

Euroregion Baltic
 Executive Board Meeting
 Elbląg, Poland
 12th February 2020



Title Meeting minutes

Submitted by MLR, International Permanent Secretariat

Summary / Note This document provides the meeting minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting in Elbląg, Poland on 12th Feb 2020

Requested action Final

Participants:

ERB Executive Board:

Mr Witold Wróblewski	ERB President, Mayor of Elbląg, Chair of the Association of Polish Communes ERB
Mr Petras Pušinskas	Mayor of Skuodas District Municipality, Board Member of the Klaipeda Region Association
Mr Wiesław Byczkowski	Member of ERB Executive Board, Deputy Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Ms Joanna Zielińska	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Vice-Chair of the Association of Polish Communes ERB
Mr Robert Olesen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board Region Kronoberg
Mr Roland Gustbée	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board Region Kronoberg
Mr Lars Lundberg	Member of ERB Executive Board, Skåne Association of Local Authorities
Mr Anders Tell	Member of ERB Executive Board, Skåne Association of Local Authorities
Ms Maria F. Kjaergaard	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Regional Council in Bornholm
Ms Liana Maximova	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Deputy Head of the Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region
Mr Roger Gustafsson	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Region Kalmar County

Mr Pär-Gustav Johansson	Deputy Member of ERB Executive Board, Region Kalmar County
Mr Johan Sandberg	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Regional Development Board, Region Blekinge

ERB Youth Board

Ms Julia Orluk	Chairwoman of the ERB Youth Board, Pomorskie Region
Mr Christian Van der Weij	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Daniel Migunov	Member of ERB Youth Board, Kaliningrad Region
Ms Johanna Wyckman	Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Ms Elin Petersson	Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge
Mr Alexander Nilsson	Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge
Mr Grzegorz Gieda	Member of ERB Youth Board, Warmia and Masuria Region

ERB Secretariats:

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Slawomir Demkowicz - Dobrzanski	Region Kronoberg
Ms Evgeniya Russu	Kaliningrad Region
Ms Johanna Haward	Skåne Association of Local Authorities
Ms Klaudija Kionies	Association of Klaipeda Region
Ms Krystyna Wróblewska	Pomorskie Region
Ms Małgorzata Klawitter-Piwowarska	Pomorskie Region
Mr Jan Martinsson	Region Kalmar County
Ms Johanna Rönn	Region Blekinge
Ms Małgorzata Samusjew	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Ms Valentina Scandola	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Ms Anna Dudziak	Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat
Ms Adrianna Gniado-Turkowska	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic

Guests

Mr Piotr Grzymowicz	Mayor of Olsztyn, Vice-Chair of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Mr Marek Charzewski	Mayor of Malbork, Board Member of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Mr Jacek Kosmala	Mayor of Nidzica, Board Member of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic

13.00 1. **Welcome and opening**

13.15

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło welcomed the ERB member organisations and thanked everyone for their presence. She asked Mr Petras Pušinskas, Mayor of Skuodas district municipality and Board Member of Association of Klaipeda Region to open the meeting on behalf of the ERB President Mr Grubliauskas, who could not participate due to his illness. Mr Pušinskas welcomed the participants of the meeting and gave a summary of the Lithuanian presidency in ERB. He concluded with an invitation to all to Skuodas district municipality and explained the importance of international cooperation to Klaipeda Region.

According to the ERB Statute (§5,2) "When the President cannot attend, meetings will be chaired by the Vice-President". Thus Mr Pušinskas asked Chairman of Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic and Mayor of Elbląg, Mr Witold Wróblewski to continue as a Chairman of the meeting.

Mr Witold Wróblewski presented a short history of Elbląg, followed by two video clips promoting the city of Elbląg and animation on creating a water corridor connecting Elbląg with the Baltic Sea. Later, Mr Witold Wróblewski presented the meeting agenda and suggested to make the change of the programme due to presence of the press and other local media at the meeting, who are also interested in the Presidency transfer. Therefore he suggested moving point 4. "Transfer of ERB Presidency" to the beginning of the meeting and follow with the next points after the short break for the press conference.

ERB Executive Board decided to approve the agenda of the Executive Board meeting and accept the change of the order suggested by Mr Wróblewski.

13.15 **Transfer of ERB Presidency**

13.20

2.

