



Euroregion Baltic
Present Presidency
Southeast Sweden 2001-2002

12 November 2001

Minutes Euroregion Baltic Council Meeting Liepaja, 12 November 2001

Attendancies

Council members

Southeast Sweden:

Roger Kaliff, President ERB and Kalmar Regional Council
Ulf Andersson, Vice Chairman Kronoberg County Council
Ethel Duvskog, Region Blekinge (substitute)

Poland:

Henryk Slonina, Mayor Elblag
Andrzej Helbrecht, Chairman Board Gorowo Ilaweckie
Zbigniew Rychly, Vice President Slupsk

Latvia:

Normunds Niedols, Director Liepaja City and Region Council
Edvins Drigins, Vice Executive Director Liepaja City Council

Lithuania:

Roma Stubriene, Head of Foreign Relations Dep, Klaipeda County
Jolita Kraniauskaite, Klaipeda municipality (substitute)

Kaliningrad:

Victor Koshelev, Deputy Head of Baltijsk Municipality

ERB secrs:

Zdzislaw Olszewski, Poland
Malgorzata Samusjew, Poland
Maria Lindbom, Sweden
PG Lindencrona, Sweden
Björn Johansson, Sweden
Niels Chresten Andersen, Bornholm/Dk
Gunta Strele, Latvia
Ligita Laipeniece, Latvia

Gunars Ansins, Latvia
Dalia Makuskiene, Lithuania
Elena Boutorova, Kaliningrad region
Evgenia Tcherniavskaja, Kaliningrad region

Working groups/others: Uldis Sesks, Mayor Liepaja
Marianne Eckerbom, Chairman Environmental Working Group
Jaroslaw Zietkiewicz, Gdansk, Voivod Office
Janis Grundbergs, Latvia - Member of working group
Antanas Kontautas, Lithuania, Environmental Working group
Stasis Belinis, Lithuania

§ 1 Welcome and opening of the meeting

The President Roger Kaliff opens the ERB Council meeting by stating the pleasant fact that all ERB parties are present this time.

Gunars Ansins, Liepaja, suggests adding one item to today's agenda – "Border Crossing Problems".

§ 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 The ERB Statutes

Within the ERB 2002+ project we have earlier started a discussion regarding a revision of the Statutes that were signed in Malbork, February 1998, at the birth of Euroregion Baltic. A first draft proposal with some suggested changes have been sent out to all parties only a few days ago. This of course means that no decision can be taken at today's meeting.

The discussion continues here today and will continue at home before reaching a final decision, supposedly at the Council meeting in Liepaja 11-12 March 2002. The ERB parties are kindly requested to send suggestions on amendments/changes to the Presidency secretariat, which will be included and presented for the Executive Board at a meeting on 23 January 2002 in Klaipeda.

Mr Björn Johansson, project manager for the ERB 2002+ project, sees two important objectives for our statutes. They can be used as a tool when:

1. ERB parties don't agree with each other
2. Marketing and profiling our organisation

Decision

The Council decides that the national secretariats shall send proposals to the Presidency secretariat – **no later than 20 December 2001**.

§ 4 Report from the PIA group regarding the Seagull project

Ms Gunta Strele, Liepaja, gives a brief report from a recent meeting with the PIA group in Riga. The most important changes discussed were:

- Not to create a specific work package for statistics. Instead a statistics part shall be included in all other work packages.
- To consider dividing work package 5 – Innovative Centres - into two different packages;
 1. IT as a tool for regional development
 2. SME development as a tool for regional development

The PIA group also agreed that the following issues should be included in the Seagull project:

- Improvement of the home-page
- IT projects
- Support to Secretariats/ERB administration
- Working group meetings
- NGOs and the private sector of the member regions should be involved

Lithuania as well as Denmark explains that a revision with last amendments is needed to be able to estimate consequences, size of co-financing etc. Then it will also be easier to sign the Letter of Intent.

To be able to succeed with a submission of an application until 1 April a final discussion must be held at the Council in Liepaja 11-12 March 2002, which means that the discussion at home in each ERB region must be finished by the end of January.

