

EUROREGION BALTIC NEWSLETTER

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



New President of Euroregion Baltic

The Council meeting in Kaliningrad marked the change of leadership in Euroregion Baltic. The Russian Party now in charge of the ERB Board is led by Mr Mikhail Pluhin, Minister of Territorial Development and Cooperation with Municipalities of the Kaliningrad Region Government.

Mr Pluhin was born on 3rd July 1962 in Sverdlovsk. He graduated in radio-engineering from the State Baltic Academy in 1995, in law from Kaliningrad State University in 1999, and from the Higher School of International Business at the Russian Government in 2005.

After conducting military service and working for the Kaliningrad Trawler Fleet, he has pursued professional careers of a youth instructor, specialist and manager at the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region, to finally become the Chairman of its Development Committee.

In 2000 Mr Pluhin became the Deputy Governor of the Kaliningrad Region, and since 8 October 2005 he has been the Minister of Territorial Development and Cooperation with Municipalities. On 30 March 2006 he took on the responsibility of chairing the Executive Board of Euroregion Baltic.

He is married with two children. Hockey is his hobby.

We all at Euroregion Baltic wish him a successful presidency and a lot of professional satisfaction from the work!



*ERB President Mr Mikhail Pluhin
Minister of Territorial Development,
Kaliningrad Region Government*

Baltic Crossborder Cooperation Programme

The governments of Denmark, Poland and Sweden agreed to set up a Baltic crossborder cooperation programme, within Objective 3 between 2007—2013.

The intensive lobbying campaign, run by Euroregion Baltic and SySam for almost two years, as well as a strong support provided by the government of Sweden have enabled moving the geographical scope of the programme more to the East, in comparison with the original proposal put forward by the European Commission (including German Mecklenburg Vor-Pommern and only Zachodniopomorskie in Poland). The present geography comprises the ERB member regions of Denmark (Bornholm), Poland (Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie), and Sweden (Regions of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg).

In addition, it will be possible to spend up to ten per cent of the funds available on cooperation with the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, which in the case of Euroregion Baltic will

facilitate joint initiatives with organisations and institutions from the Kaliningrad Region.

In the course of initial negotiations the idea of a programme covering the whole territory of Euroregion Baltic was only supported by the Swedish government. Later, once Germany had decided to withdraw from the programme, the representatives of Denmark, Poland and Sweden debated on the possibility to at least involve the Klaipeda County. This idea did not, however, result in a satisfactory solution.

At the present moment, preparations are being made in order to appoint regional representatives to a task force whose main goal will be to propose a management structure and priorities for the future programme. It is of extreme importance for Euroregion Baltic that its representatives are also included in the process. Their aim will be to contribute to the programme with the actions recommended within the ERB Joint Development Programme.

We are pleased to inform that the negotiation process with the Delegation of the European Commission has come to a close, and the grant contract will be signed, allowing the commencement of the Tacis - funded activities of the Seagull II Project in the Kaliningrad Region.

COUNCIL MEETING IN KALININGRAD



Russian delegation from left to right: Mr A. Kuznecov, Mr A. Gregorev (AMOKO), Mr V. Koshelev (ERB Council), Mr J. Rozkov-Jurevskiy (ERB Council), Mr M. Pluhin (ERB President), Mr G. Boos (Governor of Kaliningrad Region).

The Governor of the Kaliningrad Region, Mr Georgiy Boos welcomed the participants to this Council meeting, marking the change in the ERB Presidency, now to be held by the Russian Party.

Change to the Annex establishing ERB

Due to the establishment of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region, which is legal successor of Administration of Kaliningrad Region, the Russian Part in Euroregion Baltic will now be constituted by the Government of the Kaliningrad Region, the Kaliningrad Regional Duma, and the Association of Municipalities in the Kaliningrad Region.

2005 Annual Report

Ms Irina Rozova read out an outline of the 2005 Annual Report, presenting a brief account of the activities conducted within the Euroregion under her chairmanship. She emphasised the completion of the Seagull devERB project and its main output: Joint Development Programme, the Seagull II project, whose main aim is to enhance institutional capacities within Euroregion Baltic, the lobbying campaign pursued by the Euroregion in order to acquire a status of a CBC area between 2007 and 2013, and promotional activities of Euroregion Baltic.

The participants received copies of the 2005 Annual Report, drawn up, compiled and released by the International Secretariat.

ERB territory in the future CBC programmes

Proposals were presented of geographical scopes of the planned crossborder and transnational cooperation programmes covering the territory of the ERB member regions. The discussion concerned both, the new Objective 3 programmes (suggested programmes: Denmark – Germany – Poland – Sweden, Lithuania – Poland, Latvia – Lithuania), and those on the EU's external border to be financed by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, particularly the one covering Poland, Kaliningrad and Belarusia.

The members of the Council passed a resolution in support of the efforts aiming at establishing such a programme which would make it possible for all the ERB member regions to fully participate in the European territorial cooperation.

