



FROM VISION TO ACTION APPROACH

Euroregion Baltic as a transferable
model of constructing a euroregion
consisting of EU and non-EU member
regions

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In 2008 we are celebrating our 10th Anniversary in Euroregion Baltic. These 10 years have been intensive in the development of our cooperation and we feel proud of what we have achieved together.

The publication we present today is a result of the Seagull II project, co-financed under the BSR INTERREG III B Programme and implemented between 2005 and 2007. The aim of the project was to improve the institutional capacity of Euroregion, and to facilitate the implementation of the Joint Development Programme, adopted in November 2005.

The publication aims at describing Euroregion's construction process, highlighting experience gathered and best practice accumulated in the different stages and processes over the 10 years. Therefore, we would like it to serve as a manual sharing our know-how and expertise, which we hope can be inspiration for other euroregions and crossborder cooperation structures. Hence, the title: From Vision to Action Approach.

The vision defined in the Joint Development Programme is that by 2015 Euroregion Baltic will be an area characterised by growing prosperity and good living conditions for its citizens. It will also be internationally recognised as a front runner in sustainable growth and in the integration of old and new market economies, and exemplifying genuine social and regional cohesion.

I would like to express my gratitude to all who have contributed to the manual, and especially to those who took the initiative of establishing Euroregion Baltic and have done all the hard work in the past ten years, forming the solid basis upon which we can continue to build.

Bernth Johnson
ERB President



Euroregion Baltic

was the first euroregion to formally include a Russian partner (Kaliningrad Region);

is a good example for the EU-Russia relations at the regional level, proving it is possible to fully include a Russian member region and showing ability to handle sensible border crossing issues in a friendly atmosphere.

What is a euroregion?¹

In the 1970s crossborder cooperation received a new tag-line in the form of what became to be known as euregions and later euroregions. The name originates from Euregio, still existing Dutch-German cross-border region.

Euroregion usually implies a long-term (as opposed to ad hoc) integrated structure with a developed level of organisational and financial capacity and with a scope of cooperation covering all the important aspects of crossborder cooperation issues.

This does not mean the creation of a new type of government at the cross-border level. In fact, euroregions do not have political powers and their work is limited by the competences of the local and regional authorities which constitute them.

The most important common features distinguishing euroregions from other forms of crossborder cooperation can be described as follows:

- Formalised permanent cooperation between
- local and regional authorities, normally based on an Agreement and Statutes,
- Joint political and administrative structures, such as Council, Board, Secretariat, etc.,
- Wide range of collaborative actions,
- Crossborder orientated activities.

Euroregion Baltic - a Polish initiative

In order to develop neighbourly relations between 1991 and 2003 the Polish Government supported the establishment of 16 euroregions.

¹ "Comparative Analysis of Euroregions on the Territory of Lithuania", by Jolita Piliuteyte and Sarunas Radvilavicius, 2004

Between 1991 and 1995 the focus was placed on the western and southern borders of Poland.

On 28th February - 1st March 1997 the Polish Government and the local authorities in Elbląg organised a conference at the famous Gothic Castle in Malbork. Representatives of 4 Polish regions (Elbląg, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Słupsk) met representatives from the Russian Kaliningrad region, Swedish Blekinge Region and the Latvian City and District of Liepāja.

Following the conference, an organising committee was established, and the Polish Government appointed Mr Zdzisław Olszewski as a Commissioner to the Governor of Elbląg Region. His responsibilities included the cooperation between the Polish regions of North-East and the Russian Regions of Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg, as well as a specific task of establishing a Euroregion.

Legal basis

"Euroregions are not a type of new authority at transfrontier level: they do not assume new powers and their activities do not extend beyond the powers and responsibilities of the local and regional authorities that make them up²."

Euroregion Baltic does not have any legal status and therefore is not able to apply for EU grants or in any other way act beyond the competencies of its member regions.

The formal basis for the establishment of Euroregion Baltic, as for almost any other euroregion, is the "Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier cooperation

between Territorial Communities or Authorities", adopted 21st May 1980 by the Council of Europe³. Annexed to the Convention were models for the Agreement and Statutes, used in the preparation of the Euroregion Baltic's formal documents.

On 1st August 2007 EU opened up a new possibility for euroregions and similar crossborder cooperation structures to get a legal status in line with the regulation 1082/2006 on "European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, EGTC".⁴

Euroregion Baltic bodies are now monitoring possible ways of application for the legal status of EGTCs.



Mr Zdzisław Olszewski was the Governor of Elbląg Region twice: in 1981 and again between 1989 and 1996.

Between 1996 and 1997 he was the Undersecretary of State in the Cabinet of the Polish Prime Minister.

Since the establishment of Euroregion Baltic Mr Olszewski has been the Director of the Secretariat of the Association of Polish Communes in Elbląg – an organisation with 85 municipalities and cities as members (2007).

² Legal Framework for Euroregional Cooperation Preliminary Discussion. Memorandum of the Secretariat, LR-CT, Council of Europe, 15th January 2004, P. 4

³ More information about the Madrid Convention: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=106&CM=1&CL=ENG>

⁴ More information about EGTC: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/gect/index_en.htm

Russian participation

It was of special priority for the Polish Government to include the neighbouring Kaliningrad Region into Euroregion Baltic.

The preparations for the establishment of Euroregion Baltic were attentively followed by the Polish Foreign Minister, Professor Bronisław Geremek who also took part in the founding conference in Malbork on 22nd February 1998.

In 1997 the Association of Local Authorities of Kaliningrad Region was founded to include all 21 municipal districts and the City of Kaliningrad. The Association became a formal partner to sign the Agreement establishing Euroregion Baltic. It was the first signature ever joining a Russian territorial government into a euroregion.



Mr Victor Koshelev, Deputy Mayor of Baltiysk, was one of the leading Russian representative in the preparations to establish Euroregion Baltic. He is active today as Director of the ERB secretariat in Baltiysk, and a member of the Council.



The Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR) was established in 1971 and today has around 90 member organisations. AEBR report in 2002 maps around 130 border and cross-border regions in Europe, and 14 large amalgamations of border regions.

Find more information about AEBR:
<http://www.aebr.net/>



Euroregion Baltic

is one of the largest euroregions with 8 member regions from 5 different countries and 5.5 million inhabitants;

consists of member regions from both 'old' and 'new' EU member states, as well as a member region from a non-EU country.

