

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Grenzregionen (AGEG)  
Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas (ARFE)  
Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)  
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)  
Comunità di lavoro delle regioni europee di confine (AGEG)  
Europæiske grænseregioners Arbejdsfællesskab (AGEG)  
Werkgemeinschaft van Europese grensgebieden (WVEG)  
Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)  
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)  
Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)  
Ассоциация Европейских Приграничных Регионов (АЕГПР)



## **STATUTES FOR THE** **ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS (AEBR)**

Adopted at AEBR General Assembly 2015, Committee of the Regions, Brussels, on 13 November 2015;  
corrected at AEBR General Assembly 2017 in Badajoz on 26 October 2017; reviewed in Oulu on 20  
September 2018

### **Preamble**

The Association of European Border Regions grants itself

- in acknowledgement of the fact that borders often divide historically and culturally connected areas and people;
- in the awareness of the inviolability of borders, the peaceful co-existence of people in border regions and the protection of minorities;
- in respect of European cultural diversity and the regional independence in cross-border cooperation;
- in view of increasing European cross-border cooperation and progressive European integration;
- in view of the necessary subsidiarity and partnership between the European, national, regional and local levels in cross-border cooperation;
- in the awareness that, despite the European Common Market and increasing cooperation with neighbouring countries, the border regions must solve problems the origin of which they are not responsible for;
  - in acknowledgement of the fact of further differences appearing in the borders between national competences and structures, tax and social legislation, regional planning and regional policies;
  - in the awareness that cross-border cooperation on all levels supports peace, freedom, security and the safeguarding of human rights;
  - in the awareness that border regions and cross-border regions are elements and bridges for the European unification process, and for the cooperation between European general population and minorities;
  - in the awareness of the opportunity for borders, traditionally separating lines, to become bridges and meeting places;

in further development of the inaugural meeting on 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June 1971 at the Anholt Castle (Westphalia), and the decisions of 21<sup>st</sup> January 1977 (Bonn/Strasbourg), 25<sup>th</sup> November 1994 (Trieste), 13<sup>th</sup> October 1997 (Salamanca), 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Brussels), 26 October 2017 (Badajoz) and 20 September 2018 (Oulu), the following statutes are adopted:

### **§ 1**

### **Name, legal form and headquarters**

1. The name of the association is "Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)". Since 1971 AEBR affiliates European border and cross-border regions.
2. The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is a registered association. The association is registered at the district Court in charge (Coesfeld).
3. The headquarters of the association is Gronau (Westphalia), Federal Republic of Germany, at the premises of EUREGIO (DE/NL).
4. AEBR can establish regional branches, antennae of info-centres, and ask them to execute AEBR's interests at national level.
5. The financial year corresponds to the calendar year.

### **§ 2**

#### **Purpose and tasks**

1. The promotion of an international disposition, in particular to cross-border cooperation, with a focus in Europe, is an exclusive and direct purpose of common benefit of the association AEBR.
2. This purpose is in particular achieved by:
  - Making clear special problems, chances and tasks of border regions.
  - Exchanging experiences and information, in order to coordinate and formulate common interests out of the variety of cross-border problems and chances, and to offer solutions.
  - Initiating, coordinating and supporting co-operation between European border regions.
  - Representing common interests of European border regions on European and international level (EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, OECD, UN).
  - Informing politicians and the general public in a targeted way and regularly on cross-border issues.
  - Organising and carrying out thematic events and measures on cross-border cooperation (in cooperation with one or more border regions or European institutions).

### **§ 3**

#### **Common Public Interest**

The association treats exclusively and directly public interests in the sense of the paragraph "Tax privileged purposes" of the German tax code.

The association is acting selflessly and does not pursue own economic purposes at first instance. All means of the association can only be used according to the purposes defined in these Statutes.

The association is politically and religiously neutral.

Members do not receive financial benefits from means of the association (membership

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contributions). No person can benefit from tasks not directly linked with the purpose of the Association, or from disproportionate remunerations.

The Executive Committee can decide, if necessary and taking into consideration the economic and budgetary situation, that functions within the association and within its bodies are executed being paid based on a service contract or by means of a lump-sum expense allowance.

The Executive Committee is responsible for decisions with regard to entry of force, content and end of contracts, according to § 26 BGB.

Resigning members do not have the right to claim percentages of the association assets.

### **§ 4**

#### **Membership**

Members of the Association of European Border Regions can be:

1. As full members with a right to vote:
  - European border and cross-border regions in member states of the European Union or the Council of Europe.
  - Large-sized amalgamations of border regions within several countries provided not all their members join AEBR individually.
  - Chambers of Commerce in border regions, provided their involvement in cross-border cooperation, and other entities considered by AEBR bodies.
2. As members without the right to vote:
  - Border and cross-border regions with observer status for two years.
  - Honorary members must have won special recognition for AEBR.
3. As advisory members without the right to vote:
  - Advisory members can be persons, associations, institutions and institutes working in the field of cross-border co-operation.
4. The Executive Committee decides on the admission of a new member. Confirmation by the General Assembly is required. The application must be submitted in written. If the Executive Committee rejects the admission, the applicant can raise an objection within one month after receipt of the rejection. The following full General Assembly will then decide on this matter. It can rescind the decision of the Executive Committee with a two-thirds majority.
5. Membership can be terminated by a written notice of resignation. It is only possible if six months notice is given before the end of the calendar year and provided outstanding membership fees have been paid.
6. By decision of the Executive Committee a member can be expelled if obligations towards AEBR have not been fulfilled. The member can raise an objection against this expulsion within one month, which will be decided upon in the following full general meeting. It can rescind the decision of the Executive Committee only with a two-thirds majority.

