



Euroregion Baltic
Presidency Southeast Sweden 2001-2002

Annual Report 2001



1. Aims and Forms of Co-operation within Euroregion Baltic (ERB)

Euroregion Baltic was founded on 22 February 1998. ERB consists of nine regions from six countries in the Southeast Baltic Sea region. In year 2001 the members were:

- Kronoberg, Kalmar and Blekinge Counties in Sweden
- Bornholm County in Denmark
- Pomeranian and Warmia-Masurian Regions in Poland
- Kaliningrad Region in Russia
- Klaipeda Region in Lithuania
- Liepaja District in Latvia.

A population of 5,7 million people inhabit the ERB regions.

The aims and forms of co-operation within ERB are as follows.

- To improve life conditions of the people inhabiting the area of ERB.
- To promote mutual contacts.
- To tighten bonds among local communities.
- To eliminate historical prejudices.
- To plan activities aimed at providing sustainable development among the members of ERB.
- To promote actions aiming at co-operation between regional and local authorities.

The aims will be realised in the following ways:

- Supporting common cross-border projects of social and economic development in various areas.
- Co-operation to realise common municipal projects on border-territories.
- Co-operation in spatial planning for border-territories.
- Development of border-crossing infrastructure.
- Increasing professional qualifications and directing requalification systems to decrease unemployment, especially among young people.
- Exchange of groups of scientists, sportsmen, people dealing with culture, youth and children.
- Co-operation in scope of tourism development.
- Stimulating learning of neighbour-languages.
- Protection and cultivation of common cultural heritage.

- Organising information channels of ERB and supporting media development to provide all the Parties with current information.
- Co-operation in scope of fighting natural and ecological disasters, fire and other emergencies. Exchanging information about the mentioned threats.

2. Resources and working methods

The Council and the ERB Presidency

The Council is the highest decision-making body. It consists of representatives appointed by each member. The Council consists of a maximum of 8 persons from each member, who meet at least twice a year. The Council has had three meetings during 2001.

By approving the Vice-president, the council defines the rotation of the President post for the following year. The representative of the party, who is to take the position as ERB president next year, performs the function of vice president. The presidency chairs the meetings in the Council, the Executive Board and secretariats' meetings. The presidency rotates yearly among the members. The president and the vice president represent ERB externally.

By the end of year 2001 the members of the Council were:

Kalmar-Kronoberg-Blekinge Counties/Sweden:

Roger Kaliff, President, The Regional Council in Kalmar County

Evy Jonsson, Council member, The Regional Council in Kalmar County

Gertie Ohlsson, Board member, Region Blekinge

Marie Sällström, First Vice President, Region Blekinge

Ulf Andersson, Chairman of the board of County Development,
Kronoberg County Council

Bo Frank, Vice Mayor of Växjö Municipality, Kronoberg Association of
Local Authorities

Substitutes:

for Gertie Ohlsson: Sigurdh R Petersson, Region Blekinge

for Marie Sällström: Solveig Johansson, Region Blekinge

Liepāja City-Region/Latvia:

Normunds Niedols, Executive Director, Liepāja City Council

Edvins Drigins, Vice Executive Director, Liepāja City Council

Gunars Ansins - Project co-ordinator, Liepāja City Council

Klaipeda Region/Lithuania:

Virginia Lukoshene, Governor of Klaipeda County

Kiastutis Vaitiekunas, Director of Dep of Regional Development,
Klaipeda County

Roma Stubriene, Head of Foreign Relations Dep, Klaipeda County

Rimantas Taraskevicius, Mayor of City of Klaipeda

Richardas Vaitiekunas, Mayor of Klaipeda District

Algirdas Balchitis, Mayor of Silute District

Kaliningrad Region/Russia:

Alexander Kuznetsov, Mayor of Baltijsk Municipal District

Iouri Savenko, Mayor of Kaliningrad

Victor Koshelev, Deputy Head of Baltijsk Municipal District

Victor Romanovsky, Head of the Board of administration of Kaliningrad
region

Valery Starikov, Head of the Board of administration of Kaliningrad
region

Valerian Jourov, Administration of Kaliningrad, Head of Department

Anton Zouikov, Svetly Municipal District, Specialist of Administration

Guennadi Ivanov, Slavsk District, Specialist of the Administration

Warmia-Mazury and Pomerania regions/Poland:

Henryk Slonina, President of Elblag, Chairman of Executive Board of
Association of Communes

Zbigniew Rychly, Vice-President of Slupsk, Deputy Chairman of
Executive Board of Association of Communes

Zbigniew Czepulkowski, Member Council of Gdansk

Andrzej Helbrecht, Chairman of Executive Board of Górowo Ilaweckie

Tomasz Sowinski, Voivod of Pomerania region

Zbigniew Babalski, Voivod of Warmia-Mazury region

Andrzej Rynski, Marshall of Warmia-Mazury region

Jan Zarebski Marshall of Pomerania region

Bornholm/Denmark:

Knud Andersen, County Mayor of Bornholm

The Executive Board

The executive body is the Executive Board, which is appointed by the Council.

Members of the Board by the end of 2001 were:

Roger Kaliff (President during 2001), The Regional Council in Kalmar County, Sweden

Normunds Niedols (Vice President during 2001), Liepaja City Council, Latvia

Virginia Lukoshene, Governor Klaipeda County, Lithuania

Alexander Kuznetsov, Mayor of Baltijsk Municipal District, Kaliningrad region, Russia

Henryk Slonina, President of Elblag/Chairman of Executive Board of Association of Communes, Poland

Knud Andersen, County Mayor of Bornholm, Denmark

The Board has had six meetings during the Swedish presidency.

ERB Presidency Secretariat and National Secretariats

The national ERB secretariats form an administrative network of the Euroregion. Each member has a national secretariat as a contact point and liaison office. The Presidency is responsible for the Head secretariat, which at the same time is the official ERB secretariat. The national secretariats organise meetings regularly to prepare and follow up Council and Board decisions and resolutions. The official ERB secretariat is responsible for the meetings which can be held anywhere in the ERB area. The official secretariat maintains contact with the national secretariats, organises exchange of information and sets up the calendar of events. The official ERB secretariat is also responsible for Council and Board minutes and information activities during the presidency period.

Responsible for National Secretariats during 2001 has been:

Maria Lindbom, Sweden (Official Secretariat during Swedish Presidency 2001)

Gunta Strele, Latvia

Dalia Makuskiene, Lithuania

Victor Koshelev, Russia

Zdzislaw Olszewski, Poland

Niels Chresten Andersen, Denmark

Working groups

ERB has three permanent working groups dealing with issues in the following fields:

Spatial Planning:

Responsible party Kaliningrad region, Chairman/Secretariat

Mr. Victor Koshelev

Environment:

Responsible party Sweden, Chairman Ms Marianne Eckerbom,
Secretariat Ms. Carolina Gunnarsson

Social issues:

Responsible party Poland, Chairman Mrs Jadwiga Semmerling,
Secretariat Malgorzata Samusjew

Temporary project group "PI A"

A working group was set up during the year to prepare an applications to Interreg IIIB Baltic Sea/Phare and Tacis programmes – the "Seagull-DevERB"-project (see more info on page 11).

Members of the group are:

Sweden	Håkan Brynielsson (Chairman)
Kaliningrad	Victor Koshelev
Liepaja	Gunta Strele
Klaipeda	Roma Stubriene
Poland	Zbigniew Czepulkowski
Bornholm	Niels Chresten Andersen
Secretariat	Rolf Karlson

3. Important issues in 2001

The Swedish Presidency Vision for year 2001 was to intensify the work and search for financial tools for the ERB organisation and common development work in the ERB regions. Since 1998 many issues have been discussed, for instance environment, infrastructure and social matters. During 2001 we have started to develop a common strategy for our work. Euroregion Baltic's political network on the local and regional level in the Baltic Sea region is of great interest in a European Union perspective; cross-border co-operation between EU member regions, EU candidate countries and the Russian exclave Kaliningrad.

