



Euroregion Baltic
Present Presidency
Southeast Sweden 2001-2002

1 February 2001

Minutes

Euroregion Baltic Council Meeting

Kalmar, 1 February 2001

Attendances

Council members

Kaliningrad region: Alexander Kuznetsov, President of Euroregion Baltic and Head of Baltijsk Municipal District
Valery Starikov - Head of Board of Adm of Kaliningrad region
Victor Koshelev, Deputy Head of Baltijsk Municipal District

Klaipeda region: Ricardas Vaitekunas, Mayor of Klaipeda District
Algirdas Balcytis, Mayor of Situte District
Roma Stubriene, Head of Foreign Relations Dep
Klaipeda County Adm

Southeast Sweden: Roger Kaliff, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
Evy Jonsson, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
Gertie Ohlsson, Region Blekinge
Ulf Andersson, Kronoberg County Council
Solveig Johansson, substitute for Marie Sällström, Region Blekinge
Sigurdh R Petersson, substitute for Gertie Ohlsson

Poland: Zbigniew Babalski, Voivode of Warmia-mazury
Tomasz Sowinski, Voivode of Pomorze
Henryk Slonina, Elblag President
Zbigniew Rychly, Vice President Slupsk
Zbigniew Czepulkowski, Gdansk Council

Danish and Latvian members of Euroregion Baltic are not present at the meeting.

Officials/ERB secrs: Malgorzata Samusjew, Poland
Zdzislaw Olszewski, Poland
Maria Lindbom, Sweden
PG Lindencrona, Sweden
Björn Johansson, Sweden
Håkan Brynielsson, Sweden

Others: Rolf Karlson, Interreg III expert
Marianne Eckerbom, becoming chairman of the
Environmental Working Group
Carolina Gunnarsson, secr Environmental Working
Group

Tadeusz Sobierajski, Olsztyn, Marszal Office
Henryk Wozniak, Gdansk, Marszal Office
Witold Strobel, Olztyn
Jaroslaw Zietkiewicz, Gdansk, Voivod Office
Gregorz Grzelak, Head of Sejmik, Gdansk

Interpreters: Marina Karlsson
Fredrik Wilhelmsson

§ 1 **Welcome and opening of the meeting**

Mr Ulf Andersson, Vice President of Euroregion Baltic welcomes everybody to the Council meeting in Kalmar and gives the floor to the President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Alexander Kuznetsov. Mr Kuznetsov opens the meeting and presents the proposed agenda for the Council meeting. The agenda is adopted as presented.

§ 2 **Presentation of new Council members**

New council members have been appointed by the Kaliningrad party. There might also be other changes from other parties and therefore it is decided to up-date the list of Council members. The new Euroregion Baltic secretariat in Kalmar (under the Swedish Presidency 2001-2002) will produce an up-dated list with the help of the other regional secretariats.

§ 3 **Report from the Kaliningrad Presidency**

Mr Victor Koshelev, Director of the Euroregion Baltic secretariat, reports that the following activities have been carried through during the Kaliningrad Presidency:

- one Council meeting in Baltijsk
- two Board meetings
- 21 different meetings related to Euroregion Baltic activities
- preparatory work for approximately four EU project proposals
- EXPO 2000 in Klaipeda

A planned Board meeting in Klaipeda in connection with the EXPO was not realizable due to elections being held in Russia and in Lithuania at the same time. It is important to give more notice to such circumstances (to take them into consideration) when planning future Euroregion Baltic activities.

§ 4 **Report from Working groups**

Mr Victor Koshelev, responsible official for the working group for *Spatial Planning*, gives a brief report on its work during the past year. Interesting projects within which the Euroregion Baltic partners have been involved are e.g. “SEB Trans” and “Translogis”.

Ms Malgorzata Samusjev, responsible official for the working group for *Social issues*, describes a number of current projects in the youth and culture fields; e.g. an art competition and an ecological camp for youth in the Baltic Sea region.

