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**EUROREGION BALTIC BOARD
SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE**

Minutes

Date:

19th April 2007
14.30 – 18.30 hours (local time)

Meeting Place:

Polish Secretariat of Euroregion Baltic, Elbląg, 3/4 Św. Duchy Street

Participants:

ERB BOARD / SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Johnson, Mr	Bernth	ERB President, Blekinge County
Petersen, Mr	Per Ole	ERB Vice-President, Bornholm
Mincinauskiene, Ms	Raisa	Member of the Board, Klaipeda County
Pluhin, Mr	Mikhail	Member of the Board, Kaliningrad Region

SECRETARIATS

Andersen, Mr	Niels Chresten	Director of EU Office Bornholm
Andersson, Mr	Ulf	Administration of Regional Council in Southern Småland
Åstrand-Karlsson, Mr	Tor-Björn	Region Blekinge Administration Officer
Demkowicz-Dobrzański, Mr	Sławomir	Head of ERB International Secretariat
Håkanson, Mr	Hans	International projects in infrastructure/Baltic affairs, Region Blekinge
Johannesson, Ms	Mariana	Rural Network Expert
Koshelev, Mr	Victor	Deputy Head of Municipality of Baltijsk
Lindencrona, Mr	Per Gudmund	Region Blekinge, Project Coordinator
Liutkute, Ms	Viktorija	Klaipeda County Administration Officer
Romanovski, Mr	Victor	Head of CBC Department, Ministry of Territorial Cooperation, Kaliningrad
Rozkov-Juerevskij, Mr	Jurij	Kaliningrad Region representative in Poland
Stańczyk, Ms	Kora	International Cooperation Department at Pomorskie Marshal's Office
Szluma, Ms	Dorota	International Cooperation Department at Pomorskie Marshal's Office
Szymanowska, Mrs	Magdalena	Secretariat of Association of Polish Communes ERB
Zdanova, Mrs	Julia	Seagull 2 Staff
Zdrojewski, Mr	Jacek	Tourism Network Expert
Zwolak, Mr	Piotr	European Integration Department at Warminsko-Mazurskie Marshal's Office

1. WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE ERB BOARD / STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

ERB President and Chairman of the Steering Committee, Mr Bernth Johnson opened the Board meeting and welcome its participants.

Upon the request from the Swedish secretariat the agenda was extended with one extra point (point 4) dealing with the follow-up of the border crossing resolution adopted by the ERB Council on 14th March 2007.

2. SIGNING THE MINUTES OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING IN ELBLAG

ERB President and Chairman of the Steering Committee, Mr Bernth Johnson and member of the ERB Board / Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Mr Mikhail Pluhin placed their signatures in approval of the minutes from the previous ERB Board session on 7th February 2007.

ERB President and Chairman of the Steering Committee, Mr Bernth Johnson, and ERB Vice-President, Mr Per Ole Petersen will co-sign the minutes of this meeting.

3. INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ERB BOARD / STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING IN VILNIUS

Niels Chresten Andersen outlined the preparation status for the 3rd Seagull 2 Study Visit and Steering Committee meeting in Vilnius, including the tentative programme, budget and details concerning travel and hotel arrangements. The travel and accommodation will be provided within the project budget for the five members of the Seagull II Steering Committee / ERB Board and the nine members of the Project Coordination Group.

Mr Andersen explained the Study Visit will consist of the meetings with the Nordic Council of Ministers on 31st May, Euroregions of Nemunas and Sesupe on 1st June, as well as the Steering Committee meeting on 2nd. To this meeting embassies of the ERB member countries in Lithuania should also be invited. ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson proposed that the Study Visit also include a meeting with Hansa Bank whose office is located in Vilnius.

The ERB Board members took note of the information provided and recommended that the International Secretariat in cooperation with the National Secretariats make all the necessary preparations.

