

## Public consultation - Overcoming obstacles in border regions

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

For the last 25 years, the European Union has been investing in cross-border cooperation through Interreg, a financing instrument for regional development across borders. Despite all the progress made, many obstacles persist, and many of these cannot be solved with Interreg financing alone.

The main purpose of this consultation is therefore to collect experiences and opinions from citizens, key stakeholders and experts, in order to get a comprehensive overview of what obstacles persist and of their impact on the daily lives of people and businesses in border regions.

The results will be published online. They will also feed into a study aiming to produce conclusions and practical suggestions on how the EU and its partners can ease remaining obstacles.

For more information on this consultation, please read the background document.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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**\* 1. In which capacity are you completing this questionnaire**

- As an individual/private person
- As a self-employed individual
- On behalf of a business/private company
- On behalf of a pan-European interest group
- On behalf of a public authority
- On behalf of an organisation
- On behalf of an academic/research institution
- Other

\* Your name or the name of the business/organisation/institution on behalf of which you are responding

*50 character(s) maximum*

Euroregion Baltic

**If your organisation is registered in the Transparency Register, please indicate your Register ID-number.**

If your organisation is not registered, you have the opportunity to [Register now](#). Then return to this page to submit your contribution as a registered organisation.

Responses from organisations not registered will be published separately. Non-registered organisations, please [submit your contributions here](#).

For more information about the Transparency Register, click [here](#).

Yes

No

\* Please indicate your Register ID-number

626055619655-10

**\* 2. Your name or the name of the business/organisation/institution on behalf of which you are responding**

Euroregion Baltic (ERB)

**3. Contact e-mail address**

sebastian.magier@euroregionbaltic.eu

**\* 4. Where are you currently resident or based?**

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> BE - Belgique -<br>België | <input type="radio"/> BG - България -<br>Bulgaria | <input type="radio"/> CZ - Česká<br>Republika | <input type="radio"/> DK - Danmark                |
| <input type="radio"/> DE -<br>Deutschland       | <input type="radio"/> EE - Eesti                  | <input type="radio"/> EL - Ελλάδα -<br>Ellada | <input type="radio"/> ES - España                 |
| <input type="radio"/> FR - France               | <input type="radio"/> HR - Hrvatska               | <input type="radio"/> IE - Ireland -<br>Eire  | <input type="radio"/> IT - Italia                 |
| <input type="radio"/> CY - Κύπρος -<br>Κύπρος   | <input type="radio"/> LV - Latvija                | <input type="radio"/> LT - Lietuva            | LU -<br><input type="radio"/> Luxembourg<br>(G-D) |
| <input type="radio"/> HU -<br>Magyarország      | <input type="radio"/> MT - Malta                  | <input type="radio"/> NL - Nederland          | <input type="radio"/> AT - Österreich             |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> PL - Polska    | <input type="radio"/> PT - Portugal               | <input type="radio"/> RO - România            | <input type="radio"/> SI - Slovenija              |
| <input type="radio"/> SK - Slovensko            | <input type="radio"/> FI - Suomi -<br>Finland     | <input type="radio"/> SE - Sverige            | <input type="radio"/> UK - United<br>Kingdom      |
| <input type="radio"/> IS - Iceland              | <input type="radio"/> LI - Liechtenstein          | <input type="radio"/> CH -<br>Switzerland     | <input type="radio"/> NO - Norge                  |
| <input type="radio"/> Other                     |   |   |   |

**\* 5. Language in which I complete the questionnaire.**

- |   |                                      |   |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> български (bg)      | <input type="radio"/> čeština (cs)   | <input type="radio"/> dansk (da)              | <input type="radio"/> Deutsch (de)         |
| <input type="radio"/> eesti keel (et)     | <input type="radio"/> ελληνικά (el)  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> English (en) | <input type="radio"/> español (es)         |
| <input type="radio"/> français (fr)       | <input type="radio"/> hrvatski (hr)  | <input type="radio"/> italiano (it)           | <input type="radio"/> latviešu valoda (lv) |
| <input type="radio"/> lietuvių kalba (lt) | <input type="radio"/> magyar (hu)    | <input type="radio"/> Malti (mt)              | <input type="radio"/> Nederlands (nl)      |
| <input type="radio"/> polski (pl)         | <input type="radio"/> português (pt) | <input type="radio"/> română (ro)             | <input type="radio"/> slovenčina (sk)      |
| <input type="radio"/> slovenščina (sl)    | <input type="radio"/> suomi (fi)     | <input type="radio"/> svenska (sv)            |  |