Mr Ulf Andersson stresses the fact that the working group for Social issues have been very successful applying for funding for youth projects, which must be seen as one of the most important fields for our common work in Euroregion Baltic. For instance the floor ball tournament was a successful arrangement. A Polish team later visited Växjö. This is one good example of how to co-operate within Euroregion Baltic, Mr Andersson states.

Ms Carolina Gunnarsson, responsible official for the working group for *Environmental issues*, reports on the work during the past year. The work has mainly been concentrated on forming a network of steady members in the group, which is needed to be able to reach the aims initially decided upon by the Council. Three meetings have been held in the year 2000. It has been very difficult however to gather representatives from all parties in Euroregion Baltic. Poland and Sweden have been present at all meetings.

There is a great need of producing a common strategy for the environmental work. A political discussion on aims and resources for the working group is lacking. There has been a low response from the different Euroregion Baltic parties (this also applies to the Swedish party), which makes it difficult to produce material of high quality.

The work plan of the Environmental group comprises:

- Development of a common environmental strategy in Euroregion Baltic (of great importance e.g. when applying for funding from the EU etc)
- A summary of environment analysis/strategies existing within Euroregion Baltic as a common basis for future activities
- Forming of an Agenda 21 municipality network
- Deletion of Hot Spots in our region
- Investigate the interest for a network of different environmental organisations in the Baltic Sea region

A number of interesting concrete project ideas have been discussed in the group. Ms Gunnarsson hopes that the group will be able to realize some of them. A first draft report on the work will be presented on the next Council meeting 19 June. She ends by stating that “Economical development requires ecological sustainability” – in other words the Environmental working group is of crucial importance for the development of the Euroregion Baltic co-operation.

As Ms Gunnarsson ends her report we can all see the Russian Coast Guard (MINSK) entering Kalmar harbour to take part in “Forum Kaliningrad” the following two days, 2-3 February 2001.

§ 5 **Acknowledgement of the Russian Presidency**

Mr Alexander Kuznetsov thanks for the confidence shown by all Euroregion Baltic Council members during the year of the Russian/Kaliningrad Presidency. Mr Kuznetsov especially expresses his gratitude to the Polish regions Pomorskie and Warminsko-Mazurskie and to the Swedish Vice President Mr Ulf Andersson for his support and “shoulder to lean on”. Mr Kuznetsov also thanks the leaders of the working groups for their work during the Russian presidency.

Mr Ulf Andersson thanks Mr Kuznetsov for the work carried out during the Russian Presidency 2000-2001. Alexander Kuznetsov has always handled different kinds of situations in a diplomatic and for Euroregion Baltic most fruitful way. He has shown great enthusiasm and commitment for the common task as well as human warmth and a great sense of humour. Ulf Andersson also thanks for the work done by the Russian Euroregion Baltic secretariat; Mr Victor Koshelev and Ms Evgenia Tcherniavskaja.

§ 6 **Inauguration of the Swedish Presidency**

In line for presidency is now the Southeast Sweden party of Euroregion Baltic. The statutes require that a new president is elected.

Proposal from the Southeast Sweden party:

President Euroregion Baltic 2001-2002, Mr Roger Kaliff, The Regional Council in Kalmar County and
responsible for the Euroregion Baltic secretariat 2001-2002:
Ms Maria Lindbom, The Regional Council in Kalmar County

Note that the Southeast Sweden party consists of three counties; Blekinge, Kronoberg and Kalmar.

Decision

Mr Roger Kaliff is elected President of Euroregion Baltic for one year 2001-2002 and as a symbolic gesture the Euroregion Baltic statutes are handed over by Mr Kuznetsov, Kaliningrad to Mr Kaliff, Southeast Sweden.

The Polish delegation expresses their gratitude to the former president Mr Kuznetsov at the same time as wishing Mr Kaliff great success with the new presidency.

