

Euroregion Baltic
 Executive Board Meeting
 Palanga
 Lithuania
 18th September 2017



Title Final Minutes
Submitted by SM, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note This document provides minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting in Palanga on 18th September 2017
Requested action Signing

ERB Executive Board:

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| Ms Akko Karlsson | ERB President, Vice-Chair of the Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County |
| Mr Per Ole Petersen | ERB Vice President, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm |
| Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson | Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of Region Kronoberg |
| Mr Aleksander Bogdanov | ERB Board Member, First Vice Chair of Kaliningrad Regional Duma, Russia |
| Mr Lennarth Förberg | Member of ERB Executive Board, Vice Chair of Board of Region Blekinge |
| Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas | Member of ERB Executive Board, President of Association of Klaipėda Region |
| Ms Christina Mattisson | Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of Board of Region Blekinge |
| Mr Robert Olesen | Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board Region Kronoberg |

ERB Youth Board

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| Ms Alexandra Winberg | Deputy Chair of ERB Youth Board, Kumulus / Kalmar |
| Mr Damian Ciachorowski | Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Polish Communes |
| Mr Dawid Jędrzejak | Member of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region |
| Ms Sabine Nicoline Lyngberg | Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Municipality of Bornholm |
| Mr Mikkel Holm Tved | Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Municipality of Bornholm |
| Ms Simona Skuodaite | Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Klaipėda Region |

ERB Secretariats

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Klaudija Kionies	Association of Klaipeda Region
Ms Egle Stonke	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 Evgeniya Russu	Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Kaliningrad Region
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
Ms Gabriela Zarębska-Jende	Pomorskie Region
Ms Valentina Scandola	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Ms Domenico Misurelli	IVY Interreg Volunteer Youth

Guests:

Ms Marmar Nekoro	Baltic Sea Future
Mr Pranas Žeimys	Vice Mayor of Palanga Municipality
Mrs Aušra Šikšnienė	Economic development department of Palanga Municipality Administration

Welcome and opening

- Vice Mayor of Palanga Municipality, Mr Pranas Žeimys welcomed the participants of the meeting on behalf of the hosting municipality of Palanga. A presentation of the municipality and its activities was delivered to the Board by Mrs Aušra Šikšnienė from Economic development department of Palanga Municipality Administration
1. Vice Mayor of Palanga Municipality, Mr Pranas Žeimys welcomed the participants of the meeting on behalf of the hosting municipality of Palanga. A presentation of the municipality and its activities was delivered to the Board by Mrs Aušra Šikšnienė from Economic development department of Palanga Municipality Administration

President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson opened the meeting and presented the agenda of the meeting.

ERB Executive Board adopted the agenda.

2. Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Executive Board meeting

ERB Executive Board approved the minutes submitted by the ERB IPS in relation to the previous ERB Executive Board meetings, held in Elbląg on 22nd May 2017.

Relevant ERB Executive Board members signed the minutes of ERB Executive Board meeting.

3. **Activities for 20th Anniversary of ERB**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information about the current status of preparations of the ERB 20th Anniversary.

In this context the presentation provided an overview of the AMBER project, recently submitted within the Europe for Citizens Programme, whose aim is to organize a series of conferences and meetings over the period of 2018-2019 to help in the discussion of the future of ERB. If approved, the AMBER (Activeness Makes Baltic Engagement Real) project would foresee 5 meetings being organised within the ERB area, with two major events in Malbork and Olsztyn, as well as three focused meetings on Bornholm, in Kalmar and Klaipeda. The events would fall under the themes of civic participation and the future of Europe, with conference and workshop activities merged with active forms of debating such a painting competition for children, movie contest for youth and adults entitled *My home, my Europe*.

The current meeting agenda for AMBER project would be as follows:

1. *Cross-border Cooperation Debate – Euroregions and town-twinings for the future of Europe – Malbork, 15-17.02.2017*
2. *Cross-border Cooperation Debate on Civic Involvement and Participation for Future of Europe – Bornholm, second half of September 2018 - date to be defined.*
3. *Cross-border Debate on the Role of Culture and Heritage for Future of Europe – Olsztyn, 13-14.02.2019*
4. *Debate on the future of Youth – A sustainable future on base of cultural heritage and social cohesion- Kalmar, 14-15.05.2019*
5. *New Conversation about Sustainable Cross-border Tourism – Klaipeda, 26-27.09.2019*

Finally, further proposals related to the process of modernisation of the image of ERB within the stakeholder community, including the update of the ERB logotype and brand identity were displayed. The options taken into account are either to contact an agency for the preparation of a new logo, whose copyright would be possessed by the Association of Polish Communes ERB, or to utilize an open source for a self-updating of the logo, giving the possibility to all the members to take part in this process and without the necessity of contacting an external agency. Both the Association of Polish Communes, which owns the right to the ERB logo, and the IPS are in dialogue on how to develop and implement this practical side of anniversary preparations.

