



Euroregion Baltic
Present Presidency
Southeast Sweden 2001-2002

22 August 2001

Minutes Euroregion Baltic Council Meeting Karlskrona, 22 August 2001

Attendances

Council members

Southeast Sweden:

Roger Kaliff, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
Evy Jonsson, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
Gertie Ohlsson, Region Blekinge
Ulf Andersson, Kronoberg County Council
Bo Frank, Kronoberg Association of Local Authorities

Poland:

Zbigniew Babalski, Voivode of Warmia-Mazury
Andrzej Helbrecht, Chairman Board Gorowo Iławeckie
Tomasz Sowinski, Voivode of Pomorze
Zbigniew Rychly, Vice President Slupsk
Zbigniew Czepulkowski, Gdansk City Council

Latvia:

Normunds Niedols, Director Liepaja City and Region Council

Denmark:

national secretariat - see below

Russian and Lithuanian members are not present at the meeting.

Officials/ERB secrs:

Malgorzata Samusjew, Poland
Adrianna Gniado, Poland
Maria Lindbom, Sweden
PG Lindencrona, Sweden
Björn Johansson, Sweden
Niels Chresten Andersen, Denmark
Gunta Strele, Latvia

Working groups/others: Rolf A Karlson, Interreg III expert/PIA group
Marianne Eckerbom, Chairman Environmental Working Group
Carolina Gunnarsson, Secr Environmental Working Group
Bengt Gustavsson, Spatial Planning Working Group
Lech Michalski, Expert for ERB Strategy, Poland
Wojciech Samulowski, Deputy Marshal Warmia Mazury, Poland
Michal Opieczynski, Specialist Marshal's Office Warmia-Mazury, Poland
Jacek Olszewski, Chairman Working group for Tourism, Poland
Jadwiga Semmerling, Chairman Working group Social Affairs, Poland
Jakub Kolodziejczyk, Secretary of Kwidzyn, Poland
Jaroslaw Zietkiewicz, Gdansk, Voivod Office

Interpreters: Marina Karlsson
Fredrik Wilhelmsson

§ 1 Welcome and opening of the meeting

The President Roger Kaliff opens the ERB Council meeting by welcoming the members to Southeast Sweden and Karlskrona. Most of the items on today's agenda are of informative character; only a few decisions have to be taken by the Council.

Tomasz Sowinski, Voivod of Pomeranian region, suggests that no decision shall be taken concerning item no 12 (*Establishment of a political platform in the southern BSR*). The question has to be dealt with at a coming meeting.

§ 2 Appointment of a member to check and approve of the minutes

Decision

Mr Normunds Niedols is chosen to check and co-sign the minutes of today's meeting.

§ 3 Length of presidency and appointment of Vice President during the Swedish presidency

In February the board was given the task by the council to contact the Danish and Latvian parties to find a candidate for the vice presidency in Euroregion Baltic during the Swedish presidency 2001-2002.

The Latvian party (Liepaja) has confirmed their willingness to take an active part in the work of Euroregion Baltic and to function as Vice President during the Swedish Presidency. Mr Normunds Niedols, Executive Director of Liepaja City Council, is suggested for this appointment.

There is unanimity in the board for Latvian vice presidency/Mr Normunds Niedols and the proposal is now forwarded to the council for a formal decision. The board also proposes to keep the present length of presidency periods, i. e. one year.

Decision

The council unanimously appoints Mr Normund Niedols, Liepaja City Council, to function as Vice President during the Swedish presidency. Consequently Latvia will be next President of ERB; in 2002. The council also decides to keep the present length of presidency periods, i. e. one year.

§ 4 Report from the PIA group preparing an Interreg IIIB application

In February the Council decided to intensify the cooperation activities through the development of an Interreg IIIB-Phare-Tacis project for the whole ERB – the Seagull-Deverb project. The name Seagull derives from the ERB-logotype. The project aims at developing the ERB in line with the central EU policies about social and economic cohesion between the EU regions and to regions in the Applicant countries as well as to border regions in the NIS and other countries.

Rolf A Karlson describes the process of the PIA group's work. The group consists of one representative from each ERB member region and a coordinator, Mr Karlson himself. The Swedish side has additionally created an expert group with 40 people from Swedish member counties and other institutions in southeast Sweden. The expert group will support the PIA group with ideas and concrete input concerning the contents of the project.