Geography

The following regions attended the first Malbork Conference, held between 28th February and 1st March 1997:

- Blekinge Region, Sweden
- Kaliningrad Region, Russia
- Liepaja City and District, Latvia
- Regions of Elbląg, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Słupsk, Poland

During continued foundation work in 1997 and 1998 more regions joined in so the list of partners who finally signed the Agreement establishing Euroregion Baltic was extended with:

- County of Bornholm, Denmark
- Regions of Kalmar and Kronoberg, Sweden
- Klaipeda Region, Lithuania

Following the administrative reform in Poland in 1999 the 4 Polish regions Elbląg, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Słupsk merged into 2 larger Regions of Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie.

In 2002 the Latvian partnership area expanded to include the whole Kurzeme Region. In 2006 however, the Latvian partners withdraw completely from Euroregion Baltic.

Aims and activities

The aims of the co-operation within Euroregion Baltic, in line with the Statutes are to:

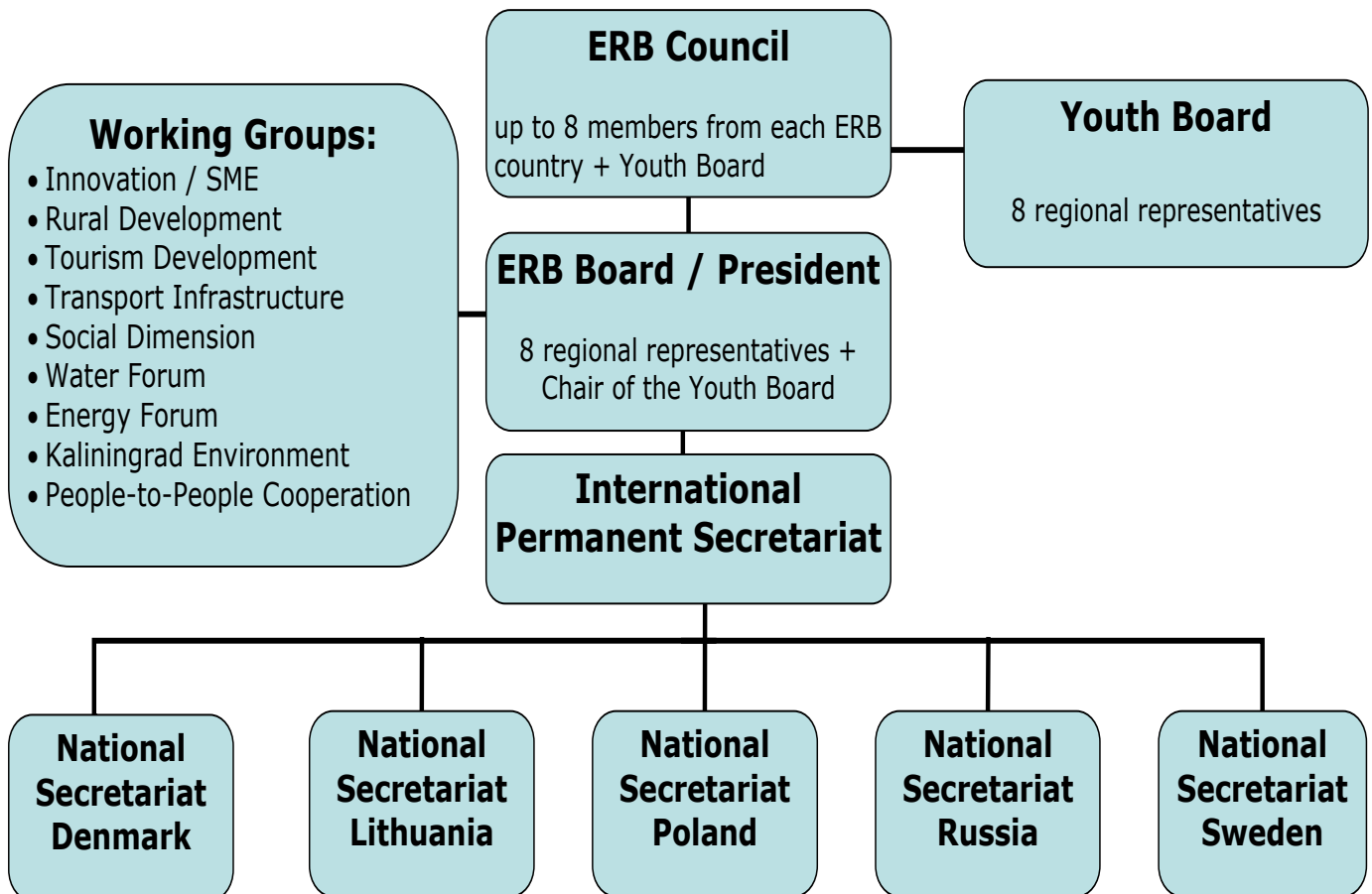
- improve the life conditions of the people inhabiting the area of ERB,
- promote mutual contacts,
- tighten bonds among local communities

- eliminate historical prejudices,
- plan activities aimed at providing sustainable development among the Parties of the Agreement,
- support actions aiming at co-operation between regional and local authorities.

The activities will include:

- supporting common cross-border projects of social and economic development in various areas,
- cooperation in the realisation of common municipal projects on the border-territories,
- cooperation in spatial planning for the border territories and for the whole ERB,
- development of the border-crossings infrastructure,
- increasing professional qualifications and directing re-qualification systems to decrease unemployment, especially among young people,
- exchange of groups of scientists,
- sportsmen, people dealing with culture, youth and children,
- cooperation in the scope of tourism development,
- stimulating learning of neighbour-languages,
- protection of common cultural heritage,
- organising information channels of ERB and supporting media development to provide all the Parties with current information,
- cooperation in the scope of fighting natural and ecological disasters, fire and other emergencies. Exchanging information about the above mentioned threats.

STRUCTURE OF EUROREGION BALTIC



Historic Gothic Castle in Malbork where Euroregion Baltic was founded on 28th February 1998



Founders



From left: Polish Foreign Minister Mr Bronisław Geremek, Mayor of Elblag Mr Witold Gintowt-Dziewałtowski and Minister Head of the Chancellery of the Polish President, Ms Danuta Hübner, all attending the founding meeting in Malbork.



