

EUROREGION BALTIC 2020



2010

This Euroregion Baltic 2020 Agenda resulted from a constructive dialogue among its stakeholders. This document outlines the goals and priorities of our cooperation for the next decade.

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EUROREGION BALTIC 2020

THIS IS OUR GOAL

The stakeholders of the cooperation consider Euroregion Baltic (ERB) an important platform involving partners from Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden in activities contributing to the development of the whole Baltic Sea Region and with particular attention to the South Baltic area. The significance of the cooperation has been reflected by joint political initiatives resulting, among others, in the attraction of funds to support the South Baltic area, implemented strategic projects based on the ERB Joint Development Programme 2005 – 2015, and improved intercultural dialogue benefitting the integration processes in Europe. The goal of this Agenda is to draw on these successful experiences and help the organisation move into a new phase where it becomes a more dynamic tool to tackle common challenges observed by its members, and a strengthened political leverage in the cross-border cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region.

ADDED VALUE OF COOPERATION

The ERB member regions have designed this Agenda and its implementation to highlight added value of the cooperation in their common actions. Thus, the elementary condition for a variety of concrete projects and activities which the ERB stakeholders will jointly implement must be that they bring added value to each region's own development through operating at the overall ERB level. In addition, any such action should only be developed if it produces superior results by being implemented through the ERB partnership rather than by a member region alone.

FOCUS AREAS

This Agenda calls for a consolidated approach to the cooperation within the ERB and therefore streamlines a wide scope of joint activities into the three following strategic focus areas:

- lobbying activities,
- strategic actions, and
- exchange initiatives.

These focus areas have been selected by the member regions as a result of a careful examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the ERB cooperation observed up to date, and are recognised to justify the commitment of the member regions in ERB activities in the future.

Lobbying Activities

ERB will enhance its role of a lobbying platform towards the European Union and take an active role in the shaping of EU policies. The policies within the scope of the ERB interest include, but are not limited to, EU Cohesion Policy, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Europe 2020 Strategy, TEN-T Policy, Rural Development Policy, EU – Russia Cooperation and Eastern Partnership. The ERB Executive Board will be an initiator of lobby initiatives and to this end establish ad hoc task forces with the objective of planning and executing lobbying activities under its scrutiny. Cooperating with the European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, national governments, Baltic organisations, as well as with the regional offices in Brussels will be an important part of the lobbying effort.

EU Cohesion Policy

ERB should monitor the preparation process for the future Cohesion Policy within the European Union and actively promote a greater role of its Objective 3 (territorial cooperation). Advocating for the equal importance of cross-border cooperation along maritime borders to that along land borders shall be not less important. A specific focus should be placed on the future of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. In order to ensure favourable long-term financial possibilities for cross-border cooperation in the ERB area, we shall lobby for the continuation of the South Baltic Programme including all the ERB member regions. The stakeholders of the ERB cooperation consider that the future South Baltic Programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund with the ENPI component enabling the participation of Russian partners will be the best option.

Strategic Actions

Strategic initiatives within ERB serve a multi-fold function. By enabling networking among a variety of partners and providing complementarity with the regional development strategies, such actions upgrade added value of the cooperation. By inviting high political representatives of the regions and involving

other important stakeholders, such actions strengthen the vitality of the cooperation. Today, a more focused coordination of joint strategic objectives within ERB will be necessary in such areas as:

- implementation of the ERB Joint Development Programme (JDP),
- accomplishment of prioritised institutional activities, and
- development of platforms supporting other forms of cooperation and actors in the ERB area.

ERB Joint Development Programme

JDP will continue to be implemented by the partners of the cooperation who will each year define which JDP action(s) shall be selected for realisation, and how it (they) should be prepared and put into operation. It is hereby recommended that ad hoc task forces be established by the ERB Executive Board in order to deal with this specific task.

Prioritised Institutional Activities

Actions and/or projects will be designed by the stakeholders of the ERB cooperation to implement prioritised institutional activities. One strategic joint action should be the investigation of a possible status of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) on the condition that it covers all the ERB partners. A SWOT analysis should be conducted with the aim of presenting possible benefits of such a solution against necessary financial and administrative resources, as well as indicating what functions will be feasible and most suited for ERB as an EGTC.