**\* 6. How should we publish your response?**

- In full (I consent to the publication of any information in my completed form, including my identity).
- Anonymously (I consent to the publication of any information in my completed form, apart from my name/the name of my organisation, the e-mail/contact address provided and the Transparency Register ID).
- Not at all (My response will not be published. It will be used within the Commission only).

**\* 7. Does your organisation specialise in cross-border cooperation or in working to ease or remove border obstacles?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Not applicable

## BORDER OBSTACLES

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**\* 1. How do you view the border in your region?**

- As an opportunity
- As an obstacle
- It has no impact
- Other
- Don't know

**\* 2. Are any of the following border obstacles relevant in your region?**

Explanation

Yes = this obstacle is relevant in my region

No = this does not apply in my region.

n/a = I have no opinion. / I don't know.

	yes	no	n/a
*Difficult physical access, e.g. 'I can't cross the border because there is no bridge/tunnel//It takes too long to travel to the other side//There are no/too few buses and trains to the other side'	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Language barriers, e.g. 'I don't speak the language they speak on the other side of the border//The people on the other side don't speak my language.'	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Legal and administrative barriers, e.g. 'The national taxation systems/pension systems are different//My professional qualifications are not recognised on the other side of the border//I'm not allowed access to certain medical services/education schemes'.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Lack of trust, e.g. 'I don't trust the people from across the border.'	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Economic disparities, e.g. 'It's too expensive on the other side of the border//There is too big a gap between economic conditions on either side of the border.'	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Sociocultural differences, e.g. 'I don't like the way society works on the other side of the border//I have better access to my rights on my side of the border'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*Public authorities' interest in working together, e.g. 'Local politicians don't seem to be interested in working together//Political debate doesn't include border issues'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3. Please select up to 3 obstacles from the previous question. Choose those you think pose most problems in your region.**

Explanation: Please state what form this/these obstacle(s) take(s) in your region and how it/they affect(s) your life. Use one box per obstacle.

**Obstacle 1**

*500 character(s) maximum*

Difficult physical access - despite significant improvements there are still certain barriers within ERB area hampering cooperation. These include mostly insufficient transport links between different member regions, especially those remotely located. On land borders not all crossing points are connected to improved road infrastructure, while maritime travel suffers from seasonality and frequent changes in the schedules.

**Obstacle 2**

*500 character(s) maximum*

Legal and administrative barriers - still continue despite many positive changes in recent years. On land borders between Kaliningrad and Lithuania/Poland small border crossing regime allowed for a greater movement of people, but still movement of goods and services remains restricted. The barriers are significantly smaller among the regions in the EU countries, but internal procedures differ from country to country and that can create problems e.g while implementing joint cross-border projects

**Obstacle 3**

*500 character(s) maximum*

Economic disparities - these have decreased throughout the years but still remain one of the most important barriers hampering the sustainable development of ERB regions. These include significant difference in GDP per capita, productivity rate, unemployment especially among young people, salaries, education and many other. Still some regions are considered more attractive which makes it even more difficult to closing the disparity gap in the near future.

#### 4. How can this/these obstacle(s) be overcome?

Explanation: Please write your answers in the order in which you ranked the obstacles in question 3 above. Use one box per obstacle and include:

- all aspects of your potential solution, such as any administrative procedures that need to be changed and any national, regional or local regulatory provisions that you think affect the situation;
- any organisations, groups or individuals you think should be involved in the process;
- any other factors that might help overcome the obstacle(s).

If you have any real-life examples of projects or solutions to a similar problem from elsewhere in Europe, please mention them too.

