

Euroregion Baltic
Executive Board Meeting
Gdańsk, Poland
18 May 2011



Title Final Minutes
Submitted by SDD, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note This document provides provisional minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place on 18th May 2011 in May, Poland.
Requested action Comments / Subsequent Adoption

1. **Welcome**

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, Vice-Chair of the Board of Pomorskie Region, and member of ERB Board welcomed the participants of the ERB Executive Board meeting.

2. **Opening**

Mr Roland Gustbée, Vice-President of Euroregion Baltic opened the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.

3. **Adoption of the agenda**

ERB Executive Board approved the agenda of the ERB Executive Board meeting, extending it upon the request from the Lithuanian and Russian delegations with two new points (see 4 and 5 below) .

4. **Information from Kaliningrad Region**

Ms Alla Ivanova, Minister of International Relations of the Kaliningrad Region, informed the ERB Executive Board that Mr Mihail Plukhin became the Chair of the Federal Electoral Commission and would soon cease to be the Deputy Governor of Kaliningrad Region. The Russian partners will soon inform the ERB Executive Board of replacement arrangements.

5. **Information from Klaipeda County**

Mr Arūnas Burkšas, Chair of Klaipeda Regional Development Council, and member of ERB Executive Board informed the Executive Board about his meeting with newly elected mayors of municipalities in Klaipeda County. During the meeting they expressed their willingness to be active partners within the ERB cooperation. To this end, the municipalities within the Klaipeda County are currently working on the establishment of an association of local authorities.

6. **Adoption of 21.02.2011 ERB Board Meeting minutes**

ERB Executive Board approved the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place in Kaliningrad on 21st February 2011.

7. Adoption of 2010 ERB Annual Report

Mr Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański, Head of ERB IPS presented the structure and basic contents of the Annual Report for ERB activities in 2010, including the information about the implementation of the joint ERB budget for 2010 and the proposed 2011 joint budget.

ERB Executive Board members informed about the positive outcome of their internal adoption of procedures of the 2010 ERB Annual Report and thus approved the report, including the financial report for 2010. ERB Executive Board also adopted the forecast of the 2011 joint budget.

A discussion ensued during which participants expressed their views on the questions concerning the structure of annual reports and the following possible changes to its future editions:

- Should a light version of the report be also written offering a summary of activities? How short should it be?
- Who should the light version target and, as a result, should it use less technical jargon?
- Do we have enough internal expertise to prepare the light version of the activity report?

Following the discussion, the Executive Board concluded the following:

- the full version of the Report will be retained as it serves as a documentation of ERB activities;
- additionally, a light version of the Report will also be drafted with the aim of reaching a wider public i.e. politicians, journalists etc., and also serving as a marketing tool. To this end, the Executive Board requested the ERB IPS to present a preliminary proposal of a light version of the Report. In this work the IPS will be assisted by ERB Regional Secretariats.

The ERB Executive Board also presented their opinions concerning the time-frame of drafting the ERB Annual Report. In the discussion the Executive Board was of the opinion that the Report must be drafted early enough so that it can be discussed and anchored internally in the regions, and subsequently presented to the ERB Executive Board for adoption at its first meeting in a year.

8. Adoption of ERB 2011-2012 Action Plan

Ms Alla Ivanova presented the structure and basic contents of the ERB Action Plan 2011-2012 whose outline had been introduced by ERB President Mihail Plukhin in Kaliningrad on 21st February 2011.

A discussion followed during which members of the ERB Executive Board presented information on internal procedures with regards to the adoption of the Action Plan in individual member organisations. Following the discussion, the ERB Executive Board adopted the ERB Action Plan 2011-2012.

After the discussion the ERB Executive Board concluded that the future Action Plans should be drafted for two years and be more concrete as well as result-oriented including detailed activities within a specific time-frame. Also, the Action Plan should include activities of the ERB Youth Board thus facilitating the integration of the Youth Board within the ERB. Executive Board was of the opinion that future action plans must be drafted early enough so that they can be discussed and anchored internally in the regions, and subsequently presented to the ERB Executive Board for adoption at its first meeting in a year.

9. **ERB youth cooperation debate**

Ms Mariana Gomez Johannesson of the Regional Council of Southern Småland presented the highlights of the memorandum on the youth cooperation proposing the decisions around the role of the ERB Youth Board, possible flag ship project and ERB Youth Action Plan.

Following the presentation, members of ERB Executive Board members discussed specific issues related to the further development of ERB youth cooperation:

The role of the ERB Youth Board

The ERB Executive Board approved the newly defined role of the ERB Youth Board as outlined in the memorandum. It was concluded that there was a need for an institutional / personal coordinator of the youth cooperation that would ensure its continuity. In order to facilitate integration of the Youth Board in ERB, it was decided that the Vice-President of Euroregion Baltic with necessary assistance by ERB Secretariats would be responsible for contacts between the Executive Board and Youth Board.

Kalmar Region offered to support the Youth Board by hosting a young volunteer (18-30 years old) financed under the European Voluntary Service (Youth In Action programme 2007-2013). Kalmar is already approved as a Host Organisation under EVS and already hosts several volunteers. Probably all the ERB member regions have Sending Organisations who could recruit and send potential volunteers. Such a volunteer could be connected full time to assist the Youth Board for the period of up to one year.

Bornholm and several members from the Youth Board including the YB chairperson supported this proposal and offer. The ERB Youth Board was asked to include this idea in their further work on their Action Plan.

