

Euroregion Baltic
Executive Board Meeting
Karlskrona, Sweden
27 - 28th May 2013



Title Preliminary minutes

Submitted by SDD, International Permanent Secretariat

Summary / Note

Requested action

Participants: ERB Executive Board:

Mr Per Ole Petersen	ERB President, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Vaclovas Dackauskas	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of Association Klaipėda Region
Mr Lennarth Förberg	Member of ERB Executive Board, 2 nd Vice-Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Mr Roland Gustbée	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Regional Council of södra Småland
Mr Karl Holst	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of ERB Youth Board
Ms Monica Haider	Member of ERB Executive Board, 2 nd Vice-Chair of the Board of Regional Council of södra Småland
Ms Christina Mattisson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Mr Åke Nilsson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Executive Committee of Regional Council in Kalmar County
Mr Włodzimierz Siudek	On behalf of Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of the Association of Polish Communes

Participants: ERB Youth Board:

Mr Mateusz Ankiewicz	Deputy Member of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Mr Ivan Alsanov	Member of ERB Youth Board, Kaliningrad Region
Mr Hmida Benattalah	Deputy Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council in Kalmar County
Ms Elin Petersson	Deputy Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge
Mr Oliver Rosengren	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council of södra Småland
Ms Sara Sakhnini	Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge

ERB Secretariats:

Mr Niels Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański	ERB International Permanent Secretariat
Ms Karolina Hołowka	EVS volunteer
Ms Therese Magnusson	Regional Council of södra Småland
Mr Jan Martinsson	Regional Council of Kalmar County
Ms Agata Nazar	Association of Polish Communes
Mr Marcin Popiela	International Cooperation Department, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Mr Valdas Pučkorius	Director of the Secretariat of Association Klaipėda Region
Ms Johanna Rönn	Region Blekinge

Mr Piotr Zwolak Office of the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region

Other participants:

Ms Charlotte G. Alidzanovic Regional Council of Kalmar County

Mr Torun Ekstrand ArtLine Project Leader

Mr Tobias Faccini ERB Water Core Group

Ms Cilla Ilhammar Regional Council of Kalmar County

Ms Ewa Jagodzińska Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region

Mr Linus Karlsson Baltic Maritime Science Park

Ms Anna Martinsson Trainee

Ms Åza Rydén Head of Regional Development and Growth Team, Region Blekinge

Mr Alexander Wendt Member of the Board of Region Blekinge

Information Meeting

27th MAY, 13.00 – 15.30

Karlskrona, Kreativa rummet at Länsstyrelsen Blekinge län, Skeppsbrokajen 4

- 13.00 3. **Welcome**
13.10
- Chair of Region Blekinge and ERB Executive Board member, Ms Christina Mattisson, welcomed the participants.
- 13.00 4. **How to spend 10 million euros?**
14.00
- This part of the information meeting was coordinated by the ERB Task Force on Cohesion Policy. The objective was to present the state of play regarding the preparations for the new South Baltic Programme giving the background for the decision the ERB Executive Board on the Programme thematic objectives and investment priorities. Information was also given about the revised EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its renewed and extended Action Plan with focus placed on the financing of flagship projects and the participation of different actors (*see presentation: New objectives in the Baltic Sea Strategy.ppt*). The regional representatives informed about their regions' involvement in flagship projects.
- 14.00 5. **ERB Youth Board**
14.30
- ERB Youth Members informed of their recent activities, including the results of the survey whose aim was to investigate the anchoring of youth cooperation in their regions. ERB Youth Board members were asked about practical issues related to their work, expectations from the EVS project and the volunteer involved (*see presentation: The survey inside of the Youth Board-final.pptx*).
- 14.30 6. **Baltic Maritime Science Park**
15.00
- Mr Linus Karlsson, Project Deputy Leader for the Baltic Maritime Science Park (BMSC) made a presentation. BMSC is working to become a leading arena for innovations and knowledge development within maritime safety, security and environment. Aiming to establish innovation-partnerships which transfer research and knowledge into products and services, BMSC offers a platform for dialogue and knowledge development in the Baltic Sea Region (*see presentation: BSMP_presentation_ERBBoard.pdf*).
- 15.00 7. **ArtLine**
15.30
- Mr Torun Ekstrand, ArtLine Project Leader made a presentation. Art Line is an international art project investigating and challenging the concept of public space. 14 partners from 5 countries around the Baltic Sea joined to create a co-operative platform for art and academia. The platform is working to strengthen the institutions, create opportunities for artists, and interact with people in public space, on the internet, in exhibitions, and on the Stena Line ferries between Gdynia and Karlskrona (*see presentation: BSMP_presentation_ERBBoard.pdf*).
- 15.30 8. **BSSSC**
16.00
- Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański made a presentation aiming to provide the ERB Executive Board with some background information on the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) which is a political network for decentralised authorities (subregions) in the Baltic Sea Region.

