



Seagull II

EUROREGION BALTIC

INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

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MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING OF ERB BOARD & SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE

Date:

7th February 2007
09.00 – 18.30 (local time)

Location:

3/4 Św. Duchy Street, Elbląg,
Old Town's Conference Hall,

Participants:

ERB Board / Seagull 2 Steering Committee

Mikhail Pluhin	ERB President, Chairman of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Russia
Dalia Makusiene	on behalf of Raisa Mincinauskiene, ERB Board member, member of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Lithuania
Bernth Johnson	ERB Vice-President, Vice-Chairman of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Sweden
Jan Kozłowski	ERB Board member, member of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Poland
Per Ole Petersen	ERB Board member, member of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee, Denmark

ERB Secretariats / Seagull 2 Personnel

Niels Chresten Andersen	Head of Danish ERB Secretariat, Seagull 2 Work Package 3 Leader, Bornholm
Ulf Andersson	Seagull 2 Regional Coordinator, Kronoberg
S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański	Head of ERB International Secretariat, Seagull 2 Coordinator, Poland
Olga Grigoreva	Assistant to Regional Coordinator, Kaliningrad
Carolina Gunnarsson	Seagull 2 water reference network expert, Region Kalmar
Hans Hakansson	Senior Clerk at Region Blekinge,
Victor Koshelev	Head of Russian ERB Secretariat, Seagull 2 Regional Coordinator, Kaliningrad
P.G. Lindencrona	Head of Swedish ERB Secretariat, Seagull 2 Regional Coordinator, Blekinge

Viktorija Liutkute	Regional Economic and Social Development Office, Klaipeda County Administration
Zdzisław Olszewski	Head of Polish ERB Secretariat
Kora Stanczyk	Seagull 2 Work Package 1 Leader, Pomorskie
Magdalena Szymanowska	ERB Sekretariat, Poland
Piotr Zwolak	Seagull 2 Regional Coordinator, Warmińsko-Mazurskie

Guests:

Violeta Baneviciene	State Education Supervision Service, Klaipeda
Elena Koroleva	Consultant of Department for Co-ordination of Region Representatives Abroad, Government of Kaliningrad Region
Lucyna Szmurło	Vice-Mayor of Elbląg
Krystyna Wróblewska	Director of International Cooperation Department at Pomorskie Marshal's Office
Mirosław Dymczak	Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Elbląg for International Affairs
Wiktor Romanowski	Head of Department for Co-ordination of Region Representatives Abroad, Government of Kaliningrad Region
Zbigniew Szmurło	Advisor on Foreign Relations to Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivode
Rafał Wolski	Director of European Integration and International Cooperation Department at Warmińsko-Mazurskie Marshal's Office

09.30 – 13.00 PROGRAMME OF THE MAYOR OF ELBLĄG

09.30	Departure from <i>Hotel Vivaldi</i>
09.45	Visiting a new sports hall, also housing the <i>Elbląg Incubator of New Information Technologies</i>
10.30	Drive to <i>Green Terraces</i> ; a complex of sports and cultural facilities: the cinema, swimming pool, theatre, skating rink
11.10	Visit at the District Geodetic and Cartographic Enterprise <i>OPEGIEKA</i> ; presentation of the <i>Spatial Information System</i>
12.30	Visit at the Traders' Gate and walk along the Old Town's streets
13.00	Lunch at <i>Hotel Vivaldi</i>
14.20	Walk to the <i>Old Town's Conference Hall</i> in 3/4 Św. Ducha Street

14.30 – 18.30 OERB BOARD AND SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Welcome by the Mayor of Elbląg, Henryk Słonina

On behalf of the Mayor of the City, Mr Henryk Słonina, Vice-President Lucyna Szmurło welcomed the guests wishing them a fruitful debate.

2. Opening by the ERB President, Mikhail Pluhin

Mikhail Pluhin, President of the Euroregion and Chair of the Seagull 2 Steering Committee began the meeting by thanking the assembled company for coming and offering special thanks to the Mayor of the City of Elbląg for the organisation of the morning programme.

3. ERB Board's internal matters

3.1 Approval of the Agenda

President Mikhail Pluhin asked the Board members to approve of the presented agenda of the meeting.

Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański requested that a new item under 11.4 be added, whereby the Board was supposed to respond to the request of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development - implementation authority of the new crossborder cooperation programme in the South Baltic Area - to appoint a representative of the Euroregion to the Joint Programming Committee. The Board accepted the extension of the agenda.

