Euroregion Baltic: Building on partnerships, looking to the future

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Euroregion Baltic's General Assembly met in Kalmar to discuss future priorities, new opportunities for cross-border cooperation and the role of regions in shaping Europe's future.

At the heart of Euroregion Baltic's cooperation is a shared ambition: a healthier Baltic Sea, better opportunities to learn and work, and communities where people of all ages can build their future.

ERB brings together large urban centres, small and medium-sized towns, rural and coastal communities, and islands, all connected by the Baltic Sea. This geography brings particular opportunities, but also challenges of accessibility, demographic change, skills, connectivity and resilience. For Euroregion Baltic, strengthening European competitiveness therefore also means strengthening the capacity of these places to develop, innovate and benefit from the green and digital transitions, so that people can stay, work, learn and build their future across the region.

Young people are central to the demographic future of the South Baltic. The right to stay is not only about retaining talent, but about investing in communities where young people can see a future for themselves, with access to education, jobs, housing, services, mobility and opportunities to participate in shaping their communities. At the same time, this is part of a wider territorial ambition: to create good conditions for people of all ages to live, work, learn and build their future in the region.

"Our regions face many of the same challenges, but they also bring different experiences and strengths. Euroregion Baltic gives us a platform to learn from one another, build partnerships and develop solutions together. As we look towards the future, we want to identify where our cooperation can make the greatest difference for our communities and ensure that their needs and perspectives are reflected in European discussions," says Maria Ixcot Nilsson, President of Euroregion Baltic.

Connecting regional priorities with Europe's future

Euroregion Baltic's current focus areas – water, skills and demography, and youth – provide a foundation for addressing shared challenges and identifying new opportunities for cooperation.

Water cooperation connects the health of the Baltic Sea with the wider challenges of sustainable water management, climate adaptation and environmental resilience. The European Water Resilience Strategy creates opportunities to bring regional experience and cooperation into a broader European framework.

Skills and demography are central to the future of communities across the South Baltic. Ageing populations, labour shortages and the need to attract and retain talent call for stronger cooperation between public authorities, education providers, businesses, civil society and young people themselves. The EU's Union of Skills and the emerging European debate on the *right to stay* offer an important policy context, particularly for smaller towns, rural areas and island communities. Within Euroregion Baltic, the Youth Council provides a platform for young people to contribute their perspectives, engage in cross-border dialogue and help shape initiatives that affect their future.

Looking ahead: A stronger platform for cooperation

The discussion in Kalmar took place at a time when the European Union prepares its next Multiannual Financial Framework and shapes Cohesion Policy beyond 2027.

Building on its established partnerships and understanding of regional needs, EGTC Euroregion Baltic aims to play an active role in shaping new opportunities for cross-border cooperation. The organisation stands ready to bring its members' experience, knowledge and perspectives into European discussions, particularly on the future of Interreg South Baltic and the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

"Euroregion Baltic is more than a network of regions. It brings together years of partnership, practical experience and a close understanding of the communities partners represent. As Europe's future policies and priorities take shape, we have a valuable perspective to offer, grounded in our belief that shared challenges are best addressed through cross-border collaboration ," says Iwona Kieda, Director of Euroregion Baltic.

To advance these ambitions, Euroregion Baltic is committed to strengthening its institutional capacity, visibility and role as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Our renewed visual identity reflects our shared regional identity, rooted in the Baltic Sea that connects us, and symbolises our commitment to a stronger, more cohesive and forward-looking Euroregion Baltic. ERB aims to build on this renewed identity to reinforce our presence, partnerships and influence across the Baltic Sea region and at the European level.

The Kalmar meeting provides a starting point for shaping Euroregion Baltic's future direction, building on existing cooperation and the shared priorities of its members.

A greener and more competitive South Baltic should also be a more cohesive, resilient and connected South Baltic.

Since 1998, Euroregion Baltic has brought together local and regional authorities across the South Baltic to exchange experience, build partnerships and pursue common interests. Today, demographic change, environmental challenges, a shifting geopolitical landscape and evolving European priorities give this cooperation renewed relevance.

As a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, Euroregion Baltic seeks to bring together its members' knowledge and experience to develop joint initiatives that respond to regional needs while helping address challenges of a wider European relevance.

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About Euroregion Baltic

Established in 1998, Euroregion Baltic brings together local and regional authorities from Sweden (Kalmar, Kronoberg and Blekinge), Denmark (Bornholm) and Poland (Pomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic).

Learn more: www.eurobalt.org