



Euroregion Baltic

Presidency: Regional Municipality of Bornholm, EU Secretariat, Ullasvej 17, 3700 Roenne, Denmark
Tel: + 45 5692 1303 fax: +45 5692 1301 e-mail: carrefour@bora.dk - homepage: www.eurobalt.org

The Executive Board

Minutes for the meeting in Brussels 25 May 2003

and a summary of the meetings 26 – 27 May 2003.

Participants:

Mrs Annelise Molin	Bornholm, Denmark	President of ERB
Mr Zbigniew Karpowicz	Warmia-Mazury, Poland	Vicepresident
Mr Normunds Niedols	Liepaja, Latvia	
Mr A. Michailov	Klaipeda, Lithuania (25 – 26 May)	
Mr Bo Frank	Kronoberga, Sweden	
Mr Rolf A. Karlson	Project leader of Seagull project (25 – 26 May)	
Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Head of main ERB Secretariat, Bornholm	
Ms Karen Lynn Jacobsen	Main ERB Secretariat, Bornholm	
Ms Gunta Ceplevica	National Secretariat in Latvia	
Ms Roma Stubriene	National Secretariat in Lithuania (25 – 26 May)	
Mr Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobranski	National Secretariat in Poland	
Mr Ulf Andersson	National Secretariat in Sweden	
Mr Knud Andersen	Member of ERB Council, Member of CoR (26 – 27 May)	

1. Approval of minutes for the Executive Board meeting in Malbork, 24th February 2003

Approved and signed by Mrs Annelise Molin and Mr Normunds Niedols.

2. Appointment of Board member to co-sign the minutes for this meeting

Mr Zbigniew Karpowicz, Vice president of ERB, appointed to co-sign the minutes together with the President, Mrs Annelise Molin.

3. Report by the President, on follow up activities since last meeting and planned activities for the near future

a. The resolution on Maritime Safety

In the resolution ERB strongly recommend that

- Safety measures will be taken as to prohibit unsafe oil production platforms, as well as unsafe shipping of dangerous and potentially polluting cargo in the Baltic Sea
- A transnational safety infrastructure is developed and constructed in the Baltic Sea. This should be a decentralised safety plan, involving regional and local authorities.

The Executive Board will discuss what has been done in the member regions since the decision on the resolution 24th February 2003 – and what more can be done.

It should be noted that many actions and decisions have been taken by EU Council within the last few months after the Prestige Catastrophe in November last year. The issue has also been discussed recently in the International Maritime Organisation, in the Nordic Ministers Council and in bilateral meetings between governments in the Baltic Sea.

What is so far not seen mentioned in the conclusions from the large number of meetings is the question about unsafe oil production platforms. How big is this problem and should we pay more attention to it?

The involving of Regional and Local Authorities has also been neglected as a specific subject in most of the meetings. CPMR made a resolution on this matter 5th December 2002, and had a meeting with EU Transport Commissioner Loyola de Palacio 21st

January 2003. For the moment the EU Member States are to prepare national plans for places of refuge – sea ports with special facilities for oil tankers and other ships with problems.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended

- To assure that all ERB parties will send the resolution to the respective national governments, if not already done. It should be addressed to the Prime Minister and to the Ministers responsible for Environment and Transport,
- To prepare a letter to the EU Transport Commissioner, Mrs Loyola de Palacio and the EU Environment Commissioner, Mrs Margot Wallström, recommending EU to put more focus on the unsafe Oil Production platforms, on the role of regional and local authorities in the Maritime Safety infrastructure, and recommend support for the Baltic Sea to become a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area,
- To ask the Environmental Working Group in ERB to put Maritime Safety on their agenda for coming meetings, and if possible and relevant to organise a specific ERB Conference on this matter. If so, a concrete proposal should be discussed in the Executive Board.

Conclusion:

The Board approved the recommendations.

