



EUROREGION BALTIC
INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT
Ul. Sw. Duchy 3/4
82-300 Elbląg, Poland
Tel./ Fax: +48 55 641 27 70
E-mail: ips@eurobalt.org.pl
www.eurobalt.org.pl

**EUROREGION BALTIC BOARD
SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE**

Minutes

Date:

2nd June 2007
08.30 – 11.30 hours (local time)

Meeting Place:

Holiday Inn Hotel, 1 Seimyniskiu Street, Vilnius

Participants:

ERB BOARD / SEAGULL 2 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Johnson, Mr	Bernth	ERB President, Blekinge County
Mincinauskiene, Ms	Raisa	Member of the Board, Klaipeda County
Kozłowski, Mr	Jan	Member of the Board, Pomorskie Region
Andersen, Mr	Niels Chresten	On behalf of Mr Per Ole Petersen, ERB Vice- President, Bornholm
Romanovski, Mr	Victor	On behalf of Mr Mikhail Pluhin, Member of the Board, Kaliningrad Region

SECRETARIATS

Demkowicz-Dobrzański, Mr	Sławomir	Head of ERB International Secretariat
Erlandssons, Ms	Ann- Kristin	ERB President's Assistant, Blekinge Region
Lindencrona, Mr	Per Gudmund	Region Blekinge, Project Coordinator
Liutkute, Ms	Viktorija	Klaipeda County Administration Officer
Olszewski, Mr	Zdzisław	Head of Polish ERB Secretariat, Warmia- Mazury Region
Wróblewska, Ms	Krystyna	Director for Int'l Cooperation, Pomerania Region
Zdanova, Mrs	Julia	Seagull 2 Staff
Zwolak, Mr	Piotr	European Integration Department at Warminsko-Mazurskie Marshal's Office

GUESTS

Russian Embassy in Vilnius

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 welcomed its participants.

2. WORD BY THE GUEST

Mr , representative of the Russian Embassy in Vilnius wished the participants a fruitful meeting and Euroregion Baltic a lot of successes in the future.

3. SIGNING THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING IN ELBLAG

ERB President and Chairman of the Steering Committee, Mr Bernth Johnson placed his signature in approval of the minutes from the previous ERB Board session on 19th April 2007. ERB Vice-President, Mr Per Ole Petersen will place his at a later date.

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

4. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY VISIT IN VILNIUS

WP3 Leader, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen briefly summarised the two-day study visit that the Seagull II Steering Committee members and staff had between 31st May and 1st June. He pointed out three most important aspects of the visit, i.e.:

- Discussions on legal status of crossborder cooperation structures like Euroregions and the relation to the future standing of Euroregion Baltic;
- Focus on concrete projects executed by such crossborder cooperation structures (Euroregions Nemunas and Sesupe) and the relation to the networks existing within the Seagull II project;
- Visibility and lobbying measures and the need to more intensively address the national level;

The ERB Board members took note of the information provided, and recommended that the monitoring of the newly established European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation by the Committee of the Regions should be closely followed. Further debate was also advised regarding the future of the Seagull II networks after they conclude by submitting new project applications at the end of 2007. The ERB Board members also encouraged taking more intensive visibility activities even though Euroregion Baltic might seem to be well promoted.

5. INFORMATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

IPS Head, Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski presented updated information on the following topics:

a. the following ERB Board / Steering Committee meeting in Kalmar

The meeting will be held on 13th August together with the Seagull II water network seminar. A social event is also planned on the island of Öland in the evening.

b. Administrative and financial Implementation status of the Seagull II project

S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski informed the Board of some organisational challenges that need continuous attention on the part of the project coordination group and highlighted the need for political support towards common projects at the local and regional level in order to advance work on the implementation of the Joint Development Programme.

He also stressed the fact that the Seagull II implementation has been possible through the financial involvement of the Association of Polish Communes taking the role of the Lead Partner in the project. Their financial commitment has made it possible to speed up the project budget implementation during the last Milestone. This however may pose some difficulty for the Association in terms of cashflow in the last quarter of the year. One possible remedy could be increased monetary contribution towards the ERB joint budget. Another, as seen in the case of the Marijampole Office of Euroregion Nemunas, might be bank loans.

c. possible ideas for a new ERB project

S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski informed the Board between 6 and 8 projects are expected to result from the work of the Seagull II reference networks. These projects will directly relate to the specific tasks of the ERB Joint Development Programme. The International Secretariat on its part should continue, he went on, its coordinative role within the organisation. There are questions however that need to be answered with regards to such a new project. Some are of technical nature (which programme, what implementation period, who as legal lead partner, whether centralised or decentralised project budget, etc). Others are more subject specific (what to implement: cultural projects, projects celebrating ERB Anniversary, etc.)

