



# **EUROREGION BALTIC**

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **2020 - 21**



**Elbląg, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

## Background

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

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) Action Plan for 2020-21 was adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at the beginning of the new presidency within the organisation assumed by the Association of Polish Communes to Euroregion Baltic from Poland. The plan foresees actions for 2020 and 2021, while Blekinge Region presidency. The Action Plan is elaborated on a bi-annual basis to streamline better stakeholders' resources and concretise results they expect from ERB cooperation, also from longer-term strategic actions, while at the same time to allow 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 the vision for Euroregion Baltic.

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

The **Euroregion's mission** is, therefore, to undertake joint initiatives aiming at strengthening and promoting cooperation among the local and regional authorities of the Parties of the Agreement, as well as contributing to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region, with 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, to seek a collaborative approach to common challenges and to progress in innovation and operational efficiency of the cooperation.

### **Internal documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2020-21:**

1. ERB Agenda 2030
2. ERB Action Plan 2020-21

### **External documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2020-21:**

1. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;
2. European Commission's proposal for the future Cohesion Policy - “Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020” objectives:
  - Smarter Europe;
  - Greener, carbon-free Europe;
  - Connected Europe;
  - Social Europe;
  - Europe closer to citizens.
3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ERB takes into account key sector programmes such as Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, Horizon Europe, Life, Creative Europe and the Health programme, but also the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and the regional funds, including the Interreg.

As ERB includes a member organisation from the Russian Federation, i.e. the Kaliningrad Region, the Northern Dimension (ND) is therefore essential to us.

# Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic priorities 2020

Assuming the leading role in the organisation in 2020, the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic will focus on three main priorities:

1. Environmental protection and tackling climate change, especially concerning water management and air pollution;
2. Youth policy as a continuation of the focus on youth-related project and activities with particular attention to the brain-drain problem and democratic procedures;
3. Actions to improve the innovation of local governments.

The main priorities will be reflected strongly in the activities proposed for 2020 and presented below. In 2021, with the Blekinge Region presidency assumed, the Action Plan 2020-21 will be updated, to include the priorities introduced by the Blekinge Region and the activities related to them.

## 1. South Baltic Agenda Activities

### ➤ Supporting the continuation of independent South Baltic Programme

- ✓ lobbying for the continuation of the South Baltic Programme as a separate European Territorial Cooperation instrument, and promoting arguments from the ERB Position Paper adopted in September 2018 and ERB Position Paper prepared in October 2019 during the SBP meetings organised by the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat;
- ✓ recommending to the South Baltic Programme Joint Programming Committee the proposal to establish small project funds within Interreg South Baltic Programme with the budget of max. 20% of the total programme allocation. ERB will lobby for the beneficiary of a small project fund to be a cross-border organisation such as Euroregion Baltic, working together with hosting organisation, a legal entity, such as Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic;
- ✓ active engagement and participation in SBP Monitoring Committee (MC meeting planned for April 2020 in Western-Pomerania region), heading the Joint Delegation of Euroregions and active involvement as a member of the Joint Programming Committee of the new Programme 2021-2027 including the first JPC meeting on 4.02.2020 in Warsaw.

- **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 Umbrella project activities:
    - Water Core Group ‘microactivity’ and study visit in Elbląg on 12-13.02.2020;
    - cross-border conference with EUSBSR PA Tourism panel for South Baltic stakeholders in Denmark on 25-26.02.2020;
    - cross-border workshop on the problem of brain-drain and attractiveness of South Baltic rural areas for employees (spring or fall 2020, if the Umbrella project would be prolonged);
    - cross-border workshop on trust management (spring or fall 2020, if the Umbrella project would be extended);
    - organise the final conference of UMBRELLA project as the ERB Annual Forum of ERB Stakeholders on 18-19.05.2020 in Gdańsk;
  - ✓ support and promote events planned in ERB SBP project - Interconnect including active engagement in the organisation of the final project conference on sustainable transport and connectivity in the South Baltic Sea on 7.05.2020 in Gdańsk.

## 2. Baltic Sea Region Agenda Activities

- **Active involvement in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)**
  - ✓ co-organise Baltic Sea Youth Camp on in June 2020 in Turku, Finland back-to-back with 11<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Forum;
  - ✓ actively participate in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum in Turku on 15-16.06.2020;
  - ✓ continue to work closely with relevant Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions of the EUSBSR, mainly by organising related cross-border conferences with PA/HA panels in the UMBRELLA project.
- **Maintaining active participation in the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF)**
  - ✓ participating in the BSLF Round-table Meeting as an observer on 25-26.03.2020 in St. Petersburg.

### ➤ Further developing cooperation with relevant pan-Baltic organisations

- ✓ working meetings with the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation on joint ERB-BSSSC activities related to EUSBSR, youth ('Baltic Sea Youth Camp') and climate change issues (via an invitation to participate in "WaterMan" Interreg Baltic Sea Region project concept developed by ERB Water Core Group);
- ✓ maintain close working relationships with Council of the Baltic Sea States within the project Baltic Sea Youth Platform (Erasmus+) by organising 1<sup>st</sup> transnational partner meeting on 2-3 March 2020 in Elbląg; joint work with ERB YB on their active engagement in the Baltic Sea Youth Camp in June 2020 and other activities related to joint Baltic Sea Youth Platform project;
- ✓ with the proposal for the Baltic Leadership Programme on capacity building sent to the Swedish Institute in December 2019, ERB will organise at least one working meeting with the SI representatives and EUSBSR HA Capacity coordinators and will propose further BSR capacity building actions for small and local stakeholders based on Umbrella project implementation;
- ✓ Working meeting with the Secretary-General of the Union of the Baltic Cities to exchange the information on organisations priorities for 2020 and seek for possible synergy in ERB and UBC initiatives with particular attention to the UBC Youthful Cities Commission, as a Baltic Sea Youth Platform (Erasmus+) project partner.

## 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 by organising at least one meeting of IPS representatives with the EU Offices representatives in 2020 and 2021;
- ✓ Engage in the dialogue with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) representatives from ERB Member Organisations by informing them on crucial ERB activities related to the South Baltic, EUSBSR and E Agendas and position papers adopted.
- ✓ Continue cooperation with the European Commission DG REGIO unit D2: Interreg, Cross-Border Cooperation, Internal Borders representatives with minimum one meeting in 2020 and 2021;
- ✓ Active participation and engagement in Europe for Citizens programme project: *Strengthening civil society rights by information access for European youth* with the co-organisation of the final conference on 28.04.2020 in Gdansk including ERB YB representatives and inviting youth from all ERB Member Organisations;

- ✓ Active participation and engagement in Europe for Citizens programme project: *Connect Europe* with ERB presentation during the final conference in Brussels, on 26.05.2020 marking the anniversary of the recent EU elections.

## 4. Youth and People-to-People Agenda Activities

### ➤ Improvement of youth cooperation

- ✓ Present the outcomes of the ERB youth-oriented projects during the study visit of youth representatives from Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Russia and Poland in Gdynia on 21.02.2020;
- ✓ Start 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 meeting on 2-3.03.2020 in Elbląg, Baltic Sea Youth Camp in June 2020 in Turku and other planned project events.
- ✓ Participate actively in the organisation of the final conference of the Interreg South Baltic *Youth Core Group Network* project involving ERB YB members on 21-22.03.2020 in Elbląg;
- ✓ Start the project implementation of Erasmus+ project aiming at youth - *Promotion of social entrepreneurship in the youth sector by digital and informal education tools (InDigiSE)* with Lead Partner Klaipeda University and attend the kick-off meeting on 15-16.04.2020 in Klaipeda where the preparatory activities for the Innovation Camp for youth in Norway and Lithuania will start – ERB YB and MO youth representatives to participate in the Camps on behalf of Euroregion Baltic;
- ✓ take active measures to develop new youth project, primarily focusing on the topic of brain-drain among youth in the South Baltic Sea within the upcoming call in Erasmus+ on 1.10.2020;
- ✓ take active measures to develop new youth project proposing to organize ERB YB event in summer in BaltArtec, in the Kaliningrad region, within the upcoming CBSS Project Support Facility call in March 2020.

During 2019 the project Casypot, led by Region Kalmar County, presented a Youth Strategy adopted to the ERB Area. Activities and actions above could be strengthened if addressed to challenges and opportunities pointed out by this strategy.

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

- ✓ apply the UMBRELLA project tools called ‘microactivities’ to develop international projects for smaller actors within the South Baltic area – at least 3 ‘microactivities’ resulting in partnership/project declaration prepared in 2020, including Water Core Group microactivity on 12-13.02.2020;
- ✓ active participation in the annual Forum of Partner Regions of the Kaliningrad Region on 29 September – 1 October 2020.

## **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 Seed Money Facility project concept “*Climate Resilient Water and Wastewater Management in the BSR*” with the Umbrella project ‘microactivity’ in Elbląg on 12-13.02.2020 and ‘rent-an-expert’ facility resulting in the successful application in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the call in March 2020;
- ✓ co-organise with WCG secretariat in Kalmar cross-border event “Water Forum” in Fall 2020 in Kaliningrad (back-to-back with ERB Executive Board meeting);

➤ **Fostering the development of the blue and green economy expertise in the South Baltic Sea**

- ✓ continuing active engagement in the *Baltic Sea Biogas Alliance* project (Swedish Institute) and active participation of both IPS and regional biogas experts from ERB Members in project meetings in Riga 1-2.04.2020 and Kyiv on 5-6.05.2020.



## Improving ERB organisation, leadership and visibility

To ensure the implementation of the Action Plan, ERB will also focus on improving organisational, executive and communication capacities. To achieve this, the ERB will:

1. develop stronger linkage between the political level and the project level – prepare concise info (like in the AP) on currently running projects for every ERB Executive Board meeting;
2. improve the ERB visibility inside and outside the ERB area by the continuation of the successful Umbrella-led communication campaign through 2020;
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

PROJECT NAME	DURATION	FINANCING SOURCE	ERB BUDGET	AREA
UMBRELLA	FEB 2018-JUL 2020	INTERREG SOUTH BALTIC 2014-2020	123.625,00 EUR (85% co-financed)	CAPACITY BUILDING
INTERCONNECT	JUN 2017-MAY 2020	INTERREG SOUTH BALTIC 2014-2020	32 827 EUR (85% co-financed)	TRANSPORT
SIA4Y	DEC 2018-MAY 2020	EUROPE FOR CITIZENS	14 100 EUR	YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
CONNECT EUROPE	JAN 2019-JUN 2020	EUROPE FOR CITIZENS	5000 EUR	EU RIGHTS
BALTIC SEA YOUTH PLATFORM	MAR 2020-AUG 2020	ERASMUS +	16375 EUR	YOUTH
InDiGiSE	APR 2020-MAR 2022	ERASMUS +	25359.00 EUR	YOUTH
BASE - Baltic SeaBiogas Alliance	AUG 2019-JUN 2020	SWEDISH INSTITUTE	100% reimbursed travel and meetings by Swedish LP - Krinnova	BIOGAS