Inclusion of the ERB Youth Board in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Region

The ERB Executive Board decided to continue the work towards including the ERB Youth as a Flagship Project in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea. At the same time it was concluded that the ERB Youth Board will need to be the driving force behind the process of drafting a project application (Region Blekinge offered to support the work of the ERB Youth Board on the development of a youth cooperation project proposal). The process, ERB Executive Board highlighted, must be managed in such a way that any future project facilitating youth cooperation will be drafted and implemented with true ownership of all the ERB stakeholders. ERB Executive Board asked the Youth Board to prepare a concrete project proposal before the next ERB Executive Board meeting.

ERB Youth Action Plan

The ERB Executive Board decided to approve the document, which had been presented by the ERB Youth Board under the name of the ERB Youth Action Plan, and asked that it is called the ERB Youth Cooperation Vision. ERB Executive Board members requested that a detailed action plan for youth activities in 2012 with specific outputs and time framework, based on the approved vision, will be presented by the ERB Youth Board to the ERB Executive Board at its next meeting.

10. **Information on Involve project**

Mr Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański presented the general information about the INVOLVE project based on the contents of the application form. The focus was put on the role of ERB in the project and also on the benefits ERB may gain from the project implementation. Mr Demkowicz-Dobrzański also informed the Executive Board of possible consequences should the INVOLVE project fail to be approved by the Baltic Sea Region Programme.

11. **Discussion on the Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders**

The ERB Executive Board received preliminary information on the organisation of the Annual Forum and was requested to comment on the following issues:

Title: The Executive Board decided that the title of the Forum should be given by the ERB Secretariats.

Place: The Executive Board was informed that the Forum could be held in Warsaw provided that it would attract important speakers from the national level. Alternatively, it could be held within ERB area if no important speakers are available. Ms Kora Stańczyk from the Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region welcomed the idea of organising the Forum in Gdańsk and indicated that the region would provide a venue and cover the cost of catering.

Following a brief discussion the Executive Board decided that Gdańsk would be the first choice as it is located within ERB area and is more accessible for participants. The Forum could still be organised in Warsaw on the condition that it would attract important speakers.

Date: The ERB Executive Board approved the date of the Forum, i.e. 26-27th September 2011. Ms Alla Ivanova informed the Executive Board that an international conference in Kaliningrad scheduled for 21-22nd September could be moved to 26-27th September 2011. The Executive Board took note of information.

Participants: The Executive Board concluded that the Forum should include key politicians from ERB member organisations, ERB secretariats and relevant civil servants from the regions, and also involve external participants from embassies as well as regional business and youth organisations.

Language: The Executive Board decided that having more languages during the Forum would attract more participants. Therefore it was decided that interpretation would include five languages: English, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Swedish.

Budget: Following the offer of the three Swedish regions presented in April 2011, the members of the Executive Board from Blekinge, Kalmar and södra Småland approved the following preliminary budget of the Forum:

- cost of interpretation into five languages (English, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Swedish) – 5200 EUR gross, and
- cost of dinner – 2000 EUR gross.

Objective and structure: The Executive Board concluded that the proposed subjects for discussion during the plenary session of the Forum will include the future of the South Baltic Programme and the review process of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, both paying attention to the inclusion of the Kaliningrad Region. Both discussions would be followed by adoption of joint ERB positions on both issues. Input for discussions would be prepared by relevant ERB Task Forces. The session would be followed by two consecutive round tables on non-formal learning and business cooperation with ERB Youth Board and Task Force on Joint Project preparing input for both panels.

Contents: Mr Niels Chresten Andersen, the leader of the ERB Task Force on EU Cohesion Policy presented the outline of the political debate on the future EU Cohesion Policy with special focus on the future South Baltic CBC Programme. The debate would be divided into three main points:

1. Status of the preparations of the future EU Cohesion Policy
2. Status of the discussion of the future of the South Baltic CBC Programme
3. Presentation, discussion and adoption of an ERB Position Paper on the future of the South Baltic CBC Programme.

Ms Marie Fridh, the leader of the ERB Task Force on the EU Strategy (EUSBSR) for the Baltic Sea Region presented the preliminary proposal for the contents of the debate on the EUSBSR. The debate could be structured around issue of the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy already presented in the ERB Discussion Paper on EUSBSR. During the debate the participants would discuss and subsequently adopt a joint ERB statement on the Strategy that could later be presented during the 2nd Annual Forum of EUSBSR in Gdańsk.

Mr Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański presented the proposal concerning the theme of the round table on business cooperation including the information on the activities of the regions of Blekinge and Kalmar in the area of supporting SMEs operating in environmental technologies, possible issues that could be addressed in a joint ERB project on business cooperation, potential role for ERB and possible sources of funding (8th Call for Proposals in the South Baltic CBC Programme). During the discussion it was suggested that the project could also address climate and energy issues, which could potentially secure funding from the Intelligent Energy Europe programme.

Mr Irmantas Sujeta, Chair of ERB Youth Board presented the preliminary contents of the round table on non-formal learning which would include a presentation of a new project proposal followed by a discussion on specific issues related to its structure, objectives and activities.

Following the presentations, the ERB Executive Board approved the preliminary contents of the Annual Forum.

12. **Closing**

Mr Roland Gustbée, Vice-President of Euroregion Baltic concluded the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.