Executive Board meeting,

28th MAY, 09.00 – 12.30

Karlskrona Kommun, Östra Hamngatan 7B, Freden conference room

09.05 1. **Opening & adoption of the agenda**
09.15

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Per Ole Petersen opened the meeting and present the agenda. He also gave a short overview of the ERB cooperation.

ERB Executive Board members approved the agenda.

09.15 2. **Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Board meeting**
09.15

ERB IPS submitted the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place on 26th February 2013.

ERB President, Mr Per Ole Petersen and ERB Executive Board member, Mr Roland Gustbée signed the minutes.

09.15 3. **Decision regarding future ERB legal status**
10.00

Grzegorz Grzelak (currently, ERB Board Deputy member and also the chair of the international relations committee at the regional parliament in Pomorskie, first ERB President between 1998 and 1999) prepared the following preliminary investigating of legal status for ERB:

During the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board meeting on 29-30 October 2012 in Nida information was presented regarding the functioning of Euroregion Baltic (ERB) and its International Permanent Secretariat (IPS). Following the termination of the organisational and financial co-operation with the Association of the Polish Communes in Euroregion Baltic as of 31 June 2013, the IPS activity became limited. This was the reason for the discussion on the future organisation of Euroregion and IPS. In this context, Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański from IPS presented three alternative proposals:

- to establish an association with international members based on the Polish law,*
- to set up the IPS within one of the ERB member regions (without any changes in the current legal formula ERB),*
- to support the functioning of the IPS on the basis of individual contracts with the member regions (without changes in the current legal formula ERB).*

The information presented also listed the advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives.

Searching for the most appropriate, the most favourable organisational form for ERB should be based on some initial assumptions. Firstly, it should be an autonomous joint organisation of the cooperating partners. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to incorporate it a specific region, municipality or other association. Secondly, it should have legal personality, legal capacity to act in civil law transaction. Thirdly, it should be fully able to participate in EU programs and implement its own projects. Among the alternatives presented in October 2012, only one proposal corresponds to the above assumptions, i.e. the establishment of an international association. However, the discussion then failed to address one more option - European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

To base an international association based on the current organisation, provided agreement is reached among all the partners on statutory issues,

seems to be relatively simple. Legal establishment of such an organisation requires court procedure that is largely formal and takes not too long. Similar approach was taken by the founders of the Union of the Baltic Cities in 1991 and this formula has so far worked and enabled an effective implementation of activities within the organisation.

The establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is a much more complex project. This formula put in place by European Parliament and the Council on 5 July 2006 is currently under revision. On 7 November 2008 the Polish parliament adopted national provisions enabling the establishment of EGTCs in Poland. EGTC is a Community level cooperation instrument with legal personality designed specifically for the creation of cooperative groups in Community territory, invested with legal personality, in order to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation and act in programmes and projects of territorial cooperation by the EU through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. An important disadvantage of this arrangement is a long, complicated creation and registration process which includes national authorities in the country in which given regional or local EGTC members are. Another problem results from the ERB structure, i.e. participation of Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation, a non-EU country, in the cooperation. The current revision of the EGTC regulation (still pending approval) gives the possibility to third countries to be part of EGTCs, provided however that the rules and procedures set out in the EGTC regulation are applied also in the third country. In other words, taking steps to set up an EGTC within ERB must also involve the national level.

In summary, the establishment of an international association seems the safest and fastest way to provide ERB with legal personality, which should not hamper the consultations on an EGTC with the Russian partners.