The English version of the resolution on Maritime Safety was signed by the present Board members in two originals, and will now by the Polish partner be transferred to the Russian partner for signature. A copy of the signed resolution will be sent to all partners in order to assure that each Party will send the resolution to their respective National Government, if not already done

The Lithuanian Party will to the other parties send further information on the last 1 – 1½ years of discussions about oil production platforms to be build near/in the Curonian Split – an UNESCO appointed area to be protected. Oil production platforms will bring a big risk for the coast area from Kaliningrad up to Latvia.

The main ERB Secretariat will send to the other parties a list of the many initiatives and decisions taken through the last months in connection to Maritime Safety.

b. Recommendation about Euroregion Baltic as a future INTERREG III A area

The President of ERB has forwarded a letter to the EU Commissioner Mr Günther Verheugen, responsible for EU Enlargement, to EU Commissioner Mr Michel Barnier, responsible for the European Regional Development Fund, and to EU Commissioner Mr Chris Patten, responsible for External Relations including relations between EU and Russia.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to

- Let the future EU Cohesion Policy (Structural Funds) be the subject for a thematic discussion at the next ERB Council meeting on Bornholm 29th August 2003
- In this discussion to further clarify the opportunities for ERB in the Cohesion Policy context

Conclusion:

The Board approved the recommendations, and agreed on that each Party should inform their respective National Government about ERB's opinion on the future EU Cohesion Policy and about ERB's efforts to have ERB as a future INTERREG III A area.

c. Communications with AEBR about membership

The Latvian Presidency has received invoices for membership for the ERB member regions for 2002 and 2003, but has so far not responded on these invoices.

There have been no final decisions taken within the formal ERB bodies about such a membership, but some discussions where most of the member regions have been in favour of AEBR membership. The Executive Board has decided first to increase the knowledge to other European organisations working with regional interests, in order to identify which organisations ERB should give priority in the future. That has been one of the main reasons having this Board meeting in Brussels.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended

- To ask the former Latvian Presidency to inform AEBR that ERB do not so far have a formal decision to become members of AEBR

Conclusion:

The Board agreed on the recommendations and the Latvian Party promised to follow up the decision.

d. The President round trip to the ERB regions, time plan and topics to be discussed

Annelise Molin had the first meeting with the Polish ERB partners 16 May 2003.

A meeting with the Swedish ERB partners has been agreed to take place 12th August 2003.

In Brussels dates should be agreed for meetings with partners from Lithuania and Latvia, and after Brussels with the partners from Kaliningrad.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to take the round trip agenda into consideration, and approve the report to be put on the agenda for the ERB Council meeting on Bornholm 29th August 2003.

Conclusion:

The Board agreed on the recommendation. Preliminary dates were agreed with the Latvian and Lithuanian delegations for a visit by the President on 8 August 2003. The main ERB Secretariat will contact Kaliningrad about the Presidents visit to Kaliningrad.

4. Report from the Seagull project, by project leader Rolf A. Karlson

a. Status for co-financing applications

Mr Karlson informed that applications for co-financing have been sent for the Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian partners, but only for one year. The Polish partners are preparing an application to the PHARE CBC programme, but it will only be possible for the two regions to apply, as the programme deadline for municipalities has been passed.

Mr Karpowicz added, that the Polish lead partner will be Pomeranian region, and that some actions in connection with the Seagull project already have been taken and financed by the Polish partners. In Work packages 1 and 3 there is foreseen to be some personal changes. He proposed a meeting between the association of municipalities and the Seagull project leader, in order to provide more informations on the Seagull project and to discuss the future for the project.

Mr Karlson presented the note from the Seagull project management. Several reports have already been drafted in connection with Work Package 1. A lack of resources and problems in provision of materials have been experienced. An electronical newsletter (one page) is to produced every fortnight with headlines for the project implementation. He stressed the need to give project participants good preconditions for their participation in the activities.

