

ERB NEWSLETTER



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



**Z najlepszymi życzeniami
Wesołych Świąt oraz
Szczęśliwego Nowego roku
od Euroregionu Bałtyk!**

**De bedste ønsker om en
glædelig jul og et godt nytår,
fra Euroregion Baltic!**

**Have a very merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year with
the best wishes from
Euroregion Baltic!**

**Linksmų Šv. Kalėdų ir
laimingų Naujų metų
nuoširdžiai Jums linki
euroregionas Baltija!**

**Примите искренние
поздравления с Новым 2006
годом и Рождеством от
Еврорегиона Балтика!**

**Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus
un laimīgu Jauno gadu!
Ar vislabākajiem
vēlējumiem no
Eiropreģiona Baltica!**

**En riktigt God Jul och ett gott nytt
år önskas från Euroregion Baltic!**

We are happy to inform you that the Tacis component of "Seagull II project was approved by the BSR INTERREG III B NP Steering Committee at its meeting in Øyer, Norway on 9 December 2005.

Joint Development Programme approved

The Joint Development Programme was approved on 28th November 2005 during the ERB Council meeting in Klaipeda. Earlier, it was also adopted by the Boards of three Swedish Regions of Blekinge, Kalmar and Konberg, of the Regional Municipality of Bornholm in Denmark, by the Board of the Polish Association of Communes, and the Boards of Pomorskie and Warminsko-Mazurskie Regions in Poland. The Programme is now awaiting approval in Latvia, Lithuania and the Kaliningrad Oblast. The Programme specifies four focus areas for future cooperation: A. Development of entrepreneurship and innovation, tourism and rural areas; B. Transport infrastructure; C. Social dimension activities, particularly those relating to the improvement of labour market; D. Protection of environment with focus on energy consumption and production and water issues. Within the specified focus areas, more detailed activities are planned to be implemented in the next 10 – 15 years in the Euroregion Baltic. These are:

1. Establishment of an ERB structure for innovation and SME development
2. Setting up of an Academy for Rural Development aimed at improving the preconditions in rural areas.
3. Establishment of a Tourism Development Working Group
4. Initiating a political Committee to adopt and carry through an ERB transport infrastructure strategy .
5. Compiling a report on the ERB labour market for dissemination activities.
6. Preparing concrete proposals for political conclusions to long-term cooperation in labour market issues.
7. Working out and implementing an education programme in labour market issues.
8. Creating an ERB Water Forum, with the objective of establishing an ERB pilot area for transnational and crossborder cooperation and implementation of modern water management methods, including the EU WFD.
9. Elaborating a plan to diminish threats from the 2-3 most obvious environmental hot spots in Kaliningrad Region.
10. Forming an ERB Energy Forum with the task of initiating coordination of energy issues from a broad perspective of the whole ERB region.

Lobbying for an ERB Neighbourhood Programme

During the process of constructing the Joint Development Programme, an idea was born to launch efforts aimed at acquiring a status of a neighbourhood programme area in Euroregion Baltic within the New Financial Perspective 2007—2013. Upon a joint initiative by Euroregion Baltic and SydSam (organisation of South Sweden), meetings were held in Brussels and Strasbourg, attracting regional and national representations of the ERB member countries to the European Union, European Commission personnel and the members of Intergroup Baltic at the European Parliament.

The delegation at the meetings included President Irina Rozova, Board members: Mr Bo Frank and Mr Zigo Rutkovskis, and Sławomir Demkowicz-Dobrzański from the ERB International Secretariat. SydSam was represented by its Chairman Roger Kaliff, Director of the Secretariat in Kalmar, Mr Håkan Brynielsson and Director of the Secretariat in Brussels, Ms Sofie Gardestedt

As a result of the efforts made so far, including the position paper on the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the SydSam lobbying, the ERB ambition has acquired support from the Swedish government. There is also a growing understanding in the relevant ministries of Denmark and Poland. In addition, the members of the EP Intergroup Baltic promised their assistance in promoting the idea of a Neighbourhood Programme for Euroregion Baltic.

At present, a more detailed proposal of the Neighbourhood Programme is being prepared, which will facilitate crossborder cooperation between all the ERB member regions, including the Kaliningrad Oblast. More lobbying is being exercised towards governmental institutions, responsible for the implementation of the 2007—2013 territorial cooperation in the European Union.

