

EUROREGION BALTIC ANNUAL REPORT 2015



EUROREGION BALTIC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wiesław Byczkowski	ERB President, Vice-Chair of the Board of Pomorskie Region, Poland
Aleksander Bogdanov	ERB Vice President, Deputy Chair of Regional Government of Kaliningrad, Russia
Carina Bengtsson	ERB Board Deputy Member, Member of the Council, Region Kronoberg, Sweden
Britt-Louise Berndtsson	ERB Board Member, Member of the Board, Region Kronoberg, Sweden
Gustaw Marek Brzezin	ERB Board Member, Chair of the Board of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, Poland
Lennarth Förberg	ERB Board Member, Vice-Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge, Sweden
Vytautas Grubliauskas	ERB Board Member, Chair of Association Klaipeda Region, Lithuania
Grzegorz Grzelak	ERB Board Deputy Member, Chair of International and Interregional Committee of Pomorskie Regional Parliament, Poland
Alla Ivanova	ERB Deputy Board Member, Minister-Head of Agency for International Affairs and Interregional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region, Russia
Christina Mattisson	ERB Board Member, Chair of the Board of Region Blekinge, Sweden
Akko Karlsson	ERB Board Member, Vice-Chair of the Board of Regional Council in Kalmar County, Sweden
Maria F. Kjaergaard	ERB Deputy Board Member, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm, Denmark
Mateusz Kryżba	ERB Board Member, Chair of ERB Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, Poland
Åke Nilsson	ERB Board Member, Member of the Executive Committee, Regional Council in Kalmar County, Sweden
Per Ole Petersen	ERB Board Member, Member of the Council of Regional Municipality of Bornholm, Denmark
Mieczysław Struk	ERB Board Member, Chair of the Board of Pomorskie Region, Poland
Carina Bengtsson	ERB Board Deputy Member, 1st Vice-Chair of the Board of Regional Council, Södra Småland, Sweden
Grzegorz Grzelak	ERB Board Deputy Member, Chair of International and Interregional Committee of Pomorskie Regional Parliament, Poland
Maciej Lisicki	ERB Board Deputy Member, Vice-Chair of the Board of the Association of Communes, Poland
Robert Olesen	ERB Board Member, Member of the Board of Regional Council, Region Kronoberg, Sweden
Suzanne Svensson	ERB Board Deputy Member, Member of Parliament, Sweden
Witold Wróblewski	ERB Board Member, Chair of Board of the Association of Communes, Poland
Joanna Zielińska	ERB Deputy Board Member, Deputy of Board of the Association of Communes, Poland

In 2015 Euroregion Baltic Executive Board met on [12th February 2015](#) in Elbląg (Poland), [16th June 2015](#) in Brussels (Belgium), [3rd November 2015](#) in Gdańsk (Poland) and [15th December 2015](#) online.

EUROREGION BALTIC YOUTH BOARD

Mateusz Kryżba	Chair of Youth Board, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, Poland
Tautrimas Rupulevičius	Vice Chair of Youth Board, Association Klaipeda Region, Lithuania
Mateusz Ankiewicz	ERB Youth Board Deputy Member, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, Poland
Brigita Barkauskaitė	ERB Deputy Board Member, Association Klaipeda Region, Lithuania
Artur Hulu	ERB Youth Board Deputy Member, Blekinge, Sweden
Maria F. Kjaergaard	ERB Youth Board Member, Bornholm, Denmark
Maksymilian Lewandowski	ERB Youth Board Member, Association of Communes, Poland
Sara Sakhnini	ERB Youth Board Member, Blekinge, Sweden
Adam Świeczkowski	ERB Deputy Board Member, Pomorskie Region, Poland
Jędrzej Tadrzak	ERB Youth Board Member, Pomorskie Region, Poland

In 2015 **Euroregion Baltic Youth Board** met on 5th February 2015 in Gdańsk, Poland and online on 13th March 2015 online.

ADDRESS BY ERB PRESIDENT

Between 12th February 2015 and 8th April 2016 Euroregion Baltic was under political leadership of Pomorskie Voivodeship represented by the Deputy Marshal, **Mr Wiesław Byczkowski**.

Dear Euroregion Baltic Friends,

During 2015 Euroregion Baltic was once again under the Polish leadership. Assuming this role gave me a good possibility to engage in multilateral cooperation of regions of the South Baltic area. In my work for the further development of ERB cooperation I was guided by a firm conviction that in order to have stronger, more innovative and better developed regions, we must cooperate more with our partners across the borders, share our ideas and experiences and build mutual trust, a cornerstone of any successful human endeavour. Euroregion Baltic is one of those cooperation platforms, which brings us closer to the realisation of this idea.