A conclusion after a meeting with the Interreg IIIB secretariat in Karlskrona is that a preparation time of at least one year is needed to form an application which will lead to fruitful results. The PIA group has now worked for four months; a frame/a general idea for the project exists.

We could ask ourselves why there does not already exist a strategy for ERB? There are probably a number of reasons as for instance:

- financial problems
- lack of human resources
- lack of priorities enabling to allocate funding

Our common Interreg IIIB-Phare-Tacis project “Seagull” will hopefully result in those resources lacking at present. In the process finding our ERB-strategy we might have to set aside some of our own priorities to find the common approach.

Mr Karlson shows a sketch explaining the frame of the project, which has been developed during spring and summer 2001. The sketch describes :

- Possible sub-projects/packages
- Regional Development Programmes of each region (RPDs) put together to a common one with issues of mutual interest – Action Plan
- GIS-statistics – a regional statistical database for ERB
- Supporting activities
- Dissemination

The Interreg IIIB secretariat has advised us to work thoroughly with the preparations and wait until the second call **1 April 2002** before we deliver the application. It is strongly recommended by the IIIB secretariat as we then will be able to coordinate the applications with Phare and Tacis as well. The project will last for a period of 3 years and thus be the important instrument for ERB missing today – our common economical base - however demanding co-financing from each party!

It is important to study other ongoing parallel processes, e. g. the projects “Sapphire” or “South Baltic Arc”. We should discuss cooperation – maybe not joining but coordination of the projects.

Mr Karlson hands out a first draft of a Letter of Intent that is recommended to be discussed for signing at the next ERB Board meeting in Klaipeda. Later contracts between the partners will be elaborated signed and sent in together with the Interreg/Phare/Tacis application. Mr Karlson kindly asks the ERB members to consider the contents of the draft Letter of Intent and to present possible suggestions on changes/amendments at the next Board meeting.

Decision

The information is taken to the minutes with approval.

§ 5 Reports from permanent working groups

Environment

The Chairman of the Environmental working group, Ms Marianne Eckerbom, refers to the presentation delivered by the group's secretary, Carolina Gunnarsson in yesterday's seminar. The presentation gave a picture of how the group intends to work and also explained that contribution is needed from each member region to be able to achieve good results.

Next meeting of the group will probably be on October 12 (location is not yet decided). The council members are kindly asked to spread the information.

The group has also discussed the Interreg IIIB application and possible environmental issues that could be included. Marianne Eckerbom suggests that

- environmental issues shall form a chapter of its own
- environmental impact assessment shall be made for all proposals that will be worked out within the project.

The group would like to take an active part in the Interreg application process. Marianne Eckerbom concludes her report by requesting support for the groups' work from the ERB Council.

Spatial Planning

Bengt Gustavsson, County Administrative Board Blekinge and member of the working group, explains that the group's activity mainly is carried out within the Interreg project "SEB-Trans". Some years ago at a meeting in Elblag, the council assured its support to this project. The final SEB-Trans conference was held in June in Karlskrona. The final report will be distributed to the members of the ERB board as soon it is ready.

The project has produced valuable material; reports, visions, transport/communication goals related to spatial planning issues. Many people have met and learnt a lot from each other. Mr Gustavsson hopes that the results of SEB Trans can be used in the coming Seagull project.

Bengt Gustavsson mentions the competing transport corridors. He wonders about the ERB strategy in that context and suggests this question to be the focus of a seminar within the Seagull project.

Social group

The secretary of the group, Ms Malgorzata Samusjew, gives a brief report about project activities. Mostly bilateral projects are running and Malgorzata hopes that those projects can be extended to multilateral ones. Next meeting with the Social group will be held **September 19 in Elblag**.

Evy Jonsson, Swedish member of the council, mentions a possible cooperation project, i.e. an exchange programme for students at schools for health- and medical care in the ERB regions.

On the Polish ERB homepage there is a list of all projects. There is at least one foreign partner in all projects.

Niels Chresten Andersen stresses the importance of involving “normal” people from the different ERB regions and mentions that he is now preparing a “Culture Festival” (September), which could be regarded and profiled as an ERB activity.

Decision

Reports from the working groups are taken to the minutes with approval.

