

2009-04-15

Euroregion Baltic Transport Working group

Minutes from the meeting in Gdansk 23rd of March 2009

Date: 23rd of March

Time: 11.00 – 16.00

Venue: Pomerania Region Office

*Participants: Suzanne Svensson, chairman, Region Blekinge
Hans Håkansson, coordinator, Region Blekinge
Lars Öhrman, Regionförbundet Kalmar
Henrik Eybye Nilsson, Region Bornholm
Ryszard Toczek, Pomorski Region
Leonid Meyler, Kaliningrad Oblast
Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobrzanski, ERB Int Secretariat*

§ 1. Opening of the meeting and welcome

Suzanne Svensson, chairman of the transport group, opened the meeting and wished all participants welcome. She also explained the aim of the meeting to get a common information from each region about strategic infrastructure objects where some also can lead to further projects/feasibility studies

§ 2. Aim for the working group

The aim of the group is to analyse the different objects from a strategical point of view and how they can lead to transnational development jointly for the ERB region within the field of trade, economic growth, integration, tourism and further development of cooperation in the region in general.

§ 3 Brief presentations from each region

After this opening each participant gave a short introduction of themselves and the regions they represented and what they want to accomplish with the work in the transport group.

Proposals from most of the regions had been distributed to all participants in the working group before the meeting, but a brief summary in the presence of all participants was requested in order to get discussions around the different objects.

The Regional Council in Kalmar County:

Lars Öhrman gave a presentation regarding the object of port and ferry cooperation and meant that when a strategy is formed for future work in the group it must include all ports in the regions to get broad picture of sailings and trade which could include both feeder traffic as well as short sea shipping (ferry/rotrtraffic).

The group need to be as proactive as possible, considering possible future connections and not only have focus on already introduced and active transport EU projects.

Regional Air transportation between regions in the South East Baltic has been investigated earlier. Attempts that have been made to establish long term and durable connections to the ERB region from airports in south-east Sweden have unfortunately failed.

The reason behind the failures is foremost lack of profitability. It has not been possible to establish if the reason behind the failure is only weak demand or if other circumstances such as scheduling, frequency, cost of operations or other deficiencies in coordination on an operation level that have caused the lack of success.

To investigate this further, more information from the market/operators will be required.

As a first step, an inventory should be made of studies and reports generated locally/regionally on the subject by member regions of ERB which could be the basis for a short report with conclusions the possibility of further studies.

The Pomerania Region

Ryszard Toczek added to already delivered infrastructure priorities from the region with inputs from *Lech Michalski* that its important also to cover not only “global transport links”, TEN-ports etc (see Kalmar county above) but also coastal shipping to support development of good neighbourhood and personal visits, tourist routes and so on.

An effective team ought to be formed within the working group with close cooperation and regular meetings with some sort of information desk/webpage to enable partners from the group to be updated with latest news regarding development in the infrastructure area.

Other important issues, as Poland is a part of the Pan –European Transport corridor 6, is to follow very close the EU corridor project SoNorA , the Motorways of the Sea application # 2 Karlskrona-Gdynia , TEN-T revisions and stimulate freight by rail from the Swedish westcoast via Blekinge and Pomerania region further south in Poland., through cooperation within the frames of Baltic Link Association/ARCA,

Lech Michalski, Pomerania Region, underlined the different levels with A 1 which cover all the Pomerania Region and on the other hand smaller networks for rail/roads covering local geographic areas but important for citizens in daily use together with airports and smaller seaports.

Kaliningrad Region

Leonid Meyer as representative for the Region in the group, opened with news regarding the operation of the two ports in the region. The financial crisis which sweep over the World will force the Kaliningrad authority, as the situation is just now, to close down the port temporarily in May/June this year because of decreasing cargo flows.

L.M. underlined the importance to get private companies involved in the ERB working group to have updated information from the market directly how they look on future and the world crisis.

Hans Håkansson, Region Blekinge, presented the actual situation for the ferry services to Poland, Lithuania and Germany with 30-45 percent decrease in cargo volumes for most of the ferry lines compared to the same period a year ago.

Many of the shipping companies are facing difficult financial situations with decreasing demand and heavy investments in new tonnage. The previous growth of 15-20 % per year will not be achieved for a foreseeable future..

If there is to be a qualified discussion in the group concerning both air and sea traffic in connection to the need of new infrastructure in the regions, there is also a need to have representatives from the commercial operators involved in some way.

