

Euroregion Baltic Executive Board Meeting Gdańsk, Poland 29th October 2014



Office of the Marshal
of Pomorskie Region
ul. Okopowa 21/27
Herbowa Conference Room

Title	Final Minutes
Submitted by	SM, International Permanent Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document provides final minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place in Gdańsk on 29 th October 2014.
Requested action	Signing

Participants: ERB Executive Board:

Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas	ERB President, President of Association Klaipėda Region
Mr Wiesław Byczkowski	ERB Vice-President, Vice-Chair of the Board of Pomorskie Region
Mr Roland Gustbée	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Regional Council of södra Småland
Ms Akko Karlsson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Board of the Regional Council in Kalmar County
Ms Christina Mattisson	Member of ERB Executive Board, Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge
Mr Robert Olesen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Regional Council in Södra Småland
Mr Per Ole Petersen	Member of ERB Executive Board, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm

Participants: ERB Youth Board:

Mr Mateusz Kryżba	Deputy Chair of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Mr Mateusz Ankiewicz	Deputy Member of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region
Mr Hmida Benattalah	Deputy Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council in Kalmar County

Mr Karl Holst	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council in Kalmar County
Mr Artur Hulu	Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge
Mr Maksymilian Lewandowski	Member of ERB Youth Board, Association of Polish Communes
Mr Oliver Rosengren	Member of ERB Youth Board, Regional Council of södra Småland
Mr Tautrimas Rupulevicius	Member of ERB Youth Board, Association Klaipeda Region
Ms Sara Sakhnini	Member of ERB Youth Board, Region Blekinge

Participants: ERB Secretariats

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen	Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Mr Sebastian Magier	ERB International Permanent Secretariat
Ms Therese Magnusson	Regional Council of södra Småland
Mr Jan Martinsson	Regional Council of Kalmar County
Ms Anna Martinsson	Regional Council of Kalmar County
Ms Romualda Naruszewicz	Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic
Mr Valdas Pučkorius	Director of the Secretariat of Association Klaipeda Region
Ms Johanna Rönn	Region Blekinge
Ms Magdalena Skłucka	Department of Economic Development, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Mr Johnny Winther Holbech	Leader of ERB Task Force on Labour Mobility, Regional Municipality of Bornholm
Ms Krystyna Wróblewska	Deputy Director for International Cooperation, Department of Economic Development, Office of the Marshal of Pomorskie Region
Mr Piotr Zwolak	Office of the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region

Guests:

Mr Thorsten Kohlisch	Head of Joint Technical Secretariat, South Baltic CBC Programme
Ms Kinga Krupińska	Regional Policy Department, Office of the Marshall of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship

1. **Opening & Welcome**

Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, Deputy Marshal of Pomorskie Region and Vice President of Euroregion Baltic, welcomed the participants of the meeting in Gdańsk and the Pomorskie Region.

2. **Opening & adoption of the agenda**

Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas, President of Euroregion Baltic, opened the meeting of the ERB Executive Board.

3. **Adoption of the agenda**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas, presented the agenda.

Decision:

ERB Executive Board members approved the agenda.

4. **Signing the minutes of the previous ERB Board meeting**

ERB IPS submitted the minutes of the ERB Executive Board meeting which took place on 16th June 2014.

Decision:

ERB President, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas and ERB Executive Board member, Mr Roland Gustbée signed the minutes.

3. **Comments on the 5th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders**

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas opened a discussion where the ERB Executive Board members and ERB Secretariats shared their opinions on the 5th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders.

Mr Roland Gustbée pointed out that it was a good idea to invite students and university professors. This had a positive impact on the quality of the presentations and discussions. However, during upcoming Forums it would be better to have a more diverse representations of stakeholders with local politicians and entrepreneurs also taking active part. The format of the Forum's seminars was good and there were some interesting speeches. Some of the presentations proved too long which greatly limited the discussions. Shorter presentations and more time for discussions would be a lot better.