From left: Klaipeda County Governor Mr Laisvunas Kavaliauskas, Ms Małgorzata Samusjew of the Polish Secretariat, Mayor of Silute District Mr Sarunas Lauzikas and Klaipeda County Vice-Governor Mr Šarūnas Reikalas.

POLISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 1998



PRESIDENT:

Mr Grzegorz Grzelak,
Chair of Regional Assembly of Local
Authorities in Gdańsk, Poland

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Šarūnas Reikalas,
Vice-Governor of Klaipeda County,
Lithuania

Council sessions:

23rd February 1998 in Malbork, Poland
15th June 1998 in Gdansk, Poland

Board meetings:

14th April 1998 in Gdynia, Poland
15th June 1998 in Gdansk, Poland
13th November 1998 in Gdynia,
Poland

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Knud Andersen, County of
Bornholm, Denmark
Mr Aivars Jurkovskis, Liepeja City
Executive Officer, Latvia
Mr Roger Kaliff, Chair of Regional
Council in Kalmar County, Sweden
Mr Alexander Kuznecov, Mayor of
Baltiysk, Russia

Main activities 1998

The Association of Polish Communes and the Centre of Youth Culture in Elbląg organised the 14th Edition of the Fine Art Competition We Are from the Sea for children and youths at the age of 4 - 19 years old from Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

PHARE Small Project Fund

In 1998 Polish ERB presidency concentrated its efforts to negotiate and prepare a Small Project Fund under the SPF PHARE Integrated Programme for the Polish Eastern Border.

The Association of Polish Communes in Elbląg became the Management Authority for a grant of 120 000 EUR, which was contracted on 16th December 1998.

A Steering Committee was established, and during November 1998 the main selection criteria and priority fields were

agreed on. Basic training for potential applicants was also provided.

31 projects applied for the new Small Project Fund grants during the first call which ended on 29th January 1999.

The Steering Committee awarded 20 projects with grants totalling to 114 000 EUR, and the projects were implemented between April and October 1999.

The projects exercised significant impact on the integration process within ERB by building partnerships encompassing stakeholders from all 6 countries and involving hundreds of participants. (see pages 9 - 10)

The projects benefited cooperation in ERB also by creating permanent working groups in the fields of:

- Social and cultural cooperation
- Transport
- Environment

INTEGRATION PROCESSES 1999-2000

PHARE Small Project Fund 1999

20 projects were implemented between April and October 1999.

Euroregion Baltic

has succeeded in providing a solid basis for broad integration of children, youth and adults in the form of 20 projects dealing with culture, sports, education, tourism, and economic development and promotion.

has proved to be an efficient managing body both of European programmes as well as large and complex projects

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Days for small and medium sized companies. Partners: City of Elbląg (PL), Local Government of Kaliningrad (RU) and City of Ronneby (SE)

ENVIRONMENT

Natural environment protection methods. Partners: City Council of Rumia (PL) and Hultsfred Municipality (SE)

HEALTH

Open air as a way of activating the unemployed through integration with the disabled. Partners: Social Assistance Foundation "Samopomoc" in Górowo-Iławeckie (PL), Local Government of Bagrationovsk District (RU) and a German partner

Palliative care in advanced stages of tumour. Partners: Hospital in Elbląg (PL) and Caritas—West in Kaliningrad (RU)

TOURISM

Activation of tourism and economy in the communes of Vistula Lagoon through internet promotion. Partners: Union of Municipalities of the Vistula Lagoon (PL), City of Kaliningrad and Administration of Baltijsk City District (RU)

Cooperation of Baltic Islands in green tourism. Cycle paths on the Island of Sobieszewo. Partners: City of Gdansk (PL) and Local Government of Kalmar (SE)

PROMOTION

Promotional brochure of Euroregion Baltic. Partners: Association of Polish Communes, Elbląg (PL)

Presentation of the City and Region of Liepaja. Partners: City of Gdynia (PL) and City of Liepaja (LV)

"Let us get to know each other" - promotion of the communes as a means of regional development. Partners: City of Olsztynek (PL) and the local government of Polesk

EDUCATION

International ecological culture programme for high school youth. Partners: III High School in Elblag (PL) and Knut Hahnsskolan in Ronneby (SE)

International Ecological Camp for Secondary Schools of Baltic States. Partners: City of Elblag (PL) and Local Governments of Kaliningrad and Baltijsk (RU), and Klaipeda (LT)

International Camp in Gdynia. Partners: City of Gdynia (PL) and Boarding School for Orphans in Kaliningrad (RU)

SPORTS

Kayak Regatta Open—within Days of Elblag. Partners: "Polonia" Sports Club in Elblag (PL), Sports Club in Kaliningrad (RU) and "Vetrungė" Sports School in Klaipeda (LT)

Cycling along the Baltic Sea. Partners: Association of Communes "Jeziorak" in Iława (PL) and Local Government of Gargzdaj (LT)

Fifth Jubilee Chess Competition of Future AbsoluteMasters. Partners: Youth Culture Centre in Słupsk (PL), School of Chess Mastery in Kaliningrad (RU) and Chess School in Liepaja (LV)



CULTURE

Theatre

Symposium and workshops:
Theatre and handicapped children.
Partners: Slupsk Culture Centre (PL),
Handicap Children School and the
Danish Amateur Theatre
Association on Bornholm
(DK)

Travelling with

a sketchboard. Partners: City
of Prabuty (PL) and Local Government
of Tingsryd (SE)

Integrations '99.