### **§ 5**

### **Rights and obligations of members**

1. Members contribute to the formulation of demands and objectives of AEBR. They must be informed about topical cross-border subjects and developments at European level.
2. Members have the right to use the services, programmes and facilities of AEBR.
3. Members are required to support the work of AEBR of supporting the regional cross-border co-operation and development at national and European level. They must inform AEBR about current development in their border regions.
4. Members are required to pay their contributions according to the decisions of the General Assembly and within the regulations of these statutes and the contributions' regulation.

### **§ 6**

#### **Bodies**

The bodies of AEBR are:

1. General Assembly
2. Executive Committee
3. Secretary General

### **§ 7**

#### **General Assembly**

1. The General Assembly is the highest AEBR body.
2. Within the General Assembly every member has at least one vote as long as the contribution has been paid for the previous and current calendar year. The number of votes is regulated by the contribution regulation. Vote transfer is not permitted.
3. The General Assembly must be held at least once a year.
4. The General Assembly incorporates the following functions:
  - a. The election of the President.
  - b. Election of the first Vice-President and at least three further Vice-Presidents. Presidents and Vice-Presidents can usually only be elected representatives of border or cross-border regions.
  - c. Election of the Executive Committee.
  - d. Admission and expulsion of members according to § 4 of the statutes.
  - e. Changes to the statutes.
  - f. Contribution regulation.
  - g. Approval of the budget.
  - h. Approval of the final account.
  - i. Approval of the Executive Committee
5. The General Assembly transfers these tasks to the Executive Committee if urgent decisions have to be made between the general meetings. Such decisions must subsequently be presented to and approved by the General Assembly.

**§ 8**

**Executive Committee and President**

1. The Executive Committee will be elected for 2 years.
2. The Executive Committee includes:
  - the President
  - the first Vice-President and at least three further Vice-Presidents
  - the Treasurer,
  - at least 20 members as representatives from the border and cross-border regions.

The composition of the Executive Committee should take into account the regional balance and the number of members from individual countries. It meets at least twice annually. The chairmen of the Advisory Committee, of the working groups and task forces can be invited as long as they are not already members of the Executive Committee in advisory capacity.
3. As advisory members to meetings of the Executive Committee there can be invited representatives of the following institutions and organisations: European Union institutions (including the CoR, the European Committee of the Regions, and the EESC, the European Economic and Social Committee), the Council of Europe (and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CCRE), the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR).
4. The tasks of the Executive Committee are:
  - a. Preparation and implementation of decisions of the General Assembly.
  - b. Dealing with personnel, organisational and financial matters as long as the General Assembly or the Secretary General is not responsible.
  - c. Working out the draft budget.
  - d. Drawing up the final accounts.
  - e. Election of the Secretary General. The Executive Committee can entrust one of its members with the management if no full-time Secretary General is elected.
  - f. Constitution and staffing of the Advisory Committee, the working groups and task forces.
  - g. Passing of basic statements regarding programmes and documents at European level.
  - h. Cooperation with European institutions, organizations and entities.
  - i. Concluding urgent decisions.
5. The President is the most senior AEBR representative. He chairs the meetings of the general assemblies and of the Executive Committee. He has the right, in agreement with the Secretary General, to take all decisions necessary for the implementation of decisions of AEBR.
6. The first Vice-President is the President's deputy. In case of unavailability, other Vice-Presidents can represent them.
7. The President can transfer certain tasks to one or several Vice-Presidents.

**§ 9**

### **Secretary General**

1. The Secretary General is head of the secretariat general.
2. The Secretary General fulfils the following tasks:
  - a. Preparation of General Assemblies.
  - b. Preparation and implementation of the decisions of the Executive Committee.
  - c. Managing of the day-to-day business, the organisations and the administration of finances in the frame of the budgetary dispositions.
  - d. Implementation of programmes and projects.
  - e. Supervision and guidance of employees.
3. The Secretary General participates in meetings of the Executive Committee.

### **§ 10**

#### **Power of representation**

AEBR is represented in and out of court by the President, First Vice-President and Secretary General with the authority invested in each of the above to solely represent AEBR.

### **§ 11**

#### **Advisory Committees, Working groups and Task Forces**

1. AEBR convenes an Advisory Committee for Cross-border Co-operation. Its role is to advise AEBR professionally in all questions of cross border co-operation and to put forward solution proposals. Members of the Advisory Committee are personalities who have gained recognition through scientific works and/or forward-looking contributions regarding cross-border co-operation. The Executive Committee appoints a chairperson on the proposal of the Secretary General, in consultation with the President. The members of the advisory committee are appointed by the Executive Committee on the chairperson's proposal, in consultation with the Secretary General. The Secretariat General sends the invitations to the meetings of the advisory committee.
2. The Executive Committee can, to fulfil the tasks of AEBR, form working groups and task forces. It decides on their tasks, working methods, composition and duration and, when indicated, on their dissolution.

