

Euroregion Baltic
 Executive Board Meeting
 Kaliningrad, Russia
 1 Donskovo Street
 21st February 2011



Title	Final Minutes
Submitted by	International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document provides final minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place on 21 st February 2011 in Kaliningrad, Russian Federation.
Requested action	Adoption

1. **Welcome**

Mr Mikhail Plukhin, Deputy Governor of Kaliningrad Region, and member of the ERB Board welcomed the participants of the ERB Executive Board meeting.

2. **Address**

Mr Grzegorz Bochenek, Consul of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad addressed the ERB Executive Board and stressed the importance of ERB cooperation for the development of the all regional partners.

3. **Opening**

Mr Jacek Protas, President of Euroregion Baltic opened the meeting of the ERB Executive Board, presented the agenda and introduced the members of the ERB Executive Board.

4. **Highlights of 2009-2011 Presidency**

Mr Jacek Protas, President of Euroregion Baltic reported on his term in office between 2009 and 2011.

5. **Transfer of ERB Presidency**

Outgoing ERB President, Mr Jacek Protas handed the post to the incoming President, Mr Mikhail Plukhin, Deputy Governor of Kaliningrad Region who will chair Euroregion Baltic in 2011 on behalf of Russian Party. Mr Roland Gustbée, Chair of the Board of Regional Council in södra Småland, assumed the position of ERB Vice-President.

Following the request of the Danish partners who will have the local elections in 2013 the Executive Board agreed to change the original proposal and plan Danish presidency in 2013 and 2018 and Lithuanian presidency in 2014 and 2019. Thus, the Board agreed to adopt the following rotation sequence of ERB presidencies:

- 2011: Russian presidency, Swedish vice-presidency
- 2012: Swedish presidency, and Danish vice-presidency
- 2013: Danish presidency, and Lithuanian vice-presidency
- 2014: Lithuanian presidency, and Polish vice-presidency
- 2015: Polish presidency, and Russian vice-presidency

2016: Russian presidency, Swedish vice-presidency
2017: Swedish presidency, and Danish vice-presidency
2018: Danish presidency, and Lithuanian vice-presidency
2019: Lithuanian presidency, and Polish vice-presidency
2020: Polish presidency, and Russian vice-presidency

6. **Highlights of 2011-2012 Presidency**

Mr Mikhail Plukhin, President of Euroregion Baltic presented the objectives of the 2011 – 2012 ERB Action Plan.

ERB President Mikhail Plukhin informed the Board that from now on the role of the ERB Secretariat in the Kaliningrad Region will be played by the Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Kaliningrad Region.

7. **Adoption of the minutes**

ERB Executive Board adopted the minutes of the ERB Board meeting on 23rd September 2010 in Copenhagen, and of the ERB Council meeting on 28-29th October 2010 in Kosta.

8. **Information**

Due to the absence of Mr Arunas Burksas, ERB Board member representing Klaipeda Regional Development Council, the letter explaining the situation in Klaipeda County was read out to the ERB Executive Board members.

9. **ERB 2020 Agenda. Focus Area: Lobbying**

9.1 **Overview**

Mr Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański, Head of ERB IPS referred to the ERB 2020 Agenda adopted last year, and specifically to the first focus area of the cooperation: lobbying. Within this focus area two policies remain of crucial importance for ERB: EU Cohesion Policy after 2013 and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

9.2 **Discussion on EU Cohesion Policy after 2013**

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen, the leader of the ERB Task Force on EU Cohesion Policy presented the joint position paper contributing the consultations on the 5th Cohesion Report, as well as the proposal of a lobbying strategy with the view of disseminating the ERB position paper. ERB Executive Board expressed the necessity of active involvement in the ongoing preparation process for the Policy after 2013.

Mr Andersen moderated the discussion of the ERB Executive Board members around the following issues:

1. How much do the ERB regions internally consider the ETC objective and EUSBSR in the discussion on the future Cohesion Policy?
2. Is there a need within ERB to further develop arguments for the ERB position in a more popular form?
3. How do we argue for enhancing ETC objective?
4. How can we lobby for including all ERB area into the South Baltic Programme, and the ENPI to include the Kaliningrad Region in the programme area?
5. How can we contribute to the Territorial Agenda, and hereby underline the role of macro regional strategies and functional geographies?

After the discussion ERB Executive Board adopted the lobbying.

In connection with the discussion on future Cohesion Policy and regarding the recent departure of two ERB representatives from the Monitoring Committee of the South Baltic Cooperation Programme, the ERB Executive Board discussed a proposal that the ERB be represented in the Monitoring Committee by a Swedish politician (Committee member) and a Lithuanian politician (Committee deputy member).