3.2 Appointment of the Board member to co-sign the minutes

President Mikhail Pluhin suggested that Vice-President Bernth Johnson co-sign the minutes of the this meeting together with him. The Board supported the President's proposal.

4. Strategy of ERB development between 2007 and 2008, with the Swedish and Danish presidencies

Recently, the national secretariats of Denmark and Sweden have been working on an outline of priority activities for the Swedish and Danish presidencies between 2007 and 2008. This outline is a logical consequence of the institution building process within Euroregion Baltic, having been implemented since 2003: beginning with the development of a common strategy, through the establishment of a joint secretariat, to the realization of the Seagull II project. Following some consultations with the International Secretariat, the attached outline (Attachment_1) has now been presented to be discussed by the ERB Board members before the approval by the Council.

Krystyna Wróblewska suggested to swap the themes of the ERB Council meetings in December of 2007, February 2008 and February 2009. She recommended that ERB Council should discuss the issue of energy and environment already in December, to join in the wide-spread debate that is currently going on in the European Union. The discussion on the Lisbon Strategy in turn, earlier planned in December 2007, could take place in February 2009 when experiences of the Strategy implementation process will be well-known. Krystyna Wróblewska also informed that the European Commission had announced 2008 the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue, and proposed that this theme makes the highlight of the meeting of the Council in

February 2008; Euroregion Baltic making an ideal platform for this kind of cooperation.

Niels Chresten Andersen reminded the Board that the main aim of the ERB Strategy for 2007 - 2008 is to outline priority actions in ERB; in his view the proposed changes will contribute to a more effective coordination of such activities with the pan-European priorities.

Ulf Andersson also supported the proposed changes.

President Pluhin recommended to the Board that these changes be introduced to the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008. Members of the Board accepted the proposal.

5. A proposal of a joint project by the Lithuanian Party

A possible cooperation project idea was presented by the Lithuanian delegation. It is called: *Policy of Schoolchild Socialisation through Leisure Time Activities*. After the presentation, the Board members began a discussion.

Niels Chresten Andersen supported the proposal to implement this common project, emphasising it would be an example perfectly fitting the EU Youth Programme. He also stated that the cooperation of young people remains an important element of the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008 (see: point 4). He also suggested that this project be carried out by the Lithuanian partner in cooperation with the Association of Polish Municipalities which has vast experience in micro-projects.

Zdzisław Olszewski said that the presented issue is not present in the ERB Joint Development Programme although it constitutes a very important social aspect, of which he himself is aware of by virtue of the exercised function of member of Elbląg City Council. He suggested, that the Polish Party will consider realisation the project in the Interreg III A Neighbourhood Programme between Poland, Lithuania and Kaliningrad.

Krystyna Wróblewska suggested examining the possibility of applying to Youth in Action Programme.

Per Ole Petersen expressed his support to the idea, recommending that young people of 14 to 18 years of age be involved.

Carolina Gunnarsson recalled a project completed within ERB in 2006, called Green Circle Schools which could serve as a good example in the realisation of the new idea.

In response to the interest in the idea of all ERB partners, President Mikhail Pluhin quoted Bill Gates who once said one should invest money in the future. This future, according to the President, is young people.

6. Open Days in Brussels, 8 – 11 October 2007

The ERB Board was to consult the 8 member regions in order to organise two ERB events during the Open Days 2007, organised by the European Commission DG REGIO and the Committee of Regions (CoR) 8 – 11 October 2007.

One of the arguments in favour of participating in the event is ERB's promotional activity. In the proposed ERB Strategy 2007-2008 increased visibility is included in one of the five specific objectives, and together with strategic management and lobbying activities considered to be the Board's main responsibility. The Open Days event has become a major and highlighted EU event, with an increasing number of participants. At the Open Days 2006 there was registered more than 21 000 downloads of the programme brochure from the specific Open Days website.

During discussion Niels Chresten Andersen informed the members of the Board about the current situation related to the participation of ERB member regions in the so-called conglomerates during Open Days 2007 (only a conglomerate of at least five regions from three countries can participate in this event; the leading partner must have their office in Brussels and one region can participate only in one project). Since

both Polish voivodeships take part in other conglomerates (a result of earlier commitments), the only way for ERB to form their own conglomerate would be to use the SydSam office in Brussels. However, the information that had been acquired indicated that SydSam was not very interested in taking up the role of a coordinator for such cooperation. In conclusion, it seems that no formal ERB participation in Open Days 2007 will be possible.