It was therefore proposed that ERB adopts a two-step solution whereby an international association is established by 31st October 2013, and a process is begun afterwards in order to set up an EGTC in the future. The establishment of the international association means that:

- new Statutes and assisting documents explaining finances, liability, employment conditions, etc. will be prepared before the end of June,
- the association will be based on the Polish law and will have its seat in Poland,
- ERB membership fees will not increase and extra administrative or economic burden, if any, will be within the current financial framework,
- in June and July ERB member regions will discuss the decision to be part of the international association and anchor it internally,
- final decision to set up the association, pending the result of the internal discussions in the regions, will be taken at the next ERB Board meeting on 5th September,
- next ERB Board meeting on 5th September will be the establishing meeting of the international association.

After discussion, ERB Executive Board members:

- expressed preliminary consent to set up the international association,
- agreed to extend the temporary hosting of IPS by the Regional Council in Southern Småland until 31st October 2013.

10.00 4. **Decision regarding South Baltic thematic objectives**
10.30

The ERB response to the South Baltic questionnaire on thematic objectives and investment priorities was drafted by the ERB Task Force on Cohesion Policy proposing to consider thematic priorities 3 (enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs) and 6 (protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency) as highly relevant, and priorities 7 (promoting sustainable transport) and 8 (promoting employment and supporting labour mobility) as relevant.

In the preparation process for the future South Baltic Programme, ERB shares one vote with Euroregion Pomerania which proposed to consider thematic priorities 3, 6, 7 and 10 (investing in education, skills and lifelong learning) as highly relevant. Therefore, the ERB Task Force on Cohesion Policy proposed that the joint response to the South Baltic questionnaire on thematic objectives and investment priorities will propose thematic priorities 3, 6 and 7 as highly relevant, to be implemented with the 80% of the allocated funds, and priorities 8 and 10 as relevant, to be implemented with the 20% of the allocated funds.

ERB Executive Board members:

- adopted the ERB response to the questionnaire, as proposed by the ERB Task Force on Cohesion Policy,
- adopted the joint response by Euroregion Baltic and Euroregion Pomerania, as proposed by the ERB Task Force on Cohesion Policy.

10.30 5. **Coffee break**
10.50

10.50 6. **Decision regarding project SYRERB**
11.40

Ms Charlotte G. Alidzanovic and Ms Cilla Ilhammar from the Regional Council in Kalmar County presented an idea of project called SYRERB (see presentation: THE LUPP130528.pptx) which will aim at promoting the LUPP concept among the municipalities in the ERB area. The promotion will be facilitated by a seed money application for the preliminary study leading to a bigger project in the new programming period.

The project will finance the cost of meetings for partners from Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden (representatives from municipalities, ERB Youth Board and university). Project activities will gather around 30 participants and will be held in liaison with ERB meetings.

ERB Youth Board supported the project idea as it would give them the possibility to know what young people in the regions think about their life and how they see their future, which in turn would give them a tool to prepare future project applications.

ERB EVS project volunteer, Ms Karolina Hołowka will also be involved in the project implementation but her work on the project will not exceed 50% of her work time.

ERB Executive Board members:

- supported the project idea,
- pledged help through the ERB International and regional secretariats in identifying and contacting relevant partners in the regions.

11.40 7. **Decision regarding future ERB water cooperation**
12.10

On behalf of the ERB Water Core Group, Mr Tobias Facchini presented the idea for a project continuing the work initiated within the MOMENT project. The MOMENT project, an ERB initiative, has successfully established seven Water Users Partnerships (WUPs) across the South Baltic area. The WUP method has proven to be an effective tool in mobilising action towards a healthier Baltic Sea. It has also been recognised by the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and HELCOM which both have expressed a favourable view of spreading the concept in a wider geographical area.

Taken the above into consideration the ERB Water Core Group discussed possible ways to further develop the WUP concept. The discussions led to a suggestion of submitting a seed money application, preliminary to the Baltic Sea programme second call by 15th August 2013 (*see presentation: Presentation WaterNets.pdf*).

ERB Executive Board members:

- supported the "WaterNets" project idea,
- asked for more information to be made available before 12th June before a decision is made on ERB participation, especially with regards to a possible involvement of the Regional Council in Southern Småland, current ERB hosting organisation.