Joint Development Programme activities under the political patronage of the member regions

Representatives of the Pomorskie Region from Poland and Blekinge Region from Sweden presented official declarations to offer their patronage over the two activities recommended by the ERB Joint Development Programme, cooperation towards tourism development and improving transport infrastructure in the territory of the member regions, respectively. Such administrative support towards the Joint Development Programme will substantially enhance the implementation of the Seagull II project and the work of the reference networks. The Council took note of declarations from other member regions to promptly respond to the proposal suggesting their patronage over the remaining activities.



Swedish members of the Council (left to right): Mr G. Wollinger, Ms L. Gråhs, Mr Bo Frank, Mr R. Linberg, Ms C. Håård Anderson, and from a Danish member of the Board: Mr P.O. Petersen.



From left: S. Demkowicz-Dobrański (ERB IPS), F. Yaroshevitch (Baltijsk Municipality Head), J. Kozłowski (Marshal of Pomorskie), B. Johnson (Chairman of Region Blekinge Council), I. Rozova (Klaipeda Vice-Governor), M. Pluhin (Minister of Territorial Development and Cooperation with Kaliningrad Municipalities)

COUNCIL MEETING IN KALININGRAD

The Head of Baltijsk Municipal Administration, Mr Fedor Yaroshevitch, put forward a proposal to organise a conference dealing with the question of the West – East transport corridor, to be held in the Kaliningrad Region. The Council took note of a preliminary proposal to combine the conference with the next ERB Council meeting in November 2006.

ERB Council member, Ms Joanna Zielińska, presented a request voiced by the *Association of Amber Motorway Cities* in support of the initiative aiming at the European Commission considering the Pan-European Transport Corridor No 6 an element of the TEN – T network. The Council adopted a resolution supporting the idea of upgrading the Baltic-Link corridor in Sweden to be part of the Trans European Network system and part of the PAN European Corridor system.

ERB support to this initiative will give a strong impetus to the ERB cooperation in the field of transport infrastructure and its activities planned by the Joint Development Programme to address the so far unsatisfactory situation. It will also assist the activities within the Seagull II project that aim at establishing a permanent committee dealing with transport infrastructure within Euroregion Baltic (as recommended by the JDP).

ERB Council member, Mr Victor Koshelev presented a request from the Kaliningrad Region Philharmonic Orchestra to be involved in activities held within the ERB cooperation. The Council members requested that the Russian Secretariat send out a detailed calendar of events that the Philharmonic Orchestra plans for 2006 so that they can familiarise themselves with the proposal.

Transferring the ERB Presidency from the Lithuanian Party to the Russian Party.

The outgoing President, Irina Rozova transferred the chair of the ERB Presidency to Mr Mikhail Pluhin, Minister of Territorial Development and Cooperation with Municipalities in Kaliningrad Regional Government, wishing him a successful year of work.

Ms Irina Rozova, and the outgoing Vice-President, Mr Alexander Kuzniecov received gifts from the delegations of Poland, Russia and Sweden.

Ms Irina Rozova also thanked the International Secretariat for assistance and support provided in the course of her presidency.

The incoming President, Mr Mikhail Pluhin gave a brief opening speech, addressing all the participating parties

with a request for assistance in his work for the benefit of the Euroregion, expressing his belief that collaboration will result in further successes.

Changes of Councillors in the ERB Council

The participating delegations of the ERB member regions presented their current Councillors, following the national and regional elections, and changes. The Swedish Party also introduced their new representative to the ERB Board, Mr Bernth Johnson, who had now become the new Vice-President of Euroregion Baltic.

The Latvian and Lithuanian partners informed the Council members that they will send the lists of their national Councillors to the International Secretariat at a later date.

Resolution of the Council on political representation of the regions in the Board

Following the proposal made by the ERB Board member Mr B Frank at the Council meeting in Klaipeda on 28th November 2005 and the discussion conducted at the Board meeting on 1st March 2006, concerning the question of political representation of the regions in the Board of Euroregion Baltic, the International Secretariat drafted the text of the resolution, expressing willingness on the part of all the Parties in Euroregion Baltic to provide significant rank to their representatives to the Board. The Council adopted the proposed resolution.

Setting a date for the next Council meeting

The next Council meeting was proposed to be held on 6th November 2006 in Kaliningrad, with the invited participation by Mr Josep Bargalló, Prime Minister of Catalonia. The Polish Party of Euroregion Baltic requested that the date be postponed until about ten days later due to the local elections to be held at the beginning of November. President Pluhin, seconded by the Council, asked the International and National Secretariats to propose an alternative date.

Any Other Business

On behalf of the Polish delegation, Mr S. Demkowicz-Dobrzański, proposed that the Secretariats of Lithuania, Poland and Russia prepare a joint project proposal to the Lithuania – Poland – Kaliningrad Interreg III A Neighbourhood Programme to host the third edition of ERB Youth Games in 2007.

The Council approved the proposal and asked the Secretariats of Lithuania, Poland and Russia to appoint people responsible for the preparation of the project.