Krystyna Wróblewska said it would be worth thinking of organising the ERB conglomerate in 2008 but one must remember that the organisation should be ready for it already in November 2007. At the same time, she continued, it is still advisable to go to Brussels as attendees and observers. She suggested using a room at Pomorskie's office in Brussels (after dates are confirmed) to hold e.g. a meeting of the Board.

PG Lindencrona supported the idea to organise the meeting of the ERB Board in Brussels in October 2007. In his view it would be a good chance for the Board members to acquaint themselves with the experience of other organisations that have taken part in Open Days, essential in the case of forming a euroregional conglomerate.

Krystyna Wróblewska informed, that during Open Days there are two kinds of events: seminars prepared by conglomerates and seminars held by DG Regio. The programme will be available in May, and the time to register will not be long as interest is usually high.

Vice-President Bernth Johnson expressed his support to the ERB observing the events at Open Days 2007 as part of preparations for full participation in 2008.

As part of these preparations, Niels Chresten Andersen saw suitable to invite the heads of regional offices in Brussels to the ERB Council meeting in December 2007.

PG Lindencrona proposed this action be included in the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008.

Following a motion from the members of the Board, President Mikhail Pluhin approved the proposal to extend the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008 with the above mentioned item.

While discussing the extension of the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008, President Pluhin also suggested that another event is considered, i.e. a conference organised within the BEN project in Svetlogorsk in September 2007 to deal with euroregional cooperation, which in his opinion should be attended by ERB.

Victor Romanowsky supplemented President's proposal with the information on the conference round table devoted to the collaboration of regions of North-West Russia and the Baltic States which the ERB could partake of.

Upon President's request, the head of the Russian Secretariat, Victor Koshelev will prepare information on the subject and send it to the other National Secretariats which together with the International Secretariat will prepare ERB participation in the conference.

7. Main themes in ERB 2006 Activity Report

Members of the ERB Board were presented with the themes to the activity report of the Euroregion under Russian chairmanship. The report will be printed and officially submitted at the meeting of the ERB Council on 14 March 2007. The following themes were proposed to be included:

- referring to the aims of the Russian Presidency, i.e. the opening of the crossborder and euroregional cooperation centre in Baltijsk, involvement in the issues related to crossing the border with the Kaliningrad Region, cultural and sports cooperation;
- Seagull II report;
- participation in other projects: Baltic Master, Balic Master, BEN, East – West;
- participation in the preparatory work to the CBC South Baltic programme;

ERB Board members approved the proposed contents of the report and asked the International Secretariat to present the draft report to the National Secretariats on 18 February 2007. These, in turn, will submit their comments before 25 February 2007. The report will be printed and officially presented at the Council meeting on 14 March 2007.

8. Discussing the proposal of the ERB Council meeting agenda on 14.03.2007

ERB Board members were presented with the main topics of the agenda of the ERB Council meeting which will be held in Karlskrona on 14 March 2007. This agenda is proposed to include the following items:

- Presenting the Annual Report;
- Handing over the Presidency to the Swedish Party;
- Adopting the political declaration in the connection with the border conference on the following day;
- Approving new documents after the withdrawal of Kurzeme Region from ERB and introducing preliminary proposals of changes to the ERB Statutes;
- Setting the date of the next Council meeting;
- Seagull 2 status report;
- Thematic discussion

ERB Board members discussed the proposal and completed the agenda with the following new ideas:

- Approval of the ERB Strategy 2007 - 2008;
- Preparation for the euroregional conference in Svetlogorsk;
- Preparation for the Board meeting in Brussels;

The ERB Board members approved of the ERB Council meeting and elaborated on the theme of possible debate.

Niels Chresten Andersen said that passing a resolution on the matter of border crossing would already be an extensive topic, and therefore, the thematic discussion could be dropped from the agenda of the meeting.

Victor Romanowsky suggested introducing the information concerning territorial cooperation programmes: the trilateral neighbourhood programme for Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad and the South Baltic programme.

Zdzisław Olszewski proposed that the Victor Romanowsky's proposal remains optional until we know if more information concerning both programmes but especially the trilateral programme is available.