A discussion followed after the presentation. Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said this situation shows the need for a doubled ERB budget where 50% can cover the fixed costs of the International Secretariat and the other 50% used to generate co-financing to new common projects. Events like the anniversary need to be financed as the Secretariat's ordinary expenses since it is impossible to use EU funds for statutory activities. He added South Baltic CBC Programme seems most relevant for the ERB to apply to but the Russian partner must also have the opportunity to be fully financially involved.

S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski replied that the Trilateral (Polish – Lithuanian – Russian Kaliningrad Region) Neighbourhood Programme will be a very attractive financial tool offering the co-financing rate at the level of 90% and the possibility to acquire advance payment before the project start of up to 80% of its total budget.

ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson concluded by saying that future ERB projects should refer to the already completed or still running projects of great significance to the ERB as well as the whole Baltic Sea Region like Baltic Master, East West, Baltic Gateway, etc.

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

At the previous meeting the ERB Board began a debate on specific assistance ERB can offer to a youth network by taking on the four-step process. Following the first, i.e. the organisation of the conference in Elblag, feedback was collected and assessed by the Europe Direct offices in Karlskrona, Växjö and Ronne.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said the feedback was positive showing great interest of the youth in cooperation. They benefited from the Elbląg Conference although would have preferred more time for workshops than for presentations. Most frequently, the participating youth pointed to festivals, rock concerts and informal get-togethers as themes of cooperation.

Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene informed that a meeting was organised in Klaipeda with some representatives of youth organisations and schools to promote youth programmes like *Erasmus* or *Leonardo* in an attempt to follow up on the conference in Elbląg.

President Johnson highlighted the importance of supporting youth in their collaborative projects within Euroregion Baltic. Mr P.G. Lindencrona agreed and added EU programmes should be used to this end. Ms Krystyna Wróblewska remarked that programmes like *Youth in Action* seem much easier to apply and to manage.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen reminded of specific issues that the Board should consider while thinking of the future role of young people in the ERB: i.e. to fully integrate them into the ERB structures, to financially support their activities, to assist them in concrete projects (e.g. within South Baltic). He stressed that ERB member regions would have to be ready to donate money if they wanted the youth to succeed.

Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene reminded that Europe Direct offices work with the youth and should also be invited to take part in this discussion.

Mr Victor Romanovsky proposed that youth representatives should be invited to the ERB Anniversary events.

ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson concluded by saying that it is important to know how to develop youth cooperation, particularly if there is an intention to make it a part of the formal ERB structures.

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

The Commission has for consultation their Green Paper "Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: a European vision for the oceans and seas". The consultation process will end on 30th of June 2007. This Green Paper is of great importance for all our regions around the Baltic Sea. It addresses a very broad range of what have traditionally been regarded as separate activities and policy areas. The idea of conducting an integrated analysis of maritime activities leading to coordinated actions is new.

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski explained the procedure of drafting the joint ERB position on the Maritime Policy Green Paper whereby upon request from the Board Mr Bo Lofgren prepared the paper to be discussed by the ERB Board members.

Mr P.G. Lindencrona explained that even though the intention was to come with only one page it proved impossible due to the complexity of the subject matter. Instead, the paper has four pages allowing more room to present views and arguments.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen welcomed the paper prepared by Mr Lofgren and suggested its introduction be modified so that it is clear ERB is very positive to the integrated maritime policy. He also recommended using the full name of the Euroregion instead of the ERB abbreviation. In addition, Mr Andersen proposed that the recommendation in Point 5 on running annual conferences on the subject should be hanged into bringing the subject to the agenda of the EU annual summits. Finally, he said the part of the text saying here is no financing for the maritime policy could be changed into a more positive note where ERB sees opportunities to finance activities that benefit maritime environments through other available programmes.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska expressed her appreciation of the work put into the paper, urging the authors to make it a little shorter and thus clearer for the reader. She also

stressed the fact that ERB should be positive towards the fact that there is going to be money for local and regional authorities to take part in the implementation of the integrated maritime policy.

Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski proposed that the International Secretariat will take into consideration all the offered comments and redraft the position paper, and then send it to Mr Lofgren for a final consultation. Once agreed, the paper will be forwarded to the Board members for approval. Being short of time until the deadline, once accepted by the Board, the paper will be signed electronically by ERB President and sent to the EC.

The ERB Board members approved of the proposed procedure.