In 2015 ERB participated in the successful launching of the Interreg South Baltic Programme. Over the years the Programme has become one of the most important development tools providing targeted assistance to innovative projects in the field of entrepreneurship, tourism, green energy, sustainable transport and people-to-people contacts. Thanks to the efforts of all South Baltic stakeholders, including the ERB, this positive experience will continue within the current programming period.

Marking the 25th anniversary of the INTERREG initiative, Euroregion Baltic officially participated in the consultations launched by the European Commission on overcoming barriers in border regions and cross-border cooperation. I believe it is very important to use ERB's significant experience in developing cross-border cooperation not only in day-to-day work but also by engaging in strategic discussions on the future of such initiatives as the INTERREG and thus helping implement the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

To promote the idea of cross-border cooperation the ERB organised its 6th Annual Forum of Stakeholders in Gdańsk. The one day event provided interesting input from experts coming from different levels of governance and stakeholders to take advantage of possibilities offered by a broad spectrum of organisations and programmes under the umbrella of the EUSBSR. A symbolic coincidence was the fact that the ERB Forum was organised on the very day the first call for proposals in the South Baltic Programme was launched.

I am also satisfied that in 2015 ERB finalised its work on the providing better institutional capacities for its daily work. I am sure that within the new framework the International Permanent Secretariats will continue its work for the organisation in a more structured and efficient fashion, facilitating the implementation of the goals of our cooperation.

Finally I would like to underline the fact that the ERB has taken steps to provide concrete results for its member organisations by taking part in development of project applications to the South Baltic Programme and the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme. I am sure that with their successful approval Euroregion will become an even better and more effective tool for the development of all its member organisations.

Wiesław Byczkowski
President of Euroregion Baltic, 2015



Focus area 1: Lobbying

Strategic objective: strengthening the political role of ERB in the cross-border cooperation

1. In 2015 ERB participated in the implementation of ETC and ENI programmes in the BSR:

1.1. In 2015 ERB was actively engaged in the implementation of the South Baltic Programme taking part in both finalizing the 2007-2013 instalment as well supporting the establishment of the new Interreg South Baltic 2014-2020. The ERB's engagement was particularly important in:

1.1.1. Finalisation of the work of the Joint Programming Committee which met on 21-22nd April 2015 in Rønne, Bornholm which saw in-depth discussions and adoption of the final draft of the Cooperation Programme to be sent to the European Commission for approval. Also the JPC made a number of changes in the draft of the Programme Manual prior to the last meeting of the dedicated Task Force. Finally, the JPC adopted the preliminary scope of the 1st call for proposal scheduled for November 2015 and agreed on the agenda of the Programme Kick-off Conference in June 2015.

1.1.2. Finalisation of the Working Group on Project Manual in which Head of the ERB International Secretariat was also directly involved. The Group met three times on 3rd February, 23rd March and 2nd September 2015 in Warsaw, Poland. During its work it focused on the details of the Programme Manual making it more user-friendly, logical and simple. During the works Euroregion Baltic focused especially on those provisions of the Manual which were of the importance to its stakeholders i.e. municipalities, NGOs and all other potential beneficiaries which in the past found it more difficult to engage in South Baltic projects. Also the ERB proposed amending the Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee of the Programme in order to include the Regional Government of Kaliningrad as an observer in the new Programme MC. The proposal was positively finalised during the first meeting of the MC in Gdańsk in October 2015.



1.1.3. ERB was actively represented during the Kick-off Conference on 8-9th June 2015 with Head of International Secretariat taking part in the discussion panel on how to boost blue and green growth across the shores of the South Baltic through soft cooperation. During the panel the Secretariat promote the ERB as one of those stakeholders that have been active in development of the cross-border cooperation in the area prior to the establishment of the Programme. The Secretariat underlined the importance of grass-roots people-to-people cooperation as a prerequisite for a more advanced and complex cooperation over the borders. The intervention was well-received among the participants of the Conference therefore contributing to the better visibility of



the ERB among the stakeholders in the region.

1.1.4. On 1-2 October 2015 in Gdańsk, the ERB participated in the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the South Baltic Programme 2014-2020. Once again the International Secretariats of ERB has been chosen to head the Joint Delegation of Euroregions Baltic and Pomerania. The MC approved the timeframe for the first call for proposals and approved the new Programme Manual as well as the application pack for the first call.



1.1.5. ERB International Secretariat supported the bodies of the Programme in their works by engaging in a number additional activities. For example, on 1st April 2015 the Head of IPS took part in the meeting of a recruitment committee created by the Managing Authority to recruit a new Project Officer for the Joint Secretariat in Gdańsk. Such practical activities with the Programme will also be continued in the future as they promote the good spirit of cooperation and reciprocity in mutual relations.

1.1.6. On 30th November 2015 ERB IPS took part in an information seminar for the Polish beneficiaries from Warmia-Mazury Region. During the seminar the ERB's participation in the Capacity Building Project was presented as an example for active facilitation and development of cross-border cooperation among local, often inexperienced stakeholders.

