

**JOINT SESSION OF THE ESTONIAN- LATVIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
COMMISSIONS FOR CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION**

**MINUTES**

**Valka**

**21 of January, 2005. 13:00 – 15:00**

**Chairman:** M.Kučinskis – Minister of Regional Development and Local Governments of Latvia

**Participants from Latvia:**

V.A.Krauklis	Valka Local Government
G.Kamenskis	National Border Guard, Valmiera office
U.Ozoliņa	Valka Local Government
V.Staņa	Valmiera District Council
D.Rika	Ministry of Environment
J.Bakmanis	Limbazi Distict Council
U.Birkšteins	Valka district council
J.Ceļmillers	Alūksne District Council
D.Dzilna	Vidzeme Development Agency
E.Skuja	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Latvia to the Republic of Estonia
I.Segliņa	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
N.Linde	Ministry of the Regional Development and Local Government, Regional Policy Department

**Participants form Estonia:**

Jaan Ōunapuu	Minister for Regional Affairs of Estonian Republic	Ministry of the Interior
Aivar Pere	Director	Valga Business Information Centre
Enn Bernard	Head of Planning Department	Pärnu County Government

Georg Trašanov	Valga Substitute County Governor	Valga County Government
Jaak Maandi	Chief Specialist of Planning Department	Ministry of the Interior
Johannes Männiste	Head of South-Eastern Customs House	Tax and Customs Board
Kadri Jushkin	Advisor of Regional Development Department	Ministry of the Interior
Kalev Härk	Head of IT Department	Valga County Government
Krista Kampus	Deputy Head of Regional Development Department	Ministry of the Interior
Kirsti Ruul	Press Officer	Ministry of the Interior
Margus Lepik	Mayor of Valga	Valga City Government
Merike Metsavas	Head of Employment Office of Valga County	Estonian Labour Market Board
Natalja Mjalitsina	Head of Foreign Relations and European Integration Department	Ministry of the Interior
Rainer Kuutma	Chief Specialist of Planning Department	Valga County Government
Rein Lõokene	Chief Specialist of Railways Division of Road and Railways Department	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
Riho Tapfer	Managing director	Valga Hospital
Sirje Orgel	Head of Southern Region Department	Citizenship and Migration Board
Sulev Lääne	Advisor to the Ministry	Ministry of the Interior
Toomas Lukk	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Estonia to the Republic of Latvia	Estonian Embassy
Urmas Kase	Head of Development Department	Pärnu County Government

Väino Kõva                      Shief of Defence Staff              Valga Border Guard Region

Väino Tõemets                      Head of Local                      Ministry of the Interior  
Government and  
Regional Administration  
Department

**Secretary:**                      E.Gņedovska – Ministry of the Regional Development and  
Local Government of Latvia

**Agenda:**

- 1. Results of Valka – Valga working group (presented by Mr.Krauklis - the chairman of Latvian working group)**
- 2. Results of Riga Gulf Region Development Planning working group presented by Mr.Kase - Head of Development Department of Pärnu County Government**
- 3. Informative report „Cross-border cooperation strategy between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia” presented by Ms. Linde – the Director of Regional Policy Department of the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments**
- 4. Proposals for the next steps of working groups for the implementation of the strategy**

**1) Results of Valka - Valga working group presented by Mr.Krauklis - the chairman of Latvian working group**

**Mr.Krauklis** outlines main factors preventing effective cooperation:

- diverse principle of defining composition of working groups (representatives from national level in Latvia and representatives from local level in Estonia);
- lack of competence division between local and national level institutions.

**Mr.Krauklis** outlines short term cooperation priority questions that are to be solved urgently:

- Opening of the border point on Riga – Soprus Street;
- Inclusion of the border posts Valka – 4 and Valga - 4 in the agreement on border posts;
- Broadening the authority of border guards during the time of special regime of border crossing.

**Mr.Krauklis:** we need to nominate coordinators in the responsible ministries to raise the efficiency of co-operation.

**Mr. Ūunapuu:** the problems and tasks for solving them have been identified. Now activities for implementing those solutions need to be delegated to the competent ministries. When the agreement is signed, it will be handed over to ministries.

**Mr. Krauklis:** it is necessary to form smaller working groups for solving specific problems – especially those of legal character.

**Mr. Kučinskis:** is not ready to solve this problem on the spot; needs time to discuss it with the ministers of line ministries.