Several members of the Board agreed on the lack of resources due to many other activities of high priority, especially in preparing for EU membership.

Mr Niedols informed that the priority of Seagull will be discussed in the next Council meeting in the Kurzeeme Planning Region.

Mr Michailov stated that there are still different opinions on the priority of the project, but things are developing in a positive direction and he believed in the success of the project.

Mr Karpowicz found it difficult to explain the idea with Seagull to other politicians, not at least the immediate effects of the projects. Concrete suggestions are needed.

Mr Frank informed that also in the Swedish regions there are problems with understanding and supporting the Seagull project. But 'Rome was not builded in one day!'

Mrs Molin said that networking has for many years had a high priority for Bornholm, simply because it is needed. It started with initiatives by NGO's and considered concrete results.

Mr Ulf Andersson stressed the need of Seagull in order to meet EU opportunities and demands.

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen stated that the preparations of EU membership and the activities in Seagull project should be seen in the same light – and not considered as separate activities.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to discuss the problems raised by the project management in the report

- What measures should be taken in order to get relevant signals of priority to the Seagull project - also if there will be no PHARE/TACIS co-financing?
- How could we better explain the long-term added value of the project for all our member regions, local authorities and other possible stakeholders?

Conclusion:

Rolf Karlson promised to have a meeting with the association of municipalities in Poland, to provide further information on and discuss the Seagull project.

b. The resolution from Ronneby Conference, follow up

Mr Ulf Andersson presented an opinion paper on the subject and noted that there has already been some follow up. A letter for European Commissioners has been sent in order to consider ERB as a future INTERREG III A area, and the programme for this Board meeting in Brussels also is in line with the resolution request to inform EU bodies and other European actors on EU level.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to discuss the opinion on the resolution received from the Ronneby conference, decide on it and present the decision for the ERB Council at the meeting 29th August on Bornholm

Conclusion:

The Board agreed on

- to inform CBSS member states and more EU institutions about ERB, the political ambitions and the work carried out
- to recommend the ERB Council that a conference every second year should be organised with representatives for ERB regions and municipalities. The main ERB Secretariat was asked together with the Seagull Project Secretariat and the National secretariat in Poland to

prepare a proposal for such a conference in 2004 – to be discussed at the Council meeting 29th on Bornholm, or later if more time is needed.

5. Report from the Environmental Working Group (EWG)

a. Minutes from the last EWG meeting

The EWG meeting took place 25th February 2003 in Malbork, and all national secretariats have already received the minutes. One more file is attached with a status for ongoing EWG activities.

b. Green Circle School project, see attached files

At the ERB Council meeting in Malbork 24th February 2003 the project was presented, and it was decided to discuss concrete recommendations from the EWG concerning the further implementation of the project. In the attached files the EWG more detailed information on the project is provided and several concrete recommendations for ERB support to the further implementation.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to discuss the project in general and to decide on the concrete recommendations from the EWG Group for ERB support:

- The creation of a 10% project coordinator, supported by ERB 2004-2006
- The planning of a Green Circle School environmental Diploma
- One common meeting during spring and autumn between participating schools, maximum 4 people/school at lowest possible travel and accommodation cost
- The creation of an information leaflet about Green Circle School project
- As documentation plan an edition of a publication of Green Circle Schools experiences of cooperation between ERB partners and give tools and good examples of sustainable and environmental achievements
- A Green Circle School homepage connected to ERB link-Homepage

Conclusion:

The Board agreed on

- that the Green Circle School project is of great importance and the request from EWG relevant
- to accept the offer by the Swedish Party to finance the required 10% of the project coordinator
- to recommend that all other costs within the project, not financed by the Comenius programme, will be financed by the participating schools and the different regional ERB partners. Each country covers their own costs.
- to let the main ERB secretariat, together with Kaliningrad region, investigate what financial possibilities there might be for Kaliningrad's participation in the project.