2. participating in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR):

2.1. ERB continued to be present at main EUSBSR events:

2.1.1. The 8th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum was held in Gdańsk between 22-23rd September 2015. The event was organized by the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the Pomorskie Voivodeship in close cooperation with the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board and the Ministry of Economics, Construction and Tourism; Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – in its role as the coordinator of Priority Area Tourism (EUSBSR). The annual convention brought professionals from economics, politics and academics together to examine the development of tourism in the Baltic Sea region. In 2015 the Forum focused on four thematic priority areas such as: maritime Policy as a foundation for tourism development in coastal areas, demands on improved and sustainable transnational cooperation in BSR tourism, impact of meetings and events industry for developing the BSR as a common tourism destination, challenges of future trends in the XXI century and their effects on tourism. In addition, organizations, ongoing projects and new project initiatives had possibility to present themselves with a stand during the two conference days at the Tourism Networking Village to encourage creativity, ideas and cooperation. As a result of the meeting the ERB became involved in the project initiative entitled Baltic Sea Tourism Centre and later became part of the dedicated project partnership in the South Baltic Programme as an Associated Partner.

2.1.2. On 10th December 2015 ERB was represented at the EUSBSR Seminar in Warsaw entitled Positive Change in the Baltic Sea Region. The seminar analysed achievements of the Strategy

as well as the challenges and ambitions of its stakeholders. It also focused on the communication of benefits to all stakeholders in countries participating in its implementation.

2.1.3. On 16th November 2015 the ERB IPS took part in a stakeholder seminar on the objectives and flagships of the EUSBSR Policy Area Education organised jointly by the Warsaw University and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Targeted presentations were followed by practical workshops on all four objectives of the PA during which ERB IPS talked about ERB's activities in the sphere of youth policy.

3. holding dialogue with relevant actors:

3.1. Euroregion Baltic has taken part in public consultation on overcoming obstacles in border regions organised by the European Commission. The consultations were a part of the 25th Anniversary of INTERREG. The main purpose of this consultation was to collect experiences and opinions from citizens, key stakeholders and experts, in order to get a comprehensive overview of what obstacles persist and of their impact on the daily lives of people and businesses in border regions. In its contribution, ERB pointed to three main obstacles still influencing the cross-border cooperation in the region – difficult physical access, legal and administrative barriers as well as economic disparities. It also argued that proposed certain measures that could alleviate some of the most immediate problems and therefore contribute to a better cooperation in the future, and underlined the importance of EU financial and support facilities such as Interreg or ENP for solving the problems on the ground. The full text of ERB's contribution to the consultations is available on [ERB website](#). As an attachment ERB also provides is the previously published report on the subject prepared within the Seagull II project – [ERB Border Crossing Report](#). The results would be published online early in 2016 on the DG Regio's website. They would also feed into a study aiming to produce conclusions and practical suggestions on how the EU and its partners can ease remaining obstacles.

3.2. Having an observer status at the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF), the ERB took part in the Annual Round Table meeting which took place in Gdańsk, Poland on 18th November 2015. The event was hosted by the Solidarity Trade. The annual meeting of BSLF focused on the main themes currently being tackled by the Forum ie. labour mobility and youth unemployment. Prior to the Round



Table the meeting of the BSLF Steering Committee was held during which its members finalised an official statement on labour mobility. During the Round Table different initiatives supporting labour mobility were presented with particular focus on the Policy Area Education within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Here the support may be provided by different actors engaged in the process, including the Swedish Institute. Apart from discussions on the labour mobility issues, also the problems of youth employment and vocational training were discussed during a dedicated workshop. Also, information was provided about the available financial instruments within the current EU Financial Perspective 2014-2020, also including the Interreg Programmes such as the South Baltic or BSR.

3.3. On 28th October 2015 ERB IPS took part in the XIII General Conference of Union of Baltic Cities UBC in Gdynia. The main theme of the conference was dedicated to the development of smart cities in the Baltic Sea Region. The conference allowed for improving contact with representatives of the UBC and their member cities.

4. Promoting ERB during other events:

4.1. 'Business as usual? Governing the Baltic Sea Region in times of changing security needs' was the title of the conference organised by the University of Tartu on 28-29th May. The participants from the



academia and Baltic organisations discussed matters related to new challenges to the regional cooperation and offered different perspectives on such issues as multilevel governance or regional security. Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat was invited to present the role of ERB in the improvement of multilevel governance bringing concrete examples of involving stakeholders on different

levels in overcoming common challenges of ERB cooperation.

4.2. On 11th August 2015 in Gdańsk the ERB International Permanent Secretariat gave a presentation about Euroregion Baltic to the participants of a study tour organised by the Litorina Folkhögskola in Karlskrona. During the meeting the IPS underlined the importance of engaging local stakeholders from different sectors including education in the development cross-border cooperation. The meeting was also a very good opportunity to discuss the cooperation potential of educational institutions and local authorities within the ERB area.