Partners: Centre of Culture,
Sport and Recreation of City and
Commune of Młynary (PL)
and Local Government
of Kaliningrad (RU)

Galla Concert

of Baltic Music and Dance Bands.
Partners: City of Elbląg (PL) and Local
Government of Kaliningrad (RU)

Cultural

meetings of Baltic Cities in Elbląg.
Partners: City of Elbląg
(PL) and Local Government
of Klaipeda (LT)



POLISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 1998



PRESIDENT:

Mr Šarūnas Reikalas,
Vice-Governor of Klaipeda County,
Lithuania

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Aleksander Kuznecov,
Mayor of Baltijsk, Russia

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Knud Andersen, County of
Bornholm, Denmark
Mr Maciej Brzeski, Deputy Mayor of
Gdynia, Poland
Mr Aivars Jurkovskis, Liepeja City
Executive Officer, Latvia
Ms Gerthie Olsson, Karlskrona City
Council, Sweden

Council sessions:

15th February 1999 in Elblag, Poland

Board meetings:

30th April 1999 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
31st August 1999 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
12th October 1999 in Gdynia, Poland
1st February 2000 in Klaipeda,
Lithuania

Main activities 1999 We Are from the Sea

We Are from the Sea had already become a regular event attracting a growing number of participants. Its 15th edition was entered by 2695 works of art delivered by children and youths at the age of 4 - 19 years old. The organisers (Association of Polish Communes and Centre of Culture in Elblag) selected some ninety best contributions at the grand finale on 8th May 1999.

ERB Baltic Expo was accompanied by a conference on tourism and the publication of a brochure presenting tourism highlights of ERB member regions.

Euroregion Baltic Expo '99

Between 12th and 14th October 1999 a big promotional event took place at the World Trade Centre in Gdynia. Upon the initiative of the Polish partners and with assistance provided by Phare Programme (63 000 EUR) it was possible to hold a large presentation of 83 exhibitors from around the area of Euroregion Baltic.



RUSSIAN PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC 2000



PRESIDENT:

Mr Aleksander Kuznecov
Mayor of Baltijsk, Russia

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Ulf Andersson, Council in
Kronoberg County, Sweden

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Knud Andersen, County of
Bornholm, Denmark
Mr Aivars Jurkovskis, Liepeja City
Executive Officer, Latvia
Mr Henryk Słonina, Mayor of Elbląg,
Poland
Mr Šarūnas Reikalas, Klaipeda County,
Lithuania

Council sessions:

29th February 2000 in Elbląg, Poland
28th June 2000 in Baltijsk, Russia

Board meetings:

4th April 2000 in Baltijsk, Lithuania
16th, 17th January 2001 in Baltijsk,
Russia

Main activities 2000

Small Project Fund

In 1999 the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion contracted 18 000 EUR on one project dealing with cultural exchange.

From the Sea We Are

In 2000 the 16th edition of *We Are from the Sea* attracted 1213 works of art delivered by children and youths from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Russia.

Youth Ecology Camp

Youth Ecology Camp took place in Piaski, PL, from 24th July - 6th August 2000, with 108 young people from six countries taking part.

2000 Jamboree Scout

On 10th July 2000 Frombork in Poland became the home of Frombork 2000 Jamboree Scout, a meeting of around 160 young scouts from four countries: Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Russia

Euroregion Baltic Expo 2000

Euroregion Baltic Expo 2000 took place at the Track & Field Arena in Klaipeda 24th - 26th November 2000.



Euroregion Baltic

has its own Joint Development Programme, resulting from broad consultations and involvement of more than 1 000 participants in the member regions, and approved by the member regions and the Council.

has the Joint Development Programme fully reflecting the EU growth and employment strategy, as well as the EU-Russia four common spaces.

Focus on a joint ERB strategy

The strategic development process was initiated by the Swedish presidency in 2001 and lasted until November 2005 when the Joint Development Programme was approved. With financial support in 2001 from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the Swedish Federation of County Councils, a series of seminars with leading ERB politicians and officials were organised under the project ERB 2002+.

The project led to the revision of the ERB Statutes, to the discussions on a common vision and thereby created the basis for the elaboration of a joint ERB development programme. The application for a three-year project called Seagull DevERB was submitted in March 2002 and later selected for approval. Kalmar Region became lead partner and the kick-off conference took place in August 2002 on Bornholm.

The Seagull DevERB project

The grant allocated by the BSR INTERREG III B Programme amounted to 1.3 MEUR. The project partnership included 34 organisations. Steering Committee was established and chaired by Kalmar Region Executive Director, Mr Håkan Brynielsson. Special focus was placed on the areas of water management, innovative environments and rural development. The activities consisted in studies, seminars and workshops, gathering statistics and conferences.

Major outputs included the development of on-line toolboxes, an ERB information and communication strategy, a number of reports and publications, and finally the Development Strategy and Action Programme together constituting Euroregion Baltic Joint Development Programme adopted on 28th November 2005 in Klaipeda.

SWEDISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2001



PRESIDENT:

Mr Roger Kaliff
Chair of Regional Council in Kalmar County, Sweden

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Normunds Niedols
Liepaja City Executive Director, Latvia

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Knud Andersen, County of Bornholm, Denmark
Ms Virginia Lukosiene, Governor of Klaipeda County, Lithuania
Mr Henryk Słonina, Mayor of Elbląg, Poland
Mr Aleksander Kuzniecowa, Mayor of Baltiysk, Russia

Council sessions:

1st February 2001 in Kalmar, Sweden
22nd August 2001 in Karlskrona, Sweden
12th November 2001 in Liepaja, Latvia

Board meetings:

1st February 2001 in Kalmar, Sweden
10th April 2001 in Elbląg, Poland
27th June 2001 in Elbląg, Poland
25th September 2001 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
23rd January 2002 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Main activities in 2001

Small Project Fund

Totalling 285 000 EUR 25 projects were approved under the Small Project Fund in 2001 in the following areas: youth exchange, environmental protection, sport and culture.

We Are from the Sea

More than 2000 works of art entered the 17th edition of the competition *We Are from the Sea*, with a final closure in May 2001 in Elbląg, Poland.

ERB 2002+ seminars

See page 16

Seagull DevERB project

See page 16

The working groups

Environmental Working Group led by Ms Marianne Eckerbom from Sweden met twice during 2001 and mainly concentrated their work on the input to the PIA group, discussions on the coming EU Water Framework Directive and an environmental project for schools.

Spatial Planning Working Group (which replaced Transport Working Group) led by Mr Victor Koshelev from Russia participated in several seminars during 2001 and organised one seminar together with the Assembly of European Border Regions (AEBR) on "Elaboration and implementation of regional development in border co-operation" which took place in April 2001.

Social Issues Working Group led by Mrs Jadwiga Semmerling from Poland had one meeting in 2001 to discuss various kinds of projects within youth exchange, co-operation of cultural centres, cooperation between NGO's and disabled people.

