



EUROREGION BALTIC

ACTION PLAN 2023 – 24



Bornholm, 2nd March 2023

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 seven regions in four countries – Denmark, Lithuania, Poland and, Sweden.

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) Action Plan for 2023-24 was adopted on 2nd March 2023 at the beginning of the new Presidency within the organisation assumed by the Regional Municipality of Bornholm, Denmark. The plan outlines the joint actions for 2023 when Bornholm chairs the ERB.

After 2023, in 2024, the Presidency will be assumed by the Swedish region Kronoberg.

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 2023:

1. ERB Agenda 2030
2. ERB Action Plan 2022-23

External documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2023:

1. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Action Plan revised on 15th February 2021;
2. EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 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.

Synergies between the goals of the ERB cooperation and the four priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency 1st Half 2023 will be highlighted: security - unity, 2) competitiveness, 3) green and energy transitions and 4) democratic values and the rule of law.

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.

Bornholm presidency priorities 2023

The Presidency in 2023 will focus on four main priorities, presented below, that will be reflected strongly in the activities for the Euroregion Baltic during the year:

1. Strengthening the ERB cooperation platform, by following up the preparations of providing ERB with a legal status, as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), to reestablish a permanent international secretariat – and to celebrate the ERB 25th Anniversary as well as organise the Annual Stakeholder Forum
2. Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027, through active participation in the programme monitoring committee, promoting the programme and its calls, and by facilitating capacity building activities
3. Blue and Green Growth, through the Water Core Group and the establishment of a new ERB task force for green transition (circular economy and renewable energy)
4. Youth Cooperation, by supporting the Youth Board and promote the youth cooperation in the ERB regions

Meeting schedule 2023

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2-3 rd March | Bornholm – Board, Youth Board, international LAG-seminar 25 th Anniversary celebration |
| 15-16 th May | Blekinge – Board, Youth Board, ERB Annual Stakeholder Forum |
| 26-27 th September | Brussels – Board, Youth Board |

1. South Baltic Agenda

- **Supporting the continuation of Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027;**
 - active participation in SBP Monitoring Committee meetings and heading the Joint Delegation of Euroregions in close cooperation with Pomerania Euroregion. MC meetings scheduled 27th April 2023 (last MC in the former programme 2014-2020) and in June 2023.
- **Promote the programme 2nd Call during Autumn 2023,**

- facilitate project partnerships and support project development connected to the ERB priorities
- **Facilitate and support cooperation between Local Action Groups (Leader groups) in ERB regions**
 - International LAG seminar on Bornholm 2nd March 2023

2. Baltic Sea Region Agenda

- **Active involvement in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)**
 - actively participate in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum
- **Maintaining active participation in the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF)**
- **Further developing cooperation with relevant pan-Baltic organisations**
 - Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC)
 - Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
 - The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
 - The Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) Baltic Sea Commission

3. European Agenda

- 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
 - Executive Board meeting to be placed in Brussels September 2023
- Continue cooperation with the European Commission DG REGIO unit D2: Interreg, Cross-Border Cooperation, Internal Borders representatives;

4. Youth and People-to-People Agenda

- **Improvement of youth cooperation**
 - Youth Dialogue event in Växjö 20-21st March 2023

- **Improvement of people-to-people cooperation**

5. Green and Blue Growth Agenda Activities

- **Improved and more effective water cooperation within ERB Water Core Group**
 - Support and promote the INTERREG BSR Waterman project
- **Establishing an ERB Task Force focusing on green transition (circular economy and renewable energy)**

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. Apply for a legal status, as European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)
2. Re-establish a permanent international secretariat, as well as organising monthly meetings with the regional ERB secretariats
3. Use the ERB 25th Anniversary to improve the visibility through an exhibition and an updated promotion brochure
4. Improve the organisational support of the Youth Board

Information on currently developed ERB projects – status as of 1.01.2023

| PROJECT NAME | DURATION | FINANCING SOURCE | ERB BUDGET | AREA |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| WaterMan | 1.01.2023 – 31.12.2025 | Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021 – 2027 | 191.806,80 EUR | Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark, Sweden, Germany |