

Joint meeting of Euroregion Baltic  
 Executive Board and  
 Board of Association  
 of Polish Communes  
 Euroregion Baltic  
 Elbląg  
 Poland  
 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017



**Title** Final Minutes  
**Submitted by** SM, International Permanent Secretariat  
**Summary / Note** This document provides the final minutes of the joint meeting of ERB Executive Board and the Board of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic in Elbląg on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

**Participants:**

**ERB Executive Board:**

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Ms Akko Karlsson           | ERB President, Vice-Chair of the Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County               |
| Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson | Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of Region Kronoberg                    |
| Mr Lennarth Förberg        | Member of ERB Executive Board, Region Blekinge  |
| Mr Åke Nilsson             | Member of ERB Executive Board, Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County                 |
| Mr Per Ole Petersen        | Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm |
| Mr Witold Wróblewski       | Member of Executive Board, Association of Polish Communes                                 |
| Ms Hanna Pruchniewska      | Deputy Member of Executive Board, Association of Polish Communes                          |

**Members of the Board of Association of Polish Communes**

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ms Maria Rogińska          | Member of the Association Board |
| Ms Bożena Olszewska-Świtaj | Member of the Association Board |

**ERB Youth Board**

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|-------------------------|---|
| Mr Jędrzej Tadrzak      | Member of ERB Youth Board, Pomorskie Region                 |
| Ms Yanina Andrushkevich | Member of ERB Youth Board, Government of Kaliningrad Region |

Mr Damian Ciachorowski	Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Polish Communes
Mr Dawid Jędrzejak	Member of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Ms Alexandra Winberg	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council in Kalmar County

### **ERB Secretariats**

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Klaudija Kionies	Association of Klaipeda Region
Ms Agata Ludwiczak	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Mr Sebastian Magier	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Mr Jan Martinsson	Regional Council in Kalmar County
Ms Johanna Rönn	Region Blekinge
Ms Małgorzata Samusjew	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Mr Piotr Zwolak	Office of the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Mr Marcin Żuchowski	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Mr Tobias Facchini	Regional Council in Kalmar County / ERB Water Core Group
Ms Gabriela Zarębska-Jende	Pomorskie Region
Ms Valentina Scandola	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Ms Paulina Lieder	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic

## 1. **Welcome**

Mr Witold Wróblewski, Chair of Board of Association of Polish Communes welcomed the participants of the meeting on behalf of the hosts – the Association of Polish Regions ERB and City of Elbląg. He underline the importance of such organisations as Euroregion Baltic for better integration of neighbours and implementation of EU projects, which in case of the city of Elbląg brought almost 800 million PLN in EU investments. These investments included the renovation of the Old Town and city's cultural institutions – the Elbląg Library, EL Gallery and Elbląg Museum, but also helped to develop the infrastructure, hospitals and other important facilities within the city. Mr Wróblewski also commemorated the unexpected passing of Mr Zdzisław Olszewski, the late former Director of the Association's Secretariat and one of the founding father of the ERB.

## 2. **Opening**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson thanked Mr Wróblewski for his words of welcome and opened the meeting by presenting the agenda of the meeting.

*ERB Executive Board will be requested to approve the agenda.*

## 3. **Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Executive Board meeting**

ERB IPS has submitted the minutes of the previous ERB Executive Board meetings held in Kalmar on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

*Relevant ERB Executive Board members were asked to sign the minutes of ERB Executive Board meeting in Kalmar.*

## 4. **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ERB**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information on the development of a project marking the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the organisation.

ERB created a partnership of at least 5 organisations to submit a proposal to the strand 2.2 – Networks of Towns. The project could start at the end of 2017 and run for 24 months with a budget of up to 150 000 EUR and 40% advance payments.

In the initial draft of the project at least 4 conferences are to be developed addressing different challenges concerning the development of cross-border cooperation such as the role of euroregions and town-twinings, importance of citizens involvement, role of youth in the future of Europe and sustainable tourism for European identity.

Ms Małgorzata Samusjew outline the proposals of the Association of Polish Communes to mark the occasion of the Euroregion's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She proposed an exhibition that would present the international cooperation during the last 20 years that helped to open the local and regional level to international partners. She also stated that international EU project currently in implementation could contribute to the anniversary by developing a cycle of dedicated events. A documentary movie from 1998 could be used for the purpose of bringing back the memories of the organisation's beginnings, while the media would be used to channel the message to the contemporary audience. We would also need a slogan for 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary that would direct us toward the future.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the anniversary should not only be about the

past, but mostly about the future (30/70% share). The question is how to tackle challenges in the next 20 years and how to involve youth, eg by organising a movie festival. That is something the Task Force could work on. We need to be creative.