4. FOLLOW-UP OF THE BORDER CROSSING RESOLUTION

Following the approval of the Resolution of the Council of Euroregion Baltic supporting facilitation of the conditions for crossborder cooperation between its members, the International Secretariat sent the resolution copies to the DG Relex of the European Commission, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the representatives of the two Polish Chambers of the Parliament who had attended the conference.

Mr P.G. Lidencrona informed that the three Swedish regions of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg will decide on a joint action disseminating the text of the ERB resolution. Mr Niels Ch. Andersen informed that the Danish Secretariat will send the resolution to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU Delegation in Denmark. Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene said a representative of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry was present

at the conference in Karlskrona so the resolution will now be directly sent to the Prime Minister's Office in Vilnius.

Closing this point of the agenda, President Johnson remarked the follow-up process is an important part of the process initiated by ERB in Svetlogorsk to work with border crossing issues. Therefore, it is crucial that this process is carried through to its end in a most efficient manner.

5. ERB YOUTH CONFERENCE: DISCUSSING A SCOPE OF COOPERATION WITH YOUTHS IN ERB

Within the cooperation effort between the Europe Direct offices in Karlskrona (Blekinge, Sweden), in Klaipeda (Klaipeda County, Lithuania), in Olsztyn (Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Poland), in Ronne (Bornholm), in Słupsk (Pomorskie, Poland) and in Växjö (South Småland., Sweden), and with the support from SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Elbląg President's Office and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Marshal's Office the ERB Youth Conference will be held in Elbląg between 20 and 21 April 2007.

The main aim of the Conference is to better integrate the youth in the Euroregion Baltic. The Conference will focus especially on the youth dimension in the areas of environment protection, intercultural dialogue, democratic participation and regional development. In the mid-term perspective, in line with Objective 4 of the 2007 – 2008 ERB Strategy adopted by the Council on 14th March 2007, an ERB Youth Network should be established, including representatives from all the 8 ERB member regions. The Youth Network will be actively involved in the decision making in ERB, and will be responsible for promotion and facilitation of youth-to-youth activities.

To this end, the ERB Board began a debate on specific assistance ERB can offer to such a youth network.

On behalf of the Danish Party, Mr Niels Ch. Andersen proposed that ERB takes on four-step process, whereby:

- a) the conference is organised and evaluated;
- b) ERB Board discusses the evaluation in Vilnius, assessing the potential of such a youth network within ERB and proposing how to assist it, should the network go ahead;
- c) at the next meeting in Kalmar on 13th August, ERB Board defines a mandate and a budget for the youth network;
- d) youth network officially starts during the Council meeting in Gdansk in December 2007;

He also added that a possible mandate for the youth could be 5 new young members of the ERB Council, representing five member countries within ERB, and their chairman included in the ERB Board.

President Johnson said it was a very good idea to involve the youth into the ERB structures. Mr Victor Koshelev proposed that inmates of Kolosovskaya Educational Colony should be involved in the cooperation within the field of rural development. Mr Ulf Andersson appreciated the idea of the youth cooperation and thanked the initiators and organisers of the conference. President Johnson reminded of the hockey tournament initiative by Mr Mikhail Plukhin and added that it is extremely important to continue efforts such as the hockey tournament and youth conference and develop them into long-term events. Mr Mikhail Plukhin supported the idea and appealed to the Board members to maintain their support for a regular hockey tournament for ERB youth.

Ms Mariana Johannesson pointed out that the youth network should not only be about young participants but also people working with the youth issues. Mr Per Ole

Petersen requested that all the ERB Board members should participate in the conference so that the young people present will know personally who ERB politicians and staff are.

The ERB Board members decided to attend the youth conference and continue to support the idea of establishing a youth network. The issue will be discussed further within the Board at its next meeting in Vilnius on 2nd June 2007.