Working groups are composed of members of AEBR. When indicated, third persons can be invited to the meetings by the chairperson, in consultation with the Secretary General.

Task Forces deal with a specific subject chosen by the Executive Committee. Task Forces are composed of members of AEBR as well as representatives of other partner organisations and groupings and experts dealing with this subject.

### **§ 12**

#### **Procedures in AEBR bodies**

1. The General Assembly must be convened in writing by the President, together with the agenda, no less than four weeks prior to the meeting date. An extraordinary General Assembly must be convened through a decision of the Executive Committee or at the request

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of at least two-thirds of the members.

2. The Executive Committee will be, with the enclosed agenda, convened by the Secretary General within 14 days.
3. AEBR bodies are quorate if over 50 per cent of those representatives entitled to vote are present and as long as the statutes provide no other regulations. They are quorate as long as they are not established as being inquorate.
4. Decisions are made with a simple majority of the attending members. Decisions are made by public vote; if requested a secret ballot can take place.
5. In elections an absolute majority (50 per cent + 1 of all possible votes) is decisive in the first ballot, in the second ballot a simple majority (50 per cent + 1 of the votes present) but at least one third of all members. In the third ballot, those who gain most votes are elected.  
If an elected member loses his regional mandate/post, he retires from AEBR bodies. Until the new election in the next General Assembly, a successor, nominated by the regional authority concerned, can take his place on AEBR bodies.
6. Minutes are taken at all meetings, which have to be signed by the Secretary General.
7. The committees can determine further regulations through standing orders.
8. The statutes can only be changed by a two-thirds majority of received votes in the General Assembly but at least by the absolute majority (50 per cent + 1) of the votes of all members. Changes to the statutes must be announced in writing as item on the agenda, four weeks prior to the meeting.

### **§ 13**

#### **Finances**

1. To cover the necessary costs, members must pay contributions to AEBR. Further details are regulated by the contribution regulation and contribution structure and the number of votes for the General Assembly derived in this way.
2. The Executive Committee can grant a reduction in membership fees to individual members or member groups. This applies in particular for members who have made a special contribution to AEBR or who are particularly involved in AEBR. If a member encounters serious financial difficulty, the Executive Committee is entitled to reduce membership fees. According to resolutions of the General Assembly, members who are not able to fulfil their obligations towards AEBR can be granted a temporary status of "associated member". These members are exempted from the payment of the membership fee and do not have the right to vote.
3. In very particular cases, AEBR and other organization(s) may establish a partnership agreement with a "reverse membership". These should be approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the General Assembly. A mutual exemption of fees or the establishment of a token fee would apply in these cases.
4. The General Assembly decides on the amount and settlement date of contributions.
5. Expenses arising in connection with the meetings of AEBR bodies at the location of the conference are generally paid for by the host member region. Travel expenses, and board and lodging are not part of these costs. In particular cases the Executive Committee can decide that AEBR covers all or part of the conference costs.
6. For every business year a budget and final accounts are prepared. The draft budget should be prepared two months prior to the start of the financial year and be approved by the General Assembly at the beginning of the financial year.

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7. The principles of budget-keeping and accountability depend on the regulations fixed by the Executive Committee and must be in accordance with current law.
8. If the treasurer contradicts costs or the taking up of loans not planned for the financial year, these financial transactions can only take place if the Executive Committee so decides with a two-thirds majority.
9. The General Assembly appoints two auditors. They must present an annual auditor's report. They are entitled to demand from the Secretary General and Treasurer the necessary information at any time. Moreover, they are entitled to contact the auditor's office of a member region to support the audit.

**§ 14**

**Termination of AEBR**

1. The termination of AEBR can only take place through a specially convened General Assembly for this purpose, and for which two months' notice must be given. For a termination, the decision of a two-thirds majority of the members present is needed.
2. This General Assembly also decides on the type of liquidation.
3. In the liquidation procedure the members of AEBR are obliged to give, according to their contributions, grants to pay the liabilities of AEBR remaining after use of AEBR finances.
4. After the liquidation the remaining asset of the association is transferred to the City of Gronau that may use it directly and only for cross-border common-benefit purposes.

Brussels (Belgium), 13 November 2015



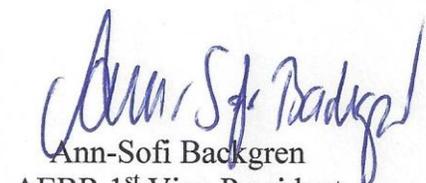
Karl-Heinz Lambertz  
President of AEBR

Badajoz (Spain), 26 October 2017



Oliver Paasch  
President of AEBR

Oulu, 20 September 2018



Ann-Sofi Backgren  
AEBR 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President