We need to include the general overview of the ERB cooperation that include 4 specific eras:

1. Beginnings – 1998-2002 - people-to-people projects
2. Strategic era – 2002-2005 - which culminated in the development of the Joint Development Programme
3. Lobbying era – 2006–2014 – with the establishment of the South Baltic Programme as the main success
4. Strategic project implementation – 2014 till now – in which the the ERB revisits the idea of project implementation as a tool for providing concrete results from its cooperation.

While summarising the achievement of ERB we should include both positive and negative elements, as this is something that would propel ERB towards the future.

The Association of Klaipeda Regions provided remarks in writing (see attached).

*ERB Executive Board took note of the information comments presented*

## 5. **Updating ERB 2020 Agenda**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented the initial idea of revising the core strategic document of the ERB adopted back in 2010 to better outline the adjustment of the organisation in the new working environment.

After 7 years it seems that the time is right to start a discussion on the amending the existing document or developing a new one that would better describe the goals of the ERB during and after its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson, Member of ERB Board, stated that while thinking about new directions for ERB we need to find new approaches towards solving every day, common problems. If we could develop such approaches together, then we would become more innovative. In this process it would be very important to include the youth perspective.

Ms Akko Karlsson agreed that the strategic update of ERB cooperation should be done jointly by all member organisations.

Mr Lennarth Förberg, Member of ERB Board stated that we need to find new ways to organise our work and while looking back at our past experiences we can also create modern ways of work. Discussions with local politicians, stakeholders on ERB cooperation could be very valuable. We should definitely use it for discussions on local level.

Mr Per Ole Petersen, Vice President of ERB, pointed out that the current ERB 2020 Agenda has a list of actions in the sub-chapter on other form of cooperation. This list could be used for further discussions on the updated themes of cooperation.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen, said that while updating the ERB Agenda we could use the approach adopted by the South Baltic Programme:

- discuss joint challenges – also on wider EU level such as Brexit or immigration
- follow-up with experiences to-date both positive and negative to see where we have succeeded and where we failed
- prioritise those areas which are most relevant for the member organisations. Decide on 3-4 priorities and build on that in the Biennial Action Plans for each Presidency

Mr Per Ole Petersen said that part of the new ERB Agenda could be the expansion

of the organisation by gaining new partners.

The Association of Klaipeda Regions provided remarks in writing (see attached).

*Following the discussion, the ERB Executive Board decided to start the process of updating the ERB 2020 Agenda.*

## 6. **South Baltic projects with ERB participation and programme status**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented the state of play of the Interreg South Baltic Programme after the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for proposals in which the ERB has engaged in 3 projects ie. Umbrella, Interconnect and DUNC.

Commenting on the information presented, Ms Berndtsson stated that the results of ERB work were incredible but in case of those project that were rejected, perhaps other programmes/financial tools would be better, especially in the future perspective.

Mr Jan Martinsson commented on the rejection of the Umbrella project by saying that it should be re-submitted. The South Baltic Programme if focusing too much on the national/academic level involving more and more private consulting companies in project development. Local level is largely missing from the Programme, while this level is the most important in cross-border cooperation, so the ERB should take that into consideration while preparing for the next programming period.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said that the project was not fairly treated. The need for newcomers in the Programme was still there, although the project should focus on those priorities that were not spent and can still be supported, especially labour market and green technologies. Focusing on the future programme could be doubtful since it would be difficult to approve a project that focused on the future programme.

Ms Johanna Rönn shared the opinion on the project pointing out that it was relevant, as well that there would be more work on capacity building after 2020. Such project must be however anchored with all stakeholders.

Additionally, Ms Małgorzata Samusjew presented the South Baltic project submitted by the Association of Polish communes which were selected for funding ie. CTCC and SB PIN

She also pointed out to the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation that addresses the areas of knowledge sharing, policy exchange of best practice and institutional capacity-building. The first call of the Fund is expected in the Autumn of 2017.

Short information was also presented on other projects in implementation and development etc. CaSYPoT, Liquid Energy and Friendly House.