Leonid Meyer continued to describe the proposal from the Kaliningrad Oblast which could be realized as an ERB project. Kaliningrad have also suggested the same project to be part of the East-West TC application this year.

The project suggests student exchange within technology/logistics where students could be offered on site practice in the different ports as Trelleborg, Karlshamn, Karlskrona and Kalmar on the Swedish side and similar programs Kaliningrad and Lithuania and Poland. A draft programme for 10 students should be worked out with cost estimates etc for totally 10 days study visits in respective ports included voyage and accommodation. This would also be a focus areas for the student exchange program within ERB.

Bornholm Region

Henrik-Eybye Nilsson reported from Bornholm about there ideas to investigate conditions for ferry/air traffic to regions in the south east Baltic. From their side there was a special focus on Germany and Poland.

As did Kalmar region, Bornholm meant that its important to involve private companies in the working group from time to time to get updated information and their point of view in future matters important for the regional development.

Lobbying is important via different organisations and ERB WG shall use this way to get the ERB territory better recognized, especially in future TEN-T projects and maps.

To develop regional air connections within the south east Baltic and stimulate shorter travels within the ERB area which could be developed in future a feasibility study ought to be done to focus on regional air traffic.

The draft from Region Blekinge for a project like this will be supported from Bornholm and should involve also Poland and other Baltic states.

Regional Council of southern Småland

The region was not represented at the meeting but had sent in a project idea with focus on railway freight on the coast to coast railway line from Gothenburg to Blekinge completed with railway hubs in Alvesta/Växjö railway stations/Yards.

They also had shown interests to take part in an investigation to describe and analyse the present status for the regional air connections in the Baltic in cooperation with the member regions in ERB.

Klaipeda County

There was no representation from the region. Mr Arthuras Drungilas had before meeting send a proposal for a common project to be used in ports.

It was a technical system which is developed to use for recognising variations in port water depths because of sediment movements, waves and tides which allows ships to enter ports safer and with a better knowledge of the draft conditions..

Representatives from the company who are specialists in this technique could at a future meeting with the working group(or in Klaipeda) inform more in detail and describe the product

Warmia-Mazuri Region

Because of other important meetings the representatives were unfortunately not able to attend the meeting.

The region had sent informative transport target descriptions before the meeting which was distributed to the representatives at the working group.
The focus from the region is corridor VI, I and IA.

The main tasks included in the TEN system for the region: rebuilding national roads No 15,16 to express roads. Rebuilding railway lines Elblag-Elk-lines no 204 ,353 ,038 with electrification and building regional airport in Szymany.

Priority tasks: Railway line Elblag-Olszyn-Korsze-Szymani
Building regional airport in Szymani

Warmia-Mazuri regions representative will at next meeting more in detail explain the Warmia-Mazurie aims and goals

Brief conclusions of the discussion and how to get further with work group meetings:

- The private sector within the air/ferry sector ought to be included in coming meeting
- Involve all ports in regions(ferry ports, feeder ports and smaller ports) as hubs in the transport chain
- Focus on ITS solutions
- Regional air connections is important for trade, tourism and integration in the ERB Region
- Arrange workshops and use former results from studies within EU projects
- Identify common transnational objects for further studies and decision within the political ERB board
- Use the working group as a permanent forum to communicate internal and external development to the regional and local level in each region/local . Tourism, transportation, infrastructure etc
- Could we use part of the SoNorA budget for such a permanent board?
- How to cooperate within other working groups and learn from each other? There is a need of a dialogue.
- ERB working groups are in different development levels and work very different. At the moment all groups are responsible for reporting to the board/concil in its work. In the middle of April there will be a more complete picture of all groups activity (Slawek/ERB secretariat)
- At council meeting in November this Year it could perhaps be possible to arrange a half a day workshop covering infrastructure questions
- Is it relevant to invite representatives from Ukraina to the working group because of its strategic location geographically?
- Webpage with updated information for working group partners in infrastructure matters
- Next meeting with the network group (political representation included) have to evaluate and decide projects the working group shall focus on and study further.

Date and place for next meeting

Proposals:

8 or 9 of June close to the board meeting in Gdansk (network meeting=politicians from Working group and civil servants)

If possible representatives from the private sector within transportation (air/ferry service)

5 August in Klaipeda (core group meeting)

7 October in Kaliningrad (core group meeting)

5 November Venue will be decided later

Region Blekinge

Hans Håkansson

ERB coordinator/transport group