President Mikhail Pluhin suggested conditional introduction of the above presented proposal. The members of the Board accepted President's proposal.

9. Seagull 2 status report

9.1 Seagull 2 Action Plan and the objectives of the Project networks

The representatives of the project and reference networks: Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański, Kora Stańczyk, Carolina Gunnarsson, Niels Chresten Andersen and Ulf Andersson presented the ERB Board members with the schedule of the networks' activities, including the following elements:

- Introducing the members of the network and the core group;
- Presenting the expert of the network;
- Introducing the outcome of the first activities held in January 2007;
- Presenting the schedule of activities for 2007, considering concrete results, that were planned during the first meetings;

Since the Seagull 2 project in 2007 enters its decisive stage of the realisation, the activity of the networks will have major significance for the success of the project, as well as for the subsequent implementation the Joint Development Programme. Therefore, we ask ERB Board members to accept the schedules to be the formal action plan in the Euroregion Baltic. During following meetings of the Board and Council the networks will present status reports allowing for the permanent monitoring of their progress.

During the debate attention was paid to a few essential problems related to the effective functioning of the networks:

- Greater involvement of regional coordinators is necessary;
- Members of the core groups should have their deputies who could participate in networks meetings when the members themselves cannot take part;
- Better communication is needed between regional coordinators, National Secretariats and reference networks;

President Mikhail Pluhin suggested that the presented information be taken note of. The Board members accepted President's proposal.

9.2 Border crossing conference in Karlskrona on 15 March 2007

In line with the decision of ERB Council the second conference on the subject matter of border crossing will take place in Karlskrona on 15 March 2007.

President Mikhail Pluhin reminded the first conference in Svetlogorsk, drawing attention to its significance, highlighted by the participation of high-ranking guests: diplomats, representatives of relevant ministries, representatives of the Customs services, etc.

According to the Seagull 2 project application, a draft text of the declaration (Attachment_2) was resented by Niels Chresten Andesen.

President Pluhin asked the members of the Board to answer the following questions:

- Is it necessary to discuss the text during this meeting?
- Should the text be entitled "Political Declaration"?

Niels Chresten Andersen stated that the title of the text could be changed to e.g. "Resolution" or "Conclusions". Mr Andersen explained that he had tried to edit the text in such a way that it was possible to adopt by all the Parties. He then suggests that the text is now discussed in detail within national consultations.

Victor Romanowsky agreed that the conference subject matter and the text itself require joint action in the Euroregion, which should also employ practitioners responsible for border crossing procedures. The same people whose experience in the field had been used while editing the previous draft of the text in Svetlogorsk.

Zdzisław Olszewski pointed out that the new text is more diplomatic and of correct form, in his mind, when addressing the governments of European Union member states and of the Russian Federation, that is the form of appeal rather than that of a claim. He added that in the new text he could also see some elements of the first draft, but at the same time he reminded that the other conclusions of the first draft made the Board reject the whole text. In the end, he said he found it relevant that the text touched upon the problem of the navigation in the Vistula Lagoon.

Jan Kozłowski said that ERB is not an organization sweeping serious problems under the carpet but able to hold open discussions and solving them. He liked the new text, he continued, though he understood it needed approving by all the partners. As the Chair of the Executive Board of the Marshal's Office of Pomorskie he would like to equip the text with appropriate significance and present it to the Regional Parliament on 28 February. For this reason, he requested that the text be ready a week before the meeting of the Regional Parliament.

President Mikhail Pluhin agreed that the common resolution concerned the problem of importance to all and called upon the members of the Board to take all necessary effort in order to pass the resolution at the Council meeting on 14 March 2007.

According to the Seagull 2 project application, and upon Euroregion's request the report was to have been prepared. Since the report had been delayed (it is being reduced by Dr Tadeusz Baryła of the Scientific Research Centre in Olszyn) it was not formally presented to the Board.

Rafał Wolski proposed arranging a meeting with the author of the report within 10 days at the Marshal's Office of Warmińsko-Mazurskie in order to facilitate the completion of the work on the text. The Board members accepted Mr Wolski's proposal.

9.3 Third Seagull II study visit between 31.05 – 01.06.007 in Vilnius

One of the main outputs of the Seagull II project will be a Manual presenting ERB as a transferable model of constructing a euroregion. One of the activities foreseen in this respect is a study visit for the project Steering Committee and staff to a euroregion or working community similar to ERB. The aim is to seek best practices and experience in management of joint policies related to the ERB Joint Development Programme.

