



Euroregion Baltic  
Present Presidency  
Latvia 2002-2003

**Minutes**  
**Euroregion Baltic Board Meeting**  
**Bornholm, August 20, 2002**

**Participating Executive Board members:**

Normunds Niedols, BSCPR, Latvia  
Carl Ilsøe, Bornholm, Denmark  
Knud Andersen, Bornholm, Denmark  
Henryk Slonina, Poland  
Wladimir A. Bagalin, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia  
Ann-Kristin Erlandsson, Blekinge, Sweden  
Bernth Johnson, Blekinge, Sweden

**Secretariats:**

Gunta Strele, ERB official secretariat  
Niels Chresten Andersen, ERB national secretariat, Bornholm  
PG Lindencrona, ERB national secretariat, Southeast Sweden  
Zdzislaw Olszewski, ERB national secretariat, Poland  
Bjorn Johansson, ERB secretariat, Sweden  
Viktor Koshelev, ERB national secretariat, Russia  
Liga Riežniece, ERB national secretariat, Latvia

**Other guests:**

Alexander Sverchkov, Embassy of Russian Federation in Denmark  
Lars Gronbjerg, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark  
Stanislaw Wojtasia, Poland  
Wojciech Samulowski, Poland  
Zbigniew Czepulkowski, Gdansk  
Ewa Dargiewicz, Warmia & Mazury Region, Poland  
Krystyna Wroblewska, Pomeranian Region, Poland  
Ulf Andersson, Seagull project  
Anna-Carin Andersson, Seagull project  
Sofia M. Westerberg, Seagull project  
Per-Olof Lofberg, Seagull project  
Rolf A. Karlson, Seagull project manager

**§ 1 Welcome**

**Mr. Niedols, Chairman of the meeting** opens it by welcoming everybody to meeting of ERB Executive Board in Bornholm.

**All agree** to the planned agenda. Knud Andersen is appointed as the member to co-sign the minutes of the meeting.

**Mr. Niedols** and **Mr. Ilsøe** sign the minutes of previous Board meeting.

**1. Report on Seagull-DevERB project**

**Mr. Rolf Karlson:** The kick-off meeting was held on the previous day. Members of the Steering committee went through the contents and ideas behind the project, project management in terms of distribution of information between the Council, Board and Steering Committee. A report on the progress of Seagull project will be included in every Council or Board meeting. It was decided that the web site would be the main tool for dissemination of information, not only for the project, but also for the whole ERB. Phare applications prepared for this autumn were discussed. In order to operate on safe conditions all partners must be active. The meetings of Steering Committee will be as much as possible coordinated with Council or Board meetings, but only Steering Committee members will have the right to participate in these meetings in order to ensure the efficiency of work.

**Mr. Slonina** has several questions. What are the rules of choosing members for the Steering Committee? No members from the Polish Association of Communes are on the Steering Committee.

**Mr. Karlson** understands the anxiety, however it is up to the Polish side to choose the members to the committee. First of all these members must be senior executive officers, which Board members are not. Board and Council members will be informed about things going on by the SC member during the respective meetings and also in between. All the important issues will be decided by Board and Council, not by SC.

## **2. Information on the Expo**

Report of **Mr. Kuznetsov** is attached to the minutes.

**Mr. Niedols** starts a discussion on what to do in the future regarding Expos.

**Polish side** believes it was not correct to postpone the Expo only 4 days before it was supposed to happen. Not only financial aspect, but lost trust of 60 companies and municipalities that were planning to go. The form of such events could be changed back from commercial to municipal meetings, like it was done in 1999 in Gdynia.

**Mr. Koshelev** – Expos are important, and the one in Gdynia was the best up to now. Cannot understand the actions of Swedish partners – combining the events and then placing their stand in Forum. Russian side did not want to degrade the ERB Expo, by running it with only three partner participation.

**Ulf Andersson** – not a Board member, but believes that these meetings should be more discussions between local governments, working groups could also have seminars, prepare them for politicians.

**Mr. Niedols** – please prepare suggestions and forward them to Gunta, so there is something concrete to decide on at the Council meeting. Ms. Strele is responsible for preparing proposals.