§ 6 EXPO in Kaliningrad 2002

Since there isn't anybody from Kaliningrad present at the meeting Maria Lindbom gives only a brief summary of previous discussion of the board :

- The Centre of Baltic Expo in Kaliningrad - possible exhibition dates within period 23 May – 7 July 2002
- Forum South Sweden Kaliningrad 30-31 May 2002 - investigate possibility of arranging the EXPO parallelly to the Forum.
- Each party presents an EXPO contact person to Victor Koshelev.
- Preliminary focus of the EXPO :
 - environmental technology
 - tourism/foods (investigate if problem to take in foods to Kaliningrad)
 - possibly two more areas will be chosen after discussion with the Chambers of Commerce in each region
- Preliminary dates for the EXPO: 30-31 May 2002

§ 7 Membership in Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR)

Unfortunately the Secretary General of AEBR, Mr Jens Gabbe, could not attend today's meeting but will instead be present at the Executive Board meeting in Klaipeda 25 September. We will then learn more about the conditions of joining the AEBR and possibly be ready for a formal decision at the Council meeting in Liepaja 12-13 November 2001.

§ 8 Information/marketing material

Maria Lindbom reports briefly about decisions of the board regarding information/marketing material:

- “*The Quarterly*” shall be replaced by a common updated “*Annual Report*” on the activities of ERB after each presidency.
- *Internet web-site* - the Swedish party has registered the site again. The national secretariats will discuss more in detail what should be on the common web/what should not etc.
- The responsibility/practical work with the web site shall follow the presidency in office.

§ 9 Conclusions from ERB 2002+ seminar

Mr Björn Johansson summarises some reflections from the seminar – one of them that the ERB-members are very patient! A cooperation with six different countries is of course not always easy! This is the first time we have had a discussion about those kinds of questions and we need to practise – mix the theoretical/philosophical approach with the more concrete project discussions. In other words we need to get to know each other and understand each other to be able to be successful in our cooperation. We have discussed:

- languages/interpretation and agreed on continuation of English – Russian
- what ERB shall be used for
- how each region appoints members in ERB
- if we need to appoint deputies and agreed that this is a matter for each party to decide on
- geographical changes
- the need for separate meetings with the ERB national secretariats – which is a proposal to the council (see below).
- finally – all partners want concrete actions but do not know today exactly how.

§ 10 National secretariats’ meetings

One important conclusion from the ERB 2002+ seminar is the need for separate meetings with the ERB national secretariats. The work of the secretariats form an important base for the organisation. Better communication - separate meetings between the six national secretariats will most likely lead to better preparation of issues that will be discussed at board- and council meetings; the agenda will be formed together and the decisions will be better anchored in each member region.

The seminar decided to put forward a proposal to the council that there should be regular meetings with national secretariats.

Decision

The council supports the proposal to improve the role of the national secretariats as described. (A first meeting of the secretariats has later been decided to take place on 24 September in Klaipeda)

§ 11 Forthcoming dates – Activity Plan 2001

Observe coming dates:

Executive Board	Klaipeda 25 September
Council/ERB 2002+ seminar/Executive Board	Liepaja 12-13 November

The ambassadors of ERB member countries in Latvia will be invited to the Liepaja meeting. An invitation has to be sent out within a few weeks. The secretariats will discuss further practical details concerning this invitation and the overall programme in Liepaja 12-13 November.

§ 12 Establishment of a political platform in the southern BSR

The President, Roger Kaliff reports about the SydSam initiative to establish a political platform in the southern Baltic Sea region. There are many co-operations between the regions across the Southern part of the Baltic Sea and they could be better integrated within the existing political structure, if we had a common platform for the political representatives of the regions. Many projects that have been conducted the last years would have had greater impact if we only knew about them.

SydSam therefore want to invite the region to take part in a project on establishing a platform for the political governed regions in the Southern Baltic Sea region. This political platform could be an important instrument for exchange of information and project ideas. It will also enable us to work together creating networks for a stronger co-operation among our regions.

Invited regions:

Schleswig-Holstein
Mecklenburg Vorpommern
Hansestadt Hamburg
Fyns Amt
Bornholms Amt
Pomerania region
Western Pomerania region
Klaipeda region
Vilnius region
Liepaja region
Kaliningrad region

Bornholm, Niels Chresten Andersen stresses the importance of making the objective clear at the BSSSC Annual Conference in Riga 26 oktober 2001. The Bornholm party means that we should use the already existing networks and not necessarily create a new structure for the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

Everybody agrees that this question has to be penetrated further/be included in the agendas of the board 25 September and council 12-13 November.

Roger Kaliff
President

Normunds Niedols
Vice President

Maria Lindbom
Secretariat