6. MARITIME POLICY GREEN PAPER: PRESENTATION AND FIRST DISCUSSIONS ON A POSSIBLE ERB POSITION STATEMENT

In line with the overall strategic objectives of the European Commission 2005-2009, a Green Paper was launched in June 2006: "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas". Until the end of June 2007 everyone can give their input in the consultation of this Green Paper, which will lead to a Commission report by the end of 2007, summarising the results of the consultation process and proposing the way forward. Since the ERB consists of regions heavily depending on the maritime economy and as an EU Maritime Policy cannot be managed without cooperation with third countries like the Russian Federation, it seems obvious for the ERB to take active part in the consultation on the Maritime Green Paper.

The Board members watched a video presentation and a power point presentation outlining the subject matter. Following the presentations, Mr Niels Ch. Andersen reminded that during its meeting on 14th March the ERB Council agreed to include maritime policy into the ERB agenda. Maritime policy is also relevant for non-EU members like Russia. It is therefore important that ERB runs a political process in order to develop a joint statement on the policy, especially since the subject matter is so complex and vast.

A proposal was made that the ERB Board asks Mr Bo Löfgren (Member of the International Committee in Region Blekinge) to prepare a one-page document stating why ERB needs an integrated maritime policy and advocating an open consultation process involving active participation of the local and regional level. The draft can be distributed together with the Agenda for the Seagull 2 Steering Committee meeting and 3rd Study Visit in Vilnius.

ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson commented by referring to the ongoing projects like Baltic Gateway and existing cooperation with universities and industries that can contribute to the process of developing an ERB statement. Mr Mikhail Pluhin requested the right for the Russian Party to abstain from voting on the position since it is an internal EU policy. He did, however, expressed readiness to contribute to the preparation process. Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene said there is already an official Lithuanian position on the Green Paper, and if it is necessary, she can assist in the inviting of their representative to the meeting in Vilnius.

ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson closed the debate by saying ERB does not represent the national level and can freely take initiatives at the local and regional level, submitting its views and statements to the European Commission. The ERB Board members thus officially initiated a debate on the EU Maritime Policy Green Paper with the aim of elaborating a joint position of Euroregion Baltic.

7. STATUS OF 2 SEAGULL 2 NETWORKS: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Rural Network expert, Ms Mariana Gomez Johannesson presented the 2007 interim report on the network's activities and the current status of their preparation efforts towards the establishment of a rural development centre – the objective indicated in the ERB Joint Development Programme (see Attachment 1).

She pointed out that the centre will constitute an arena for the collection and dissemination of good examples around the region, responding to the challenges in the development of the rural areas. Its importance lays on the idea of coordination, cooperation and involving the regions and actors in joint transnational actions. The centre will act as a supporter, meeting arena and provider for different Local Action Groups. Ms Johannesson also indicated that the next important steps towards the establishment of such a centre will be: anchoring of the project, involvement of local and regional actors, developing the contents, building the partnership, financing and drafting a final application.

Tourism Network expert, Mr Jacek Zdrojewski presented the 2007 interim report on the network's activities and the current status of their preparation efforts towards the establishment of a permanent Tourism Development Working Group – the objective indicated in the ERB Joint Development Programme (see Attachment 2).

He pointed out the idea of the Tourism Development Working Group (TDWG) was borne as a result of the project called: *New Visions of Tourism Development in the Baltic Sea Regions*, financed by the Danish Ministry of Interior and Health within the „Project Baltic Educational Island“. Constituting the sole contribution to the tourism section within the Joint Development Programme, its Focus areas were identified to be: tourism market research, common trans-regional product development, network to exchange information and knowledge, sustainable tourism education and training. He informed the Board of project ideas that will be discussed and developed further into project applications, namely:

- a) creation of cross-border tourist product: Euro-Velo R-10 bike route system
- b) establishing a network of cooperation between yacht harbours / marinas around the Baltic Sea
- c) development of the cultural routes in the Baltic Sea Region: e.g. Amber Route or Baltic Fort Route.