## **3. Maritime safety**

**Mr. Koshelev** – the elaborated strategy of ERB prescribes development of transport routes, and there is necessity to develop also safety infrastructure. Many accidents, like “Estonia” prove that there is lack of rescue co-ordination on the sea as well as on land. This project could proceed similarly as Seagull – Interreg, Phare, Tacis.

**Ms. Strele** – who will be the responsible persons from Swedish and Danish sides?

**Mr. Karlson** – first we have to check if this topic is relevant for Interreg, maybe another programme is better.

**Knud Andersen** – Swedish side already has done work on this.

**Mr. Lindencrona** – headquarters are in Karlskrona, need to consult with them. Will prepare a report for next meeting.

**Ms. Wroblewska** – Also BSSC has a ministerial network for this topic. This should also be considered.

#### **4. Information about AERB annual conference**

**Mr. Niedols** – Have received many documents – Linz declaration, etc. (attached). Many changes are coming – widening of Interreg, changes in distribution of structural funds etc. Common opinion of ERB must be presented at the conference in Popenburg. Documents are on the web site for all to get acquainted.

**Mr. Andersen** – is ERB opinion valid, if ERB is not a member?

**Mr. Niedols** – Invitation addressed to “members and friends”.

**Ms. Strele** – we can benefit from their experience as was discussed in Steering Committee meeting.

**Mr. Koshelev** – Association has 30 years of experience we can use.

**Ms. Strele** – all documents can be read at EARB web page Deadline for opinion of partners – 3 weeks. Proposal – presidency and Seagull DevERB management participate in conference. Would be wonderful if the brochure on Seagull project would be ready by then. Could also place a stand, but is this necessary?

**All agree** that the representatives will be presidency and project management.

**Mr. Ulf Andersson** – will try to prepare the brochure in time.

#### **4. Web site of ERB**

**Ms. Strele** – web site must be the place where partners can find agenda of upcoming meetings, materials about issues to be discussed. Question is who will be responsible and how it will be done?

**Mr. Ulf Andersson** – Speaking about information strategy – web site must be one of the most important tools. On September 26 in Gdansk this issue will be discussed in the framework of Seagull WP5 (participants – national secretariats, computer specialists, experts from Bornholm). Proposal – postpone this discussion till then.

**Mr. Niels Chresten Andersen** – Were there problems with the web site?

**Ms. Strele** – There were problems due to holiday season.

**Mr.Niels Chresten Andersen** – Request to the Swedish side to provide assistance until a long-term solution is found for management of web site.

**Russian side** – information about concrete results must be placed on web site to show that ERB is not only paperwork.

**Polish side** – web site links must be added to the web site. The best practice up to now was when the main secretariat was running the web site.

## **5. Work group plans**

- 1) Spatial planning work group report – attached.
- 2) A work group on border crossing problems should be established. Task – collect information, experiences, prepare solution proposals.

**Polish side** – connect transport and tourism group and have a meeting as soon as possible.

**Mr.Karlson** – Main issue – who will participate from Eastern partners. WP2 – no problem to work together with existing work group, but it is difficult to say what the work groups will look like.

**Mr.Koshelev** – in order to improve dissemination of good practices and results, could combine the events with Good Governance seminar on September 11.

**Mr. Niels Chresten Andersen** – Transportation issues are crucial. Bornholm will participate in WP1, but not directly in SebTransLink or Baltic Gateway due to lack of capacity. Most important thing is the platform, because many projects are similar.

**Ms.Strele** – proposal from BSCPR. It is difficult for groups to meet, so a database of project ideas could be created in the web site to facilitate partner search.

**All agree.**

## **6. Border crossing problems**

Guests invited: **Mr. Lars Gronbjerg** from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and **Mr. Alexander Sverchkov** from the Embassy of Russia.

**Mr. Gronbjerg** explains the position of EU – visas between all members and Russia. On January 1 end of visa free transit, on July 1 – end of visa free entry. Not even a slight promise that this opinion will change. Possible solutions – multientry visas, long-term visas, cheap visas, more consulates, increase of capacity of existing consulates. Most important task is to design a visa regime, which could be even better than the current non-visa regime. Positive about visas – you have a certainty that you will be allowed to cross the border. There is an idea to establish Kaliningrad fund for support of this region.