Deadline for Phare Small project is estimated to be the end of February 2002. For Tacis there is a deadline in the beginning of December 2001 and one in March 2002.

Mr Zdzislaw Olszewski, Poland, states that co-financing is a decisive question for the project. It cannot be decided yet from what Phare part funding will be allocated. Similar projects are being prepared parallel with Seagull; e.g. for VASAB 2010, Sapphire Arc – Southern Baltic Sea Region with Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as lead part.

The Polish side has prepared a strategy with 5 aims and objectives specified and hands over a brochure/CD-rom to President Roger Kaliff, to be included in the Seagull project.

Decision

The council agrees to the suggested timetable for the Seagull project and takes the information to the minutes with approval.

§ 5 EXPO in Kaliningrad 2002

Maria Lindbom refers to an e-mail recently sent to all national secretariats explaining the Swedish viewpoint on EXPO 2002 in Kaliningrad:

Sweden has suggested the Expo to be held 30-31 May 2002 due to coordination possibilities with Forum South Sweden, which will also take place those days in Kaliningrad city. Sweden would like to make the other ERB parties aware of the fact that there might be two parallel events and maybe Sweden will dominate the scene. There is also a risk that the Forum will compete with EXPO 2002 when it concerns audience/visitors.

This however (the competition aspect) of course depends on aim and chosen target groups for the EXPO – everybody, people involved in ERB, and/or companies?

Sweden has earlier suggested that the ERB parties should agree on a target group and focus for the EXPO. From a Swedish point of view the Expo should be a commercial event; companies should meet and if possible companies in specific fields. We need a concept/product to "sell" and inform about! Companies won't participate unless they are convinced that this is a good opportunity to find interesting counterparties on the other side of the Baltic.

Poland reports that 85 municipalities are prepared to take part in the EXPO. Pomerania and Warmia-Mazurian Chambers of Commerce are also interested in participating. Mr Slonina stresses that we have to reach a final decision today about the dates and focus. The dates 30-31 May 2002 should remain and the focus should be companies working with

- Environmental Protection
- Tourism

Another possible area of interest could be "Furniture".

We also have to foresee/prevent the problems crossing the border to Kaliningrad.

Decision

The Council decides:

- the EXPO will be held 30-31 May 2002
- the EXPO shall be a commercial event
- Focus: “Environmental Protection” and “Tourism”
- Each ERB member appoints a contact person who will get in touch directly with Baltic Expo in Kaliningrad, Director Pjotr Grizenko

Baltic Expo tel: +7 0112 34 19 14, 34 10 91, 34 10 95

E-mail: baltexpo@kaliningrad.ru

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

Maria Lindbom has forwarded letters from Secretary General Jens Gabbe, AEBR to the national secretariats, explaining conditions of membership, fees etc. Unfortunately the Swedish party has not yet found a way to finance the membership and thus is not yet ready to join the organisation.

All ERB parties express the same problem but at the same time emphasise the wish to remain in contact with AEBR.

Decision

The ERB council is not prepared to apply for a full membership in AEBR at present, but wish to remain in contact for further discussions about alternate possibilities.

§ 7 ERB Membership request

At a meeting between Roger Kaliff, Normunds Niedols and the Vice Mayor of Ventspils, Mr Janis Vitolins, Ventspils, Mr Vitolins expressed an interest from Ventspils in joining ERB.

Gunars Ansins explains that Ventspils is interested to become a member in ERB but only if the other municipalities/regions within the Baltic Sea Coastal Zone also agree to join. Thus Ventspils awaits an answer from them after a meeting in the beginning of December.

Municipalities/regions in the Baltic Sea Coastal Zone are:

Ventspils District
Ventspils City
Talsi District
Saldus District
Liepaja District
Liepaja City
Kuldīga District
Edole Parish

Together they form a planning region and they have a common office in Riga.

The Polish party draws attention to the fact that there are no obstacles in the ERB statutes to adding more members to ERB and they would like to welcome the whole Baltic Sea Coastal Zone in the cooperation.

