EUROREGION BALTIC
INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

Euroregion Baltic's position on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council, laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, COM(2004) 628 final – 2004/0219 (COD).

All the nine member Regions of Euroregion Baltic

welcome the objective 3 of the reformed Cohesion Policy from 2007, namely the European Territorial Cooperation aimed to strengthen the cross-border and trans-national cooperation;

support the statement in the Strategy Paper of the European Neighbourhood Policy to reinforce existing forms of regional and sub-regional co-operation and to provide a framework for their further development;

back the European Commission's draft regulation for an European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) with its approach largely modelled on "Structural Funds" principles such as multi-annual programming, partnership and co-financing, adapted to take into account the specificities of external relations;

agree with the ENPI's proposal to define priorities for cooperation with Russia in line with the road-maps on the four common spaces approved by the Partnership and Co-operation Council;

consider, however, that the maritime borders in the Baltic Sea Region should be treated in the same way as the land borders since all our Baltic partners face one common sea and thus should be able to cooperate on an equal basis;

would hence propose that all the Euroregion Baltic member regions be included on the list of eligible territorial units for cross-border ENPI programmes, in order to create the best possible conditions to develop sea crossings of significant importance, as well as not to leave out the Danish and Swedish regions and their resources from the process of integrating Kaliningrad Region in the Baltic Sea Region development;

would therefore ask that Euroregion Baltic be considered and selected as a cross-border Neighbourhood Programme area between 2007 and 2013;

would offer to the EU and the respective national governments a politically well-anchored and effective existing cross-border neighbourhood co-operation platform, to implement the main objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Northern Dimension and the objectives for EU-Russia relations concerning the Kaliningrad region and the development of the Four Common Economic Spaces;

The position was agreed and adopted during the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board meeting in Klaipeda on 22nd July, 2005.
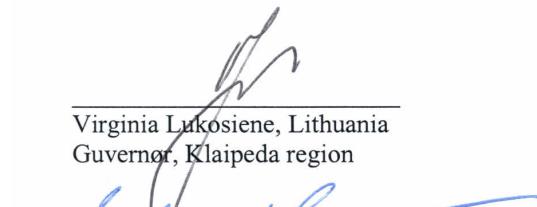
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Guvernør, Klaipeda region
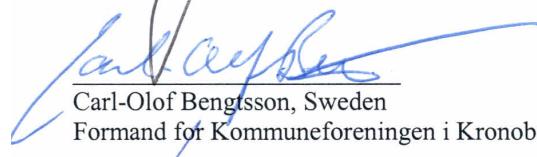
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Formand for Kommuneforeningen i Kronoberg län
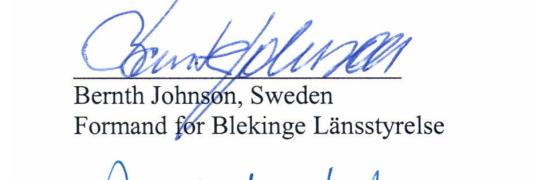
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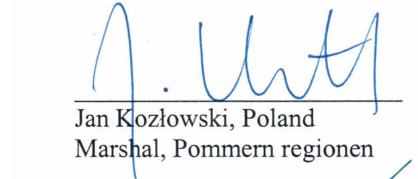
Jan Kozłowski, Poland
Marshal, Pommern regionen
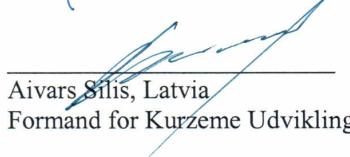
Aivars Silis, Latvia
Formand for Kurzeme Udviklingsråd
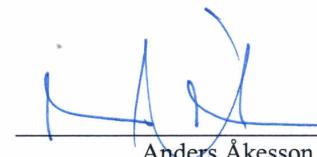
Anders Åkesson, Sweden
Formand for Regionsrådet i Kalmar län

Vladimir Egorov, Russia
Guvernør, Kaliningrad region
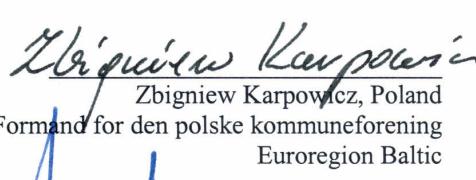
Zbigniew Karpowicz, Poland
Formand for den polske kommuneforening
Euroregion Baltic
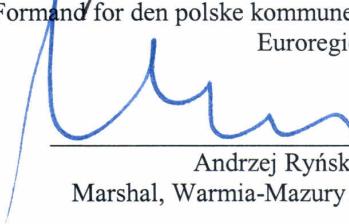
Andrzej Ryński, Poland
Marshal, Warmia-Mazury regionen
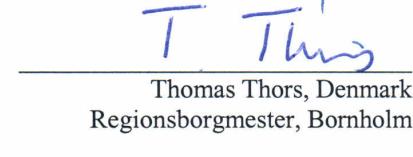
Thomas Thors, Denmark
Regionsborgmester, Bornholm

EUROREGION BALTIC
INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

Information on Euroregion Baltic

Euroregion Baltic was founded in February 1998, consisting of 9 regions from six countries in the southern Baltic Sea: Denmark (Regional Municipality of Bornholm), Latvia (Kurzeme Planning Region), Lithuania (Klaipeda County), Poland (Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie), Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), and Sweden (Region Blekinge, Region Kalmar, Kronoberg County). Based on the Cooperation Agreement and common Statutes, it has developed joint working structures, including its International Permanent Secretariat.

Comprising the regions from both old and new EU Member States, and the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast, Euroregion Baltic constitutes the operational network of substantial and effective links across the borders, facilitating the promotion of political dialogue and reform, as well as sustainable, economic, social and environmental development, and thus strengthening local democracy and fostering people-to-people contacts between civil societies. The co-operation actively involves both local and regional authorities, private and public sectors, and NGOs.

Since 1989 the ERB regions have acquired the experience as management authorities of the EU programmes, and therefore are able to provide necessary management competencies. Promoting understanding and people to people contacts have been the general themes of multi-annual projects that facilitated exchanges of youth, e.g. *Euoregion Baltic Youth Games* with more than 400 sports youth from our regions, or *From the Sea We Are Arts Competition* where over two thousand entries are sent in every year. Similarly, projects like *Green Circle Schools* have involved primary and secondary school pupils in cooperation advocating environment protection and training, as well as health education.

Within the framework of the EU financed Seagull Project, the ERB partners have elaborated a long-term development strategy based on five strategic priorities, including economic and social development, implementation of the EU policies regarding environmental protection and promotion of renewable energy sources, improving the infrastructures in order to provide better access to the Trans European transport networks, and activities supporting the integration of the Kaliningrad Oblast, all corresponding with the revised Lisbon Strategy and the development of Four Common Spaces between the European Union and Russia.

In order to enhance co-operation and facilitate investments, in November 2005 Euroregion Baltic will adopt a joint development programme, based on the common development strategy. Implementation of the programme will be assisted by a project co-financed by the INTERREG III B BSR which will start in July 2005 and aim at improving institutional capacities of Euroregion Baltic, for the effective implementation of the strategy, including support to the Kaliningrad Region's participation in Community programmes and the special focus on developing cross-border infrastructures and on border-crossing related issues.