4.3. On 13th November 2015 the IPS represented ERB at the Joint Conference organised in Brussels by the European Commission, Council of Europe, Committee of the Regions and Association of European Border Regions AEBR. The conference examined the importance of CBC for the development of the EU as well as challenges connected to major geopolitical issues such as the current refugee crisis in Europe and explored the perspectives of CBC for the coming years, stressing its value as cornerstone for the coming years.



4.4. On 4th December 2015 ERB IPS took part in a scientific seminar on the development of the Baltic Sea Region through participation in different organisational structures. Entitled EGTC and the development of the Baltic Sea Region, the meeting offered a very interesting combination of scientific expertise and practical experiences from different forms of cross-border cooperation. The ERB's presentation focused on the practical side of cross-border cooperation and provided concrete examples of ERB work for different stakeholders in the region, mainly through implementation of different projects. The meeting was also a good opportunity to improve contact with the scientific community of the South Baltic area.

4.5. In July 2015 the ERB IPS was approached by the Institute of International Sociology in Gorizia, Italy which was conducting a research on civic participation and decision-making processes at the cross-border cooperation level. The research was commissioned by the Council of Europe. The IPS was invited by the Institute to take part in an interview about the role of ERB in this context. Based on this interview the Institute prepared a summary that would serve as an input for the publication that would showcase ERB as one of the organisations promoting civic engagement and transparent decision making process in its day-to-day work.

Focus area 2: Strategic actions

Strategic objective: enhancing the added value of ERB cooperation

- 5. reinforcing stakeholder approach through continuous dialogue and information exchange:
 - 5.1. 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders

The 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders was held in Gdańsk on 2nd November 2015. Organised in Gdańsk and chaired by Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, Deputy Marshal of Pomorskie Region and President of Euroregion Baltic in 2015, the Forum coincided with the 25th Anniversary of INTERREG cooperation, one of the most important instruments of EU Cohesion Policy fostering cross-border cooperation among the border regions of Europe. Taking this opportunity the partners of Euroregion Baltic cooperation engaged ERB stakeholders in a discussion on the benefits and challenges of cross-border cooperation within Euroregion Baltic area and the wider Baltic Sea Region.



This year's Forum focused not only on the strategic aspects of cooperation, but also touched upon the basic and concrete needs and challenges identified by local and regional stakeholders during their cooperation with their counterparts on the other side of the border. The Forum also allowed potential beneficiaries to learn more about the INTERREG South Baltic Programme 2014-2020 in the context of upcoming calls for proposals. After the presentation all key speakers engaged in a panel discussion moderated by Mr Niels Chresten Andersen from the Regional Municipality of Bornholm. Among the matters discussed were the problems of relevance of different organisations and cooperation frameworks for stakeholders on the local or regional level. During the discussion participants exchanged opinions and doubts on the relevance of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region while still admitting that the cooperation across border can be and in many cases is very beneficial to the development of local communities. The fact is that many such instruments as the EUSBSR are simply too complex and consequently do not seem to be relevant or useful for solving practical



problems on the local level. The best way to change this situation is to engage more effectively local stakeholders, including key decision makers, in a dialogue on the objectives these instruments envisage. The issue of ownership was often mentioned as an important aspect which, if introduced correctly, may win more support for the successful implementation of both the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other macro-regional strategies implemented by the EU.

The plenary session of the Forum finished with a summary presented by Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, President of Euroregion Baltic and Deputy Marshal of Pomorskie Region. In his final words Mr Byczkowski stressed the importance of going beyond the current development model which focuses primarily on infrastructural projects. The current EU programming period is the last one which will provide significant funding for the development of new Member States. Now it is the time to focus also on softer measures such as the exchange of good practice or diffusion of innovation. This could only be done if we cooperate more with our international partners who have already developed necessary measures and are willing to share them in international, cross-border partnerships. But to reap the benefits of such cooperation we need to be open and able to create and maintain trust within this international context. Engaging in soft cooperation within the framework of such instruments as Interreg is a perfect opportunity not only for obtaining new knowledge and skills, but also contributing to a better development of communities on the local and regional level.

5.2. ERB Executive Board meetings

5.2.1. The first meeting of the ERB Executive Board meeting in 2015 has taken place in Elbląg, Poland. During the meeting ERB Presidency was transferred from Lithuania to Poland, with Mr Wiesław Byczkowski, Deputy Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship taking over from Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas and becoming the new ERB President. Also Mr Mateusz Kryżba of Warmińsko-Mazurskie became the new Youth Board Chair. The Board also adopted the new Action Plan for 2015-2016, and decided to support 6 project ideas within the framework of the ERB Task Force for Project Facilitation.