6. ERB's external profile and lobbying function

This is one of the main subjects for the meetings in Brussels Monday and Tuesday, and one of the main objectives for the Danish Presidency 2003-2004.

Recommendation:

The ERB Executive Board is recommended to discuss objectives and resources for strengthening the ERB external profile, and to prepare the next days meetings with CPMR, South Sweden Brussels Office, EU Committee of Regions (CoR) and officials from the European Commission.

Conclusion:

The discussion was postponed to the afternoon 26th May 2003. See summary for other meetings below.

7. Agenda for the ERB Council meeting on Bornholm 29 August 2003

Conclusion:

The Board agreed to put the following subjects at the agenda for the Council meeting:

- a. A thematic discussion on the future EU Cohesion Policy after 2006, and the Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006 to be proposed by the European Commission in June 2003
- b. A report for the roundtrip visits by the ERB president, Mrs Annelise Molin, focusing on the issue how to concretize the ERB cooperation, and other subjects
- c. The status and future of the permanent working groups for spatial planning and social area
- d. ERB enlargement, as there has been considerations in Lithuanian regions and other regions to ask for ERB membership

The main and national secretariats is expected to meet 6 August 2003 in Klaipeda to prepare the Council meeting.

8. Other matters

The Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru based in Romania has in a letter to the former Latvian Presidency asked collaboration. An answer will be prepared by the secretariats, and eventually prepared for discussion at the next Council meeting

The Latvian delegation transferred copies to the other delegations of an invitation from the Nordic Council of Ministers to a conference in Tartu, Estonia, 16 – 18 June 2003.

Bo Frank proposed the Board to broaden the participation in the Board and Council meetings, giving the delegations a possibility to in their delegations to include a young person, student and/or representative from a NGO. Costs for such a persons participation should be covered by the respective delegation. The proposal will improve the knowlegde about ERB and in other ways bring added value to the cooperation, especially consideration the participation of young people. The Board was positive to the proposal.

Mrs Annelise Molin
President of ERB

Mr Zbigniew Karpowicz
Vice president of ERB

Meeting with Pascal Gruselle, Head of CPMR's delegation in Brussels

26th May 2003

Pascal Gruselle introduced the CPMR, founded in 1973 and having for the moment 115 members from 25 different European countries.

The structure is based on an annual general assembly, a political bureau with 25 members, which meets 3-4 times annually. The general secretariat is situated in France with 16 people employed. Besides the delegation in Brussels there is also an office in Portugal with 3 persons employed and mainly dealing with studies.

CPMR is organised into 7 geographical commissions:

- Baltic Sea Commission (Annual meeting just held 26 – 27 May in Sweden)
- North Sea Commission, Arctic Sea Commission, Mediterranean Sea Commission, Balkan Commission (new), Black Sea Commission (new) and Islands Commission

Each of these commissions are organised as CPMR in general with annual assemblies etc.

Currently the main activities in CPMR is focusing on:

- Cohesion Policy, where the economic and social cohesion is proposed to be added with a territorial cohesion
 - Governance aspects, especially the current convention on EU's future, which is to finish its work in June 2003
 - Transport policy, such as the Trans European Nets
 - Common Agricultural Policy, with a position paper under preparation. A seminar is expected to be organised in January or February 2004
 - and subjects as Research and innovation, Fishing reform and Green paper on general services
- CPMR's general organisation is mainly focusing on political issues, while the geographical commissions are mainly focusing on cooperation and projects.