### **Decisions:**

- 1) To accept the report on results of Valka - Valga working group presented by Mr. Krauklis - the chairman of Latvian working group.
  - 2) To identify the institutions and contact persons (according to the issues) competent and responsible for preparing necessary legislative amendments.
  - 3) The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments of Latvia is approved co-ordinator of co-operation from the Latvian side.
  - 4) To ensure effective problem solving coordinators of both countries should involve in the process the minister responsible for regional development issues in each country.
  - 5) To continue the cooperation providing solutions to the problems included in the strategy as well as the newly revealed problems.
  - 6) To solve the urgent Valka – Valga problems parallelly to the development of strategy and cooperation program.
- 2) Results of Riga Gulf Region Development Planning working group presented by Mr. Kase - Head of Development Department of Pärnu County Government**

**Mr. Skuja:** isn't it appropriate to include Gotland in the territory of potential Livonia - Maritima Euroregion to connect the ferry route with Sweden as well?

**Mr. Ūunapuu:** Entrepreneurial activities in the field of tourism have to be started this summer already. Once there was a ferry line, connecting Estonia and Gotland, but it was closed due the number of reasons: lack of harbour deepening management, loss of interest on the part of Swedish tourists. We will be able to think about the cooperation if the Sweden is interested in such project.

**Mr. Kučinskis:** Is the working group from Estonia satisfied with the co-operation with working group from Latvia?

**Mr. Kase:** Yes, because the Latvian side included representatives from planning regions and municipalities in the working group. Riga seems to be a very active partner. We have also established good co-operation experience with the E. Gnedovska – coordinator from the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments of Latvia.

**Mr. Kučinskis:** Are there any legislative amendments needed for ensuring effective action of the work groups?

**Mr.Kase:** No, there are no any amendments needed at present.

**Mr.Luuk:** The beginning of co-operation is very positive. The implementation of the INTERREG IIIA project with an aim of developing Euroregion development strategy is a key-stone for the further productive co-operation.

**Decision:**

To accept the report on the Riga Gulf Region Development Planning working group presented by Mr.Kase - Head of Development Department of Pärnu County Government.

**3) Informative report „Cross-border cooperation strategy between Republic of Latvia and Republic of Estonia” presented by Ms. Linde – the Director of Regional Policy Department of the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments**

**Mr.Krauklis:** Additions in the „Cross-border cooperation strategy between Republic of Latvia and Republic of Estonia” in the field of infrastructure need to be made regarding the re-opening of the rail route Valga – Pskov.

**Mr.Kuutma:** another addition should be made regarding the opening of the rail route Riga – Valga – Pečora – St.Peterburg.

**Mr.Krauklis:** the entrepreneurs from Latvia, Estonia and Russia are interested in freightage. Situation of carriage of passengers is a more difficult issue.

**Mr.Kuutma:** the company „Estref Transserviss” in Estonia is in transportation business in East European region. The only essential rote they cannot currently use is Valga – Pečora.

**Mr.Krauklis:** it is not possible to develop logistics without this rail route.

**Mr.Õunapuu:** expresses gratitude to the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments for the report „Cross-border cooperation strategy between Republic of Latvia and Republic of Estonia”. One suggestion - it is necessary to separate short term urgent issues and long term priorities.

**Decisions:**

- 1) To include the issues of rail route Valga – Pskov and rail route Rīga – Valga – Pečora – St.Peterburg in the agenda of working groups.
- 2) To make corrections in the text of the report: Ziemeļu stīga – Parnu – Viru.
- 3) Representatives from all working groups should send the additions needed to improve the informative report „Cross-border cooperation strategy between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia” within 2 weeks time - until the 4<sup>th</sup> of February.

- 4) To approve the informative report „Cross-border cooperation strategy between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia” after improving it according to the proposals from the representatives of working groups.

**5) Proposals to the next steps of work groups for implementing the strategy**

**Decisions:**

- 1) To send the improved strategy to the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Estonia to enable the minister of regional affairs of Estonia to inform the government and line ministries of Estonia about the cooperation results between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia.
- 2) To develop the cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia in conformity with the strategic directions and task of the strategy.
- 3) To organise the next joint session of the Estonian- Latvian intergovernmental commissions for cross-border co-operation in August, 2005 with the goal to give careful consideration to co-operation program.
- 4) To approve the Department of Regional Policy (the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments of Latvia) as a coordinator of co-operation from the Latvian side.
- 5) To approve the coordinator from the Estonian side until the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 2005.
- 6) To continue practical work of working groups on urgent issues parallel to the development of strategy and program.