Ms Akko Karlsson stated that the sessions were interesting and she was positive on the idea of organizing parallel workshops. Inviting student to the Forum was also a very good idea. EVS volunteers from different countries could also be invited to share more information about the service. Ms Karlsson also shared the view that there should be more time for discussions. To this end the agenda of the Forum could be better adjusted next time to facilitate that. She also agreed that the venue fitted the purpose of the Forum perfectly.

Ms Christina Mattisson agreed that the choice of topics for the Forum was good, but next time more time was needed for discussions. The

presentations were too long. She also hinted that the next Annual Forum could coincide with the South Baltic Programme Kick-off Conference planned for Autumn 2015.

Mr Piotr Zwolak also praised the good selections of the themes. He expressed hope that they could integrate more stakeholders around the ERB cooperation and give some concrete results in the future.

Mr Per Ole Petersen agreed with the Swedish representatives that it would be a good idea to connect the next Forum with the South Baltic Kick-off in September 2015, should there be such a possibility. Mr Petersen also stated that the organisation of the Forum was good, but that more possibilities for networking could be considered next time. Also, some of the workshops were held in bigger venues than necessary and that could be also better coordinated next time. He also pointed out that the presentations could be shorter.

Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas stated that the organisation of the Forum generally met the expectations of participants. However, next time less presentations could be considered during the workshops to allow for more effective discussions and better results.

Mr Karl Holst pointed out that the idea of inviting students to the Forum and holding a dedicated workshop was a very good and should be continued. A workshop with more student friendly themes could be organised next time.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska thanked all ERB Executive Board members for their participation in the Forum and also for understanding with respect to any organisational issues. Commenting on some of the issues raised during the discussion, she pointed out that invitations were sent to most of the municipalities and counties in both regions. Low turnout was probably caused by the upcoming municipal elections scheduled for 16th November. Concerning the participation of the students, Ms Wróblewska explained that the idea came from prof. Kazimierz Musiał from the Institute of Scandinavian Studies and Applied Linguistics at the University of Gdańsk. The result was very positive and could be continued in the future.

Commenting on the workshops, Ms Wróblewska reiterated that the original idea was to have 30 minutes for presentations and one hour for discussions, but some of the presentations proved longer than expected. As to the youth workshop, the idea was to bring something new for the youth, more thoughts for discussions by giving examples of projects and activities of other youth organisations.

Taking the opportunity, Ms Krystyna Wróblewska expressed her concern at the absence of the representatives of the Kaliningrad Region from both the Forum and ERB Executive Board meeting. This was especially important since the next year Pomorskie would be taking over the ERB Presidency and the Russian partners would hold the Vice Presidency. As the contacts on the working level remain limited, perhaps the political level of the region should be engaged by the President and other members of the Executive Board. That would allow the ERB to know in advance about the situation and plan future activities.

Mr Per Ole Petersen agreed that the idea for contacting the Kaliningrad region by the ERB President was very good. That would allow the ERB to better plan their future activities, also with respect to the upcoming Vice Presidency. In case the Kaliningrad region should be unable to take over the VP, we could request other region to take it over instead.

President of Euroregion Baltic, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas closed the discussion.

4. **Information regarding the transfer of the International Permanent Secretariat**

ERB 2020 Agenda Focus Area: Strategic Actions
Internal Action: strengthening ERB internally

Mr Sebastian Magier gave an overview concerning the finalisation of the transfer of the IPS to Poland.

As decided by the Executive Board, as of 1st July 2014 the IPS is seated at the Foundation for Supporting and Promoting Entrepreneurship in Warmia-Mazury with Mr Sebastian Magier as the Head of IPS. Based on the decisions made by the Board on 16th June 2014, the new Head of IPS was asked to finalise the negotiations concerning the cost of running the Secretariat at Foundation, as well as the conditions of his employment. Mr Magier stated that the Chair of the Foundation, Ms Danuta Ciborowska and the entire staff there proved to be good and supportive partners. During initial negotiations both sides agreed that final cost of running the secretariat would be based on the actual spending during the first month of IPS operation within the Foundation. Further negotiations followed in August during which it was agreed that the actual cost would amount to 1700 PLN for all services and fees including accountancy and taxes, which basically met the expectations of the Board expressed in Växjö.