Niels Andersen points out that we should listen carefully to what our Latvian partner Liepaja thinks about this issue.

Decision

The Council is in favour of adding municipalities/regions mentioned above to the ERB and awaits a more precise proposal from Liepaja/Ventspils in December regarding this matter.

§ 8 Reports from permanent working groups

Ms Marianne Eckerbom, chairman of the **Environmental Working group** (EWG), has sent out a letter before the meeting reporting about the group's work. She also presents a request, which she hopes will be accepted by the council/board, to the benefit of Euroregion Baltic.

The participation at the EWG meetings and the contribution between meetings is too low. This is a problem and an obstacle when aiming at efficient work of high quality, which should be our ambition within ERB. The reason might be that the responsibility for each appointed member in the EWG is unclear.

The EWG could be the natural place for coordination of the work with an environmental strategy within the Seagull project.

Ms Eckerbom requests that the council formally appoints one responsible person from each region for this work, who will also be a member of the EWG.

Niels Andersen thanks Ms Eckerbom for the good work and regrets that Bornholm unfortunately cannot appoint a permanent member to the group.

Decision

The council supports Ms Eckerbom's proposal and suggests that each party should look into the matter and formally appoint members to make the responsibility more clear.

The Spatial Planning Working Group

Victor Koshelev reports about a UBC project called "Hanse-Tour Sunshine", a goodwill cycle ride in favour of ill children – 4.000 km around the Baltic Sea 25 July – 10 August 2003.

For more information see homepage: www.hanse-tour-sonnenschein.de

§ 9 Conclusions from ERB 2002+ seminar

Project manager Björn Johansson observes the fact that the form of yesterday's seminar led to fruitful discussions and a good dialogue concerning the future of ERB. We obviously need more of this!

The final report from ERB 2002+ will be available at the ERB homepage within a few weeks.

§ 10 The Fifth International Competition of Fine Arts of Children and Youth - "From the Sea We are"

The Polish party invites all ERB parties again to take part in the project "From the Sea we are" and hands out information to be spread to schools and institutions working with young people.

Organiser of the competition is Culture Center For The Youth in Elblag 82-300, 37 Bema St. For more details please call the Competition Commissioner Ms Malgorzata Wrzosinska tel +48 (091) 4 630 837, 4 631 744, 4 631 646.

§ 11 Activity Plan 2002

Gunta Strele, presents a proposal for Activity Plan 2002. The change of Presidency is suggested to occur at a council meeting in Liepaja 11-12 March 2002.

A discussion follows regarding what should be included in an activity plan (normally 2 councils and 4 board meetings). The Executive Board will discuss this matter more in detail together with the Liepaja party (next board meeting will be held 23 January in Klaipeda).

The ambassadors of ERB member countries in Latvia will be invited to the council in Liepaja 11-12 March. An invitation and a programme have to be sent out well in advance, including a seminar on border crossing problems.

§ 12 “Border Crossing” document to the ERB transport group

Mr Niedols reads a document which has earlier been sent to all parties:

Regarding border crossing procedure simplification

One of ERB aims is to promote tourism development, exchange of information and communication in the region scale.

At the year 1994th between Baltic states was signed an agreement about border crossing simplifying and common border control.

Unfortunately at separate locations, for instance Butinge - Rucava border control point, which is especially important in the relation to the tourism between neighbouring communities, there is impossible to say that is done everything to establish border crossing more simply and effective.

There is necessary to realize once confirmed one side border crossing schema to provide information exchange and to avoid doubling of functions, exclude responsible institutions allege with impartial, troublesome obstacles.

There is need as well to provide small practical infrastructure development work for example widening the road between both countries control buildings.

ERB is appealing to both countries responsible institutions to provide necessary organisational and financial resources to adjust at last this small but very important border crossing point and to give an input into common way to orderly infrastructure regarding ES formulations.

Decision

The council agrees that this is an important matter and a good start for a seminar on Border Crossing problems 11-12 March in Liepaja.

Roger Kaliff
President

Normunds Niedols
Vice President

Maria Lindbom
Secretariat