

# EUROREGION BALTIC NEWSLETTER

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EUROREGION BALTIC IS A POLITICAL COOPERATION OF NINE REGIONS IN DENMARK, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND, RUSSIA AND SWEDEN



## 10 Years of Euroregion Baltic

The Council celebrated the tenth anniversary of Euroregion Baltic at its special gathering in Elbląg, Poland. This Council meeting was the first in a series of events marking the anniversary which will be held throughout 2008 around the Baltic Sea and Europe.

More than 80 participants attended the special session of the ERB Council that took place on 22nd February 2008 in Elbląg, Poland, ten years after the Agreement establishing Euroregion Baltic was signed. The participants included members of the Polish Parliament, the chair people of the regional boards in the ERB member countries, mayors and heads of the regional administrations and ERB secretariats, as well as by representatives of the media. Mr Bogdan



Borusewicz, Speaker of the Polish Senate was the special guest at the celebrations which were highlighted not only by contributions from the politicians but also by the excellent performance of classical music composed by the authors from around the ERB member countries delivered by the Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Sopot and conducted by Mr Wojciech Rajski.

Special letters of congratulations included the ones from Ms Grażyna Bernatowicz, Undersecretary of State at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Piotr Stachańczyk, Undersecretary of State at the Polish Ministry of Interior, Mr Alexander Yaroshuk, Head of the Municipal District of Kaliningrad City, Mr Pavel Petrov Head of the Nordic Council of Ministers Contact Center in Petrozavodsk, Russia.

## New President of Euroregion Baltic

The Council meeting in Elbląg marked the change of leadership in Euroregion Baltic. The Danish Party now in charge of the ERB Board is led by Mr Per Ole Petersen, member of the Council of the Regional Municipality of Bornholm and the eleventh ERB President.

Mr Per Ole Petersen has since 1998 been an elected politician representing the Social Democratic party in the Regional Council on Bornholm. He is the Chairman of the Board of Nexoe Seaport, and works in three political committees dealing with Planning & Environment, Children & Youth, Culture & Leisure. He is a teacher by profession and works at Nexoe primary school. He is also an agent for a private agency renting out tourist summer cottages.

Mr Per Ole Petersen was born in 1956. He is married and has three children. He has represented the Regional Municipality of Bornholm in the Euroregion Baltic Executive Board and in the Council since March 2006.



South Baltic Crossborder Cooperation Programme kick-off conference combined with the launch of its first call for project proposals will take place in Gdańsk, Poland on 26th March 2008. The City of Gdańsk will also host the Joint Technical Secretariat of the South Baltic Crossborder Cooperation Programme.

## ***ERB COUNCIL MEET IN ELBLĄG***

**ERB Council met on 22nd February 2008 to transfer Presidency from the Swedish Party to the Danish Party, and to mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Agreement establishing Euroregion Baltic.**

The meeting was divided into two parts; working session dealt with the changes of the ERB Statutes allowing the formal extension of the Executive Board to now include new regional representatives from Poland and Sweden. Ms Marie-Louise Hilmersson, Chair of the Regional Council in Södra Småland, Mr Åke Nilsson, member of the Regional Council in Kalmar, and Mr Jacek Protas, Chair of the Regional Board of Warmińsko-Mazurskie became new members of the ERB Executive Board. The Council heard and approved of the 2008-2009 Action Programme, which had been prepared earlier and presented in cooperation of the Danish and Polish partners.

In addition, during the working session a debate on euroregional cooperation took place. The discussion included interventions from Mr Grzegorz Grzelak (ERB President in 1998/1999), Ms Raisa Mincinauskiene (ERB Board member), Mr Alexander Kuznecov (ERB President in 2000/2001), Mr Roger Kaliff (ERB President in 2001/2002) and Mr Per Ole Petersen (ERB President in 2008/2009).

Later in the evening the anniversary celebrations took place. In the medieval hall of Elbląg Library the participants welcomed the special guest: Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Speaker of the Polish Senate and listened to the breathtaking concert of the Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra in Sopot, conducted by Mr Wojciech Rajski. The music performed included special dedications to the Scandinavian partners (Edvard Grieg's *Two Melodies*), Lithuanian partners (Grażyna Bacewiczówna's *Concert for A Sting Orchestra*), Polish partners (Wojciech Kilar's *Orawa*), and to the Russian partners (Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Andante Cantabile*).

After the 2007 Activity Report delivered by the outgoing President, Mr Bernth Johnson, ERB Presidency was taken over by Mr Per Ole Petersen, on behalf of the Danish Party. Poland's Jacek Protas became the Vice-President of the ERB Executive Board.



On Saturday 23rd February the participants of the anniversary celebrations took a short trip to Malbork Castle where the Agreement establishing Euroregion Baltic was signed on 22nd February 1998. In spite of cold weather the spirits were high.



## ***ERB WORKING GROUPS***

At its meeting on 22nd February 2008 the Council decided to establish six formal ERB Working Groups. The foundations for these Groups had been laid by the so-called reference networks, consisting of politicians, civil servants and experts, formed within the Seagull II project with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the Joint Development Programme.

### **SME / Innovation Working Group**

Under the political leadership of Mr Henryk Słonina, Mayor of Elbag and administrative management by Mr Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański (International Secretariat) this Working Group will aim at cooperating within the scope of new knowledge, net-based learning, and innovative centres and clusters.

### **Rural Development Working Group**

Under the political leadership of Mr Per Ole Petersen, President of Euroregion Baltic and administrative management by Mr Niels Chresten Andersen (ERB Secretariat on Bornholm) this Working Group will aim at cooperating within the scope of rural development leading to the establishment of a South Baltic Rural Development Centre.

### **Tourism Working Group**

Under the regional patronage of Ms Marta Chelkowska, Director of Tourism Department at Pomorskie Regional Office and administrative management by Mr Jacek Zdrojewski (Regional Tourism Organisation) this Working Group will aim at cooperating within the scope of developing and promoting crossborder tourism products, and preparing marketing strategies.

### **Social Dimension Working Group**

Under the regional patronage of Ms Krystyna Wróblewska, Director of International Cooperation at Pomorskie Regional Office and administrative management by Ms Kora Stańczyk (Pomorskie Regional Office) this Working Group will aim at cooperating with labour market institutions contributing to the better integration of labour markets in the ERB territory.

### **Energy Working Group**

Under the political leadership of Ms Monica Haider, Vice-Chair of the Regional Council in Södra Småland and administrative management by Mr Ulf Andersson (ERB Secretariat in Södra Småland) this Working Group will aim at cooperating within the scope of sustainable and renewable energy supplies, particularly in the fields of wind energy and bio-energy.

### **Water Forum Working Group**

Under the political leadership of Mr Roger Kaliff, Chair of Municipal Council in Kalmar and administrative management by Ms Carolina Gunnarsson (Region Kalmar) this Working Group will aim at acting as a forum for the development and exchange, for dissemination of views, information and policies on sustainable water management.

### **Transport, People-to-People and Environment**

The remaining three Working Groups to be established in 2008 will work on their activity plans and make them ready before the next Council meeting that will take place on Bornholm in November.

## ***YOUTH BOARD SET UP***

Council meeting in Elbląg (22nd February 2008) was the first to have been attended by the members of the ERB Youth Board. Following the change of the ERB Statutes the representatives of the youth from around the member regions got included in the Euroregion Baltic Council. The Youth Board includes: Ms Cajsa Augustzen (Södra Småland), Ms Karin Ekelund (Kalmar Region), Ms Anna Grazova (Kaliningrad Region), Mr Sebastian Bloch Jensen (Bornholm), Ms Amelia Lilja (Region Blekinge), Mr Przemysław Sobiczewski (Region of Warmińsko-Mazuskie) and Ms Magdalena Zydek (Pomorskie Region). The two Swedish regions of Blekinge and Södra Småland also nominated deputy members who are:

Mr Viktor Löfgren and Ms Anna Wiktorsson, respectively.

Klaipeda County is in the process of appointing their representative to the ERB Youth Board.

The Youth Board met on 23rd February and elected their Chair. Ms Anna Grazova will lead the work of the youth and represent them in the ERB Executive Board. It was also decided that any member of the Board could be a replacement for the Chair during the meetings of the ERB Executive Board.

The Youth Board will meet on-line on 11th March 2008 to discuss their activities in the coming months. The presentation of their plans is expected to be delivered at the meeting on 25th April on Bornholm. The ERB Executive Board will then approve of the activity plan.



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## 2008 Calendar

4th March:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
11th March:	Youth Board Meeting, on-line
7th April:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
25th April:	ERB Executive Board Meeting on Bornholm
5th May:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
2nd June:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
17th July:	Baltic Festival, Karlshamn
1st August:	ERB Executive Board Meeting in Klaipeda
1st September:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
11th September:	Seminar on Baltic Sea Strategy, Brussels
12th September:	ERB Executive Board Meeting in Brussels
6th October:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
3rd November:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line
19th November:	ERB Council Meeting on Bornholm
20th November:	Conference on Labour Market Issues, Bornholm
1st December:	Secretariat Coordination Meeting, on-line

## Baltic Sea Strategy

**The Baltic Sea Region gets into focus of the European Union policies while Euroregion Baltic is planning to actively participate in the preparation process of the Baltic Sea strategy.**

The Baltic Sea strategy was given a preliminary endorsement at the European Council and will be open to all stakeholders. The strategy embraces issues of economic, transport and research cooperation, as well as environmental issues. It is intended to win more attention to the Baltic Sea area in the European Union and the hope is to shape it into a regional cooperation model for the whole of the EU. The strategy is likely to be passed during the Swedish presidency period in the second half of 2009.

Today, Baltic affairs are gaining momentum in the pan-European debate. In addition to the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament, also the Committee of the Regions has established its Baltic Sea Region's Interregional Group. The Brussels offices of the EU regions in the Baltic Sea are planning to hold the 3rd Baltic Sea Perspectives Conference this Autumn to which they are inviting a wide spectrum of organisations active in the Baltic cooperation.

Euroregion Baltic intends to become an active partner in all these initiatives. Moreover, we are now planning to organise an ERB seminar in Brussels which would deal primarily with the issue of the upcoming Baltic strategy. The date will be fixed at the meeting of the ERB secretariats on 4th March and announced publicly.

In order to read Ms Cecilia Malmström's speech to the Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament (delivered in Strasbourg, on 12th December 2007), please go to: <http://utbildning.regeringen.se/sb/d/8660/a/94598>.