By the decision of the ERB Executive Board of 21st February 2011 approving the sequence of ERB Presidency transfers, the ERB Presidency was transferred from Lithuania to Poland by Mr Petras Pušinskas, Board Member of Association of Klaipeda Region to Mr Witold Wróblewski, Mayor of Elbląg and Chairman of Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic. Mr Wróblewski assumed the position of ERB President. Mr Wróblewski thanked Mr Pušinskas for a very active and sound Lithuanian Presidency in 2019 and expressed gratitude to Klaipeda Association behalf of all ERB Executive Board members. At the same time, Mr Pušinskas wished Mr Wróblewski all the best for the upcoming presidency and confirmed that Klaipeda Region is ready to support Mr Wróblewski as ERB President when needed.

At the same time, the position of ERB Vice President was assumed by Sweden with a representative of Blekinge Region – Mr Johan Sandberg, Chair of the Regional Development Board.

14.00 3. **Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Executive Board meeting**
14.10

ERB IPS have submitted the minutes of the previous ERB Executive Board meetings held in Iława on 12th September 2019. The ERB President Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas have already signed the minutes that were given by Ms Kiones, ERB Secretariat representative for Klaipeda Region.

Relevant ERB Executive Board members were asked to sign the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting.

14.10 4. **Approval of the ERB Annual Report 2019 and Annual Budget for 2019**
14.30

A report detailing the activities implemented within ERB cooperation in 2019 ERB was delivered by Ms Klaudija Kiones, representing the ERB Presidency held by Association of Klaipeda Region. Ms Kiones reminded the Lithuanian presidency priorities in 2019 and highlighted some concrete activities following them. Afterwards, Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło, Head of ERB International Secretariat presented in details the ERB Action Plan 2019 prepared by the IPS and Lithuanian Presidency with detailed information on the number of activities and events that supporter the Lithuania priorities and ERB 5 agendas. The presentation was followed by information on the realization of the annual budget for 2019. ERB Executive Board members had no questions regarding the presented Report for 2019 nor the budget realization.

ERB Executive Board members approved the Annual Report for 2019 as well as the budget realization for 2019.

14.30 5. **Presentation of Polish priorities for ERB Presidency in 2020**
14.50

Ms Małgorzata Samusjew, from the Secretariat of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, presented the priorities of the Polish presidency. There are three main directions proposed by the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic that she explained in details:

- Environmental protection including water management;
- Youth policy;
- Innovation in local government – smart local governments in small municipalities, focusing on human resources and trust-based governance.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented and accepted the given priorities.

14.50 6. **ERB Action Plan 2020-21**

15.20

On behalf of the President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Witold Wróblewski and the International Permanent Secretariat, Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło outlined the new Action Plan for the ERB cooperation for 2020-21. The presented plan has been already sent out to the Secretariats for their comments, and all member organisations agreed on the final version. The activities for 2020 and 2021 will be updated after one year with the transfer of the Presidency to the Swedish Region of Blekinge in 2021. The Action Plan is based on 5 ERB Agendas outlined in ERB Agenda 2030 and includes many events and activities related to the projects, that ERB/IPS leads or participates, Polish presidency priorities and other. The Action Plan contains information about the on-going projects as well as brief info on two Erasmus+ projects that will start in 2020.

After the presentation of the Action Plan Ms Leszczyna-Rzucidło presented the proposal for the Annual Budget for 2020. Mr Wróblewski, ERB President, asked the ERB Executive Board members for comments and the approval of both ERB Action Plan 2020-21 and the Annual Budget for 2020.

Ms Maria Kjaergaard representing Bornholm, asked if there will be any politicians joining the Baltic Sea Labour Forum annual event in St. Petersburg in March 2020. Ms Leszczyna-Rzucidło replied she only got the invitation day before the ERB Board Meeting, but usually the politicians are welcomed during the event. She informed she will send out the BSLF invitation to Ms Niels Chresten Andersen and Ms Kjaergaard for their consideration and invited Ms Kjaergaard to be joint the event on 26-27 March 2020. There were no other questions regarding the Action Plan 2020-21.

ERB Executive Board members approved the ERB Action Plan 2020-21, as well as the Annual Budget plan for 2020.

