



Euroregion Baltic

2008-2009 Action Plan

On 22nd February 2008 Mr Per Ole Petersen, representing Regional Municipality of Bornholm will become 11th ERB President. The position of ERB Vice-President will then go to the Polish partners who will appoint 12th ERB President at the end of February 2009.

This Programme is a continuation of its 2007 – 2008 predecessor, drafted in a joint effort by the Danish and Swedish Parties, taking into consideration concrete activities implemented between 14th March 2007 and 22nd February 2008.

ERB during Swedish Presidency

Among the activities that occurred between 14th March 2007 and 22nd February 2008, the following should be highlighted:

- completion of the Seagull II project and noticeable improvement of ERB institutional capacities as well as increasing competences among ERB political representatives and staff,
- presentation of the improvement of ERB institutional capacities in the publication of the study case report on the development of Euroregion Baltic, serving as a transferable model of a crossborder cooperation organisation,
- organisation of conferences accompanying ERB Council meetings and dealing with issues of major significance to Euroregion, attended by high ranking representatives of member states and EU,
 - border conference in Karlskrona (15.03.2007) finalised with the adoption of a written resolution and the issue of a 44-page publication;
 - information meeting on the Nord Stream Gas Pipeline in Gdansk (07.12.2007), constituting an introduction into a broader discussion on common EU energy policy;

- delivery of thematic seminars with the participation of not only experts working for the Seagull II reference networks, but also politicians from the ERB regional and local level,
 - 2nd Water Forum in Halltorps on Öland (13.08.2007) and 3rd Water Forum in Gdansk (06.12.2007);
 - seminar on clusters in the Baltic Sea Region in Gdansk (07.12.2007);
- establishment of the ERB Youth Board as an integral part of the ERB organisational structure, who will take active part in the decision-taking process and be responsible for promoting and facilitating cooperation with other youth milieus,
- agreement to increase by 15% regional contributions to the ERB joint budget.

Having due regard to the ERB statutory goals of cooperation which remain to be:

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

and taking into account the recommendations stipulated in the strategic ERB document, i.e. Joint Development Programme, including its vision expressing ERB future to be follows:

ERB in the year 2015 is a region characterised by prosperity and good living conditions of its citizens. The ERB is internationally recognised as a forefront region of excellence with regard to sustainable growth and integration of old and new market economies in the Baltic Sea Region, representing real social and economic cohesion

Parties within Euroregion Baltic indicate the following priorities of their cooperation in 2008 – 2009:

Priority 1: Improving socio-economic cohesion in Euroregion Baltic

Priority 2: Improving intercultural dialogue

Priority 3: Building Euroregion Baltic Brand

Priority 4: Strengthening ERB institutional capacities

Priority 1: Improving socio-economic cohesion in Euroregion Baltic

Strategic focus: effective process implementing Joint Development Programme

Rationale: The Seagull II project aimed at facilitating the implementation of the ERB Joint Development Programme by establishing so-called reference networks, consisting of politicians, civil servants and experts, responsible for the examination of possibilities for actors from the ERB member regions to work together within the areas of Joint Development Programme, as well as for the preparation of future project applications. To formalise the work of these networks after the completion of the Seagull II project, ERB Council will turn them into ERB Working Groups, if they meet specific criteria.

Planned results:

- Joint Development Programme in its first implementation stage, including the preparation and submission of project applications, and their realisation,
- enhanced consolidation of ERB institutional capacities, including well coordinated activities as for cross-cutting issues,
- improved access of ERB political representatives and staff to the state-of – the-art knowledge and know-how in areas of interest for the Working Groups.

Result indicators:

- eight ERB Working Groups with well defined tasks and annual action plans,
- eight experts permanently involved in the Working Groups,
- eight well elaborated and applied projects with minimum one for each Working Group.

Planned activities:

- International and National Secretariats, regional coordinators and Seagull II network leaders will together prepare proposals of the first five Working Groups before the ERB Board meeting on 28th January 2008,
- ERB Board will evaluate the proposals at their meeting on 28th January 2008 and make a formal recommendation that the first five Working Groups are approved by the ERB Council on 22nd February 2008,
- ERB Council will make a formal decision regarding the establishment of the first five Working Groups at their meeting on 22nd February 2008,
- International and National Secretariats, regional coordinators and Seagull II network leaders will together prepare proposals of the remaining three Working Groups before the ERB Board meeting on 11th September 2008,
- ERB Board will evaluate the proposals at their meeting on 11th September 2008 and make a formal recommendation that the first five Working Groups are approved by the ERB Council on 19th November 2008,
- ERB Council will make a formal decision regarding the establishment of the first five Working Groups at their meeting on 19th November 2008.