*ERB Executive Board took note on the information presented and recommended the Umbrella project to be re-submitted.*

## 7. **Position paper on future Cohesion Policy**

Mr Sebastian Magier updated the Executive Board on the development of the position paper on the future Cohesion Policy.

The proposal for the position paper came as result of strategic cooperation with the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) and its Norwegian

Presidency, when in November 2016 the ERB was offered to join the work on a position paper on the Cohesion Policy after 2020. To this end the International Permanent Secretariat of ERB was invited to join a meeting of BSSSC Task Force in January 2017 in Potsdam where it participated in the drafting of the document. The draft paper was then presented to the ERB Executive Board at the meeting in Kalmar on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017, where the Board commented on the draft and made suggestions for changes.

In the meantime the BSSSC adopted the final version of the paper and disseminated it within various EU institutions and networks. Considering that the ERB would have to adopt the paper individually taking into account the changes proposed by the Board.

The document was also discussed by the ERB Secretariats at their online meetings in March and May 2017, where it was agreed that the draft will be presented to the Board for further discussion and subsequent adoption.

Commenting on the draft, Mr Per Ole Petersen suggested that the final document could be much shorter and easier to read. Making in a 2-page document focusing better on ERB issues could be more effective.

Mr Andersen supported the recommendation and added that the text should contain concrete short sentences addressing the most important issues relevant to the new CP.

Mr Förberg said he was in favour of short, clear documents with clear statements at the beginning of each paragraph with the text providing explanation for the headlines.

*ERB Executive Board discussed the final draft of the position paper and decide to adjust it in accordance with the recommendations presented during the discussion.*

## **8. Regions and UN's Sustainable Development Goals**

Mr Sebastian Magier will update the Board about the approval of a joint project entitled Regions and Sustainable Development Goals submitted jointly by the ERB and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission.

The overarching goal of this project is raise awareness and create capacity at the regional level on how to bring home the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project will increase knowledge and initiate the development of strong multi-stakeholder partnerships for cross-sectorial solutions at the local and regional levels.

Starting in late 2017 the project will organise a series of seminars and a webinar for decision makers, civil servants and the youth on the topic on SDGs, with the results being used for further work on joint projects and other initiatives in the Baltic setting.

In addition, both ERB and CPMR BSC have submitted their proposal for joint seminar on SDGs at the UBC General Conference in Växjö, Sweden, 24th – 27th October 2017, thus bringing this issue to the attention of other important stakeholders of the BSR.

Mr Berndtsson stated that the topic of SDGs was relevant for the local level and international cooperation.

Mr Jan Martinsson said that SDGs are connected to the Agenda 2030 and was becoming an important element of BSR cooperation

*ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.*

**9. Information from ERB Youth Board**

Ms Yanina Andrushkevich, Chair of the ERB Youth Board will presented the following information:

- Information about 4 Erasmus+ projects submitted through ERB member organisations and their stakeholders
- Development of joint policy project with Youth County Council in Hedmark (JFK)
- Proposal for improved structuralisation of the ERB Youth Board work based on the Norwegian experiences with youth work

Mr Damian Ciachorowski, ERB Youth Board member, thanked the member organisation for joint work on the Erasmus+ applications.

He also said that the ERB YB lacks strategic documents that would guide its work in the future.

*ERB Executive Board took note on the information presented.*

**10. Participation of ERB in the EUSBSR Forum in Berlin on 12-14.06.2017**

Sebastian Magier and Alexandra Winberg, Deputy Chair of the ERB Youth Board updated the Executive Board on the preparation of the joint BSSSC, UBC and ERB conference in Berlin on 12-13<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Additionally, Mr Magier informed the Board about a youth project running in parallel with the EUSBSR Forum preparation, entitled Baltic Leaders and funded through a grant funded by the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship to allow youth from the local level to be introduced to the Baltic cooperation on this occasion.

Mr Jan Martinsson added that the CaSYPoT project presentation would also take place on 13.06 during the Participation Day organised by the EUSBSR HA Capacity.

*ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented*

**11. ERB budget and cash-flow**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented the current execution of the ERB budget of 2017 including a projection of project related spending after the results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for proposals in the South Baltic Programme.

**12. Conclusion and closing**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson closed the joint meeting of the ERB Executive Board and the Board of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic

Akko Karlsson

Per Ole Petersen

President of Euroregion Baltic

ERB Vice President of Euroregion Baltic

