

Euroregion Baltic
 Executive Board Meeting
 Kalmar
 Sweden
 6th February 2017



Title Final Minutes
Submitted by SM, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note This document provides final minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting in Kalmar, Sweden on 6th Feb 2017
Requested action Implementation

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 Vaclovas Dačkauskas	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Mayor of Klaipėda District Municipality
Mr Lennarth Förberg	Member of ERB Executive Board, Region Blekinge
Ms Christina Mattisson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Mr Åke Nilsson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County
Mr Robert Olesen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board Region Kronoberg
Mr Per Ole Petersen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Hanna Pruchniewska	Deputy Member of Executive Board, Association of Polish Communes

ERB Youth Board:

Mr Jędrzej Tadrzak	Member of ERB Youth Board, Pomorskie Region
Ms Alexandra Winberg	Deputy Chair of ERB Youth Board, Kalmar
Ms Yanina Andrushkevich	Chair 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
Mr Mikkel Holm Tved	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Municipality of Bornholm

ERB Secretariats:

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Yana Eremeeva	Government of Kaliningrad Region
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 Zofia Makowska	Regional Council in Kalmar County / CaSYPoT Project Manager
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

Guests

Ms Reda Mikalauskaite	Head of Development department at University of Applied Sciences in Klaipeda
Ms Aneta Pierzchała-Tolak	GIWK Waterworks Gdańsk / Water Working Group of Association of Polish Communes

1. **Welcome**

Vice President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson welcomed the participants of the meeting on behalf of the hosts – the Regional Council in Kalmar County, stressing the fact that the Euroregion Baltic has been actively developing cross-border cooperation in the southeast Baltic Sea for 19 years and will have its 20th anniversary in 2018.

2. **Opening**

2.

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

Mr Per Ole Petersen, Member of ERB Executive Board took the opportunity to introduce Mr Mikkel Holm Tved, Member of ERB Youth Board representing Bornholm.

ERB Executive Board approved the agenda and welcomed Mr Tved to the meeting of the Board.

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 Stockholm on 8th November 2016 for approval.

The ERB Executive Board adopted the minutes with Ms Akko Karlsson, ERB Vice President and Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson, Member of Executive Board signed the minutes of ERB Executive Board meeting of 8th November 2016.

4. **Approval of the ERB Annual Report 2016**

4.a A report detailing the activities implemented within ERB cooperation in 2016 on behalf of the Kaliningrad ERB Presidency was delivered by Mr Sebastian Magier, Head of ERB International Secretariat.

4.b An activity report presenting the outcomes of activities undertaken within the ERB Youth Board on behalf of the Chairmanship was delivered by Mr Sebastian Magier, Head of ERB International Secretariat.

Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson commented on the Annual Report as being a summary of very impressive activities on the part of the outgoing Presidency. She also indicated some minor issues with the text of the Report which should be updated before the Report is finalised. Also, the report was missing the information about the visit of Swedish regions to other ERB member organisations to Poland, Kaliningrad and Lithuania. She also indicated that a similar visit could be organised to the Swedish regions in 2017.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen, Regional Municipality of Bornholm, stated that in 2016 ERB significantly developed its activities and became much more project oriented. Also the number of staff at the ERB International Permanent Secretariat (ERB IPS) has increased which should allow for more activities being successfully implemented in 2017. Overall, the work of the ERB is progressing well.

Ms Klaudija Kionies, Association of Municipalities of Klaipeda Region thanked ERB IPS for its hard work and effective support for cross-border cooperation on the Association. She especially underlined the significant progress in the development of ERB youth policies, both within projects as well as other activities engaging actors from the Baltic Sea Region. Taking the opportunity, Ms Kionies introduced Ms Reda Mikalauskaite who working as Head of Development Department at the University of Applied Sciences in Klaipeda and had significant experience in developing projects targeting youth policies.

Ms Yana Eremeeva said that the work of ERB had improved significantly over the last year and the organisation had become more focused on concrete activities tackled through projects. Here she mentioned the CaSYPoT-Ru project which directly included Russian partners from Kaliningrad Region in the activities of the South Baltic CaSYPoT project on development of knowledge-based strategic youth policies in ERB.

