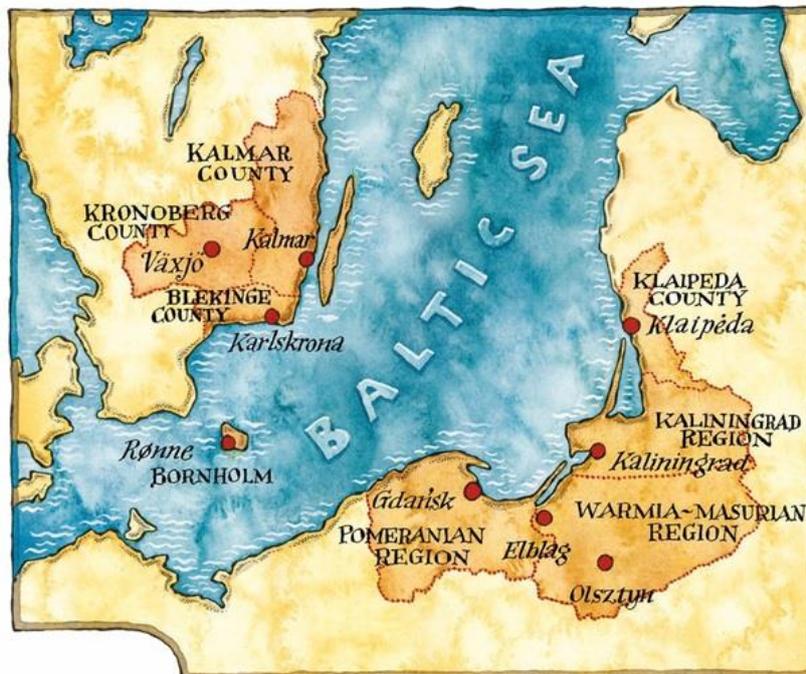




EUROREGION BALTIC

ACTION PLAN

2022 - 23



Olsztyn, 10th March 2022

Background

Established in 1998, Euroregion Baltic (ERB) is a politically solid and well-anchored cross-border cooperation platform in the southeast of the Baltic Sea region, representing regional authorities and local authorities' associations in eight regions in five countries – Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Russia.

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) Action Plan for 2022-23 was adopted on 10th March 2022 at the beginning of the new Presidency within the organisation assumed by the Warminsko-Mazurskie Region from Poland. The plan outlines the joint actions for 2022 when Warminsko-Mazurskie Region chairs the ERB. After 2022, in 2023, the Presidency will be assumed by the Regional Municipality of Bornholm. In 2021 Swedish Presidency from Blekinge Region met with the upcoming Warminsko-Mazurskie Presidency and the following Bornholm Presidency representatives to jointly discuss the future activities and ensure the continuation of the activities undertaken by the Euroregion Baltic Members. The Action Plan is elaborated on a bi-annual basis to streamline better 'stakeholders' resources and concretise results they expect from ERB cooperation, from longer-term strategic actions, while allowing better reporting on the achievements after one year.

Vision and mission of Euroregion Baltic by 2030

The ERB 2030 Agenda builds on the achievements of the first 20 years of successful cooperation and provides an updated strategic framework by defining Euroregion Baltic's vision.

1. South Baltic Agenda
2. Baltic Sea Region Agenda
3. European Agenda
4. Youth and People-to-People Agenda
5. Green and Blue Growth Agenda

Therefore, the Euroregion's mission is to undertake joint initiatives aiming to strengthen and promote cooperation among the local and regional authorities of the Parties of the Agreement and contribute to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region with a particular focus on the South Baltic area.

ERB cooperation is built around three main types of activities:

- Lobbying activities to represent and promote common interests;
- Implementation of strategic initiatives and projects complementing the local and regional agendas of the member organisations;
- Exchange activities seek a collaborative approach to common challenges and progress in the cooperation's innovation and operational efficiency.

Internal documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2022:

1. ERB Agenda 2030
2. ERB Action Plan 2021-22

External documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2022:

1. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Action Plan revised on 15th February 2021;
2. European Commission's proposal for "Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020" thematic objectives:
 - 1) a more competitive and smarter Europe, by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity;
 - 2) a greener, low-carbon transition towards a net-zero carbon economy and resilient Europe, by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility;
 - 3) a more connected Europe, by enhancing mobility;
 - 4) a more social and inclusive Europe, implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
 - 5) a Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives.
3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ERB regards programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Life, Creative Europe, the European Social Fund+ and the Interreg regional funds, especially the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and Interreg South Baltic Programme, as crucial to enhance cross-border cooperation between the ERB Member organisations and a possible source of financing for joint initiatives.