LATVIAN PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2002



Council sessions:

11th, 12th March 2002 in Liepaja, Latvia
4th November 2002 in Liepaja, Latvia

Board meetings:

11th March 2002 in Liepaja, Latvia
10th June 2002 in Talsi, Latvia
20th August 2002 on Bornholm, Denmark
24th February 2003 in Malbork, Poland

PRESIDENT:

Mr Normunds Niedols
Liepaja City Executive Director, Latvia

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Knud Andersen
County of Bornholm, Denmark

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Ms Virginia Lukosiene, Klaipeda County, Lithuania
Mr Henryk Słonina, Mayor of Elbląg, Poland
Mr Alexander Kuznecov, Mayor of Baltiysk, Russia
Mr Bernth Johnson, Region Blekinge, Sweden

Main activities 2002

From the Sea We Are

The 18th edition of *We Are from the Sea* was entered by 1777 children and youths from Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden (for the first time) The exhibition of best young artists and awarded works took place on 15th May 2002 in Elbląg.

Extension of Latvian partnership

During 2002 municipalities and districts in the new Baltic Sea Coastal Zone in Latvia (Kurzeme Region) applied to become members of Euroregion Baltic.

At the Council meeting in February 2003 the application was approved and the annex submitted to the ERB Agreement.

Ronneby Declaration

The initial phase of the Seagull DevERB

project included a series of seminars in Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad Region focusing on Good Governance.

These were finalised with a conference which took place in November 2002 in Ronneby, Sweden. 120 politicians and experts participated, representing all nine ERB regions.

The conference was concluded with a declaration focusing on three main themes:

- Economic growth in an open market economy as a fundamental precondition for the development of municipal and regional activities;
- development of Good Governance with limited resources in municipalities and regions;
- enhanced local and regional cooperation - a key to good governance in the municipalities and regions of today.

Euroregion Baltic

has managed to develop strong and effective strategic leadership based on clear objectives, visibility and lobbying activities, common budget and a joint secretariat

Information and Communication Strategy

The first ERB Information and Communication Strategy was adopted by the Council at their session on 29th August 2003.

The strategy set out concrete objectives, target groups and priority actions for 2003 and 2004:

1. Improving the internal information and communication within the ERB structures
2. Improving the information and communication within the ERB member regions
3. Improving the information and lobbying activities outside ERB regions.

Decision: Enlargement of ERB

ERB Board decided on 31st October 2003 in Kaliningrad to specify conditions for future enlargement of the ERB area.

In line with this decision ERB should not extend to include more countries. New regions within the existing ERB countries can apply for membership to the ERB Presidency who will consult the member regions in the country and have their application finally approved by the Council.

International Permanent Secretariat

With the cooperation within Euroregion Baltic constantly increasing both in the number of activities performed and actors participating, the ERB Council began to discuss a possible establishment of a joint secretariat. The debate commenced at the Council session on 29th August 2003 on Bornholm and finalised on 4th May 2004 in Elbląg.

This step involved the introduction of membership fees. Though the existing ERB Statutes already included provisions for such a system, changes were necessary in order to more precisely specify the role and function of a joint secretariat. A number of meetings were held to consult the scope of responsibilities of the joint secretariat and its relation to the national secretariats already operating in Euroregion Baltic.

During the Polish ERB Presidency the level of membership fees was discussed and finally agreed at the Council meeting on 4th May 2004 in Elbląg. Also, the Statutes were revised again to accommodate the establishment of the joint administrative structure. It was agreed that the IPS income will amount to 36 000 EUR annually with the contributions of the following proportions:

- 6 000 EUR from Danish and Swedish regions each,
- 3 000 EUR from Polish regions each,
- 2 000 EUR from regions in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia.

Following an open call, the offer to host the joint secretariat presented by the Association of Polish Communes won support of all the partners. Now officially known as Euroregion Baltic International Permanent Secretariat (IPS) opened on 1st July 2004 with Mr Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobrzanski as Head.

The division of responsibilities between all the secretariats within Euroregion Baltic was discussed in 2007 in the final months of the Seagull II project and as a result of experience gathered in the institutional enhancement process. Also, in 2007 ERB Council increased the membership fees paid by the regions into the joint budget of the International Permanent Secretariat by 15% as of 2008.



Mr Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobrzanski on duty

DANISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2003



Council sessions:

25th February 2003 in Malbork, Poland
29th August 2003 on Bornholm, Denmark

Board meetings:

25th - 27th May 2003 in Brussels, Belgium
31st October 2003 in Kaliningrad, Russia
23rd January 2004 in Klaipeda, Lithuania

PRESIDENT:

Mrs Annelise Molin,
Regional Council of Bornholm, Denmark

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Zbigniew Karpowicz,
Chair of the Board of the Association of
Polish Communes, Poland

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Normunds Niedols, Liepaja City,
Latvia
Mrs Virginia Lukosiene, Klaipeda
County, Lithuania
Mr Aleksander Kuznecov, Mayor of
Baltiysk, Russia
Mr Bo Frank, Council in Kronoberg
County, Sweden

Main activities 2003

Danish ERB Presidency introduced a stronger strategic management of the co-operation, setting up five main objectives for its presidency:

1. A stronger ERB with special focus on timely and well prepared meetings, effective chairmanship, a better follow up on joint decisions, and tighter cooperation between the national ERB secretariats including use of on-line communication.
2. A joint long-term development strategy, giving the Seagull DevERB project special attention and priority.
3. Stronger external profile and lobbying function, introducing annual Board meetings in Brussels, adoption of position papers and improved visibility towards the EU and national institutions.
4. More anchored cooperation, through the Seagull DevERB activities and

other broader projects like the Green Circle Schools project and more focus on town twinning.

5. More concrete cooperation, including visits in all member regions by the ERB President, identifying and discussing future cooperation priorities.

Green Circle Schools project

Between 2003 and 2005 twelve primary and secondary schools from all the ERB regions implemented the Green Circle Schools project, with a grant from the Comenius programme.

The aim of the project was to set up and evaluate a tool for environmental education leading to a more sustainable development. Each school was to give account of at least seven of the ten sectors:

1. Democracy,
2. Our mutual inheritance,
3. Areas worth protection,

4. Inner environment,
5. Health,
6. Fauna,
7. Recycling,
8. Water,
9. Flora
10. Schoolyard.

Several networks in specific fields between the cooperating schools were established during the project.

