

# Euroregion Baltic Standpoint on the future South Baltic CBC programme

Adopted by the ERB Executive Board on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## Geography 1:

*Euroregion Baltic (ERB) supports the continuation of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, including all the ERB member regions (with all NUTS 3 level regions involved in the current programme), thus enabling the whole Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodships in Poland, Kronoberg county in Sweden and Kaliningrad oblast of the Russian Federation to take full part in the programme implementation.*

The inclusion of the whole ERB area in the South Baltic CBC programme will reinforce the strategic programming and effectiveness of the programme, and hereby strengthen the performance and added value of the projects to be implemented.

ERB is a formal and politically anchored cooperation structure with its own joint development strategy and can be considered 'functional cross-border region', with reference to Point 31 of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development

ERB believes that the inclusion of cross-border programmes of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) into the EU Cohesion Policy will ensure simplification of the implementation system and binding procedures, and thus will also enable the full participation of our Kaliningrad partners in the future South Baltic programme. We are of the opinion that South Baltic Programme should be further implemented in accordance with the uniform rules resulting from the experience gained during the implementation of European Territorial Cooperation programmes (ERDF), and that this principle should also apply to partners from the Kaliningrad region.

## Geography 2:

*ERB supports the continuation of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme as a separate European Territorial Cooperation instrument, and thus strongly opposes the ideas to merge the South Baltic CBC Programme and the Central Baltic CBC Programme into one cross-border cooperation programme to be administered by the Joint Technical Secretariat in Rostock.*

In the experience of the ERB partners the South Baltic CBC programme has worked very well engaging a growing number of organisations and municipalities in the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). All NUTS 3 level regions, including the adjacent regions, have been actively involved in the programme

activities, and dynamic participation on the part of the municipalities in particular have laid very good grounds for the continued anchoring of cooperation in the programme area.

Moreover, the merger of the South Baltic CBC Programme and the Central Baltic CBC Programme and the transnational Baltic Sea Region Programme into one cross-border cooperation programme would create a very large administrative structure of more transnational character. There is a risk that such an enlargement would favour bigger cities with larger resources at the expense of local actors.

Furthermore, we are of the opinion that the ETC programmes should be created around networks of existing cooperation links and support existing cooperation structures in the area, e.g. euroregions. Euroregion Baltic and Euroregion Pomerania have been functional partners who have contributed to the implementation of the South Baltic CBC Programme by promoting it among its communities and working in the Programme bodies.

### **Geography 3:**

ERB supports the continuation of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme with all the participating NUTS level 3 units acting as core regions, including those added upon request by Member States according to the fourth subparagraph of Article 3 Point 1 of the Proposal for the Regulation on specific provisions for the support from the ERDF to the European territorial cooperation goal.

The coherence and continuity of the programme will improve when all of the participating regions are on an equal footing. This will enhance the feeling of ownership among the regions, municipalities and organisations in all the programme area and benefit the added value and quality of implemented projects. We believe that the inclusion of all the NUTS level 3 units as core regions in the South Baltic will better reflect functional geographies and enable more effective contributions to the programme objectives.

Roland Gustbée



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