15.20 7. **Priorities of the Pomorskie BSSSC Presidency – 2020-2021**

16.00

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska, Head of Baltic Sea Cooperation Bureau – Pomorskie Marshal's Office, BSSSC Secretary General presented the BSSSC vision 2030 document, as well as the strategic objectives of the organization towards 2030 concentrating mostly on supporting the SDGs and becoming the well-recognised and robust platform to voice the interests of the regions in Baltic Sea Region. She informed the ERB Executive Board about the plans to apply for the possibility to organize a seminar during the 11th EUSBSR Forum in Turku, Finland on 16-17th June 2020 and suggested to join these efforts between two organisations. She mentioned that both BSSSC and ERB aims to be the platform for future project development in BSR, as well as the networking arena for dialogue between the private and public sector. Ms Wróblewska also mentioned BSSSC Pomorskie Chairmanship goal to re-establish the Baltic Sea Region group in

Committee of Regions and asked ERB to be involved in the discussion on how can we make it more active and engaged in both, BSSSC and ERB activities. She concluded with brief information on the Baltic Sea Youth Platform project, aiming at strengthening youth participation, co-founded by the Erasmus+ and led by the Council of the Baltic Sea States where both BSSSC and ERB are involved. She also informed the ERB Board and ERB Youth Board about the upcoming BSSSC Spring Youth Event organized in April in Gdańsk, Poland.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

16.20 8. **Information from the South Baltic Programme**
16.45

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen will inform the Board about the recent developments in the South Baltic Programme including the Programme's orientation paper, information from the meeting of Heads of Delegations to the MC in Nov 2019, the report from the 1st meeting of Joint Programming Committee meeting in Warsaw on 4.02.2020. Mr Andersen mentioned the importance of the now-discussed multiannual financial framework for the ERB member organisations, referring the still-unknown size of the budget and the future financial situation after the Brexit is now concluded, which also affects, i.e. the rebates for Denmark among many topics. He presented the details of the ongoing discussion on the future SBP programme including the possible changes in the programme geography including the request from Warmia and Masuria and Kaliningrad regions to be included in the programme eligible area post-2020.

He also highlighted the JPC Rules of Procedure that were now concluded and soon to be adopted by the Monitoring Committee and the importance of ongoing lobbying for the separate South Baltic Programme and against the possible merger with the Central Baltic Programme, as suggested by the European Commission. He concluded with information that the European Commission hopes to adopt the future cross-border programme by the end of 2020, but he doubts whether this plan is feasible, as this is too little time to act for the Member States.

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło informed the ERB Executive Board about the Managing Authority request to nominate the Joint Programming Committee members by the end of January. She told the Board on the names of the candidates selected by the ERB Secretariats representatives during the face-to-face meeting in Brussels on 27-28th January 2020 and later confirmed with the Euroregion Pomerania representatives, who also delegated one JPC Member. The names were sent to the MA on 31st January 2020 according to the deadline.

Ms Leszczyna-Rzucidło also informed about the request from Warmia and Masuria region sent to the IPS on 11th February 2020 asking for the ERB support to lobby for the inclusion of the Olsztyn sub-region to the future Interreg South Baltic eligible area.

Ms Liana Maximowa asked in this point to also support the Kaliningrad region activities towards lobbying for the inclusion of the Kaliningrad Region, as the Russian authorities have now officially started to promote among the European Commission representatives to also join the future Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027

as eligible partner and self-finance the activities of the Russian partners in the projects. She informed she also plan the meeting with the Director of the European Territorial Cooperation from the Polish Ministry of Funds and Regional Programmes, Mr Rafał Balicki during the Poland-Russia Programme Monitoring Committee meeting in Kaliningrad at the end of the month.

Mr Wróblewski asked the ERB Executive Board members to agree to support both requests by the Warmia and Masuria and Kaliningrad region to officially support them in lobbying towards the enlarged eligible area in the future Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented and confirmed the nominees for the SBP Joint Programming Committee members.

ERB Executive Board decided to officially support Warmia and Masuria and Kaliningrad regions in their lobbying activities to be part of the eligible area in the future Interreg South Baltic Programme post-2020.

16.45 **Coffee break**

17.00

17.00 9. *Mr Jophan Snadberg, ERB Vice president, informed the ERB Executive Board about the decision of Swedish ERB members taken during their pre-meeting on 12th Feb 2020, that they will prepare joint statement regarding the future of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and their strong opposition to the possible merger with the Central Baltic cross-border programme that will also be sent to the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation.*

17.15

Mr Wróblewski, the ERB President, thanked the Swedish delegations for this initiative.