Warminsko-Mazurskie presidency priorities 2022

Having the Presidency in 2022 Warminsko-Mazurskie Region will focus on four main priorities, presented below, that will be reflected strongly in the activities for the Euroregion Baltic during the year:

1. Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027. Euroregion Baltic will continue participating in the programming process representing its member regions. It will promote possibilities for project preparations among stakeholders within the first call, which is supposed to be open in 2022.
2. Sustainable development through cooperation. The aim is to highlight how joint actions bring benefits to the development of all members of ERB. The main focus will be on sustainable mobility and innovative tourism, strictly connected with activities of the Mobility Core Group and ERB engagement in other Baltic cooperation formats.
3. Capacity Building and people to people activities. Euroregion Baltic will continue its role as a facilitator and an intermediary for local organisations and NGOs in establishing contacts and developing cross-border cooperation in our regions.
4. Youth. In the European Year of Youth, 2022, young people will prioritise cooperation in Euroregion Baltic. ERB Youth Board meetings (preferably in physical format) will be at the core of planned activities, including visibility at Baltic and all-European format events.

The above priorities are supposed to be implemented with several projects, which have been submitted to relevant programmes or are currently in the pipeline.

1. South Baltic Agenda Activities

➤ **Supporting the continuation of Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027;**

- active engagement and participation in SBP Monitoring Committee meetings and heading the Joint Delegation of Euroregions in close cooperation with Pomerania Euroregion. Continuation of active involvement as a member of the Joint Programming Committee of the new Programme 2021-2027 and two dedicated Working Groups related to the development of the new Programme thematic objectives, rules and procedures.

➤ **Improve linkage between the ERB Executive Board, the Polish presidency priorities and projects where ERB is involved in enhancing the conditions for cross-border cooperation in the area of South Baltic:**

- via online seminar organised for the ERB Stakeholders – Executive Board members, ERB Youth Board members, ERB Secretariats representatives, and other regional actors interested in the ERB South Baltic Agenda developments in 2022. Seminar planned for fall 2022. The meeting aims to present the update on the Interreg SBP 2021-2027 before the official announcement of the 1st call of proposals, underline the ERB involvement in creating the new Programme and engage the ERB stakeholders in co-creating the new project partnerships in regards to the new Programme objectives and based on ERB Members' priorities. Whenever possible, ERB shall facilitate the cooperation, supporting the South Baltic stakeholders with knowledge, networking possibilities and capacity building initiatives.
- via Umbrella2.0 project activities:
 - Sustainable Development Goals – thematic session on the practical implementation of SDGs in agenda of small and local actors – online seminar in spring 2022;
 - Three two-day "Meet-your-Flagship" events for BSR bottom-up actors organised jointly by the ERB, UBC and BSSSC in May-June 2021.
- Via ERB Mobility Core Group was established by the ERB Executive Board on 3rd December 2020. Blekinge Region hosts the secretariat for the Mobility Core Group. The Core Group will consist of partners from the previous Interreg South Baltic project Interconnect, a current project supported by the Swedish Institute – Interconnect Seed and contact persons and experts from the ERB member organisations. Some of the MCG members applied with the spin-off of the Interconnect project to Interreg SBP Seed Money call, and this framework will allow the MCG partners to work on a new project application for the 1st Interreg SBP during 2022. The group will be working on behalf of the ERB Board with concrete actions to improve mobility in the South Baltic Area and the ERB regions. The work is supposed to contribute to project development and everyday activities by following trends in network initiatives and implementing new technologies and digitisation.

The activities of the Mobility Core Group will be focusing on:

- Lobbying activities to represent and promote common interests;
 - Implementation of strategic initiatives and projects complementing the local and regional agendas of the member organisations;
 - Exchange of activities to seek a collaborative approach to common challenges and progress in innovation and operational efficiency in mobility cooperation.
- Mobility Core Group (MCG) Members will organise a series of seminars within the Interconnect Seed project funded by the Swedish Institute - if possible, the MCG experts will participate, and the results of these works will be shared with the whole MCG.

2. Baltic Sea Region Agenda Activities

➤ Active involvement in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

- actively participate in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum organised on 28-29 September in Lappeenranta, Finland (physical or digital format – tbd); The event is organised jointly by the City of Lappeenranta, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Finland).