Another prioritised institutional activity for the ERB could be to involve more intensively experts in the our work with the long-term objective of building a think-tank capacity of Euroregion Baltic. Expertise may be commissioned and provided by research institutions and independent professionals in order to assist the ERB in its lobbying work, as well as in the development and implementation of strategic actions. It is also expected that increased participation of experts will contribute to ERB's enhanced recognition and visibility.

Other Forms of Cooperation

ERB will actively contribute to the growth of its member regions by supporting the development of platforms for other forms of cooperation and actors. With respect to this role, ERB should primarily be a facilitator of cooperation, serving

as a match-making point and information broker. Moreover, ERB could aim to improve framework conditions for cooperation and investments, particularly those related to business development, environmental sustainability, regional attractiveness, and transport accessibility. Exemplary actions may include:

- enhancing cooperation between businesses, universities, academia, innovation centres, clusters, and small Baltic ports, as well as promoting people-to-people cooperation,
- improving labour mobility,
- improving maritime safety,
- mitigating and adapting to climate changes through the development of renewable energy sources and energy saving,
- promoting investment in transport corridors and improving ferry and air links among the ports of the member regions.
- facilitating border crossing with the Kaliningrad Region.

Exchange Initiatives

The stakeholders of the ERB cooperation are strongly convinced that significant progress in innovation and in operational efficiency can be successfully generated when knowledge is exchanged.

Therefore, they commit themselves to exchange activities in belief that collaborative approach to common challenges by local and regional politicians, decision-makers, experts and practitioners will lead to deepened relations between the ERB member regions and strengthened cooperation. Such exchange initiatives shall also result in the development and improvement of competence and skills of everyone engaged and provide an integrating stimulus to the organisation.



EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

ERB will continue its involvement in the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Our engagement will permeate all three focus areas of the ERB cooperation. As a political platform, ERB will act as a stakeholder of the Strategy, by monitoring its implementation and attending the Baltic Strategy annual fora. In its joint strategic undertakings, ERB may act as a participator in relevant flagship projects agreed in the Strategy Action Plan or as a contributor of its own project proposals, to be submitted to the European

Commission for approval as the Strategy flagship projects. As an information broker, ERB will facilitate the exchange of information between the member regions and the European Union, between Euroregion Baltic and other Baltic organisations, as well as among the member regions themselves.

STRONG LEADERSHIP

The implementation of this Agenda must be based on effective leadership, strong participation and efficient organisation, in which necessary resources are allocated for our common work. High-level political representatives should be more involved in ERB so that the organisation will be more effective, quicker to take decisions



and capable of taking strategic actions in order to undertake joint initiatives. ERB as a political organisation must be flexible and able to adapt to changing environments. Not only will the active participation of leading politicians be necessary to secure strong political leadership in the organisation but it will also be crucial to involve top-level civil servants more effectively in the ERB cooperation. By doing so, an effective link will be provided to facilitate smooth transfer of important aspects of the ERB work to the member regions and vice versa. Strong political leadership within ERB must be assisted by a relevant organisational structure, efficient daily management routines and necessary financial resources.

Organisational Structure

Executive Board

ERB Executive Board shall be constituted as the ERB's highest authority with the decision-taking power concerning all activities within the Euroregion. All decisions made by the Executive Board will require consensus. Each member organisation will appoint up to two representatives of the highest possible political rank as members of the ERB Executive Board and one permanent deputy. Each member organisation will have one vote. The Executive Board will also include the chair of the ERB Youth Board with the right to vote.

The Board will have at least three meetings each year, one of them coinciding with the Annual Forum. The use of online meetings should also be considered a

possibility. The Board meetings will be prepared by the International Permanent Secretariat (IPS) in close cooperation with regional ERB secretariats.

ERB President

The President chairs the Executive Board and is the ERB's highest-ranking representative. The ERB Presidency and Vice-Presidency are held for one year and it rotates around all of the National Parties of the ERB cooperation who subsequently recommend their candidates to be finally approved by the ERB Executive Board. The President has the authorisation of the Executive Board to represent ERB externally and act on its behalf. In his or her capacity as the Chair of the Executive Board, the President will be assisted by the IPS working closely together with regional ERB secretariats.

