



10 April 2001

Euroregion Baltic
Present Presidency
Southeast Sweden 2001-2002

Minutes Euroregion Baltic Board Meeting Elblag, 10 April 2001

- Board members:** Roger Kaliff, President, Southeast Sweden
Virginia Lukoshene, Governor Klaipeda County
Henryk Slonina, Mayor of Elblag
Normunds Niedols, Director Liepaja City Council
- National secretariats:** Zdislaw Olszewski, Poland
Malgorzata Samusjew, Poland
Roma Stubriene, Klaipeda
Victor Koshelev, Kaliningrad
Gunars Ansins, Liepaja
Maria Lindbom, Southeast Sweden
Björn Johansson, Southeast Sweden
- Interreg IIIB (PIA):** Håkan Brynielsson, Chairman of Working group
Rolf A Karlson, Expert
Zbigniew Czepulkowski, member of Working group

The Danish party is not present at the meeting.

Welcome to Elblag

The Mayor of Elblag, Mr Henryk Slonina, welcomes us all to Elblag and tells us about the rebuilding of the old town and the competition with the City of Gdansk. Elblag has a population of 130.000 people and was earlier the capital of Elblag province. Now Elblag is a municipality in the new province Warmia-Mazury, which is something that not everybody quite agree with. Many people would rather belong to Gdansk/the province Pomerania. Elblag is a leading town in the country when it concerns Health issues. The town has also received awards from the EU for its Ecology work and in the year 2000 an award was given to Elblag from the President of Poland.

§ 1 Up-dated list of Council/Executive Board members

An up-dated list of Council/Executive Board members of Euroregion Baltic is handed out.

The Lithuanian party informs that since the former Mayor of Klaipeda, Mr Eugenius Gentvilas, has become a minister of the Lithuanian government he is replaced by the new Mayor of Klaipeda Mr Rimantas Taraskevicius in the Council of Euroregion Baltic.

New Latvian members in the Council are:

Gunars Ansins, Project co-ordinator, Liepaja City Council
Edvins Drigins, Vice Executive Director, Liepaja City Council
Normunds Niedols, Executive Director, Liepaja City Council

Mr Niedols will be the Latvian representative in the Executive Board (see § below).

§ 2 Vice Presidency in Euroregion Baltic

The board has been given the task by the council to contact the Danish and Latvian parties concerning vice presidency in Euroregion Baltic during the Swedish presidency 2001-2002. A proposal on how to proceed shall be presented at the next council meeting. A decision will then be taken by the council.

Consequently Mr Kaliff has been in contact with the Danish and Latvian parties to discuss the matter. The outcome of those discussions are that :

- The Latvian party (Liepaja) has confirmed their willingness to take an active part in the work of Euroregion Baltic and to function as Vice President during the Swedish Presidency.

- The Danish party has also confirmed its interest in continued co-operation in Euroregion Baltic. Mr Knud Andersen however points out that, due to a reduction of personel at the secretariat of Bornholms Amt, there won't be a representative from Bornholm at all ERB meetings.

Mr Kaliff stresses the importance of involving as many elected politicians as possible in the different bodies of Euroregion Baltic; not least in view of the coming membership of the applicant countries in the European Union and the subsidiarity principle.

Initially Mr Niedols has agreed to act as Vice President from the Liepaja party. Next year however, February 2002 – February 2003 when it is time for Latvian presidency, a direct elected politician will preside over the work of Euroregion Baltic.

Mr Slonina expresses satisfaction from the Polish party that Liepaja has accepted the function as Vice President.

Decision

All members of the board are in favour of the proposed Latvian vice presidency and it is decided to forward the proposal to the council for a formal decision.

§ 3 Translation of minutes into Russian

Ms Lindbom excuses for the delay in sending out the minutes from the council and board meetings in Kalmar 1 February 2001 and also explains that she has tried to find a solution for the translation into Russian. With the help of Mr Koshelev and the Kaliningrad secretariat of Euroregion Baltic those minutes have now been translated and they are handed out at today's meeting.

Mr Koshelev however advises the Swedish secretariat to contact a translator in Kalmar concerning future translations.

§ 4 Approval of council- and board minutes as a current routine

Mr Kaliff suggests that a procedure of checking and approving the minutes from our meetings is adopted as a current routine. This would mean that the minutes always will be signed by two persons; the President and another member of the board or council.