Priority 2: Improving intercultural dialogue

Strategic focus: integration of local communities, intercultural dialogue within ERB regions, and youth involved in the ERB structures

Rationale: Integration of local communities lays at the foundation of crossborder cooperation and thus remains the core objective within Euroregion Baltic. Building a formal Working Group around the activities that so far have been numerous but sometimes uncoordinated and erratic will be an attempt to help local governments, nongovernmental organisations and other smaller actors to contribute to the European integration process. This will in a natural way relate to The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The Involvement of youth through their participation in the decision-making process within the already existing ERB Youth Board shall add value to the integration of local communities and intercultural dialogue within ERB regions.

Planned results:

- establishment of Local Community Working Group,
- youth more actively cooperating within ERB, making an effective use of their structure: Youth Board,
- information disseminated on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Result indicators:

- one Local Community Working Group established, dealing with cooperation of local communities within ERB,
- two projects involving local communities and partners from all over ERB,
- one ERB youth project,
- one seminar held dealing with the EU priority of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Planned activities:

- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will together with Europe Direct offices in the member regions prepare a programme of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue seminar to be held on 23rd February 2008 and present it to the Board on 28th January 2008,
- The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue seminar will take place on 23rd February 2008 to accompany the 10th Anniversary ERB Council meeting,
- ERB member regions will complete the selection of their Youth Board member in good time so that they can take part in the ERB Council meeting on 22nd February 2008,
- ERB Youth Board will elect their Chairperson at their first meeting on 22nd February 2008 and prepare their draft action plan before the ERB Board meeting on 25th April 2008,
- ERB Youth Board will present their action plan to the ERB Board on 25th April 2008, who will in turn decide whether to approve it or not, also considering possible spending of the money allocated in the ERB budget,

- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will work on a proposal of the ERB Local Community Working Group to be presented to the ERB Board before 22nd January 2009.

Priority 3: Building Euroregion Baltic Brand

Strategic focus: improving marketing and communication activities promoting Euroregion Baltic, as well as enhancing its lobbying function

Rationale: Euroregion Baltic has been operating for ten years now and has a considerable number of successes in the achievement of its statutory objectives. It has also been clear and noted on numerous occasions that ERB remains an organisation which is very easily recognisable in the EU milieu, regional administration, and similar institutions around Europe. However, its visibility among the wide representation of the level local is unsatisfactory. This priority will then aim at addressing the challenge of building an ERB brand which will also be familiar to

Planned results:

- ERB brand more recognisable in Baltic Sea Region and EU,
- coherent and active ERB information policy,
- well updated and functioning ERB website,
- more active participation in the EU policy-making processes,
- regularly published ERB newsletter,
- statistical data regularly uploaded to the ERB database,

Result indicators:

- revision and adoption of ERB Information and Communication Strategy
- 2 ERB events in Brussels (in 2008 and 2009),
- 8 Board meetings, held subsequently in all ERB member regions,
- at least 6 press conferences accompanying four ERB Council meetings (19.11.2008, 25.02.2009, 19.11.2009 and 25.02.2010), as well as two events in Brussels,
- bimonthly electronic newsletters,
- position papers reflecting ERB contribution to the debate on the future of the EU cohesion policy, working of the High-level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth at the Baltic Development Forum, and forming of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (during Swedish EU presidency),
- statistical database completed for the years: 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Planned activities:

- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will work together on the preparation of the ERB IC Strategy and present its first draft to the Board on 10th September 2008,
- After 10.09.2008 the draft will be consulted in the ERB member regions who will before 17.10.2008 submit their comments in writing to the International Secretariat,

- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will adopt the final draft of the ERB IC Strategy at their meeting on 3rd November 2008,
- ERB IC Strategy will be presented to the ERB Council for approval at the meeting on 19th November 2008,
- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will present to the ERB Board a final programme and a budget for a 2008 ERB event in Brussels on 1st August 2008, and the Board will make a decision whether to hold it or not,
- ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators will present to the ERB Board a final programme and a budget for a 2009 ERB event in Brussels on 18th June 2009, and the Board will make a decision whether to hold it or not,
- ERB Statistical Database will be completed by the ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators for the year 2006 before 1st September 2008,
- ERB Statistical Database will be completed by the ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators for the year 2007 before 1st September 2008,
- ERB Statistical Database will be completed by the ERB International and National Secretariats, and regional coordinators for the year 2008 before 7th September 2009,
- position paper reflecting ERB contribution to the debate on the future of the EU cohesion policy presented to ERB Board for approval on 28.01.08,
- discussion on how to participate in the working of the High-level Group on Transport for Sustainable Growth at the Baltic Development Forum at ERB Board meeting on 1st August 2008,
- discussion on how to contribute to the forming of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (during Swedish EU presidency) at ERB Board meeting on 25.04.08.

Priority 4: Strengthening ERB institutional capacities

Strategic focus: enhancing ERB organisational structure and working towards the establishment of a functional joint budget,

Rationale: Euroregion Baltic has undergone significant changes reflecting the continuous need to make it a modern and efficiently acting organisation. These changes have been possible to conduct owing to the financial assistance of the EU programmes and the involvement of all the personnel involved in the ERB cooperation at the regional level. They have included such operations as the establishment of joint structures and building joint financial resources. This strengthening process must continue so that ERB will not lose its competitive edge over weaker organisations of the kind, and will be able to shorten the distance to those who seem more effective.

Planned results:

- clearer and more functional division of roles and tasks between the International Secretariat, National Secretariats and regional coordinators,
- budget reflecting ambitions and capacities of the ERB member regions.

Result indicators:

- revised ERB Statutes,
- regular ERB Secretariat on-line meetings, preferably held on the first Monday of each month in order to prepare Board and Council meetings (including delegation of tasks), coordinate and support network activities etc,
- developing multi-annual ERB budget (2009 – 2013) and individual yearly budgets for 2009 and 2010.

Planned activities:

- ERB Board will discuss the rephrasing of Paragraph 8 Point 4 of the Statutes and make a recommendation to the Council who will take the final decision on 22nd February 2008,
- during 2009 a debate will be held within the ERB Board in order to examine necessities to introduce changes into the Statutes, reflecting a more functional division of roles and tasks between the International Secretariat, National Secretariats and regional coordinators,
- during 2008 a debate will be held within the ERB Board in order to examine possibilities of increasing the ERB budget; conclusions and recommendations will be made to the Council at their meeting on 19.11.08,
- further action to be taken with regards to the increase of the ERB budget will be decided upon following the conclusions and recommendations, and the opinion of the Council members,
- subject to the outcome of the debate on the budgetary increase, a proposal for a multi-annual ERB budget (2009 – 2013) will be made, first to the ERB Board on 22.01.09, and then to the Council on 25.02.09,
- ERB budget for 2009 will be prepared by the International Secretariat and presented to the ERB Board in September 2008 for recommendation to the Council's decision on 19th November 2008.

ERB Activity & Time Schedule:

11 February 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
22 February 2008	Council meeting/10 th Anniversary in Elblag
23 February 2008	Conference on European Year of Intercultural Dialogue
4 March 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
7 April 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
25 April 2008	Board meeting on Bornholm
5 May 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
2 June 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
11 June 2008	Baltic Sea Strategy Seminar in Brussels
12 June 2008	Board meeting in Brussels
1 September 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
11 September 2008	Board meeting in Klaipeda Region
6 October 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
3 November 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
19 November 2008	Council meeting on Bornholm
20 November 2008	Conference: Social dimension & labour market issues
1 December 2008	Secretariat on-line meeting
5 January 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
22 January 2009	Board meeting in Kaliningrad Region
2 February 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
25 February 2009	Council meeting in Warmia-Mazury Region
26 February 2009	Conference: Growth and Jobs (Lisbon Strategy)
2 March 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
6 April 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
23 April 2009	Board meeting in Pomorskie Region
4 May 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
1 June 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
18 June 2009	Board meeting in Kalmar Region
7 September 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
9 September 2009	Board meeting in Brussels
5 October 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
2 November 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
19-20 November 2009	Council meeting in Poland
7 December 2009	Secretariat on-line meeting
4 January 2010	Secretariat on-line meeting
21 January 2010	Board meeting in Warmia-Mazury Region
25-26 February 2010	Council meeting in Klaipeda Region