Youth Board

ERB Youth Board constitutes an integrated part of our cooperation, bearing responsibility for the promotion of youth perspectives and their advancement into the scope of general ERB priorities. The Youth Board consists of one representative of each member organisation. All members of the Youth Board will have the right to have a permanent deputy. Every year, the Youth Board members elect their Chair who represents them in the ERB Executive Board, and Vice-Chair. The Youth Board contributes towards the ERB Biennial Action Plan and works in accordance with their own activity schedule, which is presented and adopted by the ERB Executive Board beforehand.

Annual Forum of Stakeholders

Every year the Annual Forum of Stakeholders shall be convened upon the initiative of the ERB Executive Board. It will be a meeting platform facilitating discussions of relevant stakeholders from the member organisations and outside (leading politicians and high-ranking civil servants, national and EU representatives, experts and practitioners of territorial cooperation), and thus providing valuable input to the ERB work. The Annual Forum should be an arena where policies of significance to the ERB cooperation, in particular those concerning the European Union, Baltic Sea Region and EU – Russia relations, are discussed and joint positions and statements result from such discussions, where ideas are presented of further development of the ERB cooperation and concluding proposals made towards the ERB Executive Board. The Forum will also provide the opportunity for ERB to be a successful promoter of the stakeholder approach in its cooperation by which interests of the member regions, local

communities, authorities and other relevant actors are all taken into account. Thus, the Annual Forum will serve as an important tool strengthening the political cooperation in ERB which will enhance its institutional capacities by developing cooperative networks and increasing its visibility. The Annual Forum should therefore have a well and timely prepared, clear political agenda, enabling the member organisations to discuss in advance strategic topics internally, as well as to justify the participation of pertinent participants.

Daily Management

Under the management of the ERB Executive Board and the President, daily work in ERB will follow the Biennial Action Plan and involve the IPS and regional secretariats.

Biennial Action Plan

Every year the ERB Executive Board will adopt a Biennial Action Plan specifying joint strategic objectives, defining focus areas and describing initiatives of the ERB cooperation. The Plan should also indicate the thematic scope of the Annual Fora planned to take place within the span of the Plan. It will be drafted by the IPS working closely together with the ERB President and Vice-President, as well as with the regional ERB secretariats. The Action Plan will be adopted in the ERB member organisations. The Biennial Action Plan will ensure effective work flow despite annual transfers of the ERB Presidency.



International Permanent Secretariat

Following the Biennial Action Plan and instructions of the ERB President and Executive Board, the IPS will coordinate the organisation's daily workload in close cooperation with regional ERB secretariats. IPS will hold monthly on-line meetings of the regional secretariats. Extra meetings can also be convened whenever necessary or upon request by any of the ERB members. The International Secretariat will also bear general responsibility for the preparation of other meetings in ERB, including the Executive Board meetings and Annual Fora, and assist the ERB President in his or her term in office.

Regional Secretariats

Each member organisation will appoint its regional secretariats dealing with all issues related to the ERB cooperation. These regional secretariats shall act as a liaison between the IPS and the ERB members. All the personnel involved in the implementation of the ERB cooperation, including the IPS and regional secretariats shall share the responsibility for the successful execution of the tasks resulting from the day-to-day management of the ERB work, implementation of the Biennial Action Plan and realisation of other assignments delegated by the ERB President and Executive Board.

Task Forces

The ERB Working Groups will cease to exist. The Executive Board will have the authority to establish task forces which can operate only in strict accordance with the Terms of Reference proposed and approved by the Board, specifying clear objectives, composition, time framework and expected outputs. Task forces should be set up primarily with the general goal of meeting the ERB cooperation priorities, i.e. designing and executing lobbying activities, preparing and implementing joint strategic actions, and managing common exchange activities, but the Executive Board may also decide to empower them with any extraordinary task that it shall see relevant.

Membership Fees

The existing membership fee system should be adapted to reflect changes which have taken place in the member regions since 2004 when the system was introduced. The ultimate objective should be that all the member regions contribute financially to the joint ERB budget in the equal amount. At the same time, the stakeholders of the ERB cooperation are aware of two facts that may hinder immediate approximation of the fees; firstly, the weaker economic conditions in the Kaliningrad Region, and secondly, still unclear situation of the Lithuanian participation. Therefore, a two-speed approach is agreed by means of which the Polish organisations involved in the ERB cooperation should pay equal membership fees to those incurred by the partners from Denmark and Sweden, while the Lithuanian and Russian partners should adopt a schedule which, in the perspective of one to two years, will increase their membership fees to the amount paid by the Danish, Polish and Swedish members.