Summary of discussion:

- The European Commission is about to propose a more systematic dialogue with the regional and interregional organisations in Europe. The consultation for this ended 23 May 2003. CPMR has made a common position together with AER, CEMR, AEER and Eurocities. The role of CoR has been discussed and it was agreed to consider CoR as an intermediary body, which means that the organisations still will use CoR in the dialogue with the European Commission – but also the direct dialogue
- The balance between northern and southern regions in EU is more and more balanced
- ERB representatives are invited to a conference 16 – 17 June in France about Maritime Safety
- CPMR see it self as a kin of coordinator in cooperation with other pan-European organisations as AER, CEMR and AEER
- Good governance does not have a high priority for the moment in CPMR
- Regions can become members of CPMR. Membership fee is based on a small amount per inhabitant and with a discount for regions from candidate countries (50%).
- 90% of CPMR member regions will accept that money are transferred from first pillar in the common agricultural policy to the second pillar (rural development).
- CPMR's specific characteristic is that it represents peripheral regions and that CPMR is a pro-active organisation and not as some other organisations just re-active on development and changes.

Discussion on ERB's external role and lobbying function

26th May 2003

A discussion in the Executive Board was based on inputs from Mr Knud Andersen (KA) and Mr Niels Chresten Andersen (NCA).

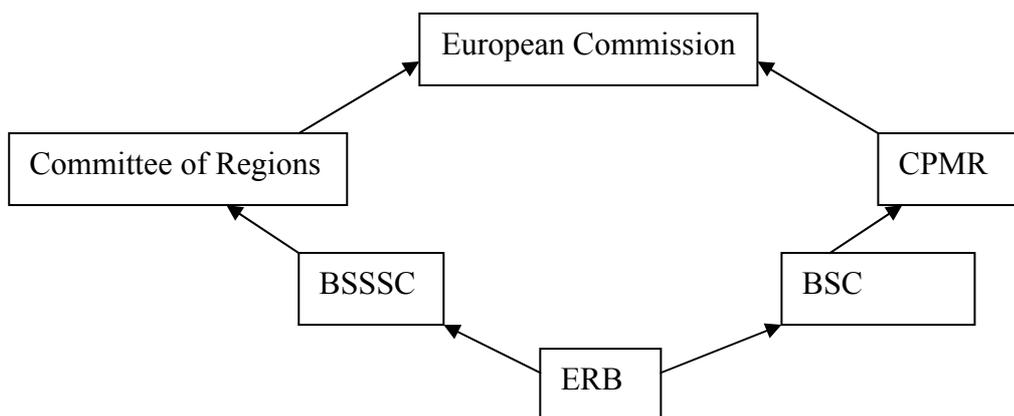
KA questioned how ERB could get most influence regarding the European Commission – acting for ourselves or together with other actors in the Baltic Sea region (BSR). If together with other actors, CPMR's Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) and Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) would be the most obvious to consider.

BSC so far has only few member regions, and from ERB only Bornholm and Klaipeda are members, and the island of Öland (part of Kalmar region).

All BSR regions including the Norwegian regions are members of BSSSC, which is a consultative partner to the European Commission.

The political discussion in ERB is important, and the ERB regions should also act as individual regions.

KA draw up the following ways of influence regarding European Commission



KA recommended ERB to address the European Commission a letter giving support for direct contact between European organisations and the European Commission, and to avoid that contacts only can be made through the Committee of Regions (CoR). Our interest must be an open-minded European Commission.

NCA stated that in the lobbying activities both the structures and the EU decision process must be considered.

As the only EU institution to take legislative initiatives the European Commission is a main target for lobbying activities. But also the Council and the European Parliament should be considered, which means ERB regions must have good contacts with national governments and the national members of the European Parliament, especially those MP's situated in our regions.

In the lobbying structure we have the lower level of institutions and networks, such as the CoR, the Economic and Social Committee, EU Representations and delegations in the countries, national permanent representations in Brussels and information networks like the Carrefour network.

Besides this we have opportunities for influence through the pan-European organisations, regional and interregional bodies like CPMR, CEMR etc., and the more commercial interest organisations for Chambers of Commerce, agriculture etc.

NCA then described the policy and decision making process, which must be considered in the lobbying activities. It is important for us to know where in the process we are, in order to identify where to set in and who in the structure to target our lobbying activities.