§ 7 **Vision of the Swedish Presidency 2001-2002**

Mr Kaliff presents the view of the Southeast Sweden party on the Euroregion Baltic co-operation. Southeast Sweden would like to intensify the work and search for financial tools for the Euroregion Baltic organisation. Since 1998 we have discussed issues of environment, infrastructure and social matters. It is now time to develop a common strategy for our work. Our political network on the local and regional level in the Baltic Sea region is of great interest in a European Union perspective; cross-border co-operation between EU member regions, EU candidate countries and the Russian exclave Kaliningrad. There are a few interesting EU programmes well suited for Euroregion Baltic co-operation projects e.g. Interreg III, which will be discussed later in today's Council meeting.

§ 8 **The Length of each Presidency and the question of Vice Presidency**

The Swedish party has got the information that neither the Latvian nor the Danish party seem to be able to hold the position as Vice President during the Swedish Presidency period 2001-2002. It also remains unclear if any of them will be able to be President in coming periods. In view of this fact the Council discuss different ways of handling the situation. A prolongation of each Presidency Period

has been proposed by the Swedish party. Southeast Sweden has offered to hold the Presidency for two years to be able to find solutions along the way. The Polish delegation stresses the fact that the Swedish proposal would require changes in the Euroregion Baltic statutes and therefore it is also a matter for the Council to decide upon. The Polish party insists on keeping the presidency period of one year in order to sustain the active interest of each party of the Euroregion. The Polish delegation proposes that the new president asks the Latvian member of how we, the other members in Euroregion Baltic, could be of assistance to a coming Latvian Presidency.

The Lithuanian party have nothing against the Swedish proposal but think that the Polish proposal to contact Latvia is logical.

Decision

The council decides that the board shall look into the matter of Vice Presidency/Length of Presidency etc and present a proposal to the council at the next meeting on 19 June. A decision will then be taken by the council.

§ 9 **EXPO in Kaliningrad**

The council discusses the yearly event Euroregion Baltic EXPO. It is now Kaliningrad's turn to be responsible for the arrangement. On the board meeting in Baltijsk 16 January 2001, the EXPO was discussed; timing, theme, organisation etc.

Mr Koshelev suggests that the EXPO is arranged at the "Baltic Expo" in Kaliningrad 11-13 October, 2001. However, there is a Swedish alternate proposal suggesting to combine the EXPO with a Forum South Sweden, which will take place in Kaliningrad in the spring 2002 some time.

Decision

The council gives the task to the board to discuss the matter further with the Kaliningrad party and to find a date for the EXPO in the spring 2002.

§ 10 **Membership in Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR)**

The Polish party has been the only observer member of Euroregion Baltic in AEBR until now. The question has now been raised if all parties should become members in AEBR. The council discusses what the advantages of joining are and the conclusion in short is that membership will contribute to a more favourable handling of applications to EU-programmes etc. More than 50 Euroregions are members in AEBR. The membership fee is approximately 1000 Euro yearly for

each country. As we don't seem to be quite sure of the size of the fee the Swedish Euroregion secretariat will try to clear the matter together with the Polish secretariat.

Decision

The council is for the joining of all parties into the Assembly of European Border Regions. The Euroregion secretariat (with help of the Polish secretariat) will contact the AEBR office and ask about conditions for membership and membership fees for the entry of all Euroregion Baltic parties into AEBR.

§ 11 **Strategy for Euroregion Baltic**

Mr Håkan Brynielsson, Chief Executive of The Regional Council in Kalmar County, describes the thoughts of the Southeast Sweden party concerning the strategy work for Euroregion Baltic. One major problem of our co-operation is lack of resources/funding. There are, however, a number of EU-programmes which can help us realising interesting project ideas from the working groups/other groups.

Baltic Sea Region (BSR) Interreg IIIB is a programme for EU member countries in co-operation with other Baltic Sea countries. A programme proposal has been delivered to the EU Commission and a final decision is expected in the summer 2001. The first deadline for project proposals will probably be in the end of 2001. Discussions with the BSR Interreg IIIB secretariats in Karlskrona and Rostock show that there is a sincere interest for and a positive view on a common project proposal coming in from the Euroregion Baltic parties (the project proposal must be combined with financing from Phare and Tacis for eastern parties).