Concerning his employment at the Foundation, Mr Magier stated that the labour contract was signed for seven months with two weeks notice, and that it would expire on 31st January 2015. Given the nature of responsibilities as the Head of IPS and provided that the Executive Board is satisfied with the performance of the Secretariat, Mr Magier requested the Executive Board to give their views on the extension of his contract.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska was of the impression that the cooperation with the new Head of IPS was good and she supported the continuation of cooperation with Mr Sebastian Magier.

Mr Per Ole Petersen agreed with this opinion and added that it was important to give the Head of IPS good conditions to perform his duties.

Ms Christina Mattisson, Ms Akko Karlsson and Mr Roland Gustbée were all in support of this opinion and recommended that the employment of the Head of IPS be extended.

Decision:

Following further discussions, the Executive Board decided to extend the

employment of Mr Sebastian Magier as the Head of IPS. Details of the extension would be agreed with the Foundation and decided on during an additional online meeting of the Executive Board before the expiration of the contract.

5. **Information from ERB Youth Board**

Mateusz Kryżba, Deputy Chair of ERB Youth Board presented information on the current activities of the Board.

A new EVS volunteer has been available to support the Youth Board in its activities. The engagement of the volunteer would be flexible and not incur any additional costs for the ERB, as she would be working for an association in Olsztyn and only dedicated her time to ERB Youth Board if needed. The Youth Board favoured this solution, but the formal agreement from the Executive Board was needed to support this solution.

Mr Per Ole Petersen said it was important to use all possibilities for the development of the Youth Board and an EVS volunteer would be a valuable support.

Ms Akko Karlson said that the idea was good in general. She indicated that the Youth Board should better communicate internally and this support could facilitate that. The problem was the Youth Board was not very active between meetings and should try to change that in order to remain sustainable.

Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas agreed that it was important to have good communication among the Youth Board members between the meetings as this makes it more effective.

Mr Oliver Rosengren shared concerns expressed by the Executive Board members. The discussion on the Youth Board was taking place for a long time. In his view the Youth Board had no capability to cooperate between meetings. Everything was done through projects but could not depend on them. A more sustainable arrangement was needed with a strategic long term goal. A permanent structure and leadership was also needed to have good functioning of the Youth Board. He said that it was not about a permanent secretariat but a person not depending on projects to support the Youth Board administratively and coordinate its work.

Ms Christina Mattisson said that she was concerned about Youth Board but remained confident that it should continue. Additional meetings between the Executive Board meetings are a necessity, as the Youth Board is rooted in the ERB Statutes. The new EVS volunteer could provide necessary assistance to facilitate better performance of the Board.

Per Ole Petersen considered the EVS volunteer as an asset that would allow the Youth Board to have discussions irrespective of possible projects. He also added that a visit of the Youth Board Chair to the ERB regions could facilitate future cooperation on youth issues. He also stated that during the pre-meeting with the Youth Board Chair he was informed that it was difficult for the Chair to remain in contact with other members of the Youth Board.

Ms Sara Sakhnini responded that the members of the Youth Board had not been receiving any communication from the Youth Board Chair which was not helpful as the Youth Board would like to have more cooperation.

Mr Roland Gustbée stated that the Youth Board needed collective responsibility and should have some concrete use for the volunteer. Also the hosting organisation is responsible for the volunteer's training and development.

Ms Akko Karlsson reminded that the previous EVS volunteer was supported by Jan Martinsson and during her work at the Kalmar Council a pre-study on youth cooperation was prepared. The problem with the Youth Board was that there was not an active list of emails and the volunteer had difficult time contacting its members.