During the year financing has been received from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities/Swedish Federation of County Councils (SALA IDA) and an application has been submitted to the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Baltic Billion programme (*approval of the application was received 7 March 2002*). The PIA group has worked intensively to prepare an application to the Interreg IIIB/Phare and Tacis programmes (*deadline 28 March 2002*).

In 2001, discussions and operations focused on the following issues and areas:

- Strategy for Euroregion Baltic
- Development of the ERB organisation; aims, forms, resources and methods for co-operation
- Continued networking between different actors of the ERB regions
- Efforts to form project applications
- Development of a common ERB web site (<http://www.eurobalt.org>)

- Border Crossing problems
- Visa regulation problems between the ERB regions
- Continued efforts of ERB Working Groups (see below)
- Development of the yearly event ERB EXPO

External guests at Council and Board meetings during 2001

During 2001 the following external guests have visited us to inform about their work and discuss possibilities of co-operation with ERB:

Mr Jens Gabbe, Secretary General, Assembly of European Border Regions

Mr Knut Hjørth-Johansen, Director Nordic Council of Ministers, Vilnius

Mr Pronin Pavel, Russian Consulate, Klaipeda

Mr M. Nicotin, Russian Consulate, Klaipeda

Mr Pjotr Grizenko, Director Baltic Expo, Kaliningrad

Mr Carl Sonesson, President Region Skåne/Vice President SydSam

Mr Edvardas Borisovas, Chairman Reg Coop Unit/Ministry Foreign Aff
Lith

Ms J. Kriskovicene, Counsellor Reg Coop Unit/Ministry Foreign Aff
Lith

Mr Jan Palmstierna, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden, Vilnius

Mr Carl-Michael Gräns, Secretary, Embassy of Sweden, Vilnius

Environmental Working Group (EWG)

The Environmental work group has met twice during 2001 and also had Internet contacts. Unfortunately there has been a problem concerning participation at meetings and contribution between meetings. There are, of course, several good explanations. Anyhow, it is a problem and an obstacle for efficient work of high quality, which has to be our ambition within Euroregion Baltic.

1. The Seagull overall strategy

The Environmental work group has taken part in the preparations of the Seagull project and has suggested the following environmental parts:

- A special environmental strategy, as a part of the overall strategy.
- Environmental impact assessments (EIA) of all suggestions in the coming strategy.
- Sustainability indicators for the ERB.
- A sub-project dealing with sustainable management of water.

2. Seagull Water

The EWG has had the main responsibility when it comes to the Seagull subproject about water management and local/regional needs of preparation for the coming EU Water Frame Directive. This subproject has been prepared and anchored within the EWG.

3. Common project about school and environment

The Environmental group is working on a project where the idea is to try the official Swedish Green School Award system in one pilot school in each interested region. This idea was approved by the ERB council in Karlskrona, August 2001.

There is a huge interest from schools around the Baltic Sea. At the moment we have created an informal network and there is an exchange of ideas by Internet. The idea is to make an application within the Socrates/Comenius programme, spring 2003. The EWG hopes it will be possible to have a preparatory meeting with the schools during 2002.

3. Expo 2002

The Environmental work has proposed that the Council of Euroregion Baltic commission each working group to contribute to the Expo 2002 in Kaliningrad by planning and performing one workshop each, open for all visitors. We think this could be a good way for the people active within Euroregion Baltic, politicians as well as civil servants and others, to meet each other.