Because Ms Valentina Scandola Umbrella Project Leader is now coming back from the project study visit for the Water Core Group organised in elbląg Mr Wróblewski, Chairman of the ERB Board meeting suggested to start with the Information on the implementation of ERB projects point on the agenda and once Ms Scandola arrives she would present her information.

ERB Executive Board agreed to the proposed change.

Information on the implementation of ERB projects

Ms Julia Orluk, Chairwoman of ERB Youth Board, presented the information on the youth project concept currently prepared by the ERB Youth Board with the assistance of the Umbrella project expert specialized in Erasmus+ programme. The project application initiated in ERB Youth VBoard meeting in Iława in September 2019 is now almost ready and youth requests the ERB member organisations to help them with the formal part of the application process meaning to engage the member organisations as the official project leader and project partners. Mr Johan Sandberg from Region Blekinge informed the Regional Board has already discussed this topic and is looking for the appropriate organisation to become the

Leading organisation for the youth project and they are willing to help the ERB Youth Board in this matter. He also informed they are in contact with the Kalmar Region representatives regarding this matter. Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło from IPS also asked the Klaipeda Region members to re-think the possibility to be included in this project. Ms Kiones asked for sed the project application once it's ready and confirmed she would try to present it to the youth organised among the Klaipeda Youth Capital association to see whether they would be interested in joining.

On behalf of the ERB International Secretariat, Ms Leszczyna-Rzucidło presented the information on the developments in currently running ERB projects as well as introduced two new projects with ERB participation.

The information included the details of the following projects:

"Strengthening civil society rights by information access for European youth" (SIA4Y) – Europe for Citizens Programme and its final conference to be organized on 28th April 2020 in Gdansk Polan – ERB Youth Board members and youth representatives from other ERB regions will be invited to the event;

"Baltic Sea Biogas Alliance" – Swedish Institute with the information that the biogas experts from ERB member organisations may participate in the upcoming project meetings in Klaipeda on 1-2 April and Kyiv in May 2020;

"Connect Europe" - Europe for Citizens Programme and its final conference to be held on 9th May 2020 in Brussels;

"Promotion of social entrepreneurship in the youth sector by digital and informal education tools" – new Erasmus+ funded project with Klaipeda University as lead partner and "Baltic Sea Youth Platform" project, with CBSS leading the consortium. This project will have its kick-off meeting in Elbląg on 2-3 March 2020 and IPS and ERB Youth Board Chairwoman will be both participating.

She concluded with the information on the "WaterMan" Interreg Baltic Sea Region Seed Money Facility project concept prepared by the ERB Water Core Group representatives and currently being developed during the Umbrella Water Management microactivity organized back-to-back with the ERB Board meeting. This project concept received the official support of the EUSBSR PA NUTRI coordinators and is now in the 2nd stage of the application process with the final project application to be submitted on 23 March 2020.

ERB Executive Board took note on the information provided.

17.15 10. Umbrella project update and ERB capacity building initiatives
17.25

Ms Valentina Scandola, Umbrella Project Manager, presented in details the latest outcomes in the project including cross-border conference with EUSBSR PA panel on tourism planned for 25-26th February 2020 in Denmark, further possibilities for micro activities for actors in the South Baltic Sea and other project outcomes.

Ms Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło informed the ERB Executive Board about the capacity building initiative proposal sent to the Swedish Institute in January 2020. The SI still has not replied, but the request is to be discussed among the EUSBSR HA Capacity coordinators soon.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

17.20	11.	Invitation to the next Executive Board meeting and Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders in Gdańsk on 18-19.05.2020 and information about other upcoming events relevant for the ERB stakeholders.
17.30		

A representative of the Umbrella project, Ms Valentina Scandola and IPS invited the participants to attend the next meeting of the ERB Executive Board and the Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders which will be held in Gdańsk on 18-19.05.2020. Ms Leszczyna-Rzucidło also reminded the participants that the possible autumn meeting of the ERB Board would take place in Kaliningrad, in the last week of September, along with the BSSSC Annual Conference, ERB and Water Core Group Water Forum and Kaliningrad Region Partners meeting. The exact date – most likely 29th September will be soon confirmed by the IPS and Kaliningrad Region.

ERB Executive Board took note of the information presented.

17.30	12.	Conclusion and closing
-------	-----	-------------------------------

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Witold Wróblewski thanked everyone for their active presence and participation and officially closed the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.