Having commented on the ERB Annual Report, ERB Executive Board decided to approve it and recommended that minor changes to the Report be added after the Board meeting.

5. Transfer of ERB Presidency and ERB Youth Board Chairpersonship

- 5.a In accordance with the decision of the ERB Executive Board of 21st February 2011 approving the sequence of ERB Presidency transfers, the ERB Presidency was transferred from the Russian Federation to Sweden, and Ms Akko Karlsson, Vice Chair of Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County assumed the position of ERB President.

At the same time, the position of ERB Vice President was be assumed by Denmark with Mr Per Ole Petersen, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm taking over the position of ERB Vice President.

- 5.b ERB Youth Board Chairpersonship was transferred from Lithuania to Russia and Ms Yanina Andrushkevich representing the Regional Government of Kaliningrad was be appointed new ERB Youth Board Chair.

At the same time, the Swedish party assumed the Vice Chairpersonship of the ERB Youth Board with Ms Alexandra Winberg appointed as the Vice Chair of ERB Youth Board.

The new ERB President, Ms Akko Karlsson thanked the ERB Executive Board for the opportunity to lead the organisation in 2017. She underlined that the ERB was created by people like Roger Kaliff to strengthen cross-border contacts and cooperation across the Baltic Sea, and during her term she would continue on this path by making the ERB stronger and more effective by focusing on four main priorities – further development of strategic youth policy in ERB, supporting the development of water cooperation through ERB Water Core Group, continuous support for implementation of the South Baltic Programme and preparation for the 20th anniversary of ERB in 2018.

Ms Yanina Andrushkevich also thanked for being able to lead ERB Youth Board in 2017. She stated the Russian chairpersonship of the YB would be active and will do its best to perform well within the ERB youth cooperation. Despite being a novice in this work, she would be doing her best to fulfil the strategic goals and bring new exciting project to the organisation.

Commenting on this part of the agenda, Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson suggested that it would be a very nice gesture to write an official thank-you letter to Mr Aleksander Bogdanov thanking him for his work as the ERB President in 2016.

ERB IPS responded that such a letter will be prepared and sent to Kaliningrad after the Board meeting.

ERB Executive Board approved the new ERB President and Vice-President, as well as the new ERB Youth Board Chair and her Deputy. The Board also welcomed the idea of sending an official thank-you letter to the outgoing ERB President.

6. ERB Action Plan 2016-2017

- 6.a President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson outlined the new Action Plan for the ERB cooperation in 2017 and 2018. She especially focused on the need to provide better awareness of ERB work among local and regional stakeholders of the cooperation. More should be done to communicate ERB work ie. monthly newsletters, as still not all the stakeholders are properly informed about ERB activities. Also ERB should further strengthen the cooperation network eg. in youth cooperation and reach out to outside stakeholders eg. Swedish Institute, CBSS etc. to become even more connected with other actors in the region. Of course, water cooperation would remain one of the cornerstones of ERB cooperation with WCG taking the lead on developing joint projects in this area.

Sebastian Magier described the AP in more details focusing also on the list of projects in which the ERB has been involved. At the moment the list totals 12 projects and they should become supportive to implementing the provision of the AP for 2017-2018 and later (see relevant list of projects with ERB participation). Among them there are 5 targeting youth cooperation (CaSYPoT, Leaders of the Baltic Sea, Universities for EU Project Culture, EVS Exchange and PL-RU Youth Exchanges). One project targets the capacity building in the South Baltic Programme – Umbrella, one sustainable cross-border public transport solutions – Interconnect and energy efficiency – Friendly House as well as renewable energy – Liquid Energy. There is one project directly supporting Water Core Group – SUWMAB in Interreg BSR. One project is being developed to initiate citizen dialogue on cross-border cooperation on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of ERB. Cross-border tourism is supported by three South Baltic projects – BSTC, South Coast Baltic and DUNC where the Association is an Associated Partner.