4. Members of the Environmental Working Group (end of 2001)

Mrs Marianne Eckerbom, Sweden (chairman)

Mrs Mara Zeltina, Latvia

Mr Antanas Kontautas, Lithuania

Mrs Danuta Makowska, Poland

Mrs Ewa Piekarska, Poland

Mrs Czesława Piotrowska, Poland

Mr Aleksander Kornietkiy, Russia

Mr Baslik Veleriy, Russia

Mr Boris V. Chubarenko, Russia

Mrs Carolina Gunnarsson, Sweden, has been responsible for the EWG secretariat during 2001.

Spatial Planning Working Group

The task of the group has been to specify the ERB mission and the concept for its development and strategy.

However, during the Swedish Presidency period the work of the Spatial Planning group has mainly been carried through within the PIA/Seagull group preparing an application to the Interreg IIIB programme (see below). The responsible party for the Spatial Planning group, Kaliningrad region, has actively taken part in these project preparations.

During 2001 comprehensive information on ERB and its role in cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region was presented to:

- The Russian Federation Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Ivanov
- Participants of the 11th Ministerial session of the Council of Baltic Sea States
- Informational and Analytical Center ‘Inoc’
- Amber and Regional Resources Institute
- Kaliningrad State University
- Kaliningrad Regional Duma
- Tacis regional office in Kaliningrad

In 2001 Swedish experience of regional planning and strategy development projects was presented. The Russian party proposed cooperation in spheres, interesting for Euroregional cooperation, such as motorway infrastructure, border-crossing structure improvement, cooperation in the area of recreation and tourism, development of contacts in the sphere of agricultural production.

Future projects were discussed with the European Integration and Tourism Center in Elblag and the Communal Union Board of the Vistula Lagoon counties. Two Russian and Polish seminars were carried out within the project “Integrated Management of Vistula Lagoon Coastal Area” together with the Polish Fund “Ecobaltic” and “Helcom” Office in Gdansk. Issues of cooperation in the spheres of spatial planning, nature protection, border contacts development, prospects and potentials of establishing border-crossing point on Baltijskaya/Vistula spit, were considered.

The group took part in the international seminar on border cooperation problems in St. Petersburg, arranged by the government of the city of St. Petersburg together with the Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the Tacis program. A seminar on “Elaboration and implementation of regional development in border cooperation” was arranged together with AEBR in April.

Representatives of the Group repeatedly participated in international seminars on the infrastructure projects SEBTrans, TransLogis, BALTICOM and MATROS.

The group has initiated a discussion about a Safety project – Maritime and on land safety. In connection with the establishment of a rescue service in Kaliningrad region, potential cooperation within Euroregion Baltic/coordination of international rescue services in the southeast Baltic Sea region has been discussed.

A substantial amount of work in the Group was devoted to development of tourism, resort and recreational activities, services, nature protection and preservation of cultural assets in the Baltic Sea region.

Representatives of the group took part in an educational seminar on border cooperation problems, held on 11-12 October 2001 in Svetlogorsk under the auspices of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Council, Administration of Kaliningrad region. Officials and experts of European Council, of Poland, Germany, Belarus, Lithuania, Euroregions “Baltic”, “Saule” and “Neman”, representatives of federal ministries and departments, executive and legislative branches of authorities and municipalities of Kaliningrad region, a number of neighbouring regions of Russia, scientists and specialists took part in the work.

The following issues were discussed:

- Euroregions in Europe: legal basis, efficiency, problems.
- Euroregions in Russian Federation.
- Euroregions with participation of Kaliningrad region municipalities.

Social Issues Working Group

The Working Group arranged a meeting in Elblag in September 2001. The Polish and Russian parties had prepared a list of organisations willing to co-operate in various kinds of projects – youth exchange, co-operation of culture centers, common projects of non-governmental organisations who take care of disabled people etc.

In May 2001 the Final of the competition of fine arts “From the Sea We Are” was arranged. More than 2000 art works were received from Poland, Lithuania and Russia. The next edition took place in September 2001 (*Final 11 May 2002 in Elblag*).

Thanks to the European Union support, 47 projects received financial support; youth exchange, environmental protection, sport, culture (total amount 280 000 Euro). A detailed report on project realisation will be prepared in May 2002 for the summary conference of the Fund of Small Projects 2001.