ERB Executive Board was requested to discuss and offer their views and suggestions on the information presented.

Ms. Akko Karlsson encouraged the ERB Executive Board to follow the path undertaken and the activities carried on in these years, reporting that Euroregion Baltic was presented as show-case during the "Ocean Conference" held in New York last 5-9th June 2017.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented

4. **Position paper on future Cohesion Policy**

Mr Sebastian Magier summarised the process of drafting the position paper. He presented the recommendations/positions taken by ERB in relation to the Cohesion Policy, taking into account the fact that the Cohesion Policy is not so much recognized among NGOs and institutions in the frame of ERB. Thus, major visibility is needed to have a higher impact on the society. Among the recommendations, the development of people-to-people contacts and projects is

fundamental for higher cohesion and recognition among the ERB partner regions. As regard to the EGTC, mentioned in the Cohesion Policy, it emerged that it is useful in the bilateral cooperation but more difficult to be applied in a multilateral context.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented and discuss voted for the adoption of the position paper on future EU Cohesion Policy.

5. **Towards ERB Agenda 2030**

Mr Sebastian Magier and Mr Niels Chresten Andersen moderated a discussion around the vision for the ERB cooperation until 2030.

Mr Magier presented a short overview of the ERB 2020 Agenda to set out the stage for a workshop debate on the future priorities of Euroregion Baltic.

Mr Andersen then moderated a group discussion with the following programme based on the contents of the ERB 2020 Agenda:

1. What do you find as the main achievements of ERB during the last 7-8 years?
 - Based on the ERB 2020 Agenda including types of activities lobby/exchange/projects and specific thematic areas such as cohesion policy, EUSBSR, South Baltic, youth, water, labour market, tourism, transport etc.
2. What do you see as the main, joint challenges for ERB the next 7-8 years?
 - Think about the current global and European agenda: terrorism, climate changes, migration, smart cities and green technology, international markets, skilled labour force, cultural dialogue, people-to-people, youth unemployment etc. etc.
3. What would be your first priority for ERB cooperation the coming years, within these three fields:
 - Lobby
 - Exchange of knowledge and experiences
 - Projects

ERB Executive Board was requested to take note of the information presented and engage in the discussion on the future ERB 2030 Agenda. The outcome of the debate will be used for drafting the new strategic document for ERB cooperation.

Based on the feedback from the workshop a preliminary draft of main elements of the new strategy was developed to be used for further work on the strategy in 2018 (see attached).

6. **Presentation of Baltic Sea Future**

Ms Marmar Nekoro, BSF Leader and Project Manager presented the Baltic Sea Future and its further development as an innovative Baltic cooperation platform focusing on sustainable development issues important for local stakeholders. In her presentation Ms Nekoro outlined possibilities of joint cooperation between BSF and ERB in a form of partnership, both in the context of the organisation of the 2nd Baltic Sea Future conference in Stockholm in March 2018 and other initiatives that would be developed within the network. The approach of Baltic Sea Future can be found particularly in thinking locally to act globally in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. The most important aspects to be

tackled in 2018 regard climate change, agriculture, multilevel governance and macro-regional strategies, climate adaptation, finances, innovations and youth perspectives through sessions, meetings and B2B (Business-to-business approach) to exchange ideas and angles during all the year, and not only during formal meetings. This has emerged in the context of the Stockholm University, very active in the research sector that difficultly encounters a bridge between science and policy.

Ms Nekoro extended an invitation to the Executive Board to participate in the BSF on 8-9.03.2018 as it would focus on the important issue of climate change, climate adaptation on local and regional level and financial aspects of climate innovations.

Commenting on the proposal, Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson asked Ms Nekoro about her expectations toward the ERB and how the organisation could cooperate with BSF.

Ms Nekoro mentioned different ways of cooperation including mutual exchanges of knowledge and experience, co-organising joint events, but also providing direct funding for the work of the BSF.

Mr Niels Andersen asked what would be the added value of BSF given the fact that we already have many organisations and networks actively working in the Baltic Sea Regions on the topic of sustainable development, including those such as UBC or ERB focusing on local agendas.

Ms Nekoro responded that although municipalities were being engaged, the often do not exchange knowledge or experience among themselves. The BSF would try to bring these actors to a higher level of cooperation, by also including academia and private sector.

ERB Executive Board take note of the information presented and requested the International Secretariat to maintain contact with the BSF as to the details of the upcoming BSF Forum in Stockholm.