Decision

It is decided to adopt such a procedure and that Mr Niedols will co-sign and approve the minutes of today's board meeting.

§ 5 Interreg III B and the PIA working group

Mr Brynielsson, Chairman of the PIA group gives a brief report from the first meeting with the working group. The group has now initiated activities to prepare a good and well anchored BSR INTERREG IIIB application for Euroregion Baltic.

The overall objective is to draw up a General Development Programme for the whole Euroregion – a programme that is well accepted and approved by all member councils.

The application should be oriented towards the first priority of the programme: **Promoting trans-national co-operation on sustainable spatial development** (spatial development strategies and actions for the Baltic Sea Region; a Baltic urban system and a balanced polycentric settlement structure; efficient and sustainable transport and communication systems and improved access to information society; natural and cultural heritage and sustainable development of coastal zones, islands, river regions and other specific areas).

The first activity will be to compile a well-structured overview of all relevant actions already implemented or started in the Euroregion as well as the plans of action of the working groups on spatial development and environment.

In order to get a good start of the project preparations, Mr Karlson will visit all parties of the Euroregion to discuss and plan the application work.

Mr Karlson reports that he regards the first PIA group meeting as very positive and fruitful and that he looks forward to his visits to each of the Euroregion parties. A first draft project proposal is planned to be finished before the summer holidays. Next meeting with the PIA group will be held in Liepaja 30 May.

Mr Slonina points out that sub-groups in each member region must be taken into consideration. Mr Karlson agrees fully and explains that it is an important task for each region to arrange such preparatory meetings in order to integrate each regional process in the common Interreg project. A meeting with Interreg III B experts from the Swedish ERB member regions is planned to be held within a few weeks.

Ms Samusjew stresses the importance of co-ordination with the Phare programme, where Polish projects now are being planned for the period 2002-2004. Mr Karlson agrees that we have to work parallelly with funding for EU member countries (Interreg), funding for the applicant countries (Phare) and Russia (Takis). We also have to work parallelly with strategic issues and proposals on concrete pilot projects as sub-projects of the overall project proposal

The question remains to be solved when and how to secure Phare and Takis funding.

At the next meeting 30 May in Liepaja the work of the PIA group will be further concretized.

§ 6 The project on Euroregion Baltic's internal work

The Council meeting in Kalmar also decided to support an application to the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency concerning the Euroregion Baltic internal work (the SALA-IDA project). There are strong links between this project and the work to prepare a project proposal for applications to the Interreg IIIB/Phare/Takis funds. The SALA-IDA project is about efficient forms of organisation, decision-making, etc. within the Euroregion, while the Interreg project is about the material content of the Euroregion cooperation.

The visits mentioned in § 5 also should be used for starting the project about the Euroregion's internal work. Mr Björn Johansson, project leader for the SALA-IDA project, and Mr PG Lindencrona will therefore visit the Euroregion parties together with Mr Karlson.

Mr Johansson describes further the aims of this project and its relation to the Interreg III B project. Guidelines for implementation of the project are handed out. One important issue to discuss within the project is for instance cultural

differences among the regions. Other issues that will be discussed are the long-term political goal, funding possibilities and the marketing/information strategy of Euroregion Baltic.

The first common project seminar will take place in Gdansk 19 June. Mr Johansson explains that it is of great importance that as many as possible of the council members attend this seminar. *(This date has later been changed as the Polish party has to attend another important meeting concerning Euroregion cooperation the same day. The first seminar will most likely be arranged in connection to the next Council meeting 21-22 August instead).*

Decision

The board approves of the aim and direction of the project. It is however decided to adopt a new and more appropriate name of the project – Euroregion Baltic 2002 + (ERB 2002+).

§ 7 Working group reports

The board is briefed about the activities of the different working groups.

Maria Lindbom reminds about the meeting of the Environmental working group in Elblag 26 April. One important issue on the agenda is the preparatory work for the Interreg IIIB application.

From the Social working group Malgorzata Samusjew reports that 32 projects are being implemented right now.

§ 8 Membership in AEBR

The question of joining the Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR) as a full member was discussed by the council in Kalmar 1 February 2001. It was decided that the Euroregion secretariat should contact the AEBR office and ask about conditions for membership and membership fees for the entry of all Euroregion Baltic parties.

