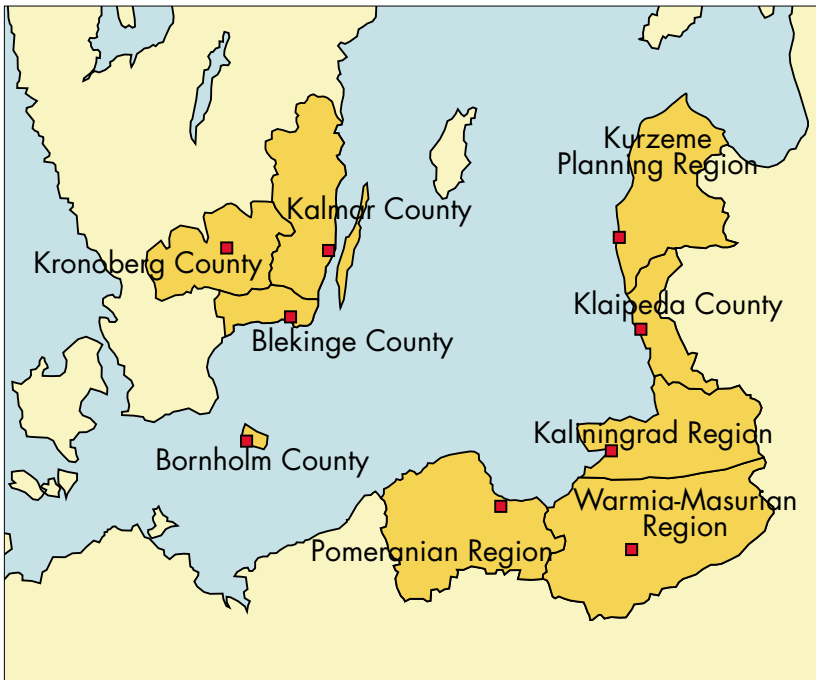




Euroregion Baltic
Presidency Latvia 2002-2003

Annual Report 2002



INTRODUCTION

The period beginning in the late 1980s and ending in the early 1990s was characterized by positive democratic transformation in Europe. The Iron Curtain fell and an opportunity for more frank co-operation manifested itself. In response to the dynamic process in cross-border co-operation in the Southeast Baltic, with its starting point in bilateral sister-city relations, a further step was taken - the creation of the Euroregion Baltic. Euroregion Baltic (ERB) was established in February 1998 in Malbork (Poland) by representatives of regional and local authorities of border areas in six countries: Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

The members of Euroregion Baltic are:

Bornholm Amt, Denmark
Kurzeme Planning Region, Latvia
Klaipeda County, Lithuania
Association of Municipalities of Kaliningrad Region, Russia
Pomeranian Region, Poland
Warmia-Masurian Region, Poland
Association of Communes of the Republic of Poland, Poland
The Regional Council in Kalmar County, Sweden
Region Blekinge, Sweden
Kronoberg County Association of Local Authorities, Sweden
Kronoberg County Council, Sweden

From March 2002 till February 2003 Latvia was the presiding party of Euroregion Baltic. The secretariat was located at Liepaja City Council. The next presidency is Denmark.

Aims

The aims and forms of co-operation within ERB are as follows:

- To improve life conditions of the people inhabiting the area of ERB
- To promote mutual contacts
- To tighten bonds among local communities
- To eliminate historical prejudices

- To plan activities aimed at providing sustainable development among the members of ERB
- To promote actions aiming at co-operation between regional and local authorities

Statutes

The Statutes were originally signed at Malbork castle in February 1998. They were elaborated basing on the Polish initiative to create an euroregion in the southeast Baltic Sea area. The Statutes were revised as a result of a discussion during the year 2001 about how to make Euroregion Baltic more up-to-date.

STRUCTURE OF ORGANISATION

The highest administrative body is the Council. The Council elects the Executive Board and the President. Between the Board and the Council meetings all organizational work is provided by the Secretariats.

Three permanent working groups were operating in 2002:

- Environmental Working Group
- Transport Working Group
- Social Working Group

Meetings during Latvian presidency

Two Council meetings were held during the Latvian presidency:

- on November 4, 2002 in Liepāja, Latvia
- on February 24, 2003 in Malbork, Poland

Minutes are available at **www.eurobalt.org**

Three Board meetings were held during the Latvian presidency:

- on June 10, 2002 in Talsi, Latvia
- on August 20, 2002 in Bornholm, Denmark
- on February 24, 2003 in Malbork, Poland

Minutes are available at **www.eurobalt.org**

One of the most topical issues this year was the mobility problem connected with accession of several of Euroregion Baltic countries to the European Union. An address to national governments and several international organisations was adopted at the Council meeting on 4th of November, 2002. The address is available at **www.eurobalt.org** under the section *Council*.