After the presentations Ms Mariana Johannesson added that the networks will continue to generate and provide new ideas for cooperation. Mr Slawomir Demkowicz – Dobrzanski reacted by saying that is exactly what will be expected of them. According to the original Seagull 2 application the networks will be turned into formal and permanent working groups within Euroregion Baltic. In this way, they can constitute some kind of an ERB think tank.

The ERB Board members took note of the information presented.

8. ESTABLISHING THE ERB'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

In February 2008 the ERB Presidency will be transferred from the Swedish region of Blekinge into the Danish Island of Bornholm. The Board decided to hold this ERB Council meeting on 21st February 2008 in Malbork, Poland. The meeting will be accompanied by a Conference on European Year of Intercultural Dialogue on the following day (22nd February 2008). This occasion should also mark the beginning of a series of coordinated events celebrating the tenth anniversary of Euroregion Baltic.

In order to best use the joint and regional resources within the ERB the 10th anniversary working group was set up to include Mr P.G. Lindencrona, Mr Niels Ch. Andersen and Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski with the aim of collecting a range of ideas of celebrating events and drafting an anniversary programme, subject of approval of the Board.

ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson stressed the importance of organising all year celebrations and inviting high-ranking guests to attend them. Mr Victor Romanovsky suggested that the people who had signed the original documents establishing ERB should also be invited. Mr Jurij Rozkov-Jurevskij proposed the publication of the ERB history book and organisation of the debate where ERB partners discuss their ideas of future development. Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski said that within the Seagull 2 a transferable model of the ERB development will be published and this can be used as a publication presented at the Council meeting. Mr Ulf Andersson proposed that a presentation of photos documenting ERB's 10-year-long history should also be displayed at the meeting.

The ERB Board members thus appoint members to the 10th anniversary working group, and ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson asked all the National Secretariats to contribute their ideas to the group.

9. INFORMATION ON THE SOUTH BALTIC CROSSBORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski briefly informed on the current status of the preparation towards the two programmes, pointing out differences in their geography and rules of co-financing.

Since Euroregion Baltic has an official representative in the programmes it can work to develop a joint position on a number of issues related to the drafting of programme documents and their future organisation. Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski thus requested that a mandate be defined by the Board for his participation in the meeting of the South Baltic Joint Programming Committee.

The ERB Board members took note of the information presented, and decided that the mandate for the ERB representative in the next meeting of the South Baltic Joint Programming Committee will include:

- a) request that the Programme Operating Document specifically mention the Kaliningrad Region as a possible partner in common projects, in accordance with the
- b) request that a representative of the Kaliningrad Region be included in the programme statutory bodies as an observer;
- c) support to the part of the Programme Operating Document stating Euroregions will have representatives, both in the Programme Steering and Monitoring Committee;
- d) request that apart from possible support for joint rural actions the Programme should also provide assistance to joint rural structures;

10. STATUS OF ERB PARTICIPATION IN BEN PROJECT

a. ERB member in BEN Steering Committee

By the decision of the ERB Board, Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański of the ERB International Secretariat will represent the Euroregion in the BEN Steering Committee, the rationale being he can best transfer knowledge and experiences from ERB to BEN, assuring the practical advantage of the inspiration coming from the BEN S.C., as well as from useful contacts with other Baltic Euroregions, NCM, etc.

b. BEN seminar in Frederiksstad on 15 – 16 May

A proposal had been made by the Danish Secretariat that the Seagull 2 SME and Social Dimension Networks leaders / experts participate in the seminar. The proposal had been backed by the Regional Secretariats in Pomorskie and South Småland. During the meeting the final proposal was discussed but no definite appointments were made by the Board.

It will be made following the meeting of the Seagull 2 Coordination Group earlier this day.

The ERB Board members thus proposed that the ERB International Secretariat will ask National Secretariats for recommendations regarding the personnel that should attend the event.

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Mr Bernth Johnson
ERB President
Steering Committee Chairman

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Mr Per Ole Petersen
ERB Vice-President
Steering Committee Vice-Chairman