Maria Lindbom has been in contact with the Secretary General of AEBR, Mr Jens Gabbe, who welcomes us all as members. However, since the organisation is adopting a new membership fee system, valid as of 2002, it is not yet quite clear how much each of the Euroregion Baltic parties would have to pay. Maria Lindbom suggests therefore to invite a representative from AEBR to the next board meeting to find out more about the organisation in general, its aims, fees etc.

Decision

The board decides to invite a representative from AEBR in accordance with Ms Lindbom's proposal.

§ 9 Euroregion “Quarterly” - Information-/marketing material

The Lithuanian party explains that there still is 1.500 USD left on the account for a new issue of the “Quarterly”, originally planned to be produced during the Lithuanian presidency. So far two issues have been published.

Mr Olszewski explains that it has not always been an easy task to gather material for the “Quarterly”. The board discusses how to improve this work. One solution might be to define a special theme for each issue.

A possible theme for next issue could be *Interreg IIIB*. But as someone said: “Money is not the difficulty – material is the problem”.

Internet

There are two different www-addresses for Euroregion Baltic. The only active web site at the moment is the one administrated by the Polish party www.eurobalt.org.pl

All members present agree that it would be better with one common web site to avoid confusion. The situation, however, is exactly analogous to the one concerning the “Quarterly”. Someone has to do the job!

Mr Koshelev suggests that a special Public Relations group is formed to work out an information strategy for Euroregion Baltic; including how to work with

- the “Quarterly”
- the web site
- other information material

Mr Johansson means that this question also could be included for discussion in the project ERB 2002+ (**marketing-/information strategy** see §5).

Decision

Maria Lindbom will discuss the matter with the other secretariats and the issue will be on the agenda again at the next board meeting (*Liepaja 7 June 2001*).

§ 10 EXPO 2002 in Kaliningrad

The council has given the task to the board to discuss the matter further with the Kaliningrad party to find a date for the EXPO in the spring 2002 in connection with a Forum South Sweden.

The secretariat will discuss the matter with Mr Koshelev to be able to present more information about the focus of the EXPO as well as possibilities of co-ordination with Forum South Sweden.

§ 11 VASAB 2010 Plus Draft Report

The Swedish presidency has been asked to deliver comments and contributions to VASAB 2010 Plus Draft Report from Euroregion Baltic. A copy of the letter is handed out to the members. Comments shall be delivered to the VASAB secretariat before 10 May (*has later been postponed to 18 May*).

Decision

A common ERB proposal will be communicated with all ERB members before sending it to VASAB by 18 May 2001.

§ 12 Projects

Maria Lindbom reports that the secretariat has received two project partner requests; one for a foot-ball tournament in Kaliningrad in the autumn 2001 and one for a canoeing project in Poland. We all agree that such very concrete projects are important to support.

Soon the Swedish secretariat will be helped by Mr Edgardo Nunez, who will look into the possibilities for Swedish partners to participate in those projects. Edgardo speaks Russian fluently since he was educated in Belarus and has worked in Russia for a number of years.

§ 13 Forthcoming dates/Activity Plan 2001

Forthcoming activities of ERB are discussed and the following dates are booked :

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 7 June | Executive Board in Liepaja |
| 21-22 August | Council meeting |
| 25 September | Executive Board in Klaipeda |

§ 14 North Kurzeme, Latvia joining ERB?

From the Lithuanian party we have learned that North Kurzeme region in Latvia is interested in becoming a member of ERB. The board therefore discusses in general how to handle such questions.

The Liepaja party will inform the board further about the situation in Latvia and possible interest from other parties at the next meeting in Liepaja 7 June.

§ 15 Report from Conference in Hungary

Mr Kaliff reports that he took part in a conference recently in Hungary dealing with Euroregion cooperation. A conclusion of the conference is that Euroregions are stability factors of great importance for the border regions of Europe.

Mr Kaliff ends the meeting by giving the floor to the becoming Vice President Mr Niedols. Mr Niedols again expresses the sincere interest of the Latvian party to function as Vice President during the Swedish presidency and next year as President for the whole Euroregion Baltic.

Roger Kaliff
President

Normunds Niedols
Liepaja City Council

Maria Lindbom
Secretariat