Position Paper on the EU Cohesion Policy 2006+

Based on a thematic discussion at the Council meeting 29th August on Bornholm, the ERB Board at the following meeting 31st October 2003 in Kaliningrad adopted a Position Paper on the EU Cohesion Policy 2006+, with the following key points:

- The future Cohesion Policy must include a territorial dimension besides the economic and social dimensions
- Maritime borders should be given the same status as land borders
- The INTERREG initiative should maintain as an independent initiative
- ERB recommended to play a key role in the future Cohesion Policy, as well as in the Northern Dimension and Neighbourhood Policy

Focus on Maritime Safety

The Council 24th February 2003 adopted a resolution on the Maritime Safety situation in the South Baltic Sea region, strongly recommending safety measures to be taken to prohibit unsafe oil production platforms and unsafe shipping with dangerous and polluting cargo. The Council also recommended a transnational safety infrastructure to be developed at a decentralised level including regional and local authorities.

Together with Sydsam, B7 islands the ERB convened a meeting 13th - 14th May 2004 in Trelleborg, SE.

At the meeting a resolution was adopted by the maritime regions, though the Russian partners had to make a reservation as for some parts of the resolution. The meeting formed the basis for the Baltic Master project 2005-2007.

The resolution was adopted with the recommendation that all ERB Parties should distribute it among their respective National governments, Prime Minister and ministers responsible for environment and transport. The paper was also forwarded to the EU Commissioners responsible for transport and environment, including a recommendation to put focus on unsafe Oil Production platforms and on the role of regional and local authorities in the Maritime Safety structures, and finally to recommend support for the Baltic Sea to become a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.



From left: Mr Rainer Feit (Chair of B7), Mr Jan Kozłowski (ERB President) and Mr Roger Kaliff (Sydsam President) signing the Trelleborg Declaration.

POLISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2004



Council sessions:

27th February 2004 in Elblag, Poland

4th May 2004 in Elblag, Poland

Board meetings:

16th June 2004 in Gdansk, Poland

3rd September 2004 in Olsztyn, Poland

16th November 2004 in Gdansk, Poland

24th - 25th January 2005 in Brussels, Belgium

Main activities 2004

The Polish ERB presidency during 2004 focused its management on the following seven priorities:

- The long-term strategy for ERB (Seagull)
- The Second Northern Dimension Action Plan
- The Lisbon & Gothenburg Agenda
- Active participation in the European debate and relevant lobbying activities
- Promotion of ERB activities
- Continued improvement of the ERB efficiency
- Maritime Safety

Secretariat webmeetings

The number of on-line meetings between the ERB secretariats, introduced during the Danish ERB presidency, increased significantly during the Polish ERB presidency and with the establishment of a joint ERB Secretariat:

PRESIDENT:

Mr Jan Kozlowski, Pomerania Region, Poland

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mrs Virginia Lukoshene, Klaipeda Region, Lithuania

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mrs Annelise Molin, Bornholm, Denmark

Mr Normunds Niedols, Liepaja City, Latvia

Mr Aleksander Kuzniecowa, Baltijsk City, Russia

Mr Anders Åkesson, Kalmar Region, Sweden

19th April 2004, 4th June 2004,
18th August 2004, 25th October 2004
11th January 2005, 9th February 2005

MS Messenger was used for these meetings, which mainly were to prepare the Board and Council sessions.

Meeting Mrs Danuta Hübner

The second Board meeting in Brussels took place 24th - 25th January 2005, and included the attendance of the Polish EU Commissioner, Mrs Danuta Hübner, responsible for regional policy.

Seagull II Seed Money project

One of the first tasks for the Joint Secretariat was to lead a special task force preparing an application for a BSR INTERREG III B Seed Money project.

The Seed Money project was granted and implemented from November 2004 to February 2005. The output was drafting an application in March 2005 for the Seagull II project.

Euroregion Baltic

has been able to steadily develop its capacities: human, technical and financial resources. In 2005 – 2007 the second 'Seagull' project initiated 8 reference networks; the regional secretariats strengthened their role and activities and youth has been fully integrated into the decision-making structures.

has launched the use of a modern on-line meeting and training system.

Agenda 2007 training seminars

With a grant of 25 000 EUR from the Danish "Baltic Educational Island" fund, Bornholm organised three training seminars from February to April for the key staff of the regional secretariats.

The project aimed at increasing the knowledge and competencies of the staff in the main EU policies, as well as tasks related to project management, information and lobbying activities.

The Seagull II project

From June 2005 until the end of 2007 the Seagull II project was implemented, led by the Association of Polish Communes in Elblag and with the Head of IPS, Mr Slawomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański as the project manager.

The project aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of Euroregion Baltic, focusing on three main areas:

1. Establishment of reference networks in relation to the 8 main priorities in the ERB Joint Action Programme,
2. Improving technical capacities of ERB, by introducing an on-line meeting facility and a database as the basis for a benchmarking system,
3. Development of human resources with a series of training seminars for the reference networks in particular, in the main EU policies and programmes, as well as project development and management.

The project Kick-off Conference took place in Klaipeda (Lithuania) on 29th November 2005, the

day after the ERB Council adopted the Joint Development Strategy and the Action Programme.

Tourism network established

Centre for Regional and Tourism Research (CRT) on Bornholm received a grant from the Danish "Baltic Educational Island" to develop an ERB Tourism Network which held two seminars and some studies concluding with four main priorities:

- Tourism market research,
- Common transregional product development,
- Network to exchange information and knowledge,
- Sustainable tourism education and training.

Later, the Tourism Network turned into one of the eight reference networks within the Seagull II project.

Baltic Master project

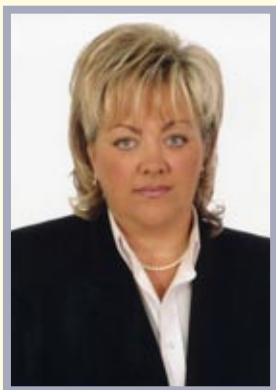
With the Blekinge Region as the lead partner a project improving maritime safety in the South Baltic Sea area was implemented between 2005 and 2007 with support from the BSR INTERREG III B programme.