Southeast Sweden suggests that we start preparing for a common project proposal to BSR Interreg IIIB/Phare/Tacis. If we can agree on this, the Swedish party intends to engage Mr Rolf A. Karlson, who has valuable experience from EU-programmes and projects together with for instance the Pomeranian region.

Mr Rolf A. Karlson explains how we could work with the preparation for an Interreg IIIB project proposal. Interreg is a huge programme, where the programme for the Baltic Sea is only one out of 13 different parts of the total programme. The programme that the Commission decides on will be valid for the period 2000-2006. A common BSR Interreg IIIB project would be an important instrument to give Euroregion Baltic better conditions and continuity in the work. Many questions that the working groups are dealing with can easily be included in such a project. The Polish proposal on a strategy for Euroregion Baltic is also perfect to combine with an Interreg proposal.

First decisions on projects will probably be taken some time in December 2001 (or a bit later). This gives us the necessary time to prepare our own project proposal. It is important to work out a common proposal, well penetrated and

anchored with all parties involved. There will probably also be some funding available from the Swedish Government (Sida – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), which can partly be used as starting motor for the Interreg preparatory work. Mr Björn Johansson will talk about such a project later this afternoon.

Southeast Sweden proposes that an expert group with one member from each country is formed to prepare a first draft of an BSR Interreg IIIB project proposal. The draft can then be discussed and further refined in common seminars. The commitment of all Euroregion Baltic parties in the process is of crucial importance to be able to finalize applications to the EU-programmes. Parallel work has to be done in the west (Interreg) and in the east (Phare and Tacis) to co-ordinate conditions and lobby work towards decision groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Russia in order to avoid the occurring of financial problems etc.

We should aim at having a first draft ready before the summer holidays 2001 (in Sweden this means by the end of June). A final decision has to be taken by the Euroregion Baltic board some time in October in time for a possible Interreg deadline. This way we will produce a common well anchored/supported project proposal which will be a valuable tool for the development of Euroregion Baltic – a stable and long-term strategy for Euroregion Baltic efforts in the years to come.

Please note that using the Interreg programme does not in any way stop us from using funds applicable only for eastern partners. For more information on the Interreg programme please see the homepage www.spatial.baltic.net

While Interreg is an instrument for the more long-term work there is also funding available at shorter notice from the Swedish government/Sida, which for instance can facilitate the preparatory work for an Interreg application – a starting motor as mentioned earlier. A summary of such a project proposal has been sent out by Mr Björn Johansson to the parties before this council meeting. Mr Johansson also explained the idea at the board meeting in Baltijsk 16 January. There are two aims of this project:

1. to work with internal organisational Euroregion Baltic matters – functions of the board, council, working groups etc.
2. to do preparatory work for a BSR Interreg IIIB application.

Mr Johansson asks for "Letters of Priority" from the parties stating their interest in taking part in such a project (no later than 28 February).

All present Euroregion Baltic parties are in favour of developing the projects as proposed.

Mr Gregorz Grzelak mentions that the Polish government has developed a two-year support programme for the regions, which can be used in our common work. In other words, Mr Grzelak explains that the Polish party is ready to start the preparatory work at once in the direction previously explained.

Mr Ulf Andersson proposes that the task to initiate the common strategy work is given to the board. The thought behind the Swedish proposal previously described by Rolf Karlson/Björn Johansson is also to get to know each other better at the same time as producing the project material.

Decision

It is decided that the task to initiate the common strategy work/preparatory work for a common project proposal to BSR Interreg IIIB/Phare/Tacis is given to the board. The council also decides to support an application to the Swedish Development agency concerning the Euroregion Baltic internal work.

Mr Kaliff ends the council meeting by inviting everybody to visit the “Royal Ship Kronan” exhibition at Kalmar County Museum.

Roger Kaliff
President

Maria Lindbom
Secretariat