8. Presentation of Euroregion Nieman

Ms. Klaudija Kionies replaced Mr. Gintaras Skamaročius, Director of Euroregion Nieman in the presentation about the activities of the Euroregion Nieman, that in 2018 would celebrate its 20th Anniversary. It was discussed about the possibility to invite representatives of Euroregion Nieman to the 20th Anniversary of ERB in the frame of AMBER in February 2018 in Malbork, if the project will be approved. This would be a good opportunity to discuss about the future of Euroregions.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

9. Situation in the INTERREG South Baltic Programme

- a. Mr Sebastian Magier informed the Board about recent changes in the Joint Secretariat, which prompted Head of MC Delegation to express serious concern over this issue. Over the summer there were sudden resignations at the JS, including that of the JS Head, which resulted in a series of letters of concern from other South Baltic MC Delegations and other stakeholders. Having been represented in the MC, both Euroregions also decided to act with writing a joint letter (see attached) asking the Managing Authority to respond to these concerns during a meeting with all Programme partners. Such a meeting was scheduled to take place in Warsaw on 25.09.2017 and hopefully would lead to the improvement of situation at the JS.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented and requested the IPS to monitor the situation closely to ensure the improvement of the situation at the South Baltic JS.

- b. Ms Agata Ludwiczak and Ms Valentina Scandola presented the current status of South Baltic projects with ERB participation (CaSYPoT, Umbrella – its contribution to the 20th Anniversary, Interconnect – sustainable transport, SB FRIHO - South Baltic Sustainable Pilot Network of Friendly Houses).

Ms Klaudija Kionies informed the Board about the activities of the Baltic Sea Tourism Centre project.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

- c. Mr Sebastian Magier informed the Board about the results of the South Baltic Green Tech 2017 Conference in Roskilde on 12th September 2017.

ERB Executive Board was requested to take note of the information presented.

10. **Regions and Sustainable Development Goals**

Mr Sebastian Magier updated the ERB Board on the implementation of the Regions and Sustainable Development Goals project. The information included practical arrangements regarding the project set-up as well as important events where the project will be engaged, including the UBC General Conference in Växjö, as well as the Swedish Institute's Baltic Leadership Programme on Agenda 2030 scheduled for 2017-2018.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

11. **Information from ERB Youth Board**

Assisted by the ERB IPS, Ms Alexandra Winberg, Deputy Chair of ERB Youth Board informed about the participation of ERB Youth Board in the EUSBSR Forum and Youth Conference in Berlin on 12-14.06.2017

Mr Damian Ciachorowski, Member of ERB Youth Board informed the Board about 2 Erasmus+ projects successfully submitted through ERB member organisations and approved by the Programme, Youth 3.0 and Youth 4.0. Russian youth participants were considered in these two new projects, but it was not possible for Kaliningrad Region to be a formal partner for a matter of balance (1 extra-European region vs. 3 European regions). Youth 1.0 and Youth 2.0 submitted by Lithuania and Poland, and rejected by the Commission, will be resubmitted adjusting the target group from young people to youth workers, and modifying the activities to be more in line with the idea of youth exchange.

Ms Klaudija Kionies informed about the Klaipeda's bid for the European Youth Capital 2020, which received official support from the Euroregion Baltic (see attached the letter of support from the ERB IPS).

Ms Akko Karlsson expressed satisfaction on over the activity level of the ERB Youth Board, especially the two new Erasmus+ projects that would be implemented in 2018.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

12. **Priorities of the upcoming Danish ERB Presidency**

Mr Per Ole Petersen, ERB Vice President presented a proposal of priorities of the upcoming Danish Presidency in ERB, encouraging the ERB Board to jointly discuss the proposals. The main focus would be on consolidation of the ERB work, making sure that the organisation takes advantage of all relevant activities and projects within the network while securing the organisational capacities to deliver the intended results. Among the others there was the aim at being closer to Brussels, lobbying, drafting strategic actions, increasing the opportunities for exchange, focusing on local youth policies. Development of the ERB Agenda 2030 was also one of the objectives. Finally, the 20th anniversary of ERB would play an important role in underlining the organisations relevance in cross-border cooperation with the Baltic Sea Region. The upcoming Lithuanian Vice Presidency will also be involved in the process of further drafting the proposals before their jointly approval at the first EBR Executive Board meeting in 2018.

Mrs. Małgorzata Samusjew informed about the opportunity and willingness of the Association of Polish Communes ERB to submit a new project in line with the new position paper in the EU Cohesion Policy, responding to a call for proposals run by the Commission "Support for information measures relating to the EU Cohesion policy" (deadline 16th October 2017). If submitted and approved, the project could further boost the ERB's lobbying role.

ERB Executive Board took note of the proposals of next year's ERB Presidency.

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

Mr Sebastian Magier informed the Board about the financial situation in ERB including the execution of the 2017 budget till 31.08.2017 and updated project implementation cash-flow 2017-2020.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

15. **Conclusion and closing**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson closed the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.

Akko Karlsson

Christina Mattisson

President of Euroregion Baltic

Member of ERB Executive Board