Ms Karlsson requested the Youth Board to upgrade the email list, use the FB page and have meetings with agenda and dates at least once between common ERB meetings. Such activity should be obligatory for Youth Board and it could be supported by the IPS in these matters.

Mr Oliver Rosengren said that the Vice Chair of Youth Board was in favour of additional meeting in February 2015. As the permanent support by EVS is not possible, more contacts with the IPS could be considered.

Ms Krystyna Wróblewska reiterated that the ERB Secretariats were ready to support the Youth Board, but they also require some input from Youth Board members to provide effective support. In her view projects are helpful as they organise the daily work of such organisations – there are subjects, timetables, funds and specific tasks to be performed.

Mr Mateusz Kryżba thanked Executive Board members for their comments on the EVS involvement and future activities of the Board. Concerning the information on the future Youth Board project, he stated that he would like to postpone the presentation as two additional face-to-face meetings would be needed before submission of the application in March 2015.

Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas was of the opinion that the Youth Board should be encouraged to have more internal communication. As both Boards have the same goals, he expressed hope that for the next meeting there would be some concrete decisions and results.

Ms Akko Karlsson requested the Youth Board to deliver agendas of their meetings to the IPS. These agendas should be available to all members of the Executive Board.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board agreed on the involvement of the EVS volunteer in the work of the Youth Board. The Youth Board was also asked to present a current list of email contacts, hold a least one meeting between the general ERB meetings, and submit detailed agendas of such meetings with dates and names of participants to the IPS.

7. **Discussion on the involvement of ERB member organisations in the upcoming South Baltic CBC Programme**

Mr Niels Chresten Andersen moderated the discussion during which ERB Board members presented their expectations and potential project initiatives that could be implemented within the South Baltic Programme Programme. Mr Thorsten Kohlisch, Head of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the South Baltic Programme actively participated in the discussion by providing expert support on the requirements of the new Programme.

Following the presentations by all member organisations present during the discussion, the following list of potential project themes was drawn up:

- Urban transport / green transport / accessibility
- Youth mobility / vocational training
- Waternets
- SME B2B / cluster internationalisation / Baltic Sea Cluster Development Centre BSCDC
- Tourism / culture / heritage / marketing
- Youth / SYPERB
- Maritime safety
- Transport East-West / Baltic Link
- Infrastructure / drainwater
- Science park
- Creative industries
- Historical events / sea battles
- Local actors in CBC / Age Friendly
- Maritime tourism / cluster
- Waste management
- Labour mobility

Commenting on the themes, Mr Thorsten Kohlisch stated that in order to be considered for funding in the South Baltic Programme, all potential projects must demonstrate how they will contribute to the specific objectives and related indicators of the chosen priorities and also have a positive impact on the blue and green growth in the South Baltic area.

Following further discussions, Mr Niels Chresten Andersen proposed that a task force be established within ERB to facilitate the initiation and preparation of project ideas submitted by the partners. The Task Force could be directed by Bornholm and actively supported by the Head of the IPS.

Decision:

The Executive Board unanimously decided to create the new Task Force to facilitate future projects with a special attention to the South Baltic programme 2014-2020. The complete setup of the TF and its detailed Terms of Reference could be agreed upon during the additional on-line meeting of the ERB Executive Board later this year.

8. **Discussion on the Action Plan 2015-2016**

Mr Sebastian Magier briefly presented the current ERB Action Plan 2014-2015 which focuses on supporting youth cooperation within the ERB Youth Board, fostering B2B cooperation with focus on clusters, innovation

and SME internationalisation and addressing the labour market mobility and youth unemployment challenges.

Concerning the contents of the next ERB Action Plan 2015-2016, Mr Magier asked the Executive Board whether any new areas of cooperation could be considered in the future ERB work.

Following a discussion, the ERB Executive Board was of the opinion that more detailed debate on the Action Plan would be possible once the Board had been informed on the position of the Kaliningrad region towards its next year's Vice Presidency.