12.10 8. **Decision regarding a proposal to cooperate with BSSSC**
12.20

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański presented a proposal of a closer cooperation with the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC). The proposal considered the following aspects:

- previous cooperation with BSSSC (joint statement on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region by BSSSC, BDF, B7, CPMR, ERB and UBC), with special focus on governance and involvement of private actors and third countries, stricter relation between the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and Europe 2020 Strategy,
- cooperation agreement between the Committee of the Regions on the one hand and BSSSC, B7, ERB, Euroregion Pomerania and UBC, with special focus on the development and implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as an important tool for achieving Europe 2020 Strategy goals,
- 2013 -2014 ERB Action Plan,
- 2013 – 2014 BSSSC Chairmanship (see attachment).

The proposal included:

- an exchange of information on current activities within the two organisations,
- an investigation of which activities can be of specific relevance to both parties, and which can be mutually supported or implemented in cooperation to improve synergy,
- an idea to co-organise an event with the Committee of the Regions in Brussels,
- an invitation of the BSSSC chair to the 4th Forum of ERB Stakeholders in Kalmar,
- establishment of working contact between the secretariats of the two organisations.

ERB Executive Board members agreed to the proposal and authorise the ERB President, Mr Per Ole Petersen to forward it to the BSSSC Chair.

12.20 9. **Decision regarding the organisation of 4th Forum of ERB**
12.30 **stakeholders**

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański presented the further developed proposal of 4th Forum of ERB Stakeholders which will include the following assumptions:

- Forum will target local actors, i.e. municipalities and public and private organisations involved in event tourism, yachting and sea cruise tourism,
- Forum will invite EUSBSR Priority Area Coordinator for Tourism (Reinforcing cohesiveness of the macro-region through tourism), and EUSBSR flagship project called "Promote the cultural and natural heritage",
- Forum will highlight the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as an important tool for achieving Europe 2020 Strategy goals,
- Forum will look at tourism as the third largest socioeconomic activity in the EU, estimated to generate over 10 % of the EU's GDP and providing approximately 12 % of all jobs, thus constituting an important sector for both EU citizens and industry, with a positive effect on economic growth and employment,
- Forum will put focus on SMEs, as well as blue and green growth (proposed to be the leading themes in the South Baltic CBC Programme),
- Forum will present new cooperation possibilities of the South Baltic CBC Programme and facilitate an exchange of project ideas between participating actors,

Some practical arrangements are already in place:

- Forum venue will be Kalmarsalen, in the so called "Glas veranda" with a beautiful view of the Baltic Sea,
- Forum will start with lunch at 12:00 on 4th September 2013,
- At 18:00 on 4th September a bus will pick the participants from the venue and take them to Kackelstugan (The Cackle House) on the Öland Island. At this international place dinner and entertainment will be provided by the host,
- The bus will go back to the hotel at 22:00,
- 40 single rooms and 5 double rooms have been already pre-booked at Calmar Stadshotell located in the centre of Kalmar at Stortorget (central square) with the price of 820 SEK/night (94 €) for single rooms and 1.020 SEK/night (117 €) for double rooms,
- Invitations to 4th Forum of ERB Stakeholders will be sent before 30th May 2013,
- Invitations will be sent through the regional secretariats which will coordinate the participation in their respective regions,
- Regional secretariats will also inform the organisers of the expected number of participants by the end of June.

ERB Executive Board members agreed to the proposed assumptions for the organisation of 4th Forum of ERB Stakeholders.

12.30 9.a **Information on the cluster development conference on Bornholm**
12.40

Mr Niels Andersen will present a short report on the conference and launch of the Baltic Sea Cluster Development Centre (BSCDC) that took place on Bornholm on 25 April 2013. BSCDC will target in particular network, knowledge and internationalisation services in Tourism, Food, Cleantech, Maritime and ICT clusters in the Baltic Sea Region (*see presentation: Baltic Sea Cluster Development Centre_May 2013.pptx*).

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

12.40 9.b **Information on the visit by the Executive Committee of Kalmar**
12.50 **County in Poland, Russia and Lithuania**

Mr Åke Nilsson presented information on the visit that the Executive Committee of Kalmar County is planning to make to Poland, Russia and Lithuania in August 2013.

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

12.50 9.c **Information on ERB joint budget**
13.00

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański informed the ERB Executive Board on the implementation of 2013 budget as of 20th May 2013 (*see file: Budget 2013_ERB_implementation_20130520.xls*).

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

13.00 10. **Conclusion and Closing**

ERB President, Mr Per Ole Petersen concluded and closed the ERB Executive Board meeting.