Euroregion Baltic was one of some forty partners attending from the Baltic Sea Region. On 27th November 2007 Baltic Master has been announced the best European maritime project in the European Regional Champion Award competition.



Per Gudmund Lindencrona (Baltic Master Steering Group Chairman) and Sofie Gardestedt (Director of SydSam Office in Brussels).

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2005



Council sessions:

25th February 2005 in Klaipeda, LT
28th November 2005 in Klaipeda, LT

Board meetings:

26th February 2005 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
11th May 2005 in Palanga, Lithuania
22nd July 2005 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
1st March 2006, Online

PRESIDENT:

Mrs Irina Rozova,
Vice-Governor of Klaipeda Region,
Lithuania

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Aleksander Kuzniecowa,
Mayor of Baltijsk, Russia

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mrs Annelise Molin, Council of
Bornholm, Denmark
Mr Zigo Rutkovskis, Liepaja City
Executive Director, Latvia
Mr Jan Kozlowski, Marshal of Pomerania
Region, Poland,
Mr Bo Frank, Council in Kronoberg
County, Sweden

Main activities 2005

We Are from the Sea

Around 2 400 contributions were sent to the Association of Polish Communes in Elblag in the annual art competition *We Are from the Sea*. The prize giving event was held in May together with a special exhibition of the awarded works.

Euroregion Baltic Youth Games

For the first time Starogard Gdanski became the host of ERB Youth Games which took place between 24th and 26th June 2005. More than 400 young competitors played basketball, volleyball and football, and fought boxing matches.

Youth Film project

150 young people, aged 15 - 21, met at the beginning of July 2005 in Malbork

(Poland) to produce a film showing everyday life of youth in the ERB countries, promoting national values and intercultural dialogue.

ERB Newsletter

Joint Permanent Secretariat launched the first ERB Newsletter in August 2005 and the second issue was launched in December 2005.

ENPI Position Paper

On 22nd July 2005 in Klaipeda the Board adopted the Position Paper on the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) proposing that ERB should become an eligible territorial unit for its own ENPI cross-border programme 2007-2013.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2006



Council sessions:

30th March 2006 in Kaliningrad, Russia
20th November 2006 in Svetlogorsk, Russia

Board meetings:

2nd June 2006 in Karlskrona, Sweden
3rd October 2006 in Karlskrona, Sweden
7th February 2007 in Elblag, Poland

PRESIDENT:

Territorial Development Minister,
Kaliningrad Region, Russia

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Bernth Johnson, Chair of Blekinge
County, Sweden

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Mr Per Ole Petersen, Council of
Bornholm, Denmark
Mrs Raisa Mincinauskiene,
Vice-Governor of Klaipeda County,
Lithuania
Mr Jan Kozlowski, Marshal of Pomorskie
Region, Poland

Main activities 2006

We Are from the Sea

In 2006 almost 3 000 works of art were sent in to the 22nd International Competition of Fine Arts for children and youth from around Euroregion Baltic. The exhibition and award giving ceremonies were held at the historic premises of the Archaeological Museum in Elblag, Poland.

Euroregion Baltic Youth Games II

The second edition of the Games attracted around 700 competitors, aged 13 - 15 years old from 9 countries, now including sports youth from outside Euroregion Baltic. Swimming and handball were included in the selected sport areas, and table tennis for the disabled youth.

Ice Hockey tournament

Between 13th—16th March 2007 young

hockey teams from Lithuania, Russia and Sweden played against each other in Karlskrona, Sweden and Klaipeda, Lithuania.

BEN project

In October 2006 the ERB Board made a decision to take active part in the Baltic Euroregional Network, lead by the Nordic Council of Ministers office in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The project strives to strengthen euroregions as competent planning partners with national authorities and international institutions, as well as to build a network of euroregions in the Baltic Sea Region.

Latvia withdraws from ERB

In November 2006 the Council approved of the request of the Latvian partners to cease its participation in Euroregion Baltic. The request followed an extended period of low Latvian involvement in the cooperation.

EUROREGION BALTIC

has managed to agree in consensus on very sensitive border crossing issues, including concrete recommendations addressed to the national governments and EU institutions

South Baltic CBC programme

The national governments in Denmark, Poland and Sweden in the Spring 2006 agreed to create a new cross-border co-operation programme in the South Baltic area, including the Danish island Bornholm, the Swedish regions Blekinge, Kalmar, Kronoberg and Skaane, and all the three northern Polish regions: Pomerania, Warmia-Mazury and Western Pomerania. During the autumn 2006 Lithuania joined the programme with the regions of Klaipeda, Telsiau and Taurage, and Germany joined with the 10 northern regions in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

The Polish Ministry for Regional Development was agreed to be the Programme Management Authority and a Joint Programme Secretariat was agreed to be established in the City of Gdansk.

Based on intensive work in a Core Group including a representative from ERB and work in a national implementation group, the Joint Programming Committee in July 2007 forwarded the draft programme to the European Commission for approval.

The programme with around 63 MEUR co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, was approved in November 2007, with the first application round expected in the beginning of 2008.

The programme will support cross border entrepreneurship, labour market and educational cooperation, transport infrastructures, environment, energy saving and renewable energy, natural and cultural heritage for regional development and local community initiatives.

Border Crossing issues

In the Seagull II project was foreseen organising two conferences focusing on border crossing issues, being a crucial aspect for the future joint ERB development.

At the first conference held in Svetlogorsk, RUS, 21st November 2006 presentations were made by several key persons representing national governments in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, as well as key representatives from the Border management in the three countries, from the Nordic Council of Ministers and other.

A main concern was on the consequences of Lithuania and Poland fully taking part of the Schengen regime.

At the second conference taking place in Karlskrona 15th March 2007, a study on the consequences of the EU enlargement 2004 was presented by its author, Dr Tadeusz Baryla from the Scientific Research Centre in Olsztyn (Poland).

A resolution was adopted, strongly recommended that the residents of Kaliningrad region and the neighbouring regions in Lithuania and Poland will have similar conditions crossing the borders as today, when Lithuania and Poland becomes fully integrated in the Schengen area.

It also recommends a special Local Border regime, as made possible by a new EU decision from February 2007 - but extended to cover all the neighbouring regions and not only 30 km from the border as decided.