5.2.2. The second ERB Board meeting took place in Brussels, Belgium on 16th June 2015. The meeting followed a seminar organised by the Informal Baltic Sea Group a day earlier which was entitled “Baltic solutions for renewable energy and sustainable transport - Initiatives for blue and green growth”. Members of the Executive Board took part in the seminar to learn more about strategies, best practices and concrete examples of implementation from regions around the Baltic Sea, focusing on major bottlenecks and smart solutions in the sectors of renewable energies and sustainable transport. The agenda of the Executive Board focused on possible cooperation between ERB and regional offices of ERB member organisations in Brussels but also on internal matters of ERB including the process of acquiring the legal personality for ERB, status of the IPS hosting organisation and the planning of the upcoming ERB Annual Forum.

5.2.3. On 3rd November 2015 the ERB Executive Board met in Gdańsk, Poland. The meeting followed the 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders that was held a day earlier. Hence the discussion focused on the impressions and conclusions of the Forum itself. During the meeting the Board

finalised the process of obtaining legal personality for the ERB and approved the transfer of ERB IPS to the Association of Polish Communes. The Board also approved ERB's participation in the WaterNets project. During the meeting the representatives of the Kaliningrad Region reiterated the will to assume the ERB Presidency in 2016 and provided more information about its cooperation priorities.

5.3. ERB Executive Board online meetings

5.3.1. The ERB Board met online on 14th December 2015. The meeting focused on ERB's participation in several projects. The most important of them was the youth project entitled CaSYPoT – Capacity Building for Strategic Youth Policy and Transnational Cooperation (formerly known as SYPERB) where the ERB would become one of the most important project partners responsible for communication and dissemination. Also, two other projects were discussed in which the ERB would become an associated partner ie. Baltic Sea Tourism Centre and South Coast Baltic. All of the aforementioned projects were submitted within the first call of the Interreg South Baltic Programme. Finally, the ERB was approached by Region Blekinge to submit a letter of support to the Attractive Hardwoods project which intends to increase the number of visitors and unlock the potential of natural hardwood sites as attractive tourism destinations. The Board approved ERB's participation in all three projects as well as support for the Attractive Hardwoods project in the form of a letter of support.

5.4. ERB Secretariats maintained regular contacts:

5.4.1. Via continuous email exchange

5.4.2. During online meetings held on 3rd March, 17th April, 22nd May, 14th August, 11th September, 8th October and 3rd December 2015.

5.4.3. During a face-to-face meeting in Olsztyn on 14-15th January 2015. The meeting was dedicated mostly to the drafting of the ERB Action Plan for 2015-2016 with new ideas on lobbying and exchange initiatives proposed for further consideration. Also the ERB Secretariats discussed strategic areas of cooperation including youth issues, business-to-business and water



cooperation. Finally on the agenda were practical matters concerning upcoming Executive Board meetings and 6th Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders. The meeting was joined by representatives of Warmian - Masurian Regional Development Agency who showcased their project proposal entitled Eurobaltic Be Smart.

6. strengthening ERB internally:

6.1. In the course of 2015 ERB IPS undertook a series of visits to ERB member organisations with the goals of sharing information about the ERB with high-level decisions makers and stakeholders, as well as learn more about the priorities of particular member organisations in order to better develop joint ERB cooperation in the future.

6.1.1. On 27th March in Elblag the ERB International Permanent Secretariat participated in the meeting of the General Assembly of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic. The

members of the Association were informed about the current activities of the ERB with special focus on the ERB Action Plan 2015-2016 and the work of the Task Force for Project Facilitation.

6.1.2. On 23rd April 2015 the ERB IPS visited the Regional Municipality of Bornholm. During the visit the Head of IPS learned more about recent administrative changes in the municipality as well as about the current strategic orientation and most important challenges faced by the it. Among the focus areas mentioned during the visit was youth policy, business-to-business development, sustainable management of environment, sustainable transport and tourism development.

6.1.3. Between 4-7th May 2015 the ERB IPS and Chair of ERB Youth Board visited the Swedish ERB member regions of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg. The meetings were held with the Working Committees of the regions, civil servants and relevant organisations working in different ERB focus areas. The ERB representatives presented the current status of the organisation and its priorities, while at the same time learning more about the priorities of the regions as well as challenges they are facing. The Chair of the ERB Youth Board presented the activities of the Board planned for 2015 and his ideas for renewing youth cooperation within the organisation. As to the priorities of the regions these were – water management, youth policies, tourism / natural and cultural heritage, B2B development in Kalmar; tourism, industry/SMEs, labour market in Kronoberg; maritime safety, water management / environmental protection / climate change, tourism and energy efficiency / smart housing in Blekinge.