ERB Membership request

Municipalities/regions within the Baltic Sea Coastal Zone in Latvia have expressed an interest in becoming members of ERB. Together they form a planning region and they have a common office in Riga.

Municipalities/regions in the Baltic Sea Coastal Zone (BSC) are:

- Ventspils District
- Ventspils City
- Talsi District
- Saldus District
- Liepāja District
- Liepāja City
- Kuldīga District
- Edole Parish

The Council has declared that they are in favour of adding municipalities/regions mentioned above to the ERB. A formal request with a more precise proposal is expected from BSC in the beginning of 2002.

“Seagull” – an instrument to form a long term vision/strategy for ERB

In February 2001 the Council decided to intensify the co-operation activities through the development of an Interreg IIIB-Phare-Tacis project for the whole ERB – the Seagull project. The project aims at developing ERB in line with the central EU policies about social and economic cohesion between the EU regions and to regions in the applicant countries as well as to border regions in the NIS and other countries.

A common BSR Interreg IIIB project will be an important instrument to give Euroregion Baltic better conditions and continuity in the work. Many questions that the working groups are dealing with can easily be included in such a project. An expert group (PIA) has been formed to prepare a first draft of a project proposal (deadline 28 March 2002). The overall objective is to draw up a General Development Programme for the whole Euroregion – a programme that is well accepted and approved by all member councils.

The PIA group has agreed to include the following five work packages:

1. Joint Transnational Development Programme.
2. Management of Water Resources.
3. Innovative centres as vehicles in regional development.
4. Development programmes for rural areas.
5. Information and communication package.

“ERB 2002+” – a development project for the internal work of ERB

During the year 2001 the Swedish presidency has managed a project called “ERB 2002+”. The project aimed at strengthening the ERB organisation to make it influential and strong in its co-operation. The long term vision and objective for ERB was also discussed. Finally the project aimed at making the people involved more familiar with each other and begin a dialogue on what we need ERB for.

The project was partly funded by the Swedish SALA IDA AB – Swedish Association of Local Authorities/Swedish Federation of County Councils. A more detailed objective was to find out ways to create an effective and efficient organisation with clear goals.

Among the members there is a common will to develop the co-operation further. All parties have expressed their views on the ERB future, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for ERB etc. The project has also made it possible to start the common strategy work parallel with preparations for the SEAGULL project.

“Good Governance” – a Baltic Billion project

A project application has been submitted to the Swedish Foreign Ministry/Baltic Billion programme. An answer is expected in the beginning of year 2002.

Municipalities and regions in the candidate countries around the Baltic Sea are now preparing to eventually become members of the European Union. The Kaliningrad region will be surrounded by EU member states in a few years. Development of efficient local and regional administrations in Kaliningrad region is an important prerequisite to be able to utilise co-operation possibilities with becoming EU neighbour countries.

However efficient municipal and regional structures in the candidate countries and in an EU-perspective is not only a question of skilfulness and capability of handling EU funds and programmes. The question is much more complex and has to do with competence dealing with the task to manage a local and/or regional administration in close co-operation with members of the community/citizens. An important prerequisite to be able to implement required parts of the EU regulation system, is that certain basic demands are fulfilled concerning both administrative procedures, organisation and expert knowledge. The function to handle EU funds is only entrusted those who are able to show a political leadership and an administration that fulfils basic requirements on local/regional "Good Governance".

The Overall objective

The overall objective is to contribute to an improved administrative and organisational competence at the local and regional bodies within the ERB member regions in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) and to convey knowledge to those partners, strengthening their competence and conditions concerning:

- how to develop efficient administration and political structures of special value at the prospect of EU-membership and co-operation with EU-partners
- how to participate successfully in different programmes and projects financed by EU-funds.

Approval of the application was received 7 March 2002.

Liepaja 12 March 2002



Roger Kaliff
President



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Vice President

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