERB become one of the organisations inviting to the conference. The organisers should be recommended to use highly qualified experts/speakers and avoid that the conference will just repeat already well-known recommendations, but will bring added regional perspectives in the debate on this matter.

The ERB Secretariats have from the Lithuanian and Russian partners received information about the planned Russian Oilfield (LUKoil Company) near the Curonian Spit, and during the President round trip visit in Baltijsk 9 August, the Russian ERB Secretariat organised a visit to the Izhevskoe, where the General Director of “LUKoil-Kaliningradmorneft” informed about the oil production plans and presented the oil terminal and the building of oil production platforms.

The President will at the Council session inform more about this visit.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to

- decide about eventually participation in the proposed conference on Maritime Safety, and
- to discuss further follow up on the matter

Conclusion:

The Council was informed that probably SYDSAM will postpone the proposed Conference till 2004. P. G. Lindencrona and the Environmental Working Group were recommended to prepare a proposal for a conference, as ERB in put to the further preparations – and to be discussed at the next Executive Board meeting. Following should be considered:

- *The need to include aspects such as safety on the Oil Production platforms in the Baltic Sea*
- *The safety on board the ships, f. ex. in regard to terrorism*
- *Eventually to include Maritime safety in the coastal zones*
- *The use of specialists and eventually well-known speakers, in order to bring new aspects into the debate*

The Council agreed in having the conference organised in Sweden and to have a common conference with other organisations.

The Council was informed about the CPMR’s Maritime Safety Conference, which has been postponed to 13 – 14 October 2003 in Nantes, France. ERB regions are invited.

15. Extension of ERB delegations with young/NGO’s observers

At the Executive Board meeting in Brussels a proposal from the Swedish ERB partners was discussed, to broaden the participation in the Executive Board and Council meetings. Delegations should be given a possibility to in their delegations include a young person, student and/or representative from a NGO. Costs for such a persons participation should be covered by the respective delegation. The proposal aims at improving the knowlegde about ERB and in other ways to bring added value to the cooperation, especially considering the participation of young people.

Recommendation:

The Executive Board recommends the Council to approve the proposal.

Conclusion:

The proposal was approved.

16. Report from the permanent ERB working groups

- a. Environmental Working Group
 - b. Social Working Group
 - c. Future status of the Spatial Planning
-

The former Spatial Planning Working Group has been integrated in the Seagull project, work package 1, which deals with transport infrastructure and other spatial planning fields.

At the round trip meetings in Baltijsk and Väjjö the need of a permanent Spatial Planning Working Group was discussed, in light of the current discussions of Trans European Networks and other important matters regarding to the development of ERB area.

At the Council session the Russian delegation will be asked to present a specific proposal for the structure and role of a permanent Spatial Planning Working Group.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss the proposal presented, and decide on it.

Conclusion:

The Council agreed that in the future to invite members of the permanent ERB Working Groups to the Council sessions, in order to create better possibilities for the Working Groups to meet.

The Polish Party informed the Council that the Social Working Group does not exist anymore, as the main aim of the group has been fulfilled – improving people-to-people relations. There will still be projects prepared in the area.

The future structure and working methods of the permanent Working Groups will be discussed at the next Executive Board meeting, including the presented proposal from the Russian Party to reconstruct a permanent Spatial Planning Working Group.

17. Exchange of information and other matters

A possibility for the delegations to exchange information relevant to the ERB cooperation, and to bring up other matters to be considered in the further cooperation.

The Seagull project will be represented at the BSSSC Annual Meeting in St. Petersburg late October 2003. The ERB President expects to participate.

18. Coming meetings in the Executive Board and Council

The Presidency proposes to have the next Executive Board meeting, scheduled to 31 October 2003, in Kaliningrad region, and the Executive Board meeting, scheduled to 23 January 2004 in Klaipeda, and the next Council session 27 February 2004 to be held in Poland.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommended to discuss the proposed meeting places.

Conclusion;

The proposed meeting places were approved.