Seagull II Kicks off in Klaipeda



Polish delegation: Ms Patrycja Belau, Mr Zbigniew Kozlowski, Ms Jadwiga Semmerling and Ms Ewelina Bonar. Russian delegation: Ms Natalia Reznitchenko and Mr Victor Koshelev

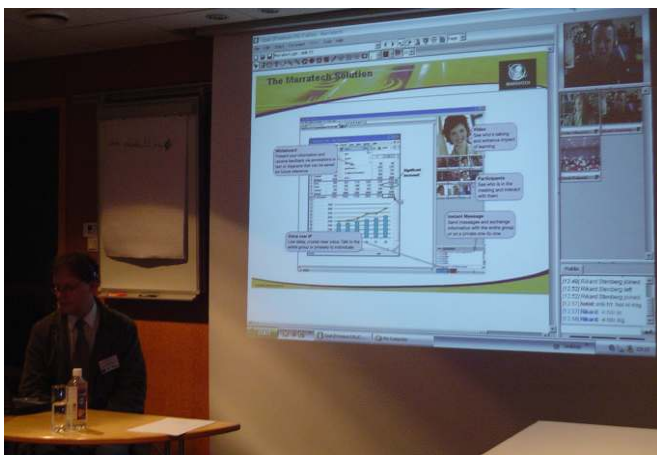
On November 29th 2005, a kick-off conference was held in Klaipeda, Lithuania to mark the beginning of the Seagull II project, co-financed by the Baltic Sea Region Interreg III B Neighbourhood Programme. The objective of the conference was to present the project to a wider audience of national, regional and local authorities, and to demonstrate how the project can support the ERB regions in their work towards sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

The central objective of the project will be to assist regional and local authorities around the South-East BSR in the implementation of the Joint Development Programme (JDP), the process planned to be in line with such EU policies as the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, European Employment Strategy and the Common Economic Space between the EU and Russia.

In general, the project will result in strengthening ERB institutional structures by means of establishing a common cooperation platform, which will make the implementation of JDP more coherent and in line with EU policies and programmes.

In detail, the objectives of the project are to:

- Establishing permanent cooperative ERB networks of professionals within the four areas of business environment (rural development, innovation and SME development, tourism), transport infrastructure, labour market cooperation, and environment and energy;
- Improving capacities to develop and manage larger projects by creating project development teams;
- Developing an internet-based communication facility;
- Establishing a common database enabling benchmarking activities;
- Facilitating exchange of best practices among civil servants in ERB;
- Increasing ERB politicians and civil servants' knowledge of EU policies relating to JTDP;
- Promoting ERB through developing transferable models, publication of project results, organising conferences and e-seminars.



The conference innovation highlight: presentation of the Internet-based communication facility. The audio-visual connection between Klaipeda in Lithuania, and Stockholm and Luleå in Sweden.



Latvian representative: Ms Inese Eistere. Ms Joanna Zielińska from Poland. Swedish delegation: Mr Bo Frank, Mr Kenneth Gyllensting, Mr P.G. Lindencrona, Ms Marianne Eckerbom

More information at www.eurobalt.org

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Green Circle Schools: successful environmental project

The 13 partner schools from the countries around the Baltic have shown with their work how good cooperation can be carried out. The schools have a variety of common projects going on. They cooperate in questions concerning energy, health, democracy, flora, fauna, water and other subjects. The pupils involved are at the age of 2 to 18.

In May pupils from Angelstad, Sweden had the opportunity to visit their friends in Hasle, Denmark. During some days the children had activities together and got to know each other. It was an experience for them to live in families and to attend lessons. In September the exchange went the other way when pupils from Hasle came to Angelstad. It was a very inspiring way for them to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

In autumn schools from Sweden, Russia, Lithuania and Denmark carried out a common health project. Their pupils walked the distance between our schools. There was also an exchange of recipes of healthy national food. The pupils made the food themselves, tasted it and commented. In October the schools arranged a common day of health with activities on the topic. They exchanged texts and pictures on their activities. This is an excellent example of cooperation where many schools are involved.

All the partner schools are working with a project called The Green Circle Journey. They have collected material from the surroundings and from their work. The material can be used as a guide when you visit the area around the partner school. The material is published on our website and is soon to be completed. During our

Action Programme for Strategic Baltic Sea Questions

With the approval of the Joint Development Programme at the council meeting on the 28th of November in Klaipeda, a new impetus has been given to the co-operation within Euroregion Baltic. In Blekinge County the Region Blekinge Board has adopted the programme.

To contribute to the promotion of growth in the Baltic Sea Region, Region Blekinge is working on an Action Programme for Strategic Baltic Sea Questions. The aim is to identify which questions Region Blekinge should give priority to in the future. The ERB co-operation with the Joint Development Programme is in this perspective a cornerstone.

The Action Programme is planned to be finalized in early spring and input to this process from our friends in the ERB member regions are of vital importance. Please feel free to contact us for further information and/or with your views and thoughts on the role Region Blekinge should play in the future Baltic Sea co-operation.

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