Policy making in EU often begins with a Green Paper – a kind of discussion paper, on a certain subject such as fishing reform, transport policy or youth policy. After launching a Green Paper the European Commission have a longer consultation and debate period, often up to one year, in which all kind of actors are invited to send position papers and to participate in a number of seminar, organised by the European Commission and other actors.

The conclusions on the debate and consultations are made in a White Paper, which will form the basis for legislative initiatives by the European Commission, to be decided by the Council and in most cases in combination with the European Parliament.

After EU legislation has been decided, it needs to be implemented in the Member states and often this implementation can be influenced as Member states implement EU legislation more or less restrictive to the legislative basis decided on the EU level.

ERB can lobby under all these phases, as well as before a Green Paper has been launched.

In areas like the Cohesion Policy we will not find a specific Green Paper. Here the policy-making is based on Cohesion reports. For the moment we are in the debate and consultative phase, but in November 2003 the European Commission plans to launch the Third Cohesion report, which in many ways will form the preliminary conclusions on how the future Cohesion Policy should be formed after 2006.

KA added that opinions agreed by the CPMR geographically commissions can only be approved through the main CPMR organisations. The CPMR commissions are mainly dealing with cooperation and projects. He also recommended ERB to consider one big secretariat like the Baltic Sea House in Brussels. The role and influence by the regions in Europe are growing.

The inputs by KA and NCA formed the basis in preparing the next day meetings.

Mr Ulf Andersson proposed to add a 'Blue Paper' considering implementation of EU legislation, in which organisations as ERB could play the key role.

Mr Bo Frank added, that experience shows that it often is more easy to influence the EU institutions than the national governments, and he proposed a more permanent ERB secretariat.

Also Mr Normunds Niedols agreed in getting a permanent ERB secretariat, and stressed the need in lobbying to press on the 'right button'. Considering INTERREG programme AEBR could still be a 'right button' to consider.

Finally KA recommended to distinguish between policy making and project making. Today BSR regions are weak. Therefore one secretariat together with BSSSC and other actors in Brussels could be useful. KA recommended ERB both to use BSSSC and CPMR's BSC in the lobbying activities.

It was agreed to use next day meetings to profile ERB and to follow up the letters to 3 European Commissioners asking them to consider ERB as a future INTERREG III A area. In this respect it is needed to get a more formal accept of maritime borders equal to land borders, to improve interaction between INTERREG and TACIS, to assure coherence with the objectives under the Northern Dimension and the follow up on EU Enlargement.

Visit to the Committee of Regions (CoR), introduced by Mr Steen Illeborg, Head of Division Registry, Press and Communication

27th May 2003

Mr Illeborg introduced the CoR, which represents 95 regions (Länder), 980 counties and about 79.000 municipalities in the 15 EU member states. CoR has 222 members.

He introduced maps about GDP and unemployment rates in the regions, showing the regional differences, and informed about the decision-making process in EU and the role of CoR.

75% of all EU legislation is implemented on regional and local level in the Member states.

CoR is the first voice of local and regional authorities, and an advisory body to the European Commission and other EU institutions. It was established in 1994 with both a political/democratic objective and a practical objective.

CoR's relations to the candidate countries has been developed since 1997 with an initiative on creating a dialogue, in 1998 a liaison group was established and in 2001 a Joint Consultative Committee in so far three countries: Poland, Czech republic and Cyprus.

From 3 July 2003 95 observers from the candidate countries will be connected to CoR.

Mr Illeborg went through the CoR's preparing activities for accession and described the future challenges for CoR: Lack of confidence, enlargement and the consequences of this on local level, the process of devolution in Europe and the results of the EU convention for local and regional authorities.

Important aspects in meeting these challenges will be key words like representativity, increased added value and information to the citizens.