- 6.b Ms Yanina Andrushkevich, ERB Youth Board Chairperson presented main activities planned within the ERB Youth Board and included in the ERB Action Plan 2017-2018. Details were delivered by Sebastian Magier in his presentation of the ERB Action Plan. Once again, much youth related work focused on project development – 5 projects in the pipeline. Additionally ERB would further continue its cooperation with BSSSC and UBC on the development of reformed youth policy in the Baltic Sea Region, jointly preparing one more seminar at the upcoming EUSBSR Forum in Berlin and a youth conference the day before.

ERB Executive Board decided approve the ERB Action Plan 2017-2018.

7. 20th Anniversary of Euroregion Baltic – joint project and other activities

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

ERB is creating a partnership of at least 4 organisations to submit a proposal to the strand 2.2 – Networks of Towns. The project could start as early as July 2017 and run for 24 months with a budget of up to 150 000 EUR and 40% advance payments.

Commenting on the proposal, Mr Petersen stated that during the 20th anniversary we should remind our communities about the ERB history, as Euroregions were

those which unified divided countries by engaging people in cooperation on local, cross-border level. ERB was a special case as it was the first Euroregion to include Russian partners from Kaliningrad Region. He proposed that during the main meetings ERB could engage young people 20 years of age in a discussion on different topics eg. immigration / refugees or feminism. We should be able to tell a story of what it is important the ERB exists and what is its purpose. This overarching theme could be present during all 4 meetings, so that the whole project is coherent and has a clear message to bring across to the stakeholders.

Ms Britt-Louise Berndtsson proposed to develop a short movie that would include input from all member organisations in which reasons for cooperation and its achievements would be brought forward to the audience.

Mr Marcin Żuchowski, Association of Polish Communes, suggested that it would be good to include interviews with ERB founders eg. Roger Kaliff.

Mr Niels Chresten Anders focused on the 4 EfC selection criteria which have different focus, especially from ERB perspective, which more fact-based. The questions that we should ask are – What do we do? How do we continue? How do we shape our future in current global and regional circumstances? In this discussion we can remind about the past, but we should first of all look into the future, look ahead.

Ms Akko Karlsson agreed with this point of view and mentioned several examples of early cross-border cooperation eg. in business - IKEA

Mr Jędrzej Tadrzak, Member of ERB Youth Board said that from his point of view only around 30% of the contents should be about the past while 70% should focus on the future.

Ms Akko Karlsson also proposed that ERB trees be planted in member regions to mark the occasion. The tree could be Sorbus intermedia which grows all around the Baltic Sea.

ERB Executive Board will be requested to comment on the idea and take note of the information presented.

8. Anchoring ERB cooperation in South Baltic Programme

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information on the project supporting ERB cooperation within the South Baltic Programme as Project Partners (list of ERB projects attached):

- Umbrella – the project was submitted within the 3rd call for proposals and was now undergoing quality assessment. The project included partners from all 5 programme countries, with 2 ERB member organisations directly involved. Further ERB members act as Associated Partners. The total project budget amount to 1,2 MEUR with direct ERB involvement of 113 000 EUR. The project is aimed at developing cross-border cooperation capacities of local actors within the South Baltic Programme by engaging them in different activities, training and project development facilitation. If approved the project would run for 36 months.
- Interconnect – project also submitted in 3rd call of SBP by the Region Blekinge as the Lead Partner and significant involvement of Pomorskie Region. ERB would be responsible for communication activities totalling around 33 000 EUR. The project would develop methods for creating a more sustainable cross-border public transportation schemes within SBP area. If approved it would run for 36 months with the total budget 3.5 MEUR.
- CaSYPoT – information about the project was delivered by Zofia Makowska, Project Manager from Regional Council in Kalmar County. The project

developed the joint survey for the ERB area, which was now being tested in a series of pilot activities in i.a. Słupsk, Bartoszyce and Emmaboda. The full survey should be carried out between March and April 2017. Next meeting of the project would be held in Elbląg between 21-23rd March 2017. Also CaSYPoT-Ru project (financed by the Swedish Institute) kicked-off in Kaliningrad in November and is now implementing parallel activities in coordination with the South Baltic project.