9. **Information from the Swedish Party about the results of Swedish elections held on 14th September 2014**

Ms Akko Karlsson presented a short information about the results of the recent parliamentary and local elections in Sweden with focus on Swedish ERB member regions.

On the national level a new government was formed by Social Democrats in alliance with the Green Party, with new views on the country's economy. On the other side of the political spectrum the Swedish Democrats gained significant number of votes.

Concerning the Swedish regions within ERB:

- Kalmar – a coalition of Social Democrats and Green Party would lead the region
- Blekinge – no changes expected in the current political set up on the regional level. The municipal level is still to be completed.
- södra Småland - some changes expected as the current political leadership is likely to be in opposition.

The changes will affect the Swedish setup of the ERB Executive Board, but final information on the changes will be known only in December 2014

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

10. **Information from the Regional Council of Southern Småland about the merger between the regional council and the county council**

Mr Roland Gustbée informed the Executive Board about the upcoming merger of the regional and county councils, and its impact on responsibilities and tasks for the new organisation.

The new organisation will comprise the regional council and the county. It will also receive a new name, most probably Region Kronoberg. The total number of employees will be around 5000.

Concerning the political bodies, there will be the Regional Parliament and Executive Board which is expected to deal with international questions. Apart from that the new organisation will also have the Regional Development Board, but its responsibilities are not clear yet.

Once the merger is completed on 1st January 2015, the ERB will gain a

stronger partner to support its cooperation.

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

11. **Request to ERB to join the future WaterNets as project partner**

Mr Jan Martinsson informed the ERB Executive Board about a request from the Regional Council in Kalmar County for ERB to become an official partner in the forthcoming WaterNets project (see attached).

WaterNets is essentially a continuation of the Moment project. In February this year the WaterNets project received support for developing the Water Users Partnership concept by the EUSBSR Feed Money Facility with the aim of emerging a new project application that would be submitted to the Baltic Sea Programme in 2015.

Furthermore, Mr Martinsson gave a short overview of the current situation with respect to the ERB Water Core Group. Up till now Ms Carolina Gunnarsson was in charge of day-to-day management of the WCG. She will now be replaced by Yvonne Aldentum. Also, it is not sure whether Mr Åke Nilsson would continue as the chair of the WCG. The final decision will be made in January 2015.

Decision:

The ERB Executive Board decided to give its preliminary consent to participate in the WaterNets project as partner.

12. **Discussion on the dates of ERB meetings in 2015**

Starting the discussion, Mr Sebastian Magier informed the Executive Board that that preliminary discussions had already been made with the Pomorskie Region and Klaipeda Association as to the availability of the ERB President and Vice President for the first meeting of the Board in 2015. The result of the discussion was that both representatives would be able to participate in the meeting during the first or second week of February (weeks 6 and 7).

Following a brief discussion among the members of the ERB Executive Board, the most suitable date for the meeting was fixed for 12-13th February 2015 (Thursday-Friday). As no place for the meeting was proposed during the discussion, the Executive Board decided to postpone the decision on the place of the meeting. Such a decision could be taken later during an on-line meeting of the Executive Board.

Discussing the organisation of the 6th Annual ERB Forum, it was once again mentioned that it could be organised together with the South Baltic Kick-off conference. Mr Thorsten Kohlich, Head of South Baltic Programme JTS stated that the Kick-off would most probably be held in Gdańsk, Poland in September 2015. Concerning that it would have quite an extensive agenda focusing also on practical activities for potential beneficiaries, the ERB Forum could be organised as a back-to-back event with the South Baltic Kick-off Conference.

Decision:

The Executive Board decided to hold its first meeting next year on 12-13 Feb 2015 (week 7). The place of the meeting would be specified later once proposals are made by member regions.

13. Information on ERB joint budget

Sebastian Magier informed the ERB Executive Board on the implementation of ERB budget as of October 2014 (see attached).

ERB Executive Board members took note of the information presented.

14. Conclusion and Closing

ERB President, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas concluded and closed the ERB Executive Board meeting.