Based on a question Mr Illeborg stressed that in the beginning of CoR existence there was a big confusion on how to understand 'local self-government' due to the big differences in the member states. CoR has created a culture and improved a common understanding, manifested through national delegations in the CoR, committees in the CoR structure and now political groups.

About Cohesion Policy Mr Illeborg drew up CoR activities, such as the Conference in Leipzig 5 – 6 May 2003, where a declaration was agreed. CoR is in favour of adding territorial cohesion to the existing economic and social cohesion aspects in the future cohesion policy. We have to look at the territories, the regions and the bigger cities. Simplification and more coherence between the different Structural Funds have been agreed with the Commissioner Mr Michel Barnier as an objective for the future Cohesion Policy.

Meeting with DG Regio

- Mrs Elisabeth Helander, DG Regio/B – Interreg
- Mr Nicola De Michelis, DG Regio/A – conception, impact, coordination and evaluation of regional policies
- Mr Niels Bjerring-Hansen, DG Regio/B – Interreg

27th May 2003

Mrs Helander gave a general outline on Interreg programme:

- Interreg should result in concrete things
- B-programmes are new, but based on the former INTERREG II C-programmes. they can do more concrete things, which can really create networks and cooperation
- In the Baltic Sea focus is on EU accession and to prepare the Interreg programmes for accession states to work as soon as possible
- 2 new priorities under the B-programme has been formulated and will promote crossborder cooperation
- 11th March 2003 the Commission launched a communication on new external borders after accession. The next communication on same matter is expected to be launched in the beginning of July 2003, introducing a new neighbourhood instrument and how Interreg and TACIS can better interact.
- Seagull project is precisely the kind of actions which is preferred
- For the future the Commissioner Mr Michel Barnier are for sure considering INTERREG.

On a question Mrs Helander precisized that the new new neighbourhood instrument is expected to support trilateral programmes for areas like Poland-Russia and Lithuania, which means neighbours around EU's external borders.

On a question about acceptance of maritime borders equal to land borders, Mrs Helander stressed that this was no problem considering INTERREG III B projects, and to have more INTERREG III A like activities under INTERREG III B-programme will be no problem, as long as the projects have a practical and concrete perspective.

The initiative on the new trilateral programmes comes from the European Commission. Interreg and TACIS will be the main instruments also considering the Northern Dimension. As example on a practical project Mrs Helander pointed on a Norwegian project about creating a big maritime corridor.

Mrs Helander did not agree in distinguishing between the natures of the A and B programmes, with the A programme to consider cooperation based on programme management, and the B programme considering concrete projects to be applied for and implemented.

Meeting with mr Alistair Mac Donald, Head of Unit

European Commission, DG External Relations/E1 – Horizontal issues and the Northern Dimension

Mr Mac Donald informed that the European Commission is expected to the 6th June 2003 to approve the next Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006, and then to be discussed in the Council and with external partners. Expected to be endorsed by the Council before end of 2003. The Action Plan is based on the guidelines prepared by the Danish presidency 2002 and approved in Luxembourg October 2002.

He outlined the main changes compared with the first Action Plan:

- Enlargement will put more focus on the North-West Russian regions (new neighbours)
- The number of core priorities will be reduced. Geographical areas as the Arctic and Kaliningrad will not be priorities, but crosscutting mainstream aspects

Northern Dimension will not be a shopping list, but based on existing instruments and programmes, and on the activities by national and regional actors. The reporting and monitoring system will be simplified, and with an internet-based system where each partner can put up in short form information about their activities.

Mr Mac Donald recommended EB to take note on the Communication from European Commission about “A Wider Europe”, describing the situation after enlargement and how to develop relations to EU’s new neighbours – in a ‘ring of friends’ (Mr Prodi). Finally what EU can offer in areas like the 4 freedoms (persons, goods, services, financial capital) based on certain conditions and with a specific action plan for each country.

He also stressed ERB to consider the new neighbourhood instrument, a communication expected in the beginning of July from European Commission.