##### Solution to obstacle 1

*500 character(s) maximum*

More effort should be made to interlink the existing transport solution, so that the already committed resources are properly used. In ERB this would concern multi-modal solutions involving land based, maritime and air transport links, but also better and aggregated information systems on the availability of transport connections. As to the land borders, development of road/rail infrastructure should always take into account the cross-border aspect, thereby contributing to its development.

##### Solution to obstacle 2

*500 character(s) maximum*

Number of obstacles concerning the land borders of ERB can be tackled only on the governmental level. However, steps make also be taken to shorten the duration of border crossing procedures for people moving between EU and Kaliningrad region. Further extension of the small border traffic regime between Poland/Lithuania and Kaliningrad could also allow passengers to use main roads currently located outside the regime to travel between the administrative areas located within the regime.

### Solution to obstacle 3

*500 character(s) maximum*

This issue requires multi-vectoral approach on part all stakeholders of cross-border cooperation and also national/EU institutions focusing on internationalisation of SMEs, fostering development of cross-border labour markets and labour mobility. Also important is the promotion green growth including increased use of renewable, energy efficiency, protection and modern management of water resources. Development policies should also include youth perspective to be more strategically oriented.

## COOPERATION ACROSS BORDERS

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### \* 1. Are you aware of any cross-border cooperation activities in your region?

- Yes  
 No

Please specify.

*300 character(s) maximum*

Euroregion Baltic is among a number of cross-border cooperation organisations in the region. ERB itself is very active on local and regional level. There are many different activities in the region which are being coordinated within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

### 2. Has cross-border cooperation improved in your region over the last decade?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

Why has cooperation improved?

*500 character(s) maximum*

The cooperation in the region has been on the rise since the 2004 expansion of the European Union. Also ERB itself became more strategically oriented and structurally matured. ERB and its member organisations can take advantage of joint financial instruments offered by the EU. Here the most important improvement was the creation of the South Baltic Programme which covered most of the ERB regions. Also an ENPI LT-PL-RU programme offered assistance to partners from Kaliningrad.

**\*3. Have you heard of Interreg or European Territorial Cooperation?**

- Yes  
 No

**\*What does it mean to you?**

*300 character(s) maximum*

For ERB Interreg/ETC is one of the most valuable initiatives in support of implementation of cross-border cooperation in the region. Through programmes like South Baltic ERB is able to tackle common challenges identified by ERB members and implement strategic initiatives on local and regional level.

**4. Any further comments?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

ERB believes that only joint and properly streamlined efforts of stakeholders from all levels of governance can significantly contribute to the improvement of all the above mentioned problems. This multi-level governance perspective should be included in all EU instruments fostering cross-border cooperation eg. CBC programmes or macro-regional strategies eg. EUSBSR, but also engage regions from outside EU by using inter-governmental bodies eg. CBSS or UE ENP instruments.

**5. Do you have any publications about border obstacles that might be relevant to this consultation?**

If so, please upload it here. If it takes up more than 1MB, please email it to [REGIO CONSULTATION BORDER OBSTACLES](#).

List the publication(s) as follows:

- Title;
- date of publication (YYYY-MM);
- author;
- Full URL link to the site where the publication is posted (if it is online).

## Useful links

Consultation on overcoming obstacles in border regions [EN]

([http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/consultations/overcoming-obstacles-border-regions/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/consultations/overcoming-obstacles-border-regions/))

Background document [EN]

([http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/consultation/overcoming-obstacles-border-regions/pdf/background](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/consultation/overcoming-obstacles-border-regions/pdf/background)

Hintergrunddokument [DE]

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Document de référence [FR]

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Регистрирате сега [BG]

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Podkladovém dokumentu [CS]

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Baggrundsdokumentet [DA]

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Taustdokumenti [ET]

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Documento de referencia [ES]

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Documento di riferimento [IT]

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Pamatdokumentā [LV]

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Aiškinamajame dokumente [LT]

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Háttérdokumentumot [HU]

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Achtergronddocument [NL]

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Dokumentacie źródłowym [PL]

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Documento de referência [PT]

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Documentul de referință [RO]

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Referenčnom dokumente [SK]

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Tausta-asiakirjassat [FI]

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Samrådsdokumentet [SV]

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## Contact

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