It was recommended that a study visit to Vilnius be made between 31st May – 2nd June 2007, with a programme including meetings with the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Vilnius, the lead partner in the BEN project (Baltic Euroregional Network). Besides this it is proposed to include visit euroregional projects within the euroregions Nemunas and Sesupe – including meetings with main representatives from these euroregions, to exchange information and experiences. (Attachment_3). ERB Board members took note of the information presented and approved of the proposal to organise the study visit and the ERB Board meeting in Vilnius.

10. Youth Conference within the cooperative framework of Europe Direct relays

The Europe Direct information relays in the ERB regions and the Mayor of Elblag are the organisers of an ERB Youth Conference which will take place in Elblag between 20 and 21 April 2007. The aim of the Conference is to improve the integration of the youth in Euroregion Baltic, and with a particular focus on:

- the intercultural dialogue among youth, through a wide range of activities including increased use of the European Voluntary Service (EVS),
- the role and involving of youth in the sustainable development, including focus on how to improve positive attitudes among youth towards a sustainable environment,
- meetings and consultations between politicians and youth, aiming to improve the democratic participation among youth,
- involving the youth more as a force in the regional development, such as focus on young entrepreneurship, increased accessibility and mobility, development of youth related tourism etc.

The target group for the conference will be main ERB politicians, regional politicians dealing with youth issues, youth representatives and leaders of youth institutions and youth NGO's, including student organisations.

Based on the Conference the Europe Direct information relays want to re-establish a Youth Network within ERB and promote youth cooperation between the regions.

ERB Board members took note of the information presented and thanked the Mayor of Elblag, Mr Henryk Słonina for his active participation in the preparations to the conference.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 In search of a twinning partner

The town of Kościerzyna, member of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, would like to establish international cooperation with a municipality within the area of the Euroregion. It is seeking a partner similar to Kościerzyna, which is about 24 thousand inhabitants. Kościerzyna lays in Pomorze, in the region called Kashubian Switzerland. It is active in raising financial means from the European Union, and at present is in the process of implementing three projects co-financed by the EU: the extension and the modernisation of the sewage treatment plant together with the expansion of the sanitary sewage system, improvement of the Koscierzyzna - East road infrastructure, construction of the Kashubian Culture Centre. The city is growing fast; apart from the projects listed there are also: the construction of the Kashubian Sports and Leisure Centre and Central Centre of the Sports Training.

Kościerzyna has three partner towns: in Germany, France and the Ukraine. However, it has not yet managed to initiate contacts with the municipalities within the Euroregion the Baltic.

ERB Board members took note of the information presented, turning to the National Secretariats for assistance in finding possible partners.

11.2 In search of an environmental partner

The Polish Secretariat was contacted by the Landscape Parks in Elbląg, asking for assistance in their search for partners from around the Euroregion Baltic in order to establish cooperation with similar units dealing with the protection of nature, including trainings, exchange of experiences, marking touristic routes, research, etc.

ERB Board members took note of the information presented, turning to the National Secretariats for assistance in finding possible partners.

11.3 Gdańsk Tourism Fair

Between 13th and 15th April 2007 the Tourism Fair will be held in Gdansk. It will be accompanied by the Fair of Water Sports and Fair of Tourism Investment. Last year, the Euroregion Baltic stand presented the offer of the Polish communes and of the Regional Municipality of Bornholm. This year too, upon the condition that at least ten Polish communes take part, the Polish Party invites all the ERB foreign partners.

ERB Board members took note of the information presented, turning to the National Secretariats for assistance in preparing for the participation of relevant partners from the tourism sector.

11.4 Letter from the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland

In response to the request of the Regional Development Ministry – implementation authority of the new crossborder cooperation programme in the South Baltic Area - to appoint a representative of the Euroregion to the Joint Programming Committee, of the South Baltic Territorial Cooperation Programme, the International Secretariat put forward a request to nominate a formal representative of the Euroregion and his or her deputy.

By the decision of the Board Sławomir Demkowicz - Dobrzański was appointed Euroregion Baltic's representative in the Joint Programming Committee of the South Baltic Territorial Cooperation Programme, and Ulf Andersson his deputy.

At that moment the agenda was completed and President Mikhail Pluhin closed the official part of the meeting.