Commenting on the project information, Mr Andersen said that the main question was about the project results – how will we influence policies or local and regional level. For example, on Bornholm youth policies are not working so it would be interesting to see if the project could help change that and have real impact on local policies.

- Liquid Energy – the project was developed by a German LP which did not submit it within the 3rd call for proposals. ERB is waiting for information whether the project development would continue for the 4th call for proposals.

And as Associated Partners:

- Baltic Sea Tourism Centre
- South Coast Baltic
- DUNC

All these projects are related to development of sustainable tourism and ERB will be closely monitoring them to see if it could become more engaged in some of the activities, also having in mind future projects in South Baltic and other CBC programmes.

Commenting on this significant engagement of ERB in different project, Mr Andersen asked about the details of project cash-flow and whether the cash-flow would be updated often to see whether the indicators are met.

Sebastian Magier responded that the cash-flow would be updated continuously once new financial information is available eg. the exact amount of reimbursement from CaSYPoT report.

The cash-flow with this engagement might become quite tight in early 2018 if all submitted project are approved and become operational as planned in the original schedules. It might be possible that for a short time the ERB would have to take a loan, but there are special facilities that lend money for project implementation.

Ms Berndtsson said that in such case ERB membership could be paid earlier to provide much needed liquidity.

Mr Damian Ciachorowski, ERB Youth Board member, suggested that the ERB fees could be paid in advance. Ms Karlsson responded that such advanced payments could be difficult to arrange as member organisation have quite strict budget planning procedures.

Mr Andersen said the ERB should be aware of the situation and monitor the cash-flow to provide updated information for the Board meeting in May 2017.

Ms Klaudija Kionies said that if needed the Association of Municipalities Klaipeda Region could make advance payments of the fee.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

10. **Information about ongoing cooperation with other pan-Baltic organisations**

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information on cooperation with other pan-Baltic organisations in relevant fields:

- With UBC and BSSSC on youth cooperation and organisation of a follow-up youth events at the EUSBSR Forum in Berlin on 12-14th June 2017
- With CPMR Baltic Sea Commission and CBSS in a project on UN's Sustainable Development Goals in the Baltic Sea Region submitted jointly to the Swedish Institute.
- With BSSSC on future Cohesion Policy and possibly joint position paper of Baltic organisations that could be jointly adopted in the first half of 2017.

Commenting on the BSSSC Cohesion Policy paper, Mr Andersen said that ERB should in general be in favour of all recommendations apart from one paragraph on page 2 which calls for a more balanced share of CP funds towards richer regions of the EU.

Mr Jan Martinsson stated that a more balanced approach would be needed as we still have a lot of funding going to Horizon 2020.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented and recommended to contact BSSSC about further discussion concerning the adoption of the joint statement on the future Cohesion Policy.

11. Information about the ongoing ERB involvement in Swedish Institute Programmes

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information on the ERB's involvement in two Programme organised by the Swedish Institute and their potential benefits for stronger ERB cooperation in relevant fields:

- Baltic Leadership Programme on Labour Mobility
- Baltic Executive Programme

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

12. Information after the meeting of Baltic Sea Labour Forum in Malmö

Mr Sebastian Magier presented information on the ERB's participation in the BSLF Steering Group meeting in Malmö on 30th January 2017.

The focus of the information was on potential participation of ERB and/or its member organisation in future joint project on labour issues within the Baltic Sea Region with involvement of transnational components of European Social Fund.

Ms Johanna Rönn said that labour issues were very important for Region Blekinge and that Magnus von Schenck has gathered a lot of experience through a labour project implemented in ESF.

Mr Andersen said that the question of youth employment was very important and difficult to develop or attract as far as skilled labour force was concerned. This was especially important for Bornholm. The questions would be the real focus of such a project.

ERB Executive Board will be requested to comment on potential deeper involvement in BSLF activities and take note of the information presented.

13. Any other business

Ms Akko Karlsson asked participants about the meaning of Euroregion Baltic for their regions and communicates. Participants of the meeting offered their views

citing positive impact of ERB cooperation on both local / regional, as well as on national and international levels.

14. **Conclusion and closing**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Ms Akko Karlsson thanked everyone for very active participation and closed the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.