The Board appointed Mr Arunas Burksas to be the deputy member of the South Baltic Programme Monitoring Committee representing Euroregion Baltic. It was also agreed that the Swedish partners will discuss this issue internally and name their representative to the post of the member of the Programme Monitoring Committee by the middle of March 2011.

9.3 **Discussion on EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)**

Ms Marie Fridh of Region Blekinge, presented the role of macro-regional strategies in the European Union with special focus on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region including its goals, intended results, phases of implementation, as well as EUSBSR related events in 2011, in particular the schedule for the revision of the EUSBSR during Spring and Summer of 2011.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska of Pomorskie Region presented basic information and distributed some printed materials on the 2nd Annual Forum to be held between 24-28th October 2011 in Gdańsk.

Mr Sławomir-Demkowicz-Dobrzański outlined the role of ERB in drafting, implementation and monitoring of EUSBSR so far. He also highlighted the objectives of the upcoming EU Presidency.

A discussion followed during which the ERB Executive Board members offered their views on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in the context of ERB cooperation. The Board asked the Task Force to prepare a proposal of the ERB contribution to the ongoing Strategy review process so that it can be presented to the Commission in the middle of March.

10. **ERB 2020 Agenda. Focus Area: Strategic Actions**

ERB 2020 Agenda adopted last year in its second focus area of the cooperation: strategic actions addresses three specific objectives for Euroregion Baltic

1. implementation of the ERB Joint Development Programme
2. accomplishment of prioritised institutional activities, and
3. development of platforms supporting other forms of cooperation and actors in the ERB area.

Two concrete activities were addressed by the Executive Board at the meeting: supporting cooperation around water issues and supporting cooperation around youth issues.

10.1 **Cooperation around water issues**

Ms Carolina Gunnarsson, water expert from Kalmar County presented the overview of ERB water cooperation initiatives which began as early as in 1998 with one of the first ERB working groups dealing with environmental issues. Cooperation around water issues has continued ever since through joint ERB projects like Seagull devERB, Seagull II and a series of Moment projects.

Mr Erik Ciardi of the Regional Council in Kalmar talked about the new EUSBSR horizontal action (multi-level governance, local and regional spatial planning and sustainable development) which the European Commission requested to be further developed by the Swedish regions of Kalmar and Västerbotten under possible project within the Baltic Sea Region Programme entitled INVOLVE.

ERB Executive Board members were asked to consider the scope of its support to water cooperation. The scenarios discussed included:

1. full-fledged support whereby ERB member regions continue to support ERB Water Core Group and ERB is a partner of the project INVOLVE,
2. limited support whereby ERB member regions continue to support ERB Water Core Group but ERB is not a partner of the project INVOLVE,
3. lack of support whereby ERB member regions do not support ERB Water Core Group and ERB is not a partner of the project INVOLVE.

After the discussion the ERB Executive Board decided to give full-fledged support to water cooperation. ERB member regions will continue to support ERB Water Core Group within the implemented projects (Moment until December 2012 and INVOLVE afterwards). In addition, ERB will become a partner of the project INVOLVE through the formal project participation of the Association of Polish Communes hosting ERB International Secretariat.

10.2 **Cooperation around youth issues**

Mr Irmantas Sujeta, the newly elected Chair of the ERB Youth Board, Ms Lisa Wagnborg, YC3 Project Manager and Mr Daniel Olovsson, YC3 Financial Manager presented the report of the activities implemented within the YC3 project, as well as the idea of a new project proposed to involve the ERB stakeholders around youth issues.

The Board took note of the information and congratulated the youth on the work done. A discussion followed during which the Executive Board members asked questions regarding specific requirements for the involvement of their regions in the new project. They had been earlier requested to consider the scope of its support to youth cooperation. The scenarios discussed included:

1. direct regional support whereby ERB member regions continue to support ERB Youth Board and become partners in the new youth project,
2. indirect support to youth cooperation whereby ERB member regions continue to support ERB Youth Board and support the project by finding a more relevant partner in their regions to represent them, and
3. institutional support whereby ERB member regions continue to support ERB Youth Board but do not support or become partners in the new youth project.

A more specific report from the ERB Youth Board lacking, the ERB Executive Board decided to continue their discussion on how to support youth cooperation at their next meeting in May. In order to facilitate the future discussion and to make decisions, the Board asked that such a report is submitted by the Youth Board to the ERB regional secretariats.

11. **Closing of the ERB Executive Board meeting**

Mr Mikhail Plukhin, President of Euroregion Baltic closed the meeting of the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board.

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Jacek Protas
ERB President
2009-2011

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Mikhail Plukhin
ERB President
2011-2012