➤ Maintaining active participation in the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF)

- Participating in the BSLF Round-table Meeting; maintaining close cooperation with the Council of the Baltic Sea States Senior Advisor working with the BSLF;

➤ Further developing cooperation with relevant pan-Baltic organisations

- working meetings with the current Presidency of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, which is held in 2022-2023 by the Western Pomerania Region, Poland and planning the joint ERB-BSSSC activities related to EUSBSR, CBSS-led youth project 'Baltic Sea Youth Platform and climate change issues;
- maintain close working relationships with Council of the Baltic Sea States within the project Baltic Sea Youth Platform (Erasmus+) by implementing the project activities and developing the youth platform online tool – ACTER cooperation

platform; working jointly on the continuation project for the BSYP platform – possible joint applications via Erasmus+ Programme, contributing to the BSYP events promoting them among the Euroregion Baltic Youth Board members;

- Baltic Sea Youth Platform project, by co-organising Transnational Project Meeting for Project Partners and youth representatives including the Euroregion Baltic Youth Board members in Olsztyn in spring or fall 2022;
- Working meeting with the Secretary-General of the Union of the Baltic Cities to exchange the information on organisations priorities for 2022 and seek possible synergy in ERB and UBC initiatives with particular attention to the capacity building initiatives and youth cooperation within the Baltic Sea Youth Platform.
- Working meeting with the Secretary-General of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) Baltic Sea Commission to update on complementary activities related to the Mobility Core Group and implementation of the EUSBSR.

3. European Agenda Activities

- Continue close cooperation with ERB member organisations' offices in Brussels as a channel for dialogue with EU institutions, lobbying and gaining knowledge on topics relevant for ERB;
- Continue cooperation with the European Commission DG REGIO unit D2: Interreg, Cross-Border Cooperation, Internal Borders representatives;
- Actively participate in the 3rd EU Macro Regional Strategies Week organised by the DG Regio on 7-11th March 2022 in an online format under the theme "Engage, Empower, Evolve";
- Continue cooperation with Europe Direct offices in member regions, initiated with activities of Euroregion Baltic COFE working group;

4. Youth and People-to-People Agenda Activities

- **Improvement of youth cooperation**
 - Continue in 2022 the project implementation of Erasmus+ project aiming at youth - *Baltic Sea Youth Platform* (BSYP) with Lead Partner Council of the Baltic Sea States –

ERB YB representatives to be engaged in transnational project partner meetings and other planned project events;

- The organisation of a Transnational Project Management meeting of the BSYP Programme for Project partners, associated partners and youth representatives in Olsztyn in spring or fall 2022 with close cooperation with CBSS;
 - Implementation of ERB Youth Board Erasmus+ project “EYE BSR - Encouraging Youth Entrepreneurship in Baltic Sea Region”, with a youth exchange for people from each participating country. A one-week event is planned to be organised in Kalmar, Sweden in July / August;
 - ERB Youth Board visits in Warmia and Mazury at the end of August to gain knowledge about W-M activities towards youth and hold meetings with officials and experts.
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- **Improvement of people-to-people cooperation**
 - Organise in spring 2022 an online seminar on the practical implementation of SDGs to Baltic Sea activities of small and local actors within the Umbrella 2.0 project;
 - Within Umbrella 2.0 project organise three, two-day "Meet-your-Flagship" events for BSR bottom-up actors organised jointly by the ERB, UBC and BSSSC in May-June 2021; possible localisation: Gdańsk (UBC event), Palanga and Stockholm (ERB events) – idea is to use to close cooperation with Policy Area Coordinators, especially PA Education, PA Innovation, PA Tourism, PA Culture, PA Biodiversity and PA Transport.

5. Green and Blue Growth Agenda Activities

- **Improved and more effective water cooperation within ERB Water Core Group**
 - strengthen the work of the ERB Water Core Group by supporting their Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027 3 yearlong core project application “*Climate Resilient Water and Wastewater Management in the BSR*”, ready to submit in the 1st call of proposals in April 2022;
- **Fostering the development of the blue and green economy expertise in the South Baltic Sea**

Improving ERB organisation, leadership and visibility

To ensure the Action Plan implementation, ERB will also improve organisational, executive and communication capacities. To achieve this, the ERB will:

1. develop stronger linkage between the political level and the project level – update the ERB website with current info on 9 ERB Members, organisations’ aims, current topics on the agenda, and currently running projects in a pdf file available to all ERB Stakeholders;
2. improve the ERB visibility inside and outside the ERB area by the continuation of the successful Umbrella 2.0-led communication campaign until the end of the project in mid-2022;
3. further develop ERB as a platform for project support, especially for small and local actors in the South Baltic Sea;

Information on currently developed ERB projects – status as of 1.01.2022

PROJECT NAME	DURATION	FINANCING SOURCE	ERB BUDGET	AREA
UMBRELLA 2.0	JAN 2021-JUN 2021	SWEDISH INSTITUTE	85.000 EUR (100% co-financed)	CAPACITY BUILDING
BALTIC SEA YOUTH PLATFORM	MAR 2020-DEC 2022	ERASMUS +	16.375 EUR	YOUTH
InDiGiSE	APR 2020-JUN 2022	ERASMUS +	25.359,00 EUR	YOUTH
Creative Waves	AUG 2021-SEP 2022	PSF Council of the Baltic Sea States	7232 EUR	CULTURE, DIGITALISATION