Council Members

Klaipeda - Lithuania

1. **Virginia Lukoshene**, Governor of Klaipeda County
2. **Kestutis Vaitiekunas**, Deputy Head of State Territorial Planning and Building Inspectorate Service
3. **Roma Stubriene**, Director of Regional Development Department of Klaipeda County Governor's Administration
4. **Rimantas Taraskevicius**, Mayor of City of Klaipeda
5. **Richardas Vaitiekunas**, Mayor of Klaipeda District
6. **Arvydas Jakas**

Kaliningrad - Russia

1. **Alexander Kuznetsov**, Mayor of Baltijsk Municipal District
2. **Iouri Savenko**, Mayor of Kaliningrad
3. **Victor Koshelev**, - Deputy Head of Baltijsk Municipal District
4. **Victor Romanovsky**, - Head of the Board of administration of Kaliningrad region
5. **Valery Starikov**, Head of the Board of administration of Kaliningrad region
6. **Valerian Jourov**, Administration of Kaliningrad, Head of Department
7. **Anton Zouikov**, Svetly Municipal District, Specialist of Administration
8. **Oleg Schlyk**

Poland

1. **Henryk Slonina**, President of Elblag, Chairman of Executive Board of Association of Communes RP "Euroregion Baltic"
2. **Zbigniew Rychly**, Vice-President of Slupsk, Deputy Chairman of Executive Board of AC RP "Euroregion Baltic"
3. **Zbigniew Czepulkowski**, member Council of Gdansk
4. **Andrzej Helbrecht**, Chairman of Executive Board of Górowo Iławeckie
(all above are politicians, local level of self-government)
5. **Tomasz Sowinski**, Voivod of Pomorze Province
6. **Zbigniew Babalski**, Voivod of Warmia-Mazury Province
7. **Andrzej Ryński**, Marshall of Warmia-Mazury Province - self-government, level of province, politician
8. **Jan Zarebski**, Marshall of Pomorze Province, self-government, level of province, politician

Bornholm - Denmark

1. **Knud Andersen**, County Mayor of Bornholm
2. **Carl Ilse**, Deputy County Mayor

Southeast Sweden

1. **Roger Kaliff**, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
2. **Evy Jonsson**, The Regional Council in Kalmar County
3. **Ethel Duvskog**, The Regional Council in Blekinge
4. **Sigurdh R Petersson**, The Regional Council in Blekinge
5. **Ulf Andersson**, Kronoberg County Council
6. **Bo Frank**, Kronoberg Association of Local Authorities
Substitutes:
for Ethel Duvskog: Bernth Johnson, The Regional Council in Blekinge
for Sigurdh R Petersson: Solveig Johnsson, The Regional Council in Blekinge

Kurzeme Planning Region - Latvia

1. **Normunds Niedols**, Liepaja City Council
2. **Aivars Lacarus**, Talsi District Council
3. **Modris Eksteins**, Liepaja District Council
4. **Talivaldis Bergmanis**, Kuldiga District Council
5. **Maris Arbergs**, Talsi District Council
6. **Sarmite Ozolina**, Saldus District Council
7. **Janis Vitolinš**, Ventspils City Council
8. **Maris Dadzis**, Ventspils District Council

Board Members

1. **Normunds Niedols**, Executive director of Liepaja City Council, Latvia, President
2. **Knud Andersen**, County Mayor of Bornholm, Denmark, Vice President
3. **Bernth Johnson**, Blekinge County Council Commissioner, Southeast Sweden
4. **Virginia Lukoshene**, Governor of Klaipeda County, Lithuania
5. **Alexander Kuznetsov**, Mayor of Baltijsk Municipal District, Kaliningrad
6. **Henryk Slonina**, President of Elblag, Chairman of Executive Board of Association of Communes RP "Euroregion Baltic", Poland

5th ANNIVERSARY OF EUROREGION BALTIC

Euroregion Baltic was established five years ago in Poland, Malbork, the same place where the anniversary Council meeting is held in 2003. The organisation has reached the first major point of reference. ERB has developed and grown - it has new member regions in Latvia, the first common projects were developed and their implementation started (“Good governance” and “Seagull”).

In order to mark this historic step, which is first of many yet to come, ERB would like to present awards for special input into the development of organisation to the following politicians and executive officers:

Ms. Adrianna Gniado
Ms. Gunta Strēle
Ms. Jelena Butorova
Ms. Jevgenia Cherniavskaya
Ms. Malgorzata Samusjew
Ms. Maria Lindbom
Ms. Roma Stubriene
Ms. Virginija Lukošiene
Mr. Aivars Jurkovskis
Mr. Alexandr Kuznetsov
Mr. Bernth Johnson
Mr. Bo Frank
Mr. Grzegorz Grzelak
Mr. Gunārs Ansiņš

Mr. Henryk Slonina
Mr. Knud Andersen
Mr. Laisvūnas Kavaliauskas
Mr. Modris Ekšteins
Mr. Niels Chresten Andersen
Mr. Normunds Niedols
Mr. PG Lindencrona
Mr. Roger Kaliff
Mr. Šarūnas Reikalas
Mr. Ulf Andersson
Mr. Viktor Koshelev
Mr. Zdzislaw Olszewski
Mr. Witold Gintowt-Dziewaltowski

PROJECTS

In order to achieve practical results in the framework of common political platform, the member regions have devoted much effort to elaboration of common development projects. Several projects (e.g. The Baltic Gateway, Green School Project) are in various stages of implementation, several more are planned for the future. In 2002 the main focuss was on the first ERB common project - Seagull DevERB and a project planned as a supporting activity for Seagull- the Good Governance project.

Seagull DevERB

In order to make the co-operation between the ERB member regions more concrete, the Board and Council decided in 2001 to apply for financial support from EU through the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) INTERREG III B programme. A project proposal (Seagull-DevERB) was worked out by an ad hoc working group in close co-operation with the ERB Board and Council.

In May 2002 the Steering Committee for the BSR programme approved the project proposal and decided to allocate 1,3 MEUR to the project. The total budget is though twice that amount since EU is financing 50 % of the project costs. Additional funding is under preparation for the CEE partners through applications to the PHARE and Tacis funds.

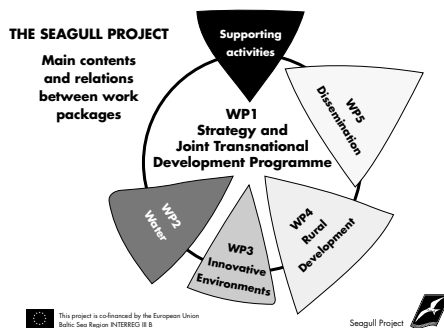
Implementation period for the project is August 2002 - July 2005.

The Seagull project is cross-sectional and the contents mirror priorities made by the ERB Council and Board. The project aims at deepening and concretising the ERB co-operation through elaborating a joint strategy for long term development and a more concrete Joint Trans-national Development Programme (JTDP) for the region.

The JTDP is planned to contain the most important cornerstones that are considered necessary for sustainable development of the whole ERB in line with the EU objectives of social and economic cohesion as well as environmental sustainability. The JTDP, which is planned to be adopted by the ERB Council and by all the member regions' decision bodies, will form the basis for pre-feasibility studies leading to larger investment proposals and other development activities of utmost importance for the region.

Some sectors will be discussed and studied deeper than others within the project. Those are Water Management, Development and Networks of Innovative Environments (science parks, clusters, etc), and Programmes for

Rural development - each of them forming its own work package (sub project). The results of the studies made and actions taken in these three work packages will form important input to the strategy and the JTDP (see the figure Main contents and relation between work packages).



The project is also containing different supporting activities for developing the ERB strategy and JTDP, such as statistics and GIS support, seminars and workshops about Good Governance, tools for regional development programming and planning, tools for measuring environmental sustainability, the importance of equal opportunities, transparency, etc.

Information and communication activities (a developed web site, conferences, publications and info material, etc.) have been considered carefully, and they have been gathered in a special work package.

The ERB co-operation is an arena for long-term political considerations, decisions and concrete actions. The Seagull project should be seen in this context, which is an obvious backbone for follow-up actions including investments and implementation of other project results.

The project partnership contains 34 organisations. Main partners from the EU side are The Regional Council in Kalmar County (lead partner for the project), Region Blekinge, The Association of Municipalities and the County Council in Kronoberg County, and the County Administration of Bornholm. There are another 20 Swedish and 3 Danish project partners. CEE partners are the Baltic Sea Coastal Planning Region in Latvia, Klaipeda County Governor's Administration in Lithuania, the ERB Association of Communes and the President's Offices of the Pomeranian and Warmia-Masurian Regions in Poland, and the Association of Municipalities of the Kaliningrad Region in Russia.

The project has a Steering Committee with members (chief executive officers) from all member regions. The Project Management is placed in the Lead partner's office in Kalmar, Sweden.

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Good governance

Initiated by the Swedish ERB partners - The Regional Council in Kalmar County, The Regional Council in Blekinge, the County Council Kronoberg and the Association of Municipalities in Kronoberg County - the Good Governance project was introduced in May 2002. After presenting a the project idea to the proposed project partner regions in Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad and with their positive reaction confirming the relevance of the project, a draft proposal was presented to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, resulting in their approval of funding the project in March 2002.

The project should be looked at in the light of the present efforts to gear up the co operation between the ERB partners and as an expression of the conviction that development of good governance in municipalities and regions will be very important for the future ERB development. The project is therefore also to be regarded as an integrated part in the first phase of the Seagull project. A dialogue about effective and well functioning political and administrative work in municipalities and regions will strengthen the understanding of the divers preconditions under which the ERB partners carry through their obligations and responsibilities. It will also contribute to the development of common values of importance for the capability to agree on joint ERB priorities and to a closer ERB cooperation in concrete activities.

The project has been implemented with the assistance of the ERB-secretariats in Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad who have been responsible for the administrative work in connection with the core activities of the project, a series of seminars with local and regional politicians and officials. Within the framework of the project the three secretariats are receiving economic means corresponding to part of the wage cost for one expert and one assistant during 24 months. The Swedish contribution in the seminars has besides project management consisted of specially assigned local and regional politicians and officials, acting as resource persons in the seminars. The project has thus been realised through a total of 15 seminars, 5 in respectively Latvia, Lithuania and Kaliningrad - 3 one day seminars for politicians and 2 two day seminars for officials and experts. All seminar activities were carried out within a period of 6 months ending in November 2002.

During the project 120 politicians and experts from the municipalities and regions concerned have attended the seminars and there met 9 politicians and 9 experts from the Swedish partner regions. In average the number of participants in the seminars for politicians was somewhat fewer while the seminar for experts gathered more participants, than expected.

In accordance with the approved project plan the seminars were to a large extent designed to highlight and discuss recent Swedish experiences of political and administrative leadership in municipal and regional work, the priorities and processes now in focus in developing good governance in the sub national levels of government. After preliminary discussions with the respective ERB secretariats seminar programmes were drawn up concentrating on three themes:

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

During the seminars Swedish views was presented giving the participants opportunity to discuss the relevance of the Swedish experiences in the local and regional environment they carry through their work. The first seminar theme has focussed on the basic connection between economic growth through a prosperous private industrial sector, it repercussions locally and regionally and - the possibilities existing on those levels of government to influence on the industrial development within own territorial borders. The Swedish experiences of the last decade with municipalities facing great economic restraints are that initiatives in response of growing unemployment has to be put on the municipal as well as the regional agenda and has to go hand in hand with long term strategic work to establish a local climate attractive to existing firms as well as to potential investors and new entrepreneurs.

The second theme has highlighted effective leadership in local and regional politics and administration. The basic issues and the specific aspects of local and regional self-government, the law and the principles of local self-government facing centrally made restraints and demands for more uniform solutions through central government solutions has been discussed. In the seminar discussions special attention has been paid to the distribution of responsibilities between politicians and officials and the specific aspects of political and administrative leadership in municipalities and regions.

The third theme has dealt with co operation as one of the most important components in a strategy aiming at good governance locally and regionally. Through enhanced co operation even small and medium-sized municipalities can get accession to highly specialised competences which

they cannot afford themselves. Joint public procurement of goods and services means cost advantages through lower prices and more effective administration. Co operation with other municipalities and regionally can also mean enhanced possibilities to carry through or benefit from large infrastructural investments as well as strengthened positions in the competition for EU development funding. Co operation between politics and industry, locally and regionally, can be an important tool in mobilizing resources and strengthening decision capacities. Finally - the ERB co operation means possibilities to develop municipal and regional advantages out of the growth potential in the Baltic Sea Region. These are all issues which have attracted great attention during the seminar discussions.

The seminars thus enabled both a sharing of experiences about and a comparison of - on the one hand the principles and regulation regarding local self-government on paper - and on the other - municipal every day work in the different regions. It is obvious that the written rules and regulations are quite similar in values and wordings. But reality seems to be quite a different thing. Strong evidence seem to be at hand for the conclusion that one of the most important challenges now facing the ERB is to develop constructive co operation between municipalities and regions, with large disparities both in economic terms and in the degree of self government in practice. Well known as it may be the experiences from the Good Governance project underlines this as a key aspect to be dealt with. It demands for realistic expectations and a very decisive work.

The Good Governance project gives also evidence for a continued ERB-dialogue on good governance issues in municipal and regional work. A conclusion close at hand is that this dialogue should focus on concrete activities for specified target groups of both politicians and officials. Addressing issues about political and administrative leadership in municipalities and regions this could then be a key priority.

These were also aspects on the future ERB co operation touched upon in the resolution approved by the concluding conference of the Good Governance project, arranged in Ronneby in co operation with the Seagull project. The conference gathered close to 200 participants of which 120 had been participating in the Good Governance seminars. The full text of the conference resolution can be read on the ERB web site (www.eurobalt.org)

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