8. STATUS OF 2 SEAGULL 2 NETWORKS: SOCIAL COOPERATION AND SMEs / INNOVATION

Due to unexpected absence of WP 1 Leader, Ms Kora Stańczyk who had a serious accident the Board members decided to postpone the detailed presentation of the present and planned activities within the social network. Instead, Ms Viktorija Liutkute presented information from a seminar on **“Common Labour Market And Business Cooperation In CBC Region”** organised between 15 and 17th May, 2007 in Fredrikstad, Norway within the BEN project. Euroregion Baltic was represented by ERB Board member, Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene and Ms Viktorija Liutkute.

With regards to the network on SMEs / Innovation Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski presented the network core group members (Mr Bertil Eifrem as a network expert, Ms Eva-Lisa Ahnström as a Seagull DevERB contact and Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski as the network leader). He also informed on a plan of activities within the network in the coming months that include:

- Study tour to Learning Centres, University Centres and incubators in South-East Sweden between 4th and 5th July 2007;
- Seminar in Gdynia between 10th and 11th September 2007 to discuss how to develop and run Science Parks, incubators and Learning centres – and how they can be connected. One part of the seminar will be a workshop on how to develop the Seagull Tool-box for innovative centres and clusters.

The ERB Board members took note of the information provided.

9. PLANNING 10TH ERB ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

At the previous meeting the ERB Board established the 10th anniversary working group to include Mr P.G. Lindencrona, Mr Niels Ch. Andersen and Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski with the aim of collecting a range of ideas how to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Euroregion Baltic, and to draft an anniversary programme, subject of approval of the Board.

Mr P.G. Lindencrona, Mr Niels Ch. Andersen and Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzanski presented first brainstormed ideas of the anniversary programme. Firstly, the regular meetings of the ERB Board and Council (there will be four and two meetings in 2008, respectively, including two big conferences and a possible participation in the Open Days Week in Brussels) should be used as an opportunity to promote Euroregion Baltic, by inviting local and regional politicians, EC representatives, local media, etc.

Secondly, a few proposals have already been made of special celebratory events, e.g.:

- promotional activities during events held in all ERB member regions: Pomorskie could invite to attend Dominican Fairs in Gdansk (4 million tourists every within a couple of weeks) or regattas in Kaszubian Lake District in Szymbark;
- contests with „cool“ prizes, e.g. with photographs or paintings in search of common Baltic and/or Euroregional heritage;
- publishing of a book listing and displaying ERB achievements;
- Culinary festival – Academic Cultural Centre at Gdansk University already with experience of hosting such events;
- ERB Folk festival.

The ERB Board members took note of the information provided.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. budgetary debate

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen went back to the issue already highlighted in Point 5 of the Agenda, i.e. the question of the joint ERB budget. With the Seagull II currently running, he remarked, it is easy to finance both the meetings within Euroregion Baltic and extra work related to the implementation of the Joint Development Programme. Our situation will change after Seagull II is over. In order to secure efficient cooperation within ERB, Mr Andersen continued, its budget would have to be doubled where the current amount could be spent on the International Secretariat and the extra money on common projects, provided of course the member regions would find proposed projects relevant and sufficiently interesting for them to participate.

Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene noted that the problem of increasing the budget is related to the issue of the legal ERB status. She also said all decisions on financial involvement of Klaipeda County will have to be consulted with the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior.

President Johnson stated any decision on the budget will have to follow decisions at the regional level but Euroregion Baltic, he stressed, remains high on the priority list in Region Blekinge.

Mr Jan Kozłowski supported the idea that it will be extra projects that need extra financing, not the regular administrative costs.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen said he was aware of the fact how difficult it may be to convince politicians to provide more finances and therefore is ready to share his list of arguments with all the secretariats. On the other hand, he went on, Bornholm supports B7 with a higher contribution than in the case of ERB.

Since the issue is of rather sensitive nature the Board approved that a series of meetings will be organised in order to discuss it in all member regions within ERB.

b. invitation to cooperate

Municipality of Iława in the Region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie is looking for partners around the Euroregion. The letter of invitation and the documents specifying the characteristics of the Municipality were handed in to the ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson.

c. invitation to the International Sailing event

The letters of invitation to participate in the International Sailing Regatta in Poland on 30th June were presented to ERB President, Mr Bernth Johnson, and ERB Vice-President, Mr Per Ole Petersen. The Region of Pomorskie is the main organiser of the event.

d. information on the Political Week on Gotland

Mr P.G. Lindenrona informed that during this year's annual Gotland's Political Week Euroregion Baltic will be represented and promoted by the participants from the three Swedish regions within ERB: Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg.