



EUROREGION BALTIC

ACTION PLAN 2024 – 25



Växjö, 15th February 2024

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. In ERB we strive to strengthen and promote cooperation among local and regional authorities in the South Baltic area, with particular attention to sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region. The principles of partnership, subsidiarity and self-governance lie at the heart of our joint initiatives.

With every new presidency an action plan is adopted in order to ensure that the ERB's goals have more concrete focus and that specific activities contribute to the strategic goals of our cooperation. These action plans also allow a more effective use of joint resources and reporting.

Euroregion Baltic Action Plan 2024-25 was adopted on 15th February 2024 when Region Kronoberg, Sweden assumed the ERB Presidency. In 2024 Region Pomerania, Poland holds the ERB Vice-Presidency leading to presidency in 2025.

Vision and mission of Euroregion Baltic by 2030

The ERB 2030 Agenda provides a strategic framework for the ERB cooperation, defining focus areas and types of activities its stakeholders will engage in.

ERB cooperation will focus its efforts within the following areas:

- South Baltic Agenda
- Baltic Sea Region Agenda
- European Agenda
- Youth and People-to-People Agenda
- Green and Blue Growth Agenda

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), democratic and human rights with focus on equality and protection of the minority rights will form the horizontal framework for the ERB activities.

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 2024:

- ERB Agenda 2030
- ERB Action Plan 2024-25

External documents guiding ERB cooperation in 2024:

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Action Plan revised on 15th February 2021;
- 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.
- 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.

Priorities under Kronoberg presidency 2024

We believe that Euroregion Baltic has an important role as a supporting organization to its members. Through joint initiatives, Euroregion Baltic should foster cooperation among local and regional actors within the network but also with other relevant actors in the South Baltic area. The main strategic focus of the ERB cooperation should be that it adds considerable value to the work that the member regions do in order to attain the objectives of their own development strategies.

ERB Agenda 2030 remains a key steering document for Euroregion Baltic. It defines the goal as well as five strategic areas of activities. A successful implementation of ERB Agenda 2030 requires an agile and effective organisation. Therefore in 2024 Euroregion Baltic will continue to:

1. Improve its strategic approach by defining medium term goals in relation to the ERB Agenda 2030 as well as specific measures that will help Euroregion Baltic achieve these goals.
2. Offer specific support to the ERB Youth Board, both with its more strategic work and its daily administrative tasks.
3. Enhance its institutional capacity by finalizing the application process for European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and establishing a secretariat.
4. Increase its visibility, both internally towards its member regions, municipalities and other actors in the member regions and externally towards national and European authorities and organisations.

Improve the strategic approach

- In 2024 the ERB stakeholders define medium-term goals in relation to the ERB Agenda 2030.

While the ERB 2030 Agenda provides a strategic framework for the ERB cooperation, it does not offer concrete ambitions that Euroregion Baltic is set to achieve in the medium-term perspective. In 2024 the ERB stakeholders will update the ERB 2030 Agenda with medium-term goals. This discussion:

- will begin with an inspiration, a debate on current political and economic situation in the European Union and Baltic Sea Region, in connection to the Board meeting, 15th February;
 - continue with a round-table, a workshop gathering ideas and proposals for the medium-term goals, in connection to the Board meeting, 23-24th May;
 - finalize with an updated ERB 2030 Agenda, decision to be taken by the ERB Executive Board in connection to the Board meeting in autumn 2024.
- During spring 2024 the Presidency will make visits to the ERB members. The goals with these meetings will be to:
 - better understand preconditions for cross-border cooperation in the ERB geography;
 - have a dialog about the strategic framework for the ERB cooperation.

Support the ERB Youth Board

- During 2024 the Presidency will assist the ERB Youth Board in its efforts to seek external funds to more strategic work.
- During 2024 the Presidency will also assist the ERB Youth Board its administrative tasks.
- The Presidency will engage the ERB Youth Board in activities aiming to improve their knowledge of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region:
 - the themes of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be introduced to the ERB Youth Board during the meeting on 14th February 2024;
 - the ERB Youth Board members will be encouraged to participate in the Strategy Forum 30-31 October 2024.

Enhance the institutional capacity

- In 2024 the ERB stakeholders will finalize the application process for European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

It is our ambition that the status of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is successfully implemented by the end of the year. The ERB stakeholders express their appreciation to Region Warmia-Masuria that leads and coordinates the application process and pledge their continued support.

- In 2024 a Director of the EGTC will be recruited and a joint secretariat established.

In 2024 the ERB stakeholders will prepare and execute the recruitment process for the Director of the EGTC. As part of this process an agreement will be reached about the amount of membership fees and number of personnel, both of which must remain in balance.

Increase the visibility

- In 2024 the ERB stakeholders will plan an information campaign in order to increase Euroregion Baltic's media presence. The campaign should be launched when the EGTC status is officially granted. The goal will be to reach a broader group of actors, both within our regions and throughout the European Union.

Five strategic areas of activities

- Euroregion Baltic will continue its active engagement in the Interreg South Baltic Programme, and in particular:
 - actively participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee meetings and head the Joint Delegation of Euroregions in close cooperation with Euroregion Pomerania;
 - promote calls for proposals, facilitate project partnerships and support project development initiatives connected to the ERB priorities;
 - engage actors from Olsztyn subregion whose inclusion into South Baltic Programme was strongly advocated by ERB;
 - engage actors in the forest sector into a discussion about possible joint projects funded by the Interreg South Baltic Programme.

- Euroregion Baltic will continue its engagement in the Baltic Sea Region affairs, and in particular:
 - continue cooperating with relevant collaboration platforms in the Baltic Sea Region;
 - encourage participation of the ERB stakeholders in the Annual Forum of the [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) (EUSBSR) 30-31 October 2024;
 - participate in the work of the [Baltic Sea Labour Forum](#) (BSLF).

- Euroregion Baltic will continue its engagement with relevant actors in the European Union, and in particular:
 - follow and contribute to the debate on the future of EU Cohesion Policy;
 - communicate with the European Commission DG REGIO unit D2: Interreg, Cross-Border Cooperation, Internal Borders representatives;
 - liaise with ERB member organisations' regional offices in Brussels;
 - hold an Executive Board meeting in Brussels September 2024.

- Euroregion Baltic will continue to support the involvement of youth in the ERB activities. Supporting the ERB Youth Board, both with its more strategic work and its daily administrative tasks is one of the priorities that the ERB Presidency has chosen to focus on in 2024, see page 5.

- Euroregion Baltic will continue to promote cooperation among regional stakeholders in issues related to Green and Blue Growth, and in particular:
 - support the ERB Task Force on green transition and circular economy in the preparation of concrete recommendations for possible joint initiatives before 23rd May 2024;
 - promote the INTERREG BSR Waterman project.

Meeting schedule 2024

14-15 th February	Växjö, Sweden – Executive Board, Youth Board
23-24 th May	Olsztyn, Poland – Executive Board, Youth Board
September	Brussels – Executive Board, Youth Board