

## **EGTC Ltd Euroregion Baltic**

### **Political Statement – “Cooperation is not just an opportunity – it’s our shield”**

The EGTC Ltd Euroregion Baltic gathered on 12–13 May 2026 in Tallinn, Estonia, together with partners and cooperation networks from across the Baltic Sea Region, to participate in the Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

This year’s “Resilience Edition” of the Forum focuses on the interconnections between the key challenges facing our region:

- Security and geopolitical uncertainties
- Demographic shifts and regional competitiveness
- Climate change and the state of the Baltic Sea environment
- Governance, implementation gaps, and financing

The newly established European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Ltd Euroregion Baltic builds on more than 25 years of close collaboration. We strongly support the Forum’s ambition to promote a more holistic and systemic approach to resilience. Recognising and addressing the interlinkages between these challenges will strengthen not only our capacity to act, but also the resilience of our democratic systems.

While some challenges must be addressed at the European level, local and regional actors play a crucial role in delivering practical solutions. We therefore emphasise that future EU cohesion policy should continue to uphold the partnership principle, support place-based approaches, and reinforce multilevel governance. For our part, we remain committed to promoting a strong multilevel governance perspective as part of our shared ambition to strengthen the resilience of the Baltic Sea region.

The current geopolitical instability, including the ongoing war in Ukraine and tensions in the Middle East, underlines the vital importance of strong and sustained cooperation. As Vice-President of Euroregion Baltic, Michał Kontraktowicz, stated earlier this year:

*“Cooperation is not just an opportunity – it’s our shield.”*

Across the Euroregion Baltic and many other European regions, we face shared demographic challenges: ageing populations, declining birth rates, and the outmigration of young people to larger urban centres. *“Addressing these trends requires new approaches. To this end, we have established a working group on skills, employment, and demography, reaching out to partners across the Baltic Sea Region to strengthen future cooperation. We are facing the same challenges across our regions. By working together, we can develop innovative solutions that secure our future”*, said Maria Ixcot Nilsson, the President of Euroregion Baltic EGTC Ltd.

Local and regional challenges are closely linked to our ability to respond to climate change, environmental pressures, and global competition. Innovative businesses and well-skilled workforces are key drivers of regional and European competitiveness. Regions that make efficient use of resources while ensuring social sustainability will be at the forefront of future development.

Securing welfare, ensuring the availability of relevant skills, and enabling sustainable living within planetary boundaries are essential cornerstones for vibrant societies and strong democratic values.

A sustainable future must also fully involve young people. We welcome the strong engagement of youth across Baltic Sea networks, and we are proud to have members of Euroregion Baltic Youth Council participating in this conference.