SWEDISH PRESIDENCY IN EUROREGION BALTIC, 2007

**PRESIDENT:**

Mr Bernth Johnson, Chair
of Blekinge County Council,
Sweden

VICE PRESIDENT:

Mr Per Ole Petersen,
Member of Bornholm
Regional Council , Denmark

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD:**

Mrs Raisa Mincinauskiene,
Vice-Governor of Klaipeda
County, Lithuania

Mr Jan Kozłowski, Marshal
of Pomeranian Region,
Poland

Mr Mikhail Pluhin, Territorial
Development Minister,
Kaliningrad Region, Russia

Council sessions:

14th March 2007 in Karlskrona, Sweden
6th December 2007 in Gdansk, Poland

Board meetings:

19th April 2007 in Elblag, Poland
2nd June 2007 in Vilnius, Lithuania
14th August 2007 on Öland, Sweden
10th October 2007 in Brussels, Belgium
28th January 2008 in Växjö, Sweden

Main activities 2007

Strategy

At the Council meeting on 14th March 2007 in Karlskrona (Sweden) a two-year activity strategy for Euroregion Baltic was adopted, following preparation work by the new ERB President and the Vice-President and in consultation with the Executive Board.

The strategy included five objectives for the years 2007-2008:

1. Improving the institutional capacity,
2. Strategic and visible management,
3. Broader anchoring of the cooperation,
4. More involvement of the Youth,
5. Social and economic integration.

In line with the strategy the Board meetings in 2007 and 2008 were planned to be held in all ERB regions, including meetings with local and regional politicians.

Another important issue was the review of the membership fee system, which resulted all the member regions agreeing to increase their financial contributions by 15 % as of 31st January 2008.

In relation to the increased budget it was also approved that the Council and the Board will be extended to include youth representatives from all the eight member regions.

The changes introduced to the organisation of Euroregion Baltic included the extension of its Executive Board. Before, the Board had five national representatives from Denmark Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. New provisions in the Statutes, adopted at the Council meeting on 22nd February 2008 in Elbląg, enable the Board to have members from all the eight regions of Blekinge, Bornholm, Kaliningrad, Kalmar, Klaipeda, Kronoberg, Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie.

INTEGRATION OF YOUTH

EUROREGION BALTIC

Is probably the first euroregion to integrate the youth fully in its decision-making bodies

Since the very beginning of Euroregional cooperation the youth aspect has played a very important role and been reflected in such joint events as youth camps, art competitions, sports events, film projects, etc.

With assistance by Europe Direct information relays in Blekinge, Växjö, Olsztyn, Slupsk, Bornholm and Klaipeda, in cooperation among all the secretariats, the first ERB Youth Conference was hosted by the Marshal of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region and the Mayor of Elblag. Between 20th and 21st April 2007, the City of Elblag (Poland) welcomed around 120 young people, ERB politicians and officials, as well as a number of special guests attending the conference which included three workshops focusing on democracy, intercultural dialogue and environment.

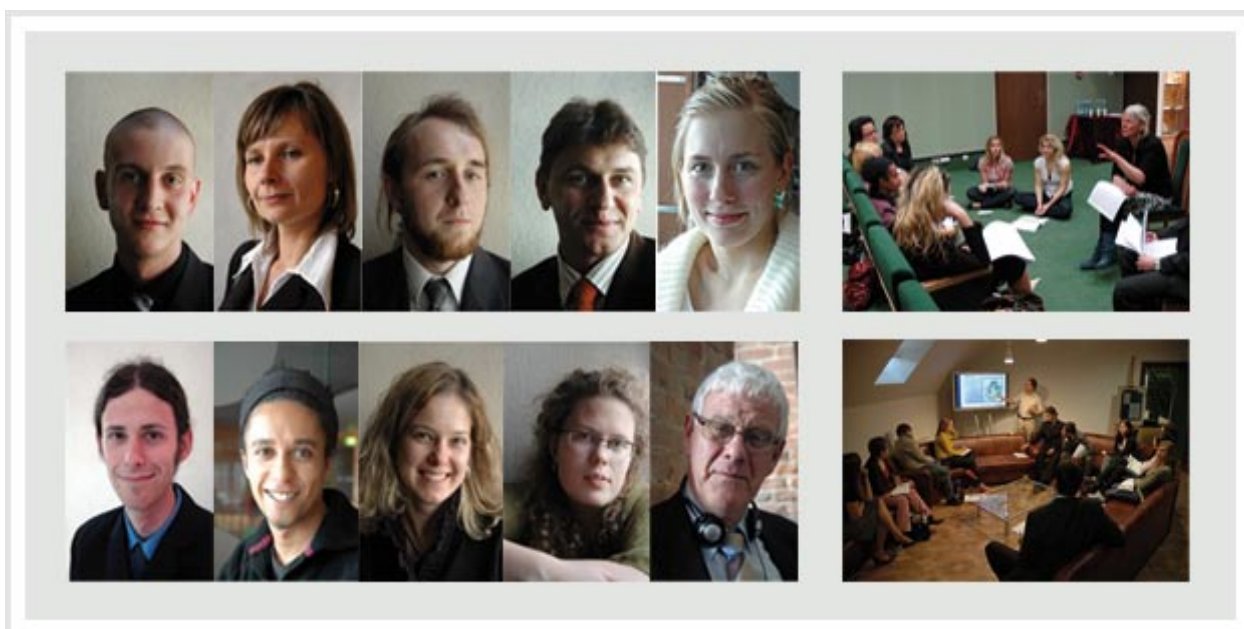
The evaluation of the conference clearly indicated significant interest among the youth to build up their own network in Euroregion Baltic as a platform for more intensive cooperation.

At its meeting on 6th December 2007 in Gdańsk (Poland) the ERB Council approved the recommendation of the Board to set up the Youth Board including representatives from each of the eight member regions, aged 16 - 25.

The Council also revised the ERB Statutes to enable the inclusion of the Youth Board, describing its role and function, as well as giving all the Youth Board members full membership in the ERB Council, and the Youth Board Chair full membership in the ERB Board.

The Council allocated separate financial resources in the ERB budget available for the Youth Board to co-finance concrete projects.

If not the first, ERB is definitely one of the first among 130 European Euroregions to have card carrying young representatives in their decision-making process





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