The Culture & Art. project, submitted within the LT–PL–RU Interreg III A Neighbourhood Programme, was awarded an ERDF/Tacis grant. The Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic (Lead Partner), and Kaliningrad Centre of Education and Methodology and Ministry of Culture at Kaliningrad Regional Government (Project Partners) will implement this 325—thousand euro project in three work packages: the first dealing with training for staff of cultural institutions, the second building an internet portal of cultural institutions in Kaliningrad and Poland, and the third constructing a culture development strategy.

EUROREGION BALTIC
INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT
SECRETARIAT

Ul. Sw. Duchy 3/4
82—300 Elblag, Poland
Sławomir Demkowicz Dobrzański
Tel./ Fax: +48 55 641 27 70
E-mail: ips@eurobalt.org.pl
www.eurobalt.org.pl



BALTIC

CONTACTS IN ERBREGIONS:

Bornholms Regionkommune
Niels Ch. Andersen
Tel.: +45 5692 1303
Niels.Chresten.Andersen@brk.dk

Администрация Балтийского
Городского Округа
Виктор Кошелев
Tel: +07 4014 522 669
koshelev@bltfrd.koenig.su

Region Blekinge
P.G. Lindencrona
Tel: +46 455 30 50 11
pg.lindencrona@regionblekinge.se

Regional Förbundet i Kalmar Län
Erik Ciardi
Tel: +46 480 44 83 33
erik.ciardi@regionforbund.se

Klaipėdos apskrities viršinininko
administracija
Dalia Makuškienė
Tel: +370 46 312 483
region@klaipeda.aps.lt

Södra Smålands kommuner och
landsting
Ulf Andersson
Tel: +46 470 77 85 48
ulf.andersson@sskl.se

Kurzemes plānošanas reģions
Zigo Rutkovskis
Tel. +371 73 31 492
zigo.rutkovskis@bjpaa.eunet.lv

Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa
Pomorskiego
Kora Stańczyk
Tel: +48 58 32 61 710
k.stanczyk@woj-pomorskie.pl

Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa
Warmińsko-Mazurskiego
Piotr Zwolak
Tel: +48 89 53 40 019
depie5@warmia.mazury.pl

Seagull II website launched

The Seagull II project has now an operational website at www.seagull2.eurobalt.org, offering information on the project, its structure and objectives, schedule of planned activities, and a directory of relevant documents. Apart from its promotional function, it is also intended to assist the project partners and associates in their work contributing to the implementation process.

You will also find a news section on the website with recent update of events that have been organised by the project, including meetings and seminars of the project reference networks, i.e. groups of local and regional institutions, political organisations and experts that deal with the activities recommended in the Euroregion Baltic Joint Development Programme within the priority areas of SMEs, rural development, tourism, transport infrastructure, social dimension, water and energy fora, and Kaliningrad hotspots. After the completion of the project, the reference networks will turn into ERB permanent cooperative structures. Their job in the course of the project implementation is to appoint project development teams who will submit crossborder and/or transnational project applications within the areas of the Joint Development Programme. These project development teams will be temporary project-based structures, delegated ad hoc by the reference networks to deal with specific problems related to the JDP activities.

The website also facilitates a working environment for all the actors involved in the work of the eight project reference networks. Each will now have access to their own sub-site with information on the goals of their cooperation, key documents, member profiles and running projects. It is also possible to discuss issues of relevance to the network in the reference forum.

From the Sea We Are Completion of the 2006 edition

Between 4 and 5th April the Jury of the 22nd International Competition of Fine Arts for Children and Youth *From the Sea We Are* examined and assessed 2992 entries, of which 180 qualified to the Main Exhibition at Elbląg Museum of Archaeology and History, and 105 to accompanying exhibitions to be held in Poland and around Euroregion Baltic.

Considering the high quality of the works this year the Jury awarded a collective Grand Prix to the Elementary and Junior High Schools No 24 in Gdańsk, as well as three individual prizes for:

- 1) Lina Jablonskyte (14 years old), of Children's School of Arts in Klaipėda,
- 2) Marta Rabitchenko (14 years old), of Children's School of Arts in Kaliningrad,
- 3) Zana Dageļ (14 years old), of Children's School of Arts in Klaipėda.

48 works of arts received equal awards and 121 more were selected to be displayed at the Main Exhibition.

Elbląg Youth Centre and the Secretariat of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic extend their kind invitation to the awarded authors and their teachers to the opening of the Main Exhibition to be held at 11.00 on 20th May 2006 in Elbląg Museum at Sigmund Augustus Boulevard in the Old Town area. The Exhibition will be accompanied by the ceremony of presenting awards.

The organisers will provide accommodation (between 19 and 20 May), and board (dinner on 19th, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 20th May). Participants can register by phone, fax or email to Elbląg Youth Centre. Personal contact through Janina Zaleska and/or Ewa Wojtkiewicz, tel/fax 48 (055) 233 48 34, e-mail: mdk-elblag@tlen.pl. The registration deadline is 10th May.