6.1.4. Between 13-14th May 2015 the International Secretariat of ERB visited the region of Klaipeda, Lithuania. The aim of the visit was to present the current and future activities of the organisation to the regional and local stakeholders but also to learn more about the development challenges and strategic



orientation of the region and identify possible areas of future cooperation within the ERB. The extensive agenda of meetings included the presentation of ERB to the mayors of member municipalities of the Association of the Klaipeda Region. Additional bilateral meetings were also held with several local stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation including the municipalities of Neringa and Palanga, the city municipality of Klaipeda, as well as the Klaipeda Science and Technology Park. The results of the meetings would help the organisation to draw up new initiatives in the area of sustainable tourism, business-to-business development and protection of cultural heritage.

6.1.5. On 14th October 2015 the Head of ERB International Secretariat visited Kaliningrad where he was invited to a meeting with Ms Alla Ivanova, Minister of International Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Kaliningrad Region. The meeting focused on the upcoming Russian Presidency in ERB in 2016 as well as other important issues concerning ERB cooperation.



6.2. During 2015 the ERB continued its efforts to investigate a possibility to obtain the legal status for the organisation. During the Executive Board meeting in Gdańsk on 3rd November 2015 it was decided that the most suitable operational framework for the organisation would be to continue relay on hosting organisations albeit with additional safeguards that would guarantee continuous and independent functioning of the ERB and its Secretariat and provide capacity for developing and participating in international projects.

6.3. In 2015 the ERB IPS continued to be hosted by the Foundation for Support and Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Warmia-Mazury. Due to internal matters of the hosting organisation, in the second part of 2015 the Executive Board decided to find a new hosting organisation for the IPS. Finally, on 1st December 2015 the ERB IPS was transferred to the ERB member organisations i.e Association of Polish Communes ERB. The Association had previously hosted the IPS and has significant experience in cross-border cooperation which allows the IPS to function effectively and provides a well-suited platforms for running joint ERB projects.

7. supporting youth cooperation within ERB Youth Board:

7.1. In 2015 main focus within this area of cooperation was put on the development of the SYPERB project. The project is based on the LUPP concept of surveys for young people allowing decision makers to include youth perspective in regional policy planning therefore creating knowledge based development strategies. Initially supported by funding from the Swedish Institute seed money facility, it intended to be submitted to the South Baltic Programme. The development of the project was managed by the Regional Council in Kalmar County with direct support from the ERB Task Force for Project Facilitation and ERB IPS. The partnership of the project included several municipalities from Sweden, Poland, Kaliningrad and Lithuania as well as relevant scientific institutions from ERB member regions. In the course of project development the name of project was changed to CaSYPoT Capacity Building for Strategic Youth Policy and Transnational Cooperation, to better reflect the strategic orientation of the South Baltic Programme. In the project the ERB (the Association of Polish Communes as a formal project partner) would be working as a project partner with the total budget of total budget of 63 109,00 EUR, which with co-financing of 15% would give 3 155,45 EUR per year from the ERB budget. The remaining costs would be reimbursed. This significant involvement would still allow ERB to implement many youth related activities. The financial liquidity would be provided by the ERB strategic financial reserve of around 20 000 EUR. In all the ERB's participation would be beneficial for the organisation and strengthen its youths cooperation agenda.

7.2. The ERB participated in the closing event of the 2nd Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue took place in Olsztyn on 8th September 2015. Organised by the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Körber Foundation in cooperation with the Warmia Mazury Region and implemented by the Borussia Foundation the event continued the cooperation successfully started in Estonia and



Russia in 2014. In the premises of the Centre of Regional Technology and Development in Olsztyn 50 young people from 19 countries presented the works created during one week of workshops, discussions and study visits held throughout the region of Warmia Mazury. The main theme of this year's youth dialogue was the question of shifting identities in the time of new challenges and changes. Young people reflected on this issue by creating posters and multimedia presentations which were showcased during the final event. Euroregion Baltic IPS was asked to contribute to the programme of the Youth Dialogue by giving a presentation about the organisation and activities of ERB. Also the ERB Youth Board contributed to the presentation with Mateusz Kryżba providing a more detailed information about youth perspective in the ERB.

7.3. In 2015 ERB Youth Board continued to facilitate its work with the help of European Voluntary Service (EVS). Youth Board stands as a partner in several regional projects focused on youth policy in the Baltic Sea region. Two of them was Erasmus+ Key Action 1. YB agreed to be one of 3 organisation taking part in youth exchange and simulation how to provide dialogue with local authorities from youth perspective. Unfortunately both projects hasn't been funded. Youth Board also agreed long-term informal partnership with three polish EVS receiving organisation to grant to access to European Volunteers. Also potential cooperation was being planned with the Global Wave Foundation which will apply for EVS volunteers in 2016.