**Mr. Sverchkov** – Russia does not agree. Primary interest – to protect rights for free movement within a country. Solutions – maybe isolated trains. Currently Kaliningrad is engaged in successful co-operation, but visa regime could isolate it.

**Mr. Ulf Andersson** – Both positions can be understood. About multivisa – how many departures a year? When can Kaliningrad fund be established?

**Mr. Gronbjerg** – Unlimited number of times within a given period of time. Normal period would be 1 year, but could consider several years. There have been no detailed discussions about fund, because only talks about border crossing are in progress currently. One field of discussions will be how and when to use the fund.

**Mr. Knud Andersen** – Why make things difficult? Can use experience from German –Danish border. All the time talk about preventing another iron curtain, but make it more difficult to cross the curtain. Who champions this system?

**Mr. Gronbjerg** – That is a European phenomenon – stronger outer borders to ensure free travel inside.

**Mr. Lindencrona** – Are there any similar places?

**Mr. Gronbjerg** – Switzerland, but no visa regime with them.

**Mr. Sverchkov** – Situation is very difficult and unique. Moscow is working on proposals, but no visa regime. This will be discussed in the Summit in Copenhagen on November 11.

**Mr. Bagalin** - When Russia had to retrieve the USSR army (100 thousands of people) it was difficult, but everything was solved. Now there is a small technical problem, but we say it is too difficult to solve. Retired people in Kaliningrad have many problems, and ask – when will the Europeans step towards us? Popularity of non-democratic parties is increasing. This unwise policy of EU will create a new hot spot. We have to use ERB to do something, because soon our politicians will not provide us money to come here.

**Mr. Niels Chresten Andersen** - Shengen does not say, that a visa with Russia is obligatory. There is a special case with Hong – Kong, but Russia will not want to break the legal space of the Russian Federation. Polish and Lithuania people will also have problems. There will be need for more consulates in Kaliningrad. Will there be support for consulates in all Russia?

**Mr. Gronbjerg** – both EU and Russia say no to breaking the legal space. Consulates necessary in Lithuania, Poland and also Russia. Russia does not agree. Lithuania is waiting for approval to expand the existing consulate and open a new one.

**Mr. Koshelev** - Do not understand such firm attitude. Why a foreigner can decide if I want to go from one part of Russia to another? We need to establish a work group for this issue. Tightening the borders will slow down economic development, which has started along the transport routes (e.g. via Hanseatica) – motels, shops, fuel stations, etc. It is necessary to work more on safety issues, because criminals will get the visas anyway.

**Ms. Wroblewska** – Russia has visas with Finland and it is ok. Russians ask sensitivity to their issues, but please have sensitivity to your neighbours' issues as well. And also – if I was a Russian citizen I doubt if I would like to go by sealed trains.

**Mr. Sverchkov** – We do not ask external corridors, but just to Russia.

**Mr. Knud Andersen** – We can not say yes or no, but can try to find the best solutions for border crossing problems, because you have problems both visa or no. Our common interest is to make it easier to cross the border. Kaliningrad fund is also a good idea. Appoint P.G. and Niels Chresten for work on this.

**Mr. Niels Chresten Andersen** – please send your ideas both on border crossing and Kaliningrad fund.

**Polish side** – difficult to say anything, because have to stick to the opinion of government, but have to agree with Mr. Koshelev, that cooperation with Kaliningrad is very important for economy. Have to find ways how to co-operate in existing situation. Visas must be available and very cheap. Russian consulate in Gdansk has a branch in Elblag and Elblag pays for this. Support the idea that on Nov. 4-5 should have resolution regarding these problems.

**Mr. Koshelev** would like to be the leader of Border-crossing work group.

**Work group established – Mr. Koshelev, Mr. Andersen, Mr. Lindencrona.**

## **7. Other issues**

**Ms. Strele** – next Council Meeting will take place in Liepaja on November 4-5. Please send documents and suggestions for agenda 2-3 weeks in advance.

About request from Kaliningrad International Childhood Fund about tuberculosis marathon. Please send your proposals for possible assistance as soon as possible.

**Mr. Niedols** closes the ERB Executive Board meeting.

Mr. Normunds Niedols  
President of ERB

Mr. Knud Andersen  
Member of ERB Executive Board  
Mayor of Bornholm

Līga Riežniece  
ERB secretariat