

EUROREGION BALTIC NEWSLETTER

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EUROREGION BALTIC IS A POLITICAL COOPERATION OF NINE REGIONS IN DENMARK, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND, RUSSIA AND SWEDEN



Euroregion Baltic Council meeting

Around 80 participants attended the Council meeting which took place on 25 February in Ryn, Poland, including ERB Council members, secretariat staff and ERB Working Groups. Special guests included Mr Krzysztof Lisek, chair of the foreign relation committee of the Polish Parliament, other members of the Parliament, as well as representatives of regional and local assemblies.

In its working session, the Council discussed outputs delivered by the ERB Working Groups in 2008 and approved of their activity plans for 2009. Two new Working Groups were also established by the Council: one dealing with environment protection in the Kaliningrad Region and the other coordinating joint initiatives of local communities around the ERB areas. The Council also heard the activity report from the outgoing President, Mr Per Ole Petersen and adopted a two-year action plan of Euroregion Baltic (see page 3 of this newsletter).



A special discussion was held in response to the consultation on the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. The debate resulted in the adoption of the ERB contribution to the consultation process, which was submitted to the European Commission (also available at http://www.euroregionbaltic.eu/images/ERB_GreenPaper_TerritorialCohesion.pdf).

In the celebratory part of the meeting, the Council attended the presidency transfer procedure. The outgoing Danish President, Mr Per Ole Petersen passed the office over to Mr Jacek Protas, Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, who will chair work in Euroregion on behalf of the Polish partners in the coming twelve months.

New President of Euroregion Baltic



Mr Jacek Protas, Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, has become the twelfth chairman of the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board. His term will continue until the end of March 2010.

Mr Jacek Protas was born in 1964 in Lidzbark Warmiński, in the Polish region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie. He graduated from the Physical Education Academy in Gdańsk and completed post-graduate studies in public administration. He is married and has a son, who is now a student at the Warmińsko-Mazurskie University in Olsztyn.

Mr Protas has been active in local and regional politics since the self-government was reinstalled in Poland as a result of democratic transformation of 1989. Between 1996 and 1998 he chaired the Municipal Council in Lidzbark Warmiński and in 2000 he took the seat of Office of Lidzbark Warmiński County Board Chair.

Following the parliamentary election victory by the Civic Platform in 2006, he became the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region. He is also the leader of the party in the region and a member of the Polish delegation to the Committee of the Regions.

ERB BOARD IN KALININGRAD

ERB Executive Board met on 22nd January 2009 in Kaliningrad. Among the issues discussed were the cooperation status of the ERB Working Groups, 2009—2010 Action Plan draft and the ERB position towards the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

The Board heard the activity reports from the ERB Working Groups which submitted applications to the South Baltic CBC Programme. Its members also agreed to recommend the establishment of two new groups dealing with local initiatives and environmental protection.

With the new presidency within Euroregion the Board approved of the new action plan to be presented to the Council as the ERB cooperation agenda prepared jointly by the Polish and Lithuanian partners (also, see age one). This Action Plan focuses on four main priorities of cooperation, including socio-economic development, societal integration, information policy and capacity building.

The Board members also discussed what should be the contribution from Euroregion Baltic to the EU consultation on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. After some discussions it was decided that the secretariats will provide their comments to the draft paper which should then be submitted to the Council for adoption (also, see page one).

The full minutes of the meeting are available at: http://www.euroregionbaltic.eu/images/090122_final_minutes.pdf



2nd CALL FOR PROPOSALS IN SOUTH BALTIC

Between 20th November 2008 and 9th January 2009 a second call for proposals was held by the South Baltic CBC Programme. 22 projects were submitted.

21 submitted project applications passed formal assessment and will be subject to further procedures, including the decision as to their approval or rejection taken by the Programme Steering Committee at the meeting on 6 — 7 April 2009 in Kalmar.

The submitted projects presented the cooperation effort of 157 partners from all the involved countries plus associate partners from the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation. The largest attendance was displayed by partners from Sweden (56 in total) and Poland (51 in total). Similarly, most would-be Lead Partners have come from Poland (9) and Sweden (7).

The total budget of the submitted applications is 23 MEUR (where the co-financing amounts to 18,28 MEUR altogether). The budgets of these applications spread relatively equally between the two Programme priority axes (47% within the first priority and 53% in the second one).

Although the submitted projects spread quite evenly between the individual measures, initiatives of local communities proved the most attractive measure among the applicants of the second call, when considering the number of projects. In terms of the type of partners who submitted the applications, most are local (54) and regional (24) authorities.

6 projects were submitted by four Euroregion Baltic Working Groups and Youth Board. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

More information can be searched at <http://www.en.southbaltic.eu>.

ERB ACTION PLAN

2009 - 2010

Adopted by the Council on 25th February 2009 and outlining the main priorities within Euroregion Baltic during Polish and Lithuanian presidencies.

Priority 1: Improving socio-economic cohesion in Euroregion Baltic through the continued implementation of the ERB Joint Development Programme.

Strategic focus: Effective implementation of Joint Development Programme.

Rationale: The reference networks which were established during the Seagull II project, turned into formal ERB Working Groups. Consisting of politicians, civil servants and experts, they examine possibilities for actors from the ERB member regions to work together within the areas of Joint Development Programme and prepare project applications with the aim of implementing specific recommendations of the ERB Joint Development Programme. The time framework for the Groups to operate should at least be until 2015, to match the temporal perspective of the Joint Development Programme.

Priority 2: Enhancing cultural and societal integration within Euroregion Baltic through joint activities of local communities and youth.

Strategic focus: Integration of local communities within ERB regions, and of youth in particular.

Rationale: Integration of local communities lays at the foundation of cross-border cooperation and thus remains the core objective within Euroregion Baltic. The Working Group on Local Community Initiatives should provide a coordinative mechanism helping ERB actors to impermanent concrete activities affecting local communities in such areas as culture, education, entrepreneurship, healthcare, sports, and tourism. The involvement of youth shall add value to the integration of local communities and intercultural dialogue within ERB regions. Participation of the Youth Board in ERB decision-making processes is instrumental in both bringing the youth aspect into the ERB agenda and attracting more interest within the regions.

Priority 3: Making ERB more recognisable nationally, in the Baltic Sea Region and in the EU through the implementation of the ERB Information and Communication Strategy

Strategic focus: Improving internal and external communication activities promoting Euroregion Baltic, as well as enhancing its participatory role in EU debates

Rationale: This priority will specifically deal with the ERB Information and Communication Strategy which has been constructed in order to address the challenge of building an ERB brand on a number of levels. Firstly, ERB will run activities to make the organisation more familiar to a wide representation of local and regional levels. Another task will be to improve ERB visibility at national levels, both among governmental and parliamentary representatives. Finally, ERB will continue efforts to make coordinated contributions to debates within the European Union.

Priority 4: Strengthening ERB institutional capacities through the enhanced involvement of both political and administrative representatives in the ERB cooperation

Strategic focus: Implementing a joint ERB project with the aim of enhancing ERB institutional capacities and positively affecting ERB organisational structures

Rationale: Euroregion Baltic has undergone significant changes reflecting the continuous need to make it a modern and efficiently acting organisation. They have all been possible through political support offered by politicians representing the regions – members of Euroregion Baltic, through administrative resources made available by their local and regional offices, and through personal commitment displayed by a number of individuals working with everyday issues on the ERB agenda. Financial assistance of EU programmes has also been instrumental in the process.

You can read the full text of the ERB 2009-2010 Action Plan at: <http://www.euroregionbaltic.eu/images/ERBActionPlan20092010.pdf>

New Euroregion Baltic Website!

As part of the implementation process of the ERB Communication and Information Strategy, a new Euroregion Baltic website is now available at <http://www.euroregionbaltic.eu>.

**EUROREGION BALTIC
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SECRETARIAT**

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EUROREGION



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2009 Upcoming Events

2 April 2009

Secretariat meeting, Gdańsk, Pomorskie

2 April – 10 May 2009

Klaipeda Music Spring, Klaipeda

6 April 2009

Board meeting, online

29 April - 3 May 2009

Trolling Master, Bornholm

1 – 4 May 2009

Elblag Junket, Warmińsko-Mazurskie

4 May 2009

Secretariat on-line meeting

7 – 8 May 2009

National Wind Energy Seminar, Kalmar

14 - 17 May 2009

Kortowiada Students' Festival in Olsztyn, Warmińsko-Mazurskie

17 May 2009

Museum Nights, all over ERB and Europe

18 May – 1 June 2009

Poetry Spring, Klaipeda

22 – 23 May 2009

Blues & Roots Festival in Mönsterås, Kalmar

30 May – 1 June 2009

International Blacksmith Open-air, Klaipeda

1 June – 7 June 2009

International Festival of Street Theatres, Klaipeda

9 June 2009

Board meeting in Gdańsk, Pomorskie

13 – 17 June 2009

Fairy Tale Festival in Ljungby, Södra Småland

24 – 29 June 2009

Klaipeda Castle Jazz Festival, Klaipeda

25 – 28 June 2009

International Children & Youth Folk Festival in Elk, Warmińsko-Mazurskie

27 June 2009

Lövmarknaden Karlskrona, Blekinge

27 June 2009

Days of the Sea in Ostróda, Warmińsko-Mazurskie

30 June – 28 August

International Organ Music Festival in Oliwa, Pomorskie

Working Group meetings

Energy WG will meet on 28th April in Gdańsk. For details, please contact Mr Ulf Anderson (see the contact box on the left).

Rural Development WG will meet on 4th August in Olsztyn. For details, please contact Mr Niels Chresten Andersen (see the contact box on the left).