7.4. 30th April Youth Board with the Polish National Agency and Elbląg Europa Association organised Seminary in Olsztyn where 50 participants from NGO, local offices and schools took part in the presentation of Erasmus Plus Key actions and exchange contacts and projects ideas. The event was the part of Youth Week Celebration in Europe.

7.5. Between 3-7th May 2015 the Chair of ERB Youth Board travelled to the Swedish ERB regions to present information about the ERB Youth Board and its activities to the decision makers and civil servants from Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg.

8. fostering B2B cooperation with focus on clusters, innovation and SME internationalisation:

8.1. In this area work focused on involving ERB in different project initiatives connected with the activities specified in the Action Plan. As results of joint efforts by the ERB Task Force for Project Facilitation and ERB IPS, the ERB joined the following partnerships:

8.1.1. Baltic Sea Tourism Centre - the project undertakes to establish a permanent service unit for improved communication and cooperation at transnational level by associating the key tourism stakeholders and promoting a sustainable, responsible and innovative tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The BSTC is developed within the framework of the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and

complements and supports the activities of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in profiling the area as a tourist destination and contributes to the target and action defined in the strategy as “Establishing the Baltic Sea region as a common and coherent tourism destination”.

With respect to ERB, participating in the project as an Associated Partner will give the organisation a direct access to all important activities and further contribute to the implementation of the ERB Action Plan 2015-2016 and its specific action fostering B2B cooperation with focus on clusters, innovation, entrepreneurial internationalisation and tourism development. The project comprises partners from Blekinge, Kalmar, Klaipeda and Pomorskie.

8.1.2. South Coast Baltic - The project proceeds and reinforces the joint efforts to foster boating tourism intensity along the “South Coast Baltic” that started with MARRIAGE project thereby project seeking to establish durable and comprehensive boating destination management for the area of South Baltic. The project comprises partners from the following ERB regions: Bornholm, Kaliningrad, Klaipeda and Pomorskie. It also underlines the need for the development of maritime tourism thereby improving the interconnectivity of the region.

9. facilitating water cooperation:

9.1. participation in development of WaterNets project

Throughout 2015 the ERB Water Core Group and its leader – Regional Council in Kalmar County were working on the development of the WaterNets project. Continuing the success of the MOMENT project, WaterNets would introduce a water management concept for a cleaner Baltic Sea, referred to as Water Users Partnerships (WUP), creating a fora for local and regional water users, enabling them to get actively involved in the implementation of EU and International Water Policies, and also facilitate a cross-sectoral and vertically aligned policy oriented dialogue amongst all levels. The main objective would be twofold, first to increase the mobilization among local authorities by providing an efficient water management concept and tools (i.e. WUP concept and tools) and secondly, establish a jointly developed concept (i.e. WUP concept) and common understanding among water authorities in the Baltic Sea Region, on how to better involve the local level in the EU Water Framework context, enforcing implementation of concrete measures.

The project was submitted within the first call of the BSR Programme. As decided by the ERB Executive Board, the ERB IPS and Task Force for Project Facilitation were actively engaged in the development of the project which potentially allowed direct ERB participation as full partner with dedicated budget. If approved the project would provide better resources for water cooperation in the ERB as stipulated in the Action Plan and allow ERB to become more visible in the BSR cross-border cooperation arena. The project was unfortunately not approved in the first call for proposal.

9.2. Implementing Water Core Group Work Plan 2015-2017

The overriding goal for the ERB Water Core Group was to implement concrete measures aiming to improve ecological and chemical status in the ERB waters, as a base for better development of the area. To this end the WCG proposed two focus areas:

1/ Decreasing the outflow of nutrients and hazardous substances into the water by coastal and upstream work (for example water management and/or spatial planning). This focus area could be tackled by the WaterNets project, should it be approved for implementation.

2/ Actions needed to cope with effects from climate change, like droughts and flooding, on water supply and water recipients (for example rain/storm water, drinking water). Within this focus area

activities concerning storm water treatment could be tackled within a South Baltic Programme project which would also provide additional support for the functioning of the WCG.

The ERB Water Core Group continued to operate from a local and regional perspective and support trans-boundary cooperation. Moreover, this approach should be characterized by participation from private, public and academic sector (Triple Helix) and be based on the structure of water basin areas. The WCG continued to be led by the Regional Council in Kalmar County with Ms Akko Karlsson as the Chair and Mr Tobias Facchini as the Secretary. The WCG was supported by the EBR IPS which engaged in its activities and liaised with ERB partners when it comes to coordination of its work.

Focus area 3: Exchange activities

Strategic objective: deepening relations & strengthening cooperation between ERB member regions

10. Study visits:

- 10.1. On 13th February 2015 members of the ERB Executive Board visited the Elbląg Technology Park EPT. The main task of the EPT is to create favourable conditions to develop business, investment and researches. The modern complex allows businesses to rent available office space, as well as to use infrastructure and professional consulting services, technology transfer and assistance for financial resources, including EU funds. With state-of-the-art Research and Development Centre specialising in advanced environmental, metallurgy and timber testing, the EPT offers a variety of services for all entrepreneurs interested in developing modern and innovative solutions for business development.



A day earlier ERB Executive Board members were given tour of the Elbląg Museum with special focus on the recently completed international project implemented by the Museum in cooperation with



the „Friedland Gate” Museum in Kaliningrad entitled Museums Over the Borders. As a result of two-year cooperation within the project both museums were significantly modernized and introduced common educational activities promoting cultural and historical heritage of the region. The presentation also included a holographic multimedia production illustrating the common history of the region

FINANCIAL RESULTS

ERB Annual Budget between 1st Jan - 31st December 2015 (EUR)			
INCOME	Planned for 2015	Actual as of 31-12-2015 EUR	Remaining
Balance as of 1-01-2015	2 819,39 €	2 819,39 €	0,00 €
Blekinge	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Bornholm	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Kaliningrad	11 000,00 €	11 000,00 €	0,00 €
Klaipeda	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Kalmar	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Kronoberg	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Pomorskie	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	5 500,00 €	5 500,00 €	0,00 €
Association of Communes ERB	5 500,00 €	0,00 €	5 500,00 €
Income total	57 819,39 €	<u>52 319,39 €</u>	<u>5 500,00 €</u>
EXPENDITURES	Planned for 2015 EUR	Actual as of 31-12-2015 EUR	Remaining
<u>Personnel:</u>	<u>27 136,60 €</u>	26 206,49 €	930,11 €
Overhead including office rental	5 000,00 €	4 972,81 €	27,19 €
Phone	900,00 €	411,84 €	488,16 €
Salary	21 236,60 €	20 821,84 €	414,76 €
Travels, meetings	15 000,00 €	9 931,91 €	5 068,09 €
IT	600,00 €	157,15 €	442,85 €
Youth Board	5 500,00 €	607,86 €	4 892,14 €
Banking charges	250,00 €	161,06 €	88,94 €
Reserve	9 332,79 €	0,00 €	9 332,79 €
EXPENDITURES	57 819,39 €	<u>37 064,47 €</u>	<u>20 754,92 €</u>
BALANCE	0,00 €	<u>15 254,92 €</u>	<u>15 254,92 €</u>

ERB SECRETARIATS

EUROREGION BALTIC INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

ul. Stary Rynek 25
82-300 Elbląg, Poland
Sebastian Magier
Mobile: +48 606 216 845
Tel: +48 (89) 535 17 80
Fax: +48 (89) 535 17 84
E-mail:
Sebastian.magier@euroregionbaltic.eu
www.euroregionbaltic.eu



CONTACTS IN ERB REGIONS:

Агентство по международным и межрегиональным связям
Калининградской области
Yana Eremeeva
tel/тел: +7 (4012) 599-298
fax/факс: +7 (4012) 599-084
mob/моб: +7 (906) 239-11-85
y.eremeeva@gov39.ru
www.id.gov39.ru

Asociacija "Klaipėdos regionas"
Klaudija Kionies
Tel. +370 6456 1144
info@klaipedaregion.com
<http://www.klaipedaregion.com/>

Bornholms Regionkommune
Niels Ch. Andersen
Tel.: +45 3018 2192
Niels.Chresten.Andersen@brk.dk
www.brk.dk

Region Blekinge
Johanna Rönn
Tel: +46 455 30 50 22
Johanna.Ronn@regionblekinge.se
www.regionblekinge.se

Regional Förbundet i Kalmar Län
Jan Martinsson
Tel: +46 480 44 87 95
Jan.martinsson@kalmar.regionforbund.se
www.kalmar.regionforbund.se

Region Kronoberg
Therese Magnusson
Tel: +46 470 72 47 54
Therese.Magnusson@kronoberg.se
www.kronoberg.se

Stowarzyszenie Gmin RP Euroregion Bałtyk
Małgorzata Samusjew, Roma Naruszewicz
Tel: +48 55 611 2000
sekel@eurobalt.org.pl
www.eurobalt.org.pl

Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Pomorskiego
Krystyna Wróblewska
Tel: +48 58 32 61 710
k.wroblewska@pomorskie.eu
www.pomorskie.eu

Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskiego
Łukasz Bielewski, Piotr Zwolak
Tel: +48 89 52 19 816
l.bielewski@warmia.mazury.pl
piotr.zwolak@warmia.mazury.pl
<http://www.wrota.warmia.mazury.pl>

Images © Pomorskie Marshal's Office – pp. 1,4,9 / Kaliningrad Regional Government – p. 13 /
South Baltic Joint Secretariat – pp. 5-6

All other images © ERB International Permanent Secretariat

Editor: Sebastian